

BOUDICA

Based On A True Story

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FILM TREATMENT

LOGLINE:

When the Romans brutalize her family and seize her lands, a fierce and defiant warrior-queen must rally Britain's tribes to wage war against the Empire or risk losing her people's freedom forever.

BACKGROUND:

In AD 43, the Roman Empire invaded Britain under Emperor Claudius, gradually incorporating the island into its territory.

By AD 60, much of Britain was under Roman control, though several local tribes, including the Iceni, had retained some autonomy as client kingdoms. The Romans imposed heavy taxes and strict governance, disrupting traditional Celtic ways of life. Tensions between the occupying Romans and native Britons were high due to land seizures, forced labor, and cultural clashes.

In this period, the Roman occupation was characterized by brutal suppression of dissent and exploitation of local resources. While some tribes resisted, others attempted to coexist under Roman rule.

The Roman army, well-equipped and highly organized, maintained control over the population, but discontent simmered among many Britons who resented their subjugation, especially in the face of increasingly oppressive policies, including the confiscation of tribal lands and wealth, and the disregard for local leadership.

OVERVIEW:

BOUDICA is a historical drama centered on a fierce Celtic queen who leads a brutal uprising against the Roman Empire in AD 61. After the Romans betray Boudica by seizing her lands, assaulting her daughters, and publicly flogging her, she takes up arms. She unites the tribes of Britain, turning her personal vengeance into a larger fight for freedom from Roman rule. The story unfolds as a gripping tale of revenge, loyalty, and resilience.

Boudica's relationships, especially with her daughters and mentor, highlight the tension between duty and survival. Her fight isn't just for liberation but for restoring her and her people's honor in a war marked by love, loyalty, and sacrifice.

With intense action and raw emotion, the film captures Boudica's rebellion as a timeless struggle for autonomy. The narrative blends history, personal tragedy, and the harsh realities of war, showcasing the clash between a determined woman and the Roman Empire.

The world Boudica inhabits is harsh and unforgiving, where each choice carries weight and betrayal is common. It's a dramatic intersection of history, human will, and the relentless spirit of a woman leading a revolt.

CHARACTER SET-UP:

Boudica:(30), The fierce warrior queen of the Iceni tribe, driven by her hatred for the Romans who have oppressed her people and violated her family. Strong-willed and determined, she seeks vengeance and unification of the British tribes. Her journey takes her from a grieving widow to a powerful leader igniting rebellion, but her relentless pursuit of revenge leads to tragic consequences.

Myrion:(40), A wise Druid and trusted advisor to Boudica and her daughters. He values harmony and preserving their culture. Compassionate and thoughtful, Myrion tries to guide them toward wisdom and restraint, aiming to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. After the rebellion's fallout, he becomes the caretaker of Boudica's legacy, helping Glenda survive and keeping hope alive for the future.

Wren:(30), The son of Caratacus, he has been wronged by Roman oppression. Fueled by the loss of his family and land, he seeks vengeance and joins Boudica's cause. Brave but bitter, Wren's journey intertwines with Boudica's, as they fight side by side. His growing rage shows the damaging effect of hatred.

Glenda:(14), Boudica's introspective and compassionate daughter, Glenda longs for peace and struggles with the violent path her mother takes. Traumatized by Roman brutality, she wrestles with fear and her role in their legacy. Over time, she finds strength and questions the cycle of vengeance, eventually becoming a symbol of hope.

Aeryn:(14), Boudica's bold and vengeful daughter, Aeryn mirrors her mother's fierce spirit. Driven by a need to avenge her family, she actively joins the rebellion but becomes consumed by hatred.

Decianus Catus:(30), The Roman Procurator,(tax collector), Cruel and capricious, he is the second in command of the Roman Province second only to the Governor General. He has been tasked by Rome to squeeze the province dry. He makes an example of Boudica and her twin daughters to keep the other tribes in line.

Prasutagus:(45), Boudica's husband and king of the Iceni, Prasutagus tries to protect his people through diplomacy with Rome. Pragmatic and cautious, he favors peace over conflict. His plan to safeguard his family through a will fails after his untimely death, triggering Boudica's rebellion.

Suetonius Paulinus:(40s-50s) The cold, calculating Roman governor determined to crush the Britons. He views them as savages and relies on military strategy to defeat Boudica's rebellion, setting the stage for a brutal confrontation.

Emperor Nero:(22), The erratic and self-absorbed ruler of Rome, more interested in grand projects and his artistic pursuits than governance. His neglect and ambition fuel unrest across the empire, indirectly contributing to revolts like Boudica's.

STORY:

Roman boats cross the Menai Strait as a Celtic carnyx plays. Glenda recounts how the Romans destroyed their land, burned villages, and starved people with heavy taxes. She speaks of divided British tribes, hoping for a savior—the one to come.

Roman artillery rains arrows and Greek fire on a Druid army. Glenda recalls a brief victory led by her mother, Queen Boudica.

At a pond, Boudica spars playfully with her husband, Prasutagus. After teasing, she overpowers him, and they make love. Later, Prasutagus warns her about the Roman procurator's visit for taxes. Despite her hatred, Boudica agrees to remain calm for their daughters' sake.

Nearby, Myrion, a Druid, teaches Boudica's daughters, Glenda and Aeryn. He demonstrates the ripple effect of actions by throwing a boulder into a stream. Boudica arrives, reminding her daughters to behave when the Romans come.

In Rome, Emperor Nero plays his lyre as sycophants praise him. In the back, Seneca and Burrus watch. Burrus fears Nero's growing madness, worsened by his mother's murder, which Nero orchestrated. Seneca tries to calm him, but Burrus remains uneasy. After Nero's performance, he announces plans for a new theater and gymnasium, ignoring Seneca's warnings about the cost. Nero demands they find the money.

Later, Seneca and his scribe discuss Nero's obsession. To avoid taxing Rome, they decide to call in debts from the provinces, including Britannia, sending Procurator Catus.

In Britannia, Wren, his wife, and son watch as Catus arrives. Accusing Wren of unpaid taxes, Catus seizes their property. Tulio, a retired centurion, is given their home. When Wren's son is struck by a slave, Wren kills the slave in a rage. Roman soldiers restrain him, and his family is chained for the slave market. Catus orders Wren to be sent to the arena for a fight.

Catus attends a banquet in Boudica's roundhouse. Iceni nobles cheer as Boudica's daughters, Glenda and Aeryn, spar. When Glenda falters, Boudica, drunk, steps in to demonstrate. She fights Aeryn but gets knocked down, embarrassed. Amidst the laughter, Boudica asks Catus about Nero killing his mother. Catus responds coldly, saying both Nero's and Boudica's mothers were traitors, which is why they died.

Prasutagus calms the room and introduces Catus, who announces Rome's demand for repayment of Claudius' loans, plus interest, and a higher grain tax. The nobles protest, but Catus holds firm. Boudica insists the money was a gift, but Catus denies it and humiliates Prasutagus. Myrion tries to intervene, but Catus adds that Seneca's loans are also due.

Boudica drinks more, sarcastically toasts Rome, and passes out. Frustrated, Prasutagus has her thrown into the goat pen.

The next morning, Catus taunts Prasutagus, saying Suetonius Paulinus is destroying the last Druid stronghold on Mona. Catus leaves, and Prasutagus grows anxious.

Boudica wakes, hungover, in the goat pen. Prasutagus, angry, accuses her of risking their safety by provoking Catus. He warns they must be cautious, as the Romans are trying to spark rebellion. Prasutagus then has a violent coughing fit, and Boudica tries to soothe him.

Later, Boudica and Aeryn spar by a sacred pond as Glenda and Myrion watch. Their session is interrupted by a villager announcing that King Prasutagus is gravely ill.

Prasutagus lies on his deathbed in the roundhouse, finalizing a scroll with Myrion. The document leaves his lands to his daughters and the emperor, though he doubts the Romans will honor it. He asks Myrion to protect his family and urges Boudica to control her temper, especially with Catus. Boudica reassures him of his worth as he takes his last breath.

At the pond, Boudica throws Prasutagus' sword into the water as an offering. Glenda questions the gesture, and Myrion explains it's for a higher cause.

Holding back her grief, Boudica walks away, while Glenda wonders if a leader will ever unite the tribes.

In Nero's palace, Seneca finds Nero dressing his eunuch slave in women's clothes. Burrus, disgusted, reflects on how his years of service have led to this. Seneca informs Nero of Prasutagus' death and that Iceni lands now belong to Rome. Nero, distracted by the eunuch, shows little interest. Burrus insists Nero sign the decree revoking the Iceni's independence, and Nero finally does. As they leave, the eunuch looks terrified as Nero orders everyone out.

In Boudica's roundhouse, Myrion finds her wrapped in a blanket, despondent. He urges her to eat and take on her responsibilities as queen, but she refuses. Frustrated, he reminds her of her duty to her daughters, but she stays silent.

Boudica recalls being sixteen. Her mother, Queen Scavo, had planned a revolt against the Romans. Despite Prasutagus and Myrion's concerns, Scavo led her warriors into battle, promising Boudica a safer future.

In Camulodunum, Catus watches as Wren fights in a brutal gladiatorial match. Wren wins but is knocked unconscious by Tulio, still bearing a scar from Wren's earlier attack.

In the roundhouse, Myrion finds Boudica grieving by the fire. He confronts her, demanding she accept her role as queen. Boudica lashes out, blaming him for not saving Prasutagus. Myrion strikes back, telling her some things are beyond their control. Boudica collapses in tears, unsure how to go on without her husband.

Flashback: Prasutagus exits a Roman command tent after negotiating with General Ostorius Scapula, who mocks his future kingship. Prasutagus returns to the Iceni village, escorting Queen Scavo's body. A young Boudica, devastated, clings to him in grief while Myrion watches.

At a forge, a swordsmith and apprentice craft a sword for Boudica, forging the blade from a meteorite.

Boudica and Myrion inspect carts of grain, realizing they are short. Myrion advises humility when dealing with Catus, but Boudica resists, saying humility isn't her strength. Their conversation is interrupted by the sound of the carnyx announcing Catus' arrival.

Catus arrives with soldiers who violently drag families from their homes and beat those who resist. Boudica confronts Catus but is restrained. Catus declares the Iceni are no longer independent and dismisses Prasutagus' will. He demands her daughters.

Boudica pleads for a deal, but Catus reveals that Prasutagus had made a deal with the Romans after betraying Boudica's mother. That, Catus says, is why the Iceni weren't crushed after Queen Scavo's rebellion.

Roman soldiers drag Glenda and Aeryn from their home as Boudica processes Catus' words. The girls resist, but Catus orders them raped. Boudica fights to reach them but is overpowered. The girls scream as they are assaulted. Catus mocks Boudica, then strikes her and orders her flogged in front of the crowd. As Boudica and her daughters cry out in pain, Catus demands taxes from the villagers.

Later, Myrion tends to Boudica's wounds as her daughters sleep. Boudica wakes in a panic after dreaming of the goddess Andraste, asking for her daughters. Myrion reassures her. She questions whether Prasutagus betrayed her mother. Myrion admits he did, to save the tribe, as they couldn't fight the Romans. When Boudica asks if Myrion was involved, he denies it, saying he learned the truth later. Furious, Boudica regrets her ignorance.

Boudica apologizes to her daughters for failing them. Glenda says no one could have stopped what happened, while Aeryn, like Boudica, embraces the desire for revenge. Boudica vows vengeance for her family. Glenda rejects the path of revenge, but Aeryn remains committed.

Meanwhile, Governor Suetonius Paulinus and Julius Agricola inspect the Druid grove on Mona, where remnants of human sacrifices remain after the Druids' failed resistance. They dismiss the Druidic religion and order the destruction of trees and settlements.

In her roundhouse, Boudica sharpens her spear, fueled by a vision from Andraste. Myrion warns her not to take dreams literally, but Boudica is determined to unite the tribes against Rome.

A montage shows a swordsmith forging a sword for Boudica.

Still weak but dressed in her queen's regalia, Boudica steps out of the roundhouse to address warriors from various tribes, their bodies painted for war. From her chariot, she gives a powerful speech, recalling past victories and condemning Roman cruelty. She invokes Andraste, releasing a hare as a sign of divine favor. The crowd chants her name, ready for battle.

At Wren's former farm, Tulio, now an overseer, hears Boudica and her daughters approach in their war chariot. Aeryn drives, and Boudica kills Tulio with a spear.

A montage shows Boudica's army growing as they tear through the countryside. Britons join her ranks, Roman families are killed, farms are looted, and settlements are burned. Roman citizens flee toward Camulodunum as Boudica's forces advance.

In Camulodunum, Wren hears the panic in the streets and sees people running as smoke fills the sky. A merchant tells him Boudica is leading a rebellion.

At the Temple of Claudius, Roman soldiers prepare nervously as Boudica's army slaughters people nearby. When the Roman defense holds, Boudica orders torches thrown. The Romans are overwhelmed, and their formation collapses.

Wren, now free, walks through the ruined streets, stepping past bodies and looted buildings. He reaches the town square, where Boudica interrogates prisoners, demanding to know where Catus is. When one remains silent, she kills him. Glenda identifies her rapist, and Boudica forces her to confront him. When Glenda hesitates, Boudica mutilates and kills the man. Aeryn then stabs him in the throat.

Boudica questions a wealthy Celtic merchant, who reveals that Catus has fled to Londinium. She orders the prisoners executed and the temple burned, sparing only the children.

That night, Wren finds Boudica's camp and spots her chariot, decorated with Tulio's severed head. Boudica learns that Catus took Wren's family and land, so she gives him Tulio's head as a symbol of vengeance. Wren stays with the camp.

The next morning, Boudica, her daughters, Myrion, Wren, and the warriors eat breakfast around a campfire, with Tulio's severed head at Wren's feet. Boudica learns that Wren is the son of Caratacus and that Catus imprisoned him over unpaid taxes.

Meanwhile, the Ninth Legion Hispana marches through thick fog to relieve Camulodunum. Boudica, Aeryn, Glenda, and the warriors wait on a hill, while Wren and others lie in ambush below. As the Romans arrive, Wren's group charges, and Boudica's warriors hurl spears and rocks from above. The Romans, caught by surprise, are quickly overwhelmed.

Boudica charges into the Roman shields, leading her warriors. Aeryn and Glenda watch as their mother fights fiercely and emerges victorious. The battle intensifies as Myrion leads the chariots into the Roman front, while Boudica and Wren fight side by side. Despite the discipline of the 9th Legion, they are outnumbered and eventually crushed, leaving Roman bodies strewn across the road.

After the battle, Boudica, exhausted and bloodied, rests against a tree.

Wren offers her wine as thanks for saving him. Myrion checks on her, concerned as Aeryn and Glenda calmly kill the wounded Romans. Boudica wonders if her daughters will ever feel joy again.

In Londinium, Catus prepares to flee before Boudica's impending attack. He offers a slave named Dylan a deal: kill Boudica in exchange for his family's freedom. He hands Dylan a dagger, warning him not to fail.

A montage shows the swordsmith finishing Boudica's sword, adding final details and a trinity knot on the pommel.

In Boudica's camp, Glenda watches midwives struggling to help a woman in labor. Boudica reassures her, likening childbirth to battle. Still anxious, Glenda hugs herself as Boudica walks away, smiling.

Suetonius Paulinus surveys the destruction of Mona's Druid stronghold, satisfied with the Roman victory. Agricola arrives with urgent news: the Iceni and Trinovantes have rebelled, sacked Camulodunum, and defeated the Ninth Legion. Shocked, Suetonius orders preparations to march to Londinium, vowing to crush the rebellion and stop future uprisings.

In Londinium, Decianus Catus prepares to flee. He loads treasure and slaves, including Wren's and Dylan's wives, onto a ship as Boudica's army approaches.

Dylan, assigned to assassinate Boudica, hesitates but readies himself on a hill overlooking her camp.

In Isca, Poenius Postumus refuses to march against Boudica, arguing that losing would put the entire province at risk. His tribunes protest, but Postumus stands firm.

In Rome, Nero, preoccupied with his theater plans, is indifferent to the revolt. Seneca and Burrus warn that losing Britannia's taxes would jeopardize Nero's projects. Burrus emphasizes that Rome cannot be driven out by a woman, which spurs Nero into action.

On the road to Londinium, Boudica, Myrion, and Wren discuss strategy. Myrion warns that Suetonius will be cautious, but Wren argues they should press their advantage as their numbers grow. Trusting in Andraste, Boudica decides to lead the attack.

Dylan bumps into Boudica and drops the dagger given to him by Catus. She admires it, unaware of its true purpose. Wren notices Dylan's nervousness and becomes suspicious. Filled with doubt, Dylan hesitates, unsure whether to carry out the assassination.

At a watering hole, Glenda confides in Boudica, revealing that she's pregnant from the Roman soldier who raped her. She fears the child will be evil. Boudica reassures her that the baby will be loved and good. Their conversation is interrupted by Dylan, who reveals that Catus fled to Gaul with his family. Suddenly, Dylan cuts Boudica's face, but Wren swiftly kills him with a spear. Enraged, Boudica repeatedly stabs Dylan's body before collapsing in frustration, realizing Catus is beyond her reach.

In Londinium, Suetonius arrives and learns that Catus fled with the treasury, and the auxiliary troops are dead. He begins preparations for battle.

That night, around a campfire near Londinium, Glenda and Myrion talk about Wren. Glenda wonders if Wren and Boudica might fall in love, but Myrion suggests they could just as easily kill each other. He mentions Boudica's fear of betrayal since her mother's death.

Boudica and Wren have a heartfelt conversation. Wren expresses guilt for failing to protect his son, who might still be alive. Boudica shares her own guilt over failing her daughters.

The next morning, Suetonius prepares to leave Londinium with his cavalry. The Magistrate pleads for protection, but Suetonius coldly responds that the city cannot be saved, advising him to flee. As Suetonius departs, panicked citizens cry out in despair.

That night, Boudica's warriors rampage through Londinium, setting fires and killing without restraint. The streets are filled with the bodies of Romans and Celtic traders, as some warriors laugh at those fleeing, engulfed in flames. Boudica walks through the destruction with Wren, frustrated by the soldiers' retreat. Myrion and Aeryn bring in prisoners, including the Magistrate, his Celtic wife, and their children. Wren suggests sacrificing the adults to honor the gods, and though hesitant, Boudica agrees, sparing only the children.

Later, in Boudica's camp, Vates perform a ritual, burning prisoners in a wickerman. Boudica walks through the camp and approaches Wren, holding mistletoe.

The next morning, Glenda, horrified by the sacrifices, confronts Boudica, accusing her of murder. Boudica defends the acts as necessary for tribal unity, but Glenda, disturbed, calls them barbarians and distances herself.

At Suetonius' headquarters in Verulamium, Agricola reports that Boudica has sacked Londinium.

Suetonius explains that Londinium was sacrificed and reveals his plan to lure Boudica's army to Manduessedum, knowing their love of wine will make them undisciplined and easy to defeat.

At dawn, Boudica stands at an ancient site, questioning whether she'll be remembered as a murderer or a liberator. Myrion reassures her and presents Excalibur, a sword commissioned by Prasutagus, made from a meteorite. Boudica is awe-struck by its beauty.

Boudica leads her army into Verulamium, only to find it abandoned. Frustrated, she orders the town looted. Wren suggests sending scouts to locate the Romans. Boudica spots a mural mocking her and Prasutagus as Nero's puppets, fueling her anger. Myrion warns it could be a trap, but Boudica dismisses his concerns.

Later, Wren informs Boudica that Suetonius is positioned at Manduessedum. Myrion advises guerrilla tactics, but Wren argues that retreating would be cowardly. Confident in her army's size and momentum, Boudica decides to face Suetonius head-on, ignoring Myrion's caution.

That night, as the warriors drink, Boudica confides in Myrion, admitting she's unsure if her vision of Andraste foretold victory or doom. Myrion urges her to leave while they still can, but Boudica, resolute, insists on confronting the Romans for the sake of her people. She reminds Myrion of his promise to protect her daughters.

The next day, Boudica's army marches to battle, with Boudica leading in her war chariot, followed by her daughters, Myrion, and Wren. Facing the disciplined Roman forces on higher ground, Boudica rallies her warriors, calling for unity among the tribes and freedom from Roman rule.

Her warriors, painted for war, chant their ancestral lineages, while the Roman army waits in silence. Boudica embraces her daughters and Myrion, sending them away for safety, and declares that they fight not just for vengeance, but for freedom. Leading the charge, she cries, "For we are the Island of the Mighty!" as her army roars in response.

As the battle begins, Myrion tries to flee with Glenda, but she goes into labor. Aeryn, determined to fight, leaves them and rushes into the fray. Myrion helps Glenda find shelter as she starts giving birth.

Suetonius commands the Roman infantry to advance. Aeryn joins Boudica on her chariot, and Boudica, filled with determination, signals the attack. Despite her efforts, the Roman forces remain disciplined, easily deflecting the first assault.

Suetonius orders his archers to target the chariots. A volley of arrows forces Boudica and Aeryn to take cover, while panicked horses create chaos among the Britons. The Romans, unfazed, keep pushing forward.

As Glenda struggles through labor with Myrion's assistance, Boudica's warriors begin to falter under the Roman assault. After recovering from a fall, Boudica fights alongside Aeryn. Suetonius orders his infantry into a wedge formation, cutting through the Britons with javelins. Amid the chaos, Aeryn is struck down and killed, crying out for Boudica. Distraught, Boudica tries to reach her but is stabbed and forced to retreat.

Wren arrives, pulling Boudica onto his horse and urging her to find Glenda. Reluctantly, Boudica rides off, leaving Wren behind to face the Romans. Wren charges into battle, determined to take his revenge.

Boudica weaves through the battlefield, focused on finding Glenda. Meanwhile, Glenda, with Myrion's help, successfully gives birth and cradles her newborn child.

After Suetonius crushes the rebellion, Poenius Postumus, ashamed for not joining the fight, sends away his adjutant and takes his own life.

In Gaul, Catus enjoys his villa when Lynet and Cara sneak up and stab him to death. Cara retrieves Boudica's stolen torc from his neck, leaving him to die.

In Rome, Nero feasts after another performance. Seneca and Burrus interrupt to announce Rome's victory over Boudica. Though pleased, Nero is frustrated to learn that only a small part of the treasury was recovered before Catus' death. They recommend transferring troops from Germania to rebuild the 9th Legion and suggest replacing the governor with someone less severe. Nero agrees, irritated that he wasn't consulted sooner.

Meanwhile, Boudica, gravely wounded, reaches the sacred pond, calling for Glenda and Myrion but hearing no response. In despair, she collapses, cursing Andraste, and drives her sword into the ground. As the sun sets, a hare briefly watches before running off.

The next morning, Glenda and Myrion find Boudica barely alive. Glenda, holding her newborn daughter, pleads with Myrion to save her mother. Boudica, relieved to see them, meets her granddaughter, Aisling. Accepting her fate, she asks Myrion for poison to protect her family. After a final goodbye, Boudica drinks it and asks Glenda to throw her sword into the pond for the one who is to come.

As Boudica dies, Glenda promises to honor her memory. She throws the sword, Hard Cleave, into the pond, where it sinks. Myrion urges Glenda to leave before the Romans arrive, and they ride away with her baby.

Glenda reflects on Boudica's legacy as they cross the meadow. A time-lapse shows the pond changing through the centuries, enduring invasions, industrialization, and World War II.

In the present day, a woman who resembles Boudica, her descendant, sits by the pond, reading a Welsh newspaper. A young man approaches and gives her a trinity knot necklace. They exchange a kiss, then stroll by the water. She tosses a coin into the pond.

The coin sinks next to Boudica's ancient sword, Hard Cleave, lying among coins from different eras of British history. The ripples spread as the couple walks away, arm in arm.

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