

Bal-sagoth

"Blood Slakes The Sand At The Circus Maximus"

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THOUGHTS OF AN ICENI GLADIATOR,
AWAITING THE OPENING OF THE ARENA PORTCULLIS:

MEMORIES OF REBELLION (CARNAGE AT
CAMULODUNUM):

ICENI MESSENGER:

Hearken! The Ninth Legion has been put to the sword!
The war-Chief of Queen Boudicca: Onwards to
Camulodunum...
wet your swords! Redden the earth with Roman blood!

I remember the carnage at Camulodunum...
The glorious clash of Celtic sword against Roman
gladius,
The pride in the eyes of our war-queen
As we hacked down the Imperial Eagle,
And the severed heads of centurions gaping atop our
spears.

BLOODSHED AND BATTLE: 61 AD (C.E.)

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We certainly taught the arrogant invading dogs a
lesson, at any rate.
The omens and portents spoke of vast bloodshed and
great carnage,
and after our slaughterous victories at Camulodunum
(the Temple
of Claudius burned wonderfully!), Londinium and
Verulanium,
the cursed Romans finally dared to meet us honourably
upon the field
of war at Mandeussedum. They sent fifteen thousand
legionaires,
their armour gleaming like gold in the sun... but it
would still yield to our
swords and spears, no matter how it sparkled.

The Roman scoundrel, Governor Suetonius Paullinus,
battle-scarred from his campaigns against the Druids,

was able to choose the ground upon which to make his stand,
and so it was that he selected as the battlefield a narrow valley,
fronted by a flat plain, with dense woodland at its rear.
Aye...
Mandeussedum, "the place of the chariots"... I remember it vividly.

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We were swelled by our victories,
empowered by our noble cause,
enraged with the battle frenzy;
thirsting to take as many Roman heads
as our bright blades could sever!
And yet we were perhaps somewhat overconfident that day...

ABDUCTED FROM THE ICENI:

In the aftermath of our defeat at Mandeussedum,
I was captured by Romans with a veiled intent...
(though three of them died at my hands in the attempt!)

Nero was growing bored with the gladiators,
slaves and lion-fodder at his great Circus,
and so had requested Suetonius Paullinus
to provide the citizens of Rome with new
entertainment...

The Emperor had heard much of the wildness and
fighting spirit
of these barbaric Britons who had brought such woe to
his far-famed legions;
these painted, pagan tribesmen who had resisted the
Empire's iron fist
where the glorious phalanxes of the East had not.

"Agents of the Imperium... hearken to my words", Nero
had demanded.

"Bring to Rome some of these tribesman for the
Games. Let us pit them
against our most ravenous beasts and our greatest
gladitorial champions."

And so I was taken in fetters aboard a Roman trireme,
the blood of slain legionaires still crusted upon my
thews,
I was taken far from the fens of my beloved homeland,

to tread the sun baked sand of the Circus Maximus...
to fight for my life in the Imperial Arena.

ARRIVAL AT THE CIRCUS MAXIMUS:

The Circus Maximus was certainly a splendid sight, I'll admit.

A vast colosseum with great stone columns and tiers,
huge ornate arches and mighty statues of grey marble.
Countless people filled the seats surrounding the
sandy floor of the Arena...
and in his opulent royal enclosure, flanked by
gleaming guards
and grovelling lackeys, sat the great Emperor himself...

EMPEROR NERO:

Fight, barbarian outlander!
Please us, and mayhap Mars will smile on thee this
day!

ICENI WARRIOR:

Bah! I do not hail to your Roman gods, and you are not
my emperor!
By Cernunnos, the blood of my enemies shall stain the
sand
of this cursed arena red this day!

THE COMBAT COMMENCES:

They unleashed the lions first. Hunger maddened
beasts,
goaded into a frenzy by the cruel point of many a
pilum...
And yet my own hunger, the hunger for revenge, was
greater,
and my honed steel was sharper than bestial fang and
claw.

And so they ranged their finest warriors against me.
Three more iron gates around the arena yawned open,
and they strode from the colosseum tunnels amidst
a cacophony of cheering from the assembled Roman
spectators,
urged on and showered with martial adulation from
the massed
arena crowd, who howled their bloodlust without
cessation.

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Far above, upon his great dias,

the Emperor gave the signal for the combat to begin,
and with the battle-lust engulfing me,
with the red mist swirling before my eyes,
I vowed to my northern gods that I would show these
leering
Romans the fighting spirit and battle prowess of my
people...
I would leave the arena littered with the bloody corpses
of my opponents...

I would cast off the imperial fetters and return to the
fens!
Aye, I would escape, and make all Romans fear my
name,
and compel Nero to rue the day Julius Caesar had first
ordered
his legions across the grim grey sea to my ancient
island...

Blood For Boudicca... Carnage For Cernunnos!!

To be continued...

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