

## Boudicca, Bringer of Victory

- 1 Boudicca, bringer of victory and queen of the Icini people, stood on the broad back of her war horse and gazed at the assembled warriors. In answer to her summons, they had travelled from tribes across the land to join her war host. As the sun rose above the low hill behind her, she raised her bronze shield and was bathed in its golden reflection.
- 6 "Warriors of the tribes," she began, "I welcome your presence here today. For too long our tribes have been under the heel of Rome. The Romans came to our land uninvited. They came to plunder our silver mines and when they didn't find treasure enough in the mines, they have taken it from our people. We work our land now to pay a tax to Rome. Only after we have paid our taxes can we benefit from our toil to feed our families and our tribes."
- 12 The warriors thumped the ends of their spears gently on the ground to show their agreement. They knew that Roman spies would be sleeping nearby and didn't want to waken them.
- 15 "But worse than that, my friends," continued Boudicca, "the slavers are coming. These brutes come to capture and enslave our children – our strength, our future. Our children will be displayed in the slave market in Rome and bartered for, like cattle. Their Roman masters will raise them to forget their culture, their language and their heritage."
- 20 The outraged warriors forgot to be wary of Roman scouts and roared their anger.
- 21 "But today, we ride to take back our future," called the war leader of the massed tribes. She waited for the shout of approval to lessen, then continued, "Paullinus, the Roman governor has left his capital city at Camulodunum and marched his troops to the west. He decided to leave only one legion to rule the eastern tribes. Today, he will regret that decision. First, we ride to take Camulodunum. Then we will drive Rome from these shores!"
- 27 This time, the noise of the celebrating warriors reverberated around the valley and beyond. The crows, shrieking their protest as they were startled from their roosts, added to the cacophony as the men and women shouted their loyalty. They hit their swords against the wood, leather and metal of their shields. Eventually, the noise came together in a shared chant, "Bou-dic-ca! BOU-dic-ca! BOU-DIC-ca! BOU-DIC-CA!!" She who gave the tribes confidence. She who was their champion. She who would lead them against Rome. And win!