

Resource 4b

The Story of Boudica

At the time of the Roman conquest of Britannia, there was a Celtic tribe called the Iceni tribe. They were ruled by a king, called Prasutagus, who was married to Queen Boudica.

The Roman army was strong and powerful and Celtic tribes like the Iceni tribe lived in fear. King Prasutagus wanted to protect his tribe, so he made a deal with the Romans that would allow him to continue ruling his tribe under their terms. When he died, he left instructions in his will to give half of his kingdom to the Roman Emperor and the other half to Queen Boudica.



However, the Romans did not keep their deal after Prasutagus died. Instead, they took away land and farms from the Iceni tribe, increased taxes and refused to let Boudica be queen, publically flogging her instead. Boudica was not the kind of queen to take this treatment lightly. She was angry with the Romans and vowed to fight back. The people in her tribe were also cross with the way in which the Romans had treated them and it was easy for Boudica to encourage her people to join her in the fight against the Romans. When warriors from other tribes heard about Boudica's rebellion, they decided to join her army too.

Boudica's army launched its attack in AD 60, when the Roman governor Suetonius Paullinus was called away. Boudica ordered her warriors to burn down Roman towns and kill as many Romans as possible. They destroyed the town of Colchester and then went on to attack London and St. Albans.

When Suetonius Paullinus heard the terrible news, he rallied more troops and called for as many soldiers as possible, but Boudica still had more than ten times as many soldiers in her army as the Romans! However, the Romans were well trained and very experienced in battle. The Romans won the battle and killed many of the Celtic warriors.

Boudica could not face being captured by the Romans, so she decided to poison herself instead by swallowing a deadly drink. The Romans celebrated their victory, sending a clear message of strength to any other tribes thinking of rebellion against their rule.