

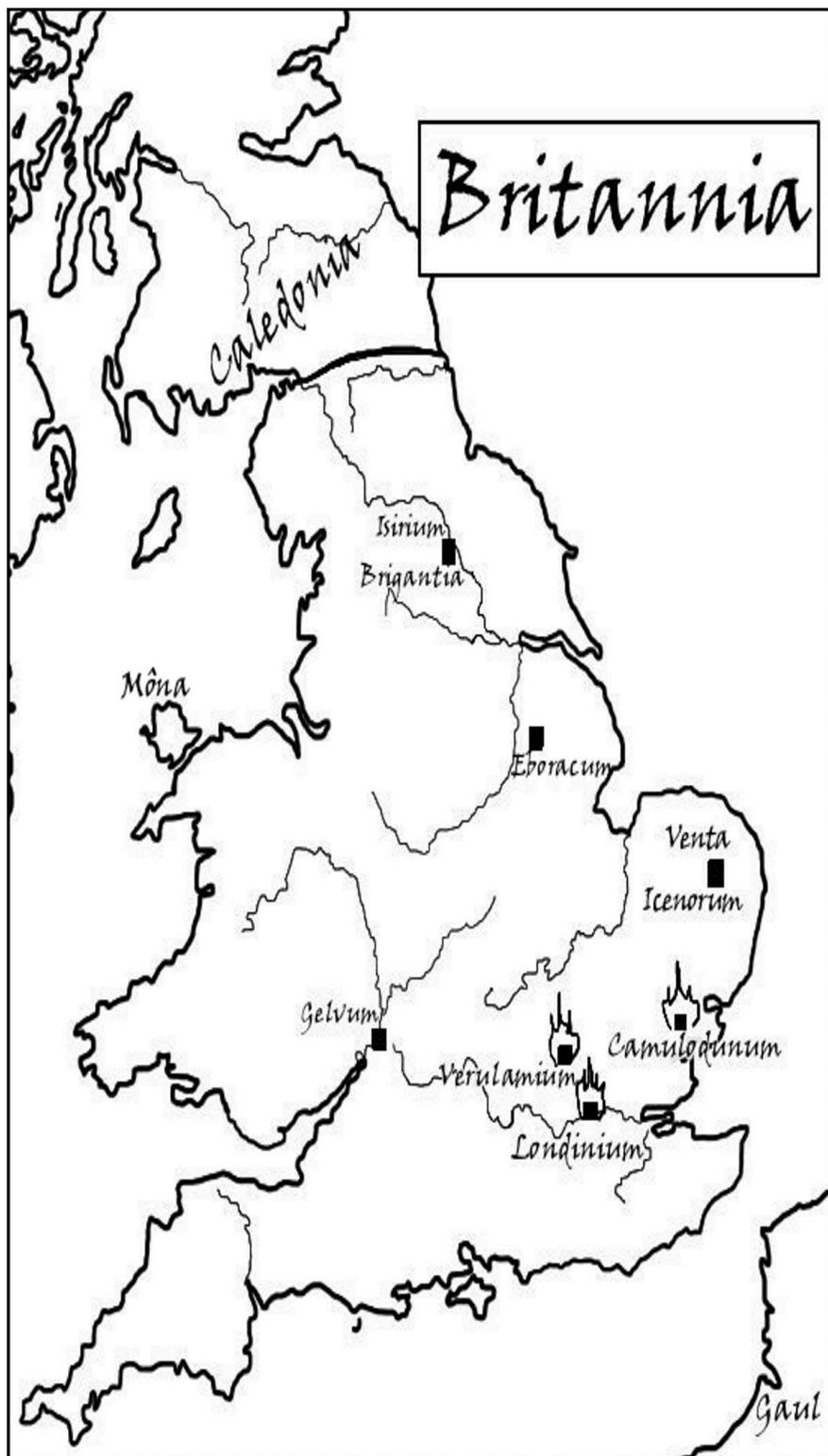
DAUGHTERS  
OF  
BRITAIN

BY  
S.M. CARRIERE

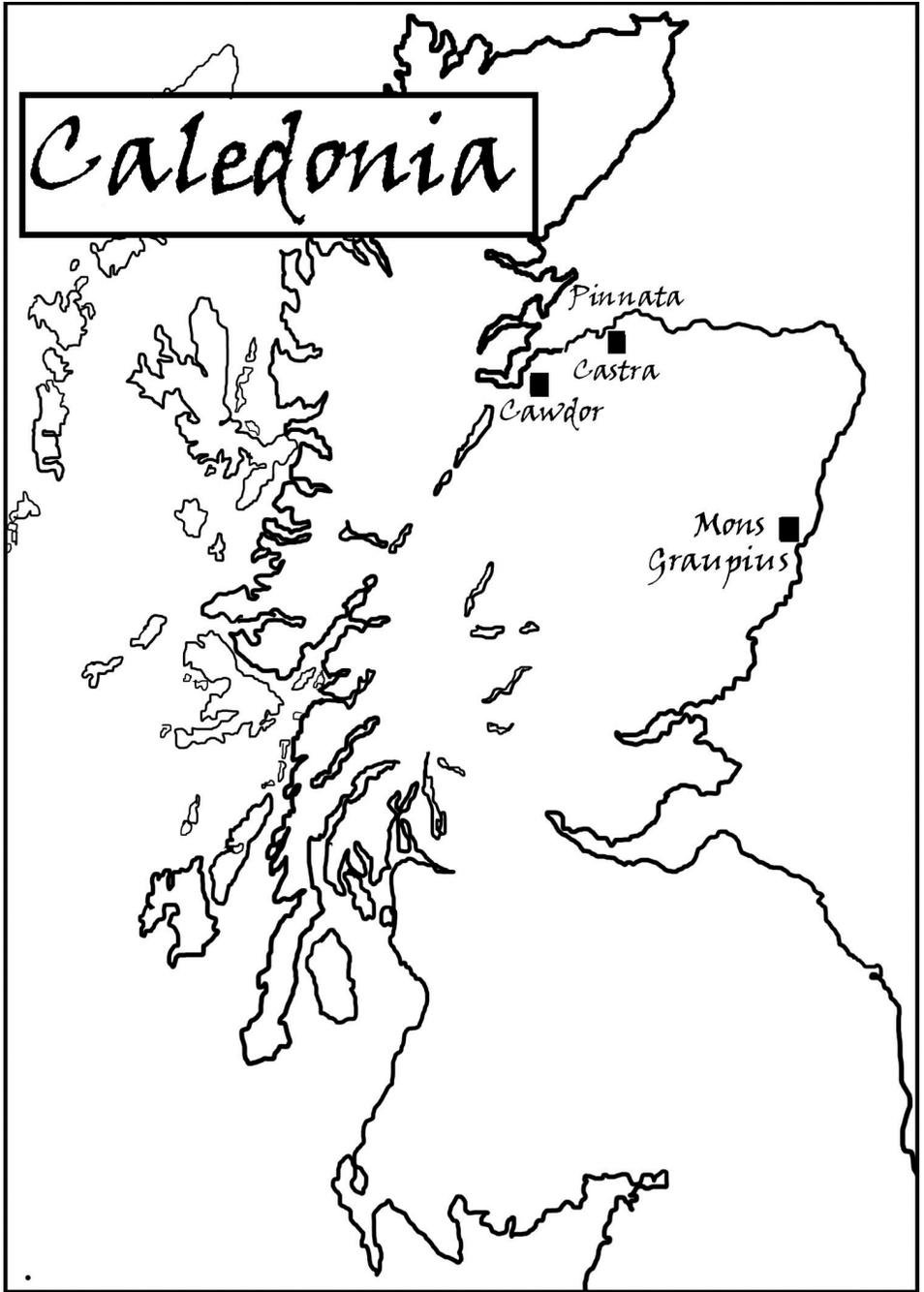


Renaissance

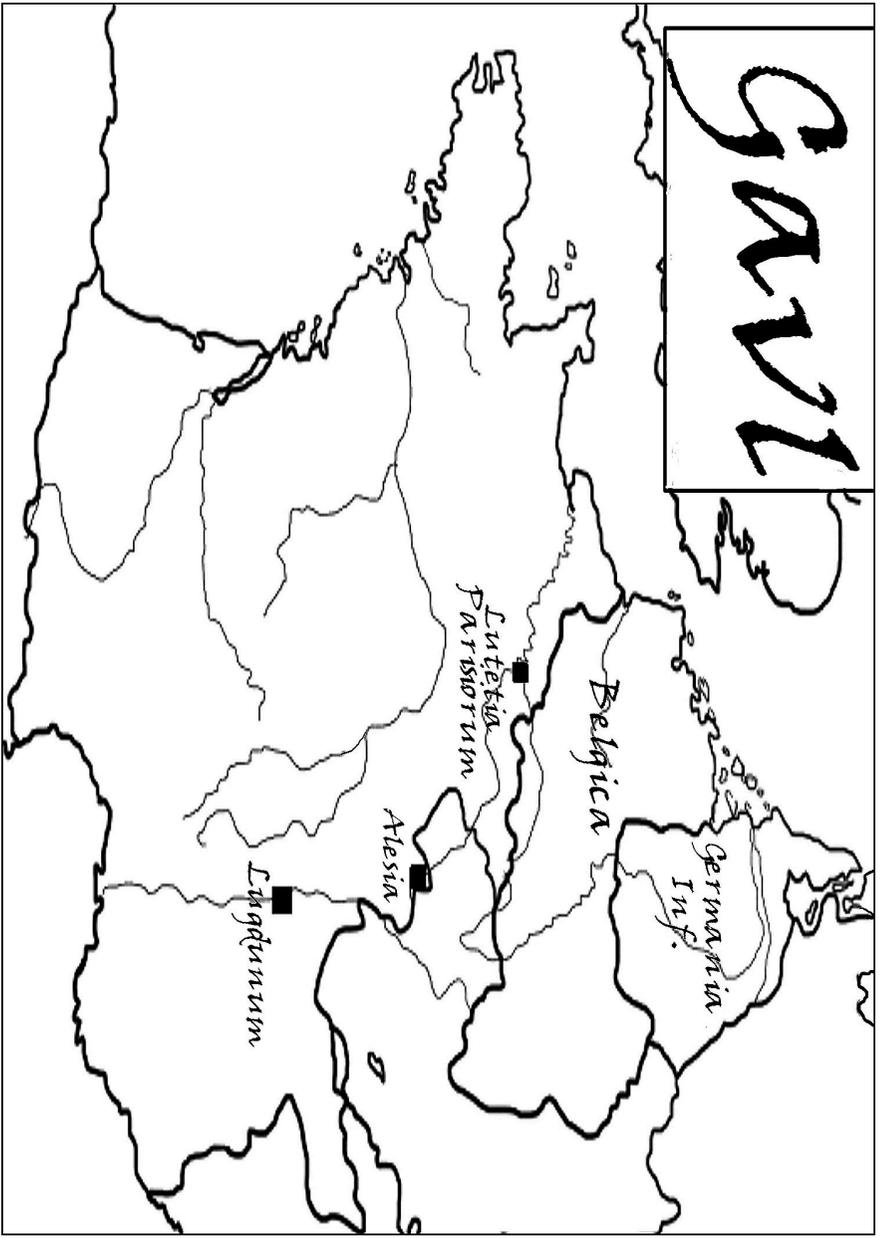
For my Saturday morning shield sisters.  
There is a warrior queen in each of you.



# Caledonia



# GAVI



# Germania Inferior

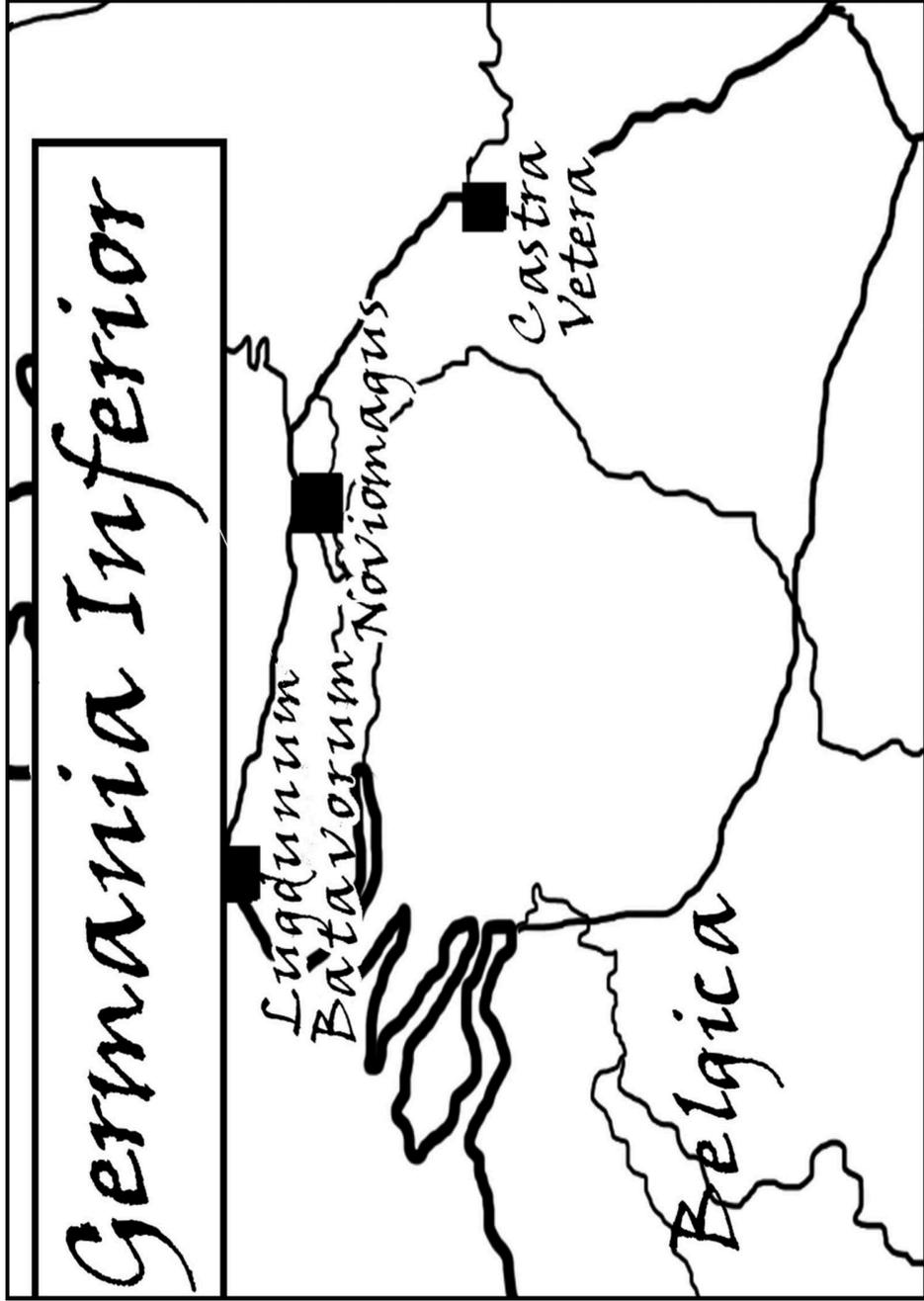
Lugdunum

BATAVORUM

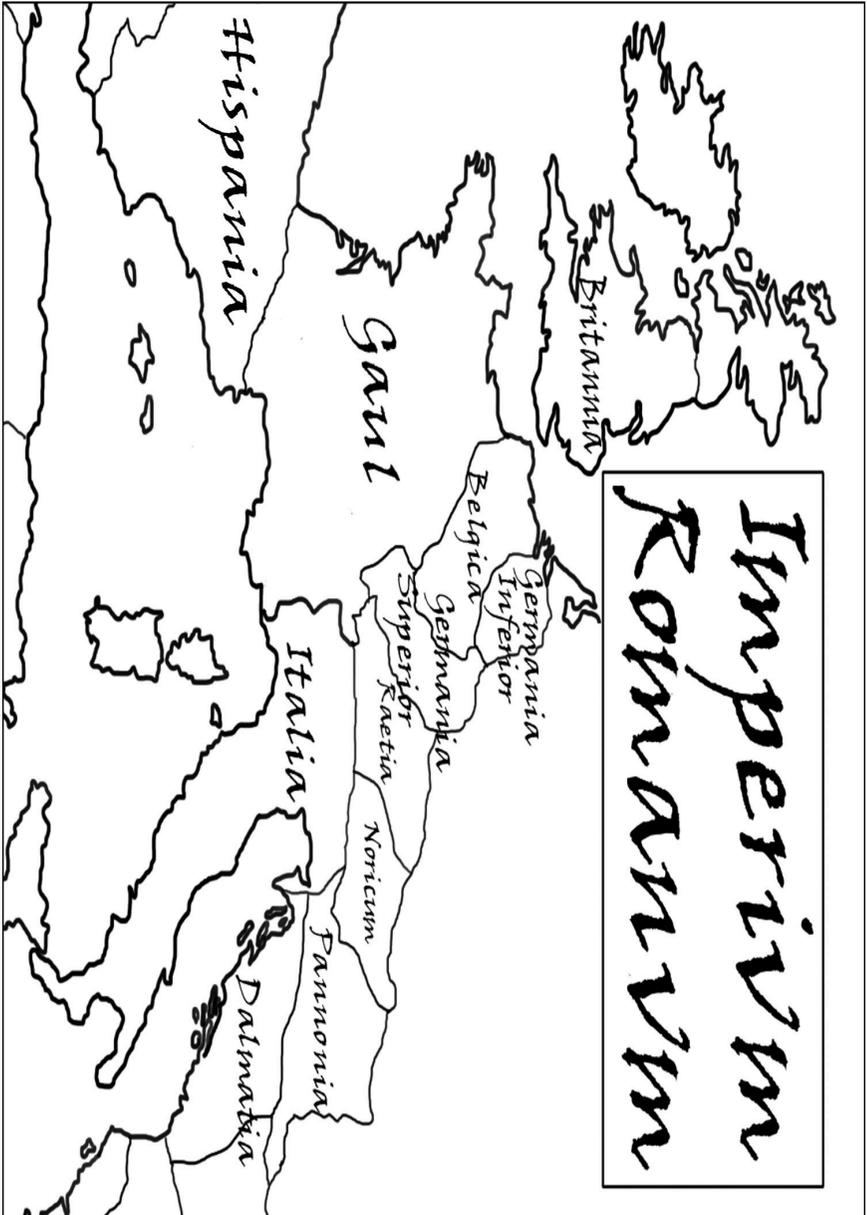
Noviomagus

Castra  
Vetera

Belgica



# Imperium Romanum



DAUGHTERS  
OF  
BRITAIN

## **TRI AN UOAT GYGHOR YNYS PRYDEIN.**

rodi y ulkessar a góyr ruuein 6e y karneu blaen y eu meirch ar y tir ym póyth meinlas.

a r eil gadel hors a heygyst a ronnoen y r ynys honn.

a r trydyd rannu o arthur y wyr deirgúeith a medraót yg kamlan.

— Trioedd Ynys Prydei, Llyfr Coch Hergest, c. 1382 AD.

## **Three Unfortunate Counsels of the Island of Britain:**

To give place for their horse's fore-feet on the land to the men of Rome, in requital for Meinlas;

and the second: to allow Horse and Hengist and Rhonwen into this Island;

and the third: the three-fold dividing by Arthur of his men with Medrawd at Camlann.

— The Welsh Triads, Red Book of Hergest. c. 1382 AD.

# PROLOGUE

The people of Britain suffered beneath Roman oppression for over a hundred years. Small rebellions in Britain were crushed each in their turn, until a new hope for British freedom arose; the vengeful Queen Boudicca.

Born of a powerful druid, Boudicca had married the king of the Magni Ceni, a mighty tribe in the south east. Their seat was Venta Icenorum and had been for generations beyond count. For all their pride, however, young king Prasutagus had bent the knee to Emperor Claudius when Caratacus lost the battle at the River Tems and so the Magni Ceni languished beneath the oppression of Rome. Hatred for their subjugation simmered beneath the skin of every member of that proud tribe.

Sensing their malcontent, Rome's heavy hand grew yet heavier. Icenian men were forbidden to carry weapons, and more than once Rome marched on Venta Icenorum to steal cattle to feed their armies, and children to die for them.

In the year 60 AD, King Prasutagus died, leaving his kingdom to his two daughters by Boudicca. In a bid to soothe Roman greed, he named Emperor Nero as co-regent.

But it was not enough. Rome marched on Venta Icenorum and demanded that Boudicca relinquish the throne that rightly belonged to her daughters, claiming the kingdom was theirs. They claimed they did not recognize female rulers. Knowing them for liars—after all, they were keen supporters of Queen Cartimandua of the Brigantes—knowing what terror awaited her people should she leave them to absolute Roman rule, and knowing her daughters' rule to be sacrosanct, Boudicca refused.

There was great tragedy that day.

Boudicca was seized, her two daughters torn from her side. She was taken outside, stripped naked and flogged before all her people who loved her. Her two daughters were brutally raped and left barely conscious in the palace, which was then set ablaze. They were but girls of seven and ten.

The Romans laughed as they marched away from Venta Icenorum, taking with them all the wealth of cattle and burning the crop fields on their way. Only when Rome had turned their back did the people of the Magni Ceni dare move, swooping in to collect their queen, who had been beaten into unconsciousness, and rescuing their princesses from the burning building.

Shock at Rome's cruelty echoed across the south east. Tribesmen gathered in secret to ponder their fate should Rome choose to take their lands next, and hate like ice grew in the breast of every Briton.

The queen of the Magni Ceni survived her flogging, and her two daughters survived their rape. They stood tall, their pride unbroken before the greed of Rome. Boudicca's name was whispered in awe throughout the isle, until it grew into a rallying cry.

Brave Boudicca would not lie quietly down. She was not a meek Roman woman. She was a daughter of Britain, and she loved the island and its people with fierce gravity. Moved by her tragedy and the love she had for her daughters, the island and the British people, the Trinovantes, the Catuvellauni and the Coreltauvi joined her. Some one hundred thousand Britons took up arms against Roman oppression. In the sacking of Venta Icenorum, Rome had created its own greatest foe.

In the summer of 61 AD, they marched. The governor of the Province of Britannia, Gaius Suetonius Paulinus, had led his legions in a campaign to destroy the heart of the British people. They laid siege to the Isle of Môn, centre of druidic learning and a sanctuary to the British way of life. Their destruction of the druidic heart was totally and utterly complete. This act of violence against the British people brought yet more warriors to Boudicca's

side. She, the mother of Britain, represented their brightest hope of driving out Rome.

She very nearly succeeded.

While Gaius Suetonius Paulinus was campaigning in the west, Boudicca and her angry hordes marched first upon Camulodunum, which had once belonged to the Trinovantes. That proud city had been turned into a *colonia*, an insult the Trinovantes could bear no longer. It was sacked and razed to the ground, the gutters running red with the blood of Roman soldiers and their traitor wives and mistresses. Quintus Petillius Cerialus led the Legion IV *Hispana* against Boudicca, but that legion was at last struck down outside the burning walls of that city, their past atrocities remembered upon their flesh by British blades.

No longer would the sons and daughters of the isle sit meekly aside as Rome ravished her. Boldly did Boudicca march on, sacking and razing Londinium and Verulamium both before the druid-killer Gaius Suetonius Paulinus met her upon the battlefield.

Disaster befell the British that day, and their angry army was defeated.

Boudicca rallied her troops, reminding them of her love for them, and of the hope of a future without Rome, a future where Britons would be ruled by Britons, in British fashion. She reminded them of all Rome had done to her and her children, and that she was the isle, and her daughters were the daughters of Britain.

For all her valiant speech, and for all the courage of her army, Rome's greed was more powerful still. The British broke and fled, hoping to survive long enough to regroup and battle once more.

Alas, Boudicca was struck in that battle as she desperately tried to shield her two daughters from harm. She fled with one of her commanders and her two daughters in a chariot, reaching the charred remains of her palace, where her people awaited news of victory.

Boudicca had no such news to give. She wept as she explained the loss to her people, pleading with them to remain proud, to remain brave, and to remain defiant. Rome would be broken. Britain would be free.

Gravely wounded and knowing Rome would chase her down, Boudicca arranged for her daughters to flee north and find refuge amongst the tribes there. They knew freedom and with Venutius, Cartimandua's ex-husband, they were fighting for it still. The girls fled in a chariot piloted by Boudicca's most trusted commander, disappearing from view a day before the Roman army descended.

As the Romans crested the hill outside the destroyed gates, Boudicca stood upon the steps of her ruined home in a ruined city, wearing a dress of white to signify her mourning, her red hair loose and blowing in the breeze. She smiled at Gaius Suetonius Paulinus and bid him welcome to the Britain that Rome had wrought; a hell of ash and death.

Standing with her were a select few warriors who refused to leave her side, such was their love for her. In that ruined city, many of the Britons remained, showing great courage in facing the wrath of Rome against their beloved queen.

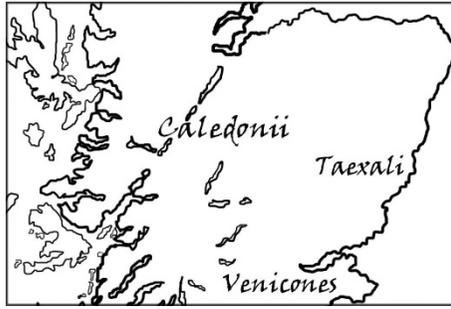
When Gaius, governor of the Province of Britannia, dismounted to place the queen in shackles, she laughed at him and from her robes produced a phial of poison. "I am a daughter of this island," she declared, her eyes fierce. "Rome will never know the love she has for me, nor the love I have for her, and for this I pity you. And I curse you. Rome will never have this island. For as long as her sons and daughters stand with her against you, you will never claim her. Britain will be free. I am this island, Roman. You may beat me, but you shall never break me. But you, you shall be broken. With my life's blood do I see it so."

She drank down the phial and there, upon the steps of her ruined palace in her ruined city, did Boudicca rid herself of life.

Enraged by the insult, Gaius laid waste to what was left of Venta Icenorum. All those who had insisted on staying by their queen's side were slaughtered, down to the last infant. Any riches left were stolen away. Leaving Boudicca where she died, the Romans sacked the rest of the territory, leaving it desolate. When they left, their rage and greed sated, those who had hidden themselves went to Venta Icenorum to pay homage to their queen. Boudicca was buried in the sacred woods beyond the city, her body becoming one with the land she had so loved.

Across the strait in Gaul, farmers raised their heads to the sound of the keening cry of the Magni Ceni. Robbed of their lands, their children and their queen, the Magni Ceni were no more.

In the north, Boudicca's daughters lived on.



## 61 AD, AUTUMN, CALEDONII TERRITORY FREE BRITAIN

Lord Rhys, the elder of the two heirs to the throne of the Caledonian Federation, raised his weary head. He had been at training all morning, and was exhausted. But the wind had whispered in his ear, urging him to look up.

There, on the crest of the hill, silhouetted against the setting sun, stood two young girls. They were thin and filthy, but the sun caught the sheen of golden torques around their necks, the glistening of golden rings in their hair.

Caught for a brief moment, the young Lord Rhys merely stared until one of the girls collapsed. With a shout, he rose to his feet and ran, fast as his long legs could carry him. His shout of surprise alerted the other men in the training fields, and they too began to run.

The first to crest the hill, Rhys stood before the girls, breathing hard. The girl on the ground, hair straight and the colour of flame, did not seem to realize he was there. The standing girl, however, did, and her pale dun eyes met his defiantly, as if demanding he kneel.

“What creatures have blown in, then?” Rhys’s trainer, and father’s shield-bearer, demanded. “Who are you, and what do you mean by so boldly entering lands that are not yours?”

The girl with the savage eyes turned to Geraint, and Rhys noted the broad man flinch back slightly.

“Sanctuary,” the girl croaked through cracked lips. “I demand sanctuary.”

“Oh, demand, is it?” Geraint snapped. “On what authority?”

The girl held out a clenched fist, and unfurled it, revealing a golden ring with a red stone. Carved in that stone, visible only because the sun now shone through it, was a hare.

“Andrasta’s mark,” one of the men breathed. “There’s only one who would carry that mark.”

“She’s dead,” Geraint said.

“I am Mederei,” the girl declared, her voice gaining strength. “Daughter of Boudicca, Queen of the Magni Ceni. I demand sanctuary.”

The short speech took all her strength, and she swayed. Rhys dove forward, catching her as she fell, starvation and exhaustion robbing her of consciousness.

Geraint turned to one of the men. “Fetch the druid, Alwyn. Cadeyrn, send word to Lord Brennus.”

“What are we going to do?” Rhys asked, looking down at the gaunt girl in his arms.

“These are Boudicca’s daughters, my Lord,” Geraint murmured. “We will give them sanctuary.”

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