

Boudicca

It was almost night-fall. The three men had travelled a long way and were glad to sit down next to the fire and have some food. They stopped talking and stood up when the flap of the tent opened and a tall woman with long tawny hair emerged. The fire-light flickered across her face and lit up the ornate gold necklace she wore, they could see she was very angry. She jammed the spear she was carrying into the soft, brown earth and said harshly, "So, the rumours are true! The Romans are on the march, destroying our towns, stealing our animals and burning our crops!"

The man nearest to her nodded, "I have sent messages to rally the warriors. In three days time, the whole of the Iceni tribe will gather here to await your instructions, Queen Boudicca."

The queen brushed her hair away from her face with a sweep of her hand, "You have done well, Gorvan. At dawn tomorrow we will draw up battle plans and assess our weapons. Now get some sleep."

She picked up the spear and turned to leave.

"Your Majesty!" said a man whose face was hidden in the shadows, "The battle will be fierce, you should take your daughters and flee to the mountains. You will be safe there."

Queen Boudicca spun around and hurled the spear towards him, it shivered through the air and landed at his feet. "How dare you!" she shrieked, "I am the Queen of the Icenis, I will not run away! I will lead my men into battle and I will win."

The man spoke again, "But what about your daughters? Why put them in danger? Let me lead them to safety."

"You think only of saving your own skin! The girls will be at my side." she snapped and turning sharply she marched back to her tent. As she flung aside the leather flap, two girls jumped out of her way. It was clear that they had been listening and the look of terror on their faces was something Gorvan would never forget.



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Section A

Choose the best word or group of words to fit the passage and put a ring around your choice.

It was almost nightfall. The

1 **two** **three** **four** **five**

men were glad to sit down. The tent opened and a tall

2 **man** **boy** **woman** **girl**

came out. "So it's true that the

3 **Vikings** **Saxons** **Romans** **Tudors**

are on the march?" the ruler said. The man

4 **spoke** **nodded** **winked** **saluted**

in reply. "You should take your daughters and

5 **flee to the mountains,"** **run away,"**

fight the battle," **escape by ship,"**

said another man. Queen Boudicca spun round and

6 **hurled** **collected** **dropped** **broke**

her spear. "I will lead my men into battle," she shouted.

Section B

1 What is the name of the queen in this story?

2 What was the queen's necklace made from?

3 Why were the three men 'glad to sit down next to the fire and have some food'?

4 Why did one man suggest the queen should 'flee to the mountains'?

5 Why did the queen throw a spear towards one of her own men?

6 Why do you think the queen's daughters had 'terror on their faces'?

Section C

Imagine you are one of the queen's daughters. Write a diary entry telling what you have overheard during the course of the evening and how you feel about it.