

Boudica's Revolt

Time travel isn't real, right? If your answer is 'No', you're wrong. I can time travel. I'm not sure how, but I do it in my dreams. Appropriately, my name, Zita, means 'seeker'! I'm also kind of a history buff, my parents being archaeologists and all. They didn't believe my tales until my Father discovered a 5,000 year-old carving of my name in Stone Henge that I placed 5,000 years ago. I guided him to where it was.

"Aaah." I sigh luxuriously. Oh no. Again? I wonder what time period I've traveled to now. I look around. Before I can though, I cough. Loudly. A curtain of smoke stings my eyes like a rain of tiny arrows. I shut them quickly, and try to get to a safer area. Finally, I'm able to open my eyes and regain my senses. I become aware of the piercing screams that cut through the smoke like knives. Then, Latin, Gaelic languages. Like most times, I find I can understand them, but what they're saying is unrepeatable. The cruel, mean words strike me like bullets. Now that the smoke has cleared, (still enshrouding half of the room, though) a glint catches my eye. I walk over to the glint. It's a tall bronze shield, leaning against the wall, with delicate, beautiful swirling patterns on it. I recognize it as a La-Tene style shield 60 to 61 a.d. -The time of Boudica's revolt against the Romans! Only one piece of the puzzle is missing: Boudica herself.

I cautiously step outside. (When you're a time traveler, there isn't such a thing as being too careful.) Nothing happens. A tidal wave of relief washes over me. I look around and see a flat, green landscape, with gray, sharp rocks that slice the blue-gray sky like razors. It's a classic, pleasant celtic land. A familiar one: at least I'm still in England. There are roundhouses scattered about, but unlike the one I discovered I was in, their tops are burnt and charred, showing all the signs of fire. Thump. Thump. Thump, thump. Thump. I swivel my head down. Figures wearing red tunics, silver armor carrying spears and shields pass right through my astral form. Romans. A loud crash sounds. I whip around. A woman with red hair and a torn blue dress rises. Suddenly she's as tall as a mountain. Two girls run out to her. I hear voices I cannot understand. The world begins to fade away. I just saw Boudica. All I know is that I start to leave at a crucial moment.

"Aaag!" I yell. "Oh, right. Zita! You're home!" I hiss to myself. To reassure myself, I look around. Glow-in-the-dark blue walls, gray dresser, wooden toy chest, gray-blue bedspread, and a canvas bag archaeology kit. Yup. Home sweet home. I smile, throw the covers off me, and get out of bed. The smell of sizzling pancakes passes under my nose and I race towards the door, shoot down the hall, into the kitchen, and nearly run smack into the breakfast table.

"Woah!", says my father's strong and steady voice. "You okay, sweetie?"

I nod, for I'm still coming to face the facts: my nose is inches away from the hard marble countertop because I'm too excited for pancakes. I look up at him. He's wearing a blue baseball cap that sits on his short brown hair, a plaid blue shirt and blue jeans accompany the cap. A pair of blue sunglasses sit perched in his pocket, waiting to cover his sparkling blue eyes. I note his entirely blue attire. At first glance, he's a normal Dad, but at second glance, you'll probably notice the official golden badge that states 'Professor Steven Alex Tesserinn, Archaeologist.'

"Dad, do you know anything about Boudica?" I ask.

"Yes." is the reply.

"Will you tell me?" I plead.

"No. Not until after the pancakes."

Reluctantly, I walk over to the computer and type in 'Boudican Revolt.' Blah, blah, blah. None of the stuff is stuff I don't already know, to my very much annoyance. Oh! Hello, hello. What do we have here? I click on the link that says 'Attacks on Camulodunum, ect.' Bingo! I read it and close it with a snap, a smile spreading across my face. I know where she's heading next! Dad calls from the kitchen, "Hon, I worry about what you'll see..."

"I've seen the Black Death, Dad. Nothing is as bad as that!" I reply.

I had a long day, but eventually, after tossing and turning, I fall asleep. I feel a familiar pressure in my head, followed by a sensation of spinning. The bouncing up and down stops. Wait a minute- bouncing? I open my eyes and find myself sitting on a dapple-gray, shaggy horse. I glance around. I'm in a lush green forest. Beside me stands rows of horses. Not far ahead, a huge amount of people are gathered, speaking quietly. So quietly, that the only word I catch is "Camulodunum." Oh. My. God. That's today's Colchester! We're there! I ready my nerves for what comes next.

The people parted and moved back, creating an opening in their ranks. A woman with red hair dressed in blue and yellow robes, and a purple cloak strides through the gap. She is accompanied by a bearded red-haired man wearing only a kilt-like skirt. Boudica and one of her warriors. "It is time!" Boudica announces.

A man in a brown tunic, with blue paint smeared on his face seems to tremble as he asks, "Do we have to?"

"Have you no spirit? No faith?" Boudica's booming voice resonates, hanging over the crowd like a sheet. "Remember what they did! To me! To all of you! Our houses were burned, our possessions and land stolen! Our culture destroyed! Whether you are Iceni or Trinovante, join me! Attack!" The last words ring out longer than the rest. Sharp spears are produced from the depths of the crowd, giving the people a menacing and violent appearance. A battering ram is brought forth from the trees, and begins to smash against a gate at the edge of the clearing. Others use ropes to climb a stone wall that's attached to the gate. Whichever way the people went, Boudica was at the head of the teeming mass, riding in a bronze chariot pulled by seven silvery horses. Soon I hear the clinking of metal, screaming, and crashing. Then, the horrible crackle of fire. Before I know it, the city of Camulodunum is in ashes. I scream as I sit up in bed, trying to stop sweating.

I feel cold, despite my bed being overly hot. I fall asleep again, shivering. Tromp. Tromp, tromp. Tromp. I open my eyes.

"Do you think Boudica will retake all of Roman Britain?" says a warrior on a horse riding next to the empty one I'm on.

"Maybe. I just hope we'll attack more than just one city per day. Verulamium today was fun, though." replies a gray-tuniced man in front of me.

"Well, we lost a lot of men." points out the man beside me.

"But we killed more than we lost." retorts gray-tunic, placidly.

For the first time, the crowd halts and parts swiftly. A haggard man with a silver-flecked beard limps between the mass of people.

"Quiet! All of you! I want to hear what this man has to say." Boudica shouts from the head of the clamoring mass.

Her and the man's voices become imperceptible as they whisper together. I feel myself go tense and rigid. The man next to me's eyes grow wide. Gray-Tunic begins nervously toying with his belt. After what seems like forever, but was really only about five minutes, Boudica announces proudly, "The Roman army is near! We shall march to them immediately!"

I feel like screaming, 'No! It's a trap!', but the world begins to fade away.

Ah! I jerk awake. I'm home, at last. According to *Tacitus' Annals* it was customary, she knew, for the ancient Britons to fight under a female captaincy. Boudica, according to Tacitus,

claimed that she “was avenging; not as a queen of glorious ancestry, her ravished realm and power, but as a woman of the people, her liberty lost, her body tortured by the lash, the tarnished honor of her daughters.”

I know what happens next. She fights bravely, but does not succeed. Her army is defeated by a Roman tactical maneuver, and Boudica dies shortly after either poisoning herself out of shame or dying of an injury-based sickness. Where she is buried is unknown, however, I do hope I get to see how the Ancient Britons honor her. Frankly, the Romans would have had to withdraw from England entirely if she had won. I think Boudica was definitely a hero because she was fighting oppression, even though the opposing force was much larger. Tonight, no matter where I am, I will honor her.