

ENGLAND: BOUDICA

by Ross Mulkern

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Boudica was a tribal Queen at a time when Britain was made up of many different Kingdoms, each with their own King or Queen. Boudica's tribe was called the Iceni, and they lived in an area of eastern England near the modern City of Norwich.

When the Romans invaded Britain, they allowed Boudica's husband, the king, to continue ruling his kingdom. However, when he died, the Romans decided to take direct control. The Iceni resisted and fought against the Romans, but the Romans won easily. Boudica and her family suffered badly as the Romans took revenge for her tribe's rebellion.

You might think that at this point Boudica would give up and accept Roman rule. However, instead she became furious and promised to take bloody revenge on the invaders. As a powerful priestess, she was an excellent speaker and well respected by her subjects. She used her diplomatic skill to convince other tribes in the area to join her in a war against the Romans. Women could have many important jobs in ancient British culture, but these were usually doctors, lawyers or religious figures – not warriors. Even Boudica herself had never fought in a battle before this time. Despite this, she immediately proved that she was a fearless soldier with a great tactical mind.

Boudica's army attacked the three most important cities in Roman Britain, including London, and burned them all to the ground – killing around 70,000 people. Even though the Roman soldiers were the best trained in Europe, and possibly the world, they were not used to the British tactics. Boudica's soldiers would make surprise attacks, designed to spread terror and chaos, before disappearing into the countryside before they could be killed.

In a short time, the British managed to push the Romans to the edge of Britain. They only needed to win one more battle and the Romans would have been forced out of the country. Unfortunately, the tactics that had worked so well for Boudica in the cities were no good against Roman

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organisation in the case of a traditional battle and the Iceni were finally defeated. The Romans went on to conquer most of Britain and stayed there for hundreds of years.

But even though she was defeated in the end, Boudica remains a true heroine to British people for fighting with such bravery and skill against a much more powerful enemy, and the image of this wild, red haired woman with her face painted blue remains a powerful symbol of British resistance to any invader.