

Flame of the Iceni
- Pilot -
"The Price of Peace"

by

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NOISE:

In the black we hear the sounds of battle; iron on iron; the shriek of horses; men and women fighting and dying.

Then; a pocket of silence.

FADE IN:

EXT. A BATTLE FIELD, ENGLAND 61AD - AFTERNOON

Open ground.

A rush of iron and gore; cohorts of Roman infantry and cavalry clash with the tribes of Britannia in a bounty of blood and agony.

INTERCUT WITH:

SOMEWHERE ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

AERONWEN rises into frame.

Her face is painted in woad, blood and rage. In her left hand she wields a war-axe, in her right a bloodied sword.

She looks around her; chest rising and falling with exhaustion as she takes in the chaos and the violence.

AERONWEN (V.O.)

Life wasn't always about death...

A Roman cavalryman rides towards Aeronwen, gladius raised; ready to strike.

She lets out a war-cry that we do not hear and hurls the axe. She drops down low as she releases her weapon.

It finds its target; landing squarely in the soldier's face, where it sticks.

The cavalryman falls backwards, bobbing on his horse until gravity disentangles his body and he drops to the bloody, muddy ground.

Time slows as Aeronwen rises once more; her breathing heavy. She looks directly at us. A fire rages behind the blue of her eyes.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP:

The pupil of her eye shrinks and then dilates as she recalls the past in snapshots of ever-increasing speed.

AERONWEN (V.O.)
But that life was stolen...

FLASH:

EXT. BEFORE CAMULODUNUM [COLCHESTER] - DAY X (PAST) - NIGHT

Fire.

Chaos.

Bloodshed.

FLASH:

CLOSE UP:

Bodies. So many bodies.

Motherless children covered in ash and filth and snot fear to cry out.

Horses tear through the city as buildings burn and the streets run with blood.

FLASH:

EXT. ICENIUM - DAY X (PAST; SOMETIME IN 47 AD)

A much YOUNGER AERONWEN is being held back by her father (PRASUTAGUS), watching as her friend, DECARIUS is handed over to a waiting Roman LEGIONARY.

AERONWEN (V.O.)
My father wanted a peaceful existence
with Rome.

Decarius' father (MAELO) kneels before his son, holding him by the shoulders. Maelo does not trust himself to speak. He gives a single resolute nod of his head.

Decarius nods bravely in return and Maelo stands.

AERONWEN (V.O.)
Submitted to their every whim and
demand...

Aeronwen watches as Maelo turns and walks away from his son.

Decarius opens his mouth to speak, but he cannot find the words.

A single tear breaks free, sliding over his young face as the

Legionary nudges him; it is time to go.

The realisation that she may never again see her friend suddenly becomes too much for Aeronwen. She breaks from her father and runs to embrace Decarius.

CLOSE UP:

The pair hold on to one another as though their lives depend on it. They both try not to cry. They both fail.

They will not be parted.

They are parted.

As Decarius is led away, Aeronwen screams and shouts and begs, but it makes no difference. Prasutagus struggles hold her back as she pounds her fists into his shoulder.

She blinks back tears, knowing that she cannot save her friend.

AERONWEN (V.O.)
But, it was never enough.

She closes her eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. A BATTLE FIELD, ENGLAND 61AD - AFTERNOON (AS BEFORE)

EXTREME CLOSE-UP:

Aeronwen's eye fills the screen once more.

She blinks. Her pupil dilates. Tears gather.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - DAY X (WINTER; 60 AD)

AERONWEN watches in horror as her mother (BOUDICA) is tied to a post and stripped of her clothing.

Their eyes meet.

CLOSE-UP:

BOUDICA's strong face.

Pain flashes across her face as the first lash connects. She hardens her resolve. Then...

Pain. And again.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXTREME CLOSE-UP:

Aeronwen holds Branwen, knowing she cannot save her mother.

FLASH:

Branwen struggles as she is ripped away from Aeronwen.

Aeronwen fights, lashing out, but is soon knocked unconscious.

She cannot save her sister.

FLASH:

EXT. A BATTLE FIELD, ENGLAND 61AD - AS BEFORE

EXTREME CLOSE-UP:

AERONWEN's face; eyes closed. She is once again covered in woad and blood and gore.

The tear that had been welling finally spills free, tracing a clean track through the battlefield grime covering her face.

An electric rage seems to surge through her as her eyes fly suddenly - and accusingly - open.

We see flames and the shape of a raven reflected in her eyes.

AERONWEN (V.O.)
And it will never be enough.

MID-SHOT:

Finally we hear Aeronwen as she roars and rushes forward, throwing herself into battle once more.

SNAP TO BLACK:

TITLES:

"Flame of the Icenii"

EPISODE:

"The Price of Peace."

SNAP OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. LONG ROMAN ROAD, ENGLAND 60AD - AFTERNOON (WINTER)

Braced against the biting weather, King PRASUTAGUS rides at the head of six Iceni warriors, including MAELO.

Riding shoulder to shoulder with the warriors are Prasutagus' two legitimate daughters; AERONWEN (19) and BRANWEN (14).

They ride in silence towards the large Romanised town of CAMULODUNUM (modern day Colchester). It is cold and the journey has been tough.

Riding on the left of her father, Branwen dithers against the blasting, icy wind; struggling to hold on to her horse's reins. She glances past Prasutagus towards her sister; seeking reassurance.

On her father's right, Aeronwen rides proud; her back straight, eyes forward pretending that the wind does not bother her.

Seeming to sense, rather than see her sister, Aeronwen sticks out her tongue. This makes Branwen smile. She laughs quietly, which makes Aeronwen smile in return.

Drawing in a breath, Branwen sits a little straighter; a little prouder. A little more like her sister.

Affecting not to have noticed, Prasutagus allows himself a smile as well.

AERONWEN

Will be worth it, do you think?

PRASUTAGUS

Only one way to find out.

AERONWEN

It's not been an easy journey.

Prasutagus looks at her; his expression is hard, but full of love for his daughter. He understands that she is not simply speaking of the immediate, but of the past eleven years.

PRASUTAGUS

If the journey were easy, Aeronwen, would it be worth the travelling?

Despite herself, Aeronwen smiles, shaking her head.

AERONWEN

I love you, father.

Prasutagus gives a short, sharp nod, but there is still a smile tugging at the corners of his mouth.

WIDE SHOT:

Iceni party ride away from us, towards CAMULODUNUM.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEFORE CAMULODUNUM - EVENING

PRASUTAGUS and his retinue approach the main gate of the town.

TEXT:

"Camulodunum, Britannia. 60AD."

The military presence at the gate is prodigious and seems unnecessary for a town this size. Prasutagus and Maelo exchange a look, silently communicating as much.

MAELO hands a document to the Captain of the Gate, who reads it and waves them through dismissively.

FOLLOW TO:

EXT. INSIDE CAMULODUNUM - BEFORE THE GATE - CONTINUOUS

A thinly veiled hostility bristles beneath the surface of every face that greets the ICENI.

Soldiers glare as PRASUTAGUS and his retinue move into the town proper and the gate is hauled - somewhat ominously - shut behind them.

Branwen glances back. She meets the eyes of the Captain of the Gate. He hawks and spits deliberately on the floor.

Aeronwen hears him, but does not look back.

CUT TO:

INT. TABLINUM OF THE MAIN PRINCIPIA BUILDING - MINUTES LATER

Inside we see statues honouring the Roman Gods and Emperor Nero, as well as a great many legionary standards (indicating all of the legions currently stationed in Camulodunum).

Slaves carrying papers, messages, etc, come and go with a silent urgency.

AERONWEN takes it all in; *"What is going on?"*

At the far end of the tablinum, Gaius Suetonius PAULINUS (the Roman Governor in Britannia) sits at a vast wooden desk that is overrun with documents and maps.

Aeronwen drinks everything in; On the desk she spies a map

highlighting the Druidic island of Mona (Anglesey) and many other documents including her father's will; countersigned by Rome's previous Emperor, Claudius.

Paulinus glances up at the entourage taking in PRASUTAGUS and then MAELO in particular, all while affecting to ignore them.

He scribbles a note, signs it and holds up the page.

PAULINUS
For Decurion Arvo.

A waiting SLAVE bows, takes the note and immediately exits.

Paulinus stands slowly, locking eyes with Maelo. His gaze is unwavering and absolute; not unlike an eagle with its prey in sight.

Aeronwen watches, proud to see that Maelo does not react to Paulinus' hard stare.

Paulinus blinks and his attention turns to Prasutagus; entirely and without exception; as though Maelo no longer exists.

PAULINUS (CONT'D)
Prasutagus.

Aeronwen's jaw tightens; her eyes become flint. Her father is their king and should be addressed as such.

PRASUTAGUS
Governor.
(beat)
Thank you for making time for us.

PAULINUS
Rome is always eager to hear the pleas of her client kingdoms.

PRASUTAGUS
I see you have a copy of my will.

PAULINUS
And I see you brought your daughters with you.

As he speaks, Paulinus plucks the will from the pile of papers. He folds it and tucks it away beneath a bust of Emperor Nero that sits on his desk.

Nero's heavy bronze stare is unforgiving in the harsh silence.

PRASUTAGUS
They are my heirs, Governor. And will succeed me to the Iceni throne, when the time comes.

The smile that flashes across Paulinus lips is non-committal, amused and filled with silent challenge; *Will they, now?*

Two SLAVES enter the room bearing trays of pre-filled cups. Two of the cups contain water and are intended for the girls, the rest contain wine.

Aeronwen does not trust the cups. A quick glance at Maelo confirms that she is not alone in her suspicion.

Offered a cup of water, Aeronwen instead takes up one of those containing wine.

Paulinus' eyebrow twitches with disapproval, but he remains silent. Aeronwen holds Paulinus' gaze.

Awkwardly, Prasutagus takes a cup of water, handing the other to Branwen.

PAULINUS

To the continuation of a fruitful alliance.

PRASUTAGUS

To future generations.

Taking hold of Prasutagus' cup, Paulinus casts the water to the floor and refills it with wine.

Aeronwen looks uncertain.

PAULINUS

To promises made.

PRASUTAGUS

And promises kept.

Prasutagus and Paulinus lock eyes. After what feels like an age both men drink, simultaneously.

Prasutagus reacts and for a heartbeat Aeronwen fears her suspicions have been correct and that the wine is poisoned.

Prasutagus coughs and pats his chest. Paulinus laughs.

PAULINUS

Our tastes may differ, Prasutagus.
But, compromise... That is key.
The wheel of the Empire continues to turn because of *compromise*.

Drinking, Paulinus' eyes flick to the entrance of the tablinum as Decurion ARVO and a soldier of rank arrive.

PAULINUS (CONT'D)

And sacrifice.

Aeronwen's gaze follows Paulinus' cold stare. Her eyes widen

as she realises that the man trailing the newcomer (Arvo) is DECARIUS; grown and Romanised and part of their army.

FLASH TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - DAY X (PAST) - A MEMORY.

YOUNG DECARIUS and YOUNG AERONWEN are play-fighting with stick swords near a river bank. In the distance the SOUND of a HORN draws their attention, halting their game.

YOUNG DECARIUS
The war council.

YOUNG AERONWEN
Do you think they will follow Antedios?

YOUNG DECARIUS
My father will. The king is his brother now.

YOUNG AERONWEN
Your mother would have counselled against such action.

YOUNG DECARIUS
As your father does.

Silence.

YOUNG AERONWEN
Will you fight?

Annoyed, he throws his stick-sword into the river and perches on a rock, shaking his head.

YOUNG DECARIUS
Maelo says I'm too young.

Aeronwen sits next to him, offering him her stick sword. After a moment he takes it.

YOUNG AERONWEN
You are a good fighter, *Ducarius*.
(beat)
I... am glad you will be here.

Decarius looks at Aeronwen, holding her gaze.

YOUNG DECARIUS
I will always be here.

Aeronwen smiles, then splashes him with water.

FLASH:

EXT. ICENIUM - DAY X (PAST; SOMETIME IN 47 AD)

YOUNG AERONWEN and YOUNG DECARIUS cling on to one another even as the hands of PRASUTAGUS and a ROMAN OFFICER tear each from the other's grip.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP:

On Decarius' face and then Aeronwen's face.

FLASH:

RETURN TO:

INT. TABLINUM OF MAIN PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE.

AERONWEN and the ICENI WARRIORS stare at the young man clad in the garb and armour of a soldier of Rome.

Feeling her sister tense, BRANWEN takes in the man before her. After a moment she seems to recall him and instantly looks to Decarius' father.

MAELO stiffens; his boy appears every inch a Roman soldier; every inch *the enemy*.

AERONWEN
(quietly)
Ducarius.

Arvo and Decarius salute Paulinus. Eyes forward.

Paulinus grins wolfishly.

PAULINUS
Your son. I believe.

MAELO
My son was stolen. Taken by Rome -

PAULINUS
As a guarantee that you would not
break your oath a second time and
raise your sword against -

The room erupts into shouted insults and objections from the Icenii. Roman hands twitch to their swords.

Prasutagus raises his hand. Silence falls.

PRASUTAGUS
A past indiscretion. For which many
compromises have been made. Governor.

Feeling the pressure of a wound that has never truly healed opening up, Aeronwen presses forward.

AERONWEN

Ducarius' life was your compromise?

PRASUTAGUS

Aeronwen -

AERONWEN (SUBTITLE)

(Iceni)

Tell me you value the lives of our people more -

PRASUTAGUS (SUBTITLE)

(Iceni)

You know I do.

Silence.

PAULINUS

Your friend has received the finest education and training that any boy could ask for -

AERONWEN

(inconsolably angry)

But he didn't ask for it!

(beat)

Antedios was dead. As were his heirs. You took Decarius because there were no royal sons left.

PAULINUS

How astute you are.

(drinking)

It is a shame you were not born a son.

The threat '*We might have taken you instead*' rings clear, as does the dismissive, unspoken statement '*But, as you are a girl you are unimportant*'.

Aeronwen glares at Paulinus before storming from the room, barely able to contain her rage.

AERONWEN (SUBTITLE)

(Iceni)

The real shame is that you were born at all. Governor.

Paulinus nods to the waiting Centurion, LUCANUS. Acknowledging him, Lucanus moves to follow Aeronwen, but is prevented by Prasutagus.

PRASUTAGUS

I wouldn't.

Lucanus' disdain for Prasutagus is palpable.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLS OF THE PRINCIPIA - CONTINUOUS

Frustrated and emotional, AERONWEN bursts from the tablinum and turns left, heading down the long pillared corridor that leads out into a courtyard.

CUT TO:

INT. TABLINUM OF MAIN PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE.

Paulinus meets Prasutagus' hard stare and eventually nods. Lucanus obediently returns to his place.

PAULINUS
Perhaps a friendlier face?
(beat)
Decarius.

DECARIUS
Sir!

Decarius salutes Paulinus and turns to follow in Aeronwen's wake.

PAULINUS
I have had a space prepared for your men in the barracks near the granary.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEFORE THE PRINCIPIA BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

AERONWEN emerges furiously into the courtyard. This is NOT the way they came earlier.

Rain begins to fall, but she does not seem to notice as she tries to steady her breathing.

CUT TO:

INT. TABLINUM OF THE MAIN PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE

PAULINUS
You and your daughters may enjoy the hospitality of the Procurator and -

PRASUTAGUS eyes PAULINUS Suspiciously.

PRASUTAGUS
Decianus' villa is near the East gate.

PAULINUS
It is indeed.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLS OF THE PRINCIPIA - CONTINUOUS

DECARIUS reaches the pillared hall, looks left and right, then chooses right in his search for Aeronwen.

PRASUTAGUS (V.O.)
The Granary Barracks are close to the
South gate.

CUT TO:

INT. TABLINUM OF THE MAIN PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE

PAULINUS
Is that a problem?

CUT TO:

EXT. BEFORE THE PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE

Enraged AERONWEN kicks over an iron brazier, spilling hot coals over slick cobbles.

Of all of the guards watching, only one chooses to address her.

LEAD GUARD
Oi!

CUT TO:

INT. TABLINUM OF THE MAIN PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE

EXTREME CLOSE-UP:

PRASUTAGUS' face fills the screen; grave and intense.

PRASUTAGUS
I want no trouble.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEFORE THE PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE

The LEAD GUARD places his hand on AERONWEN'S shoulder and is immediately sorry. She flips him on to his back, before landing a punch to his face.

PAULINUS (V.O.)
There will be none.

Startled by the sight of a young girl handing their comrade his own arse, several groups of soldiers stop in their tracks to watch, whoop, cheer and comment.

PAULINUS (CONT'D) (V.O.)
Anyone caught making trouble for your men will be paraded naked through the town and flogged in the forum.

Another LEGIONARY bolts forward to assist his companion. Sensing him, Aeronwen turns; ready for him. She lands a flurry of kicks and punches before the legionary attempts to draw his gladius.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREETS OF CAMULODUNUM - MOMENTS LATER

DECARIUS frantically searches the streets and alleyways nearby for any sign of Aeronwen.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEFORE THE PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE

AERONWEN grabs the LEGIONARY's hand tight, pinning it around the handle of the sword; preventing him from drawing the weapon. He looks up at her, shocked by her speed and strength.

PRASUTAGUS (V.O.)
And my girls?

She head-butts him in the face with such force that he drops to the ground immediately.

A loose circle of spectators and are now enjoying the unexpected entertainment.

The LEAD GUARD finds his feet and draws his gladius to shouts of derision. He reconsiders and hands his sword to a waiting soldier; the crowd cheer him as he approaches Aeronwen unarmed.

CUT TO:

INT. TABLINUM OF THE MAIN PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE

PAULINUS becomes suddenly very serious.

PAULINUS

Any man foolish enough to even glance
at your daughters with anything less
than the respect that he would extend
to a Vestal Virgin holds his life
lightly indeed...

CUT TO:

EXT. BEFORE THE PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE

The crowd shout for their favourite as AERONWEN and the LEAD
GUARD continue to fight. Aeronwen gets the better of him
again and a cheer goes up.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREETS OF CAMULODUNUM - CONTINUOUS

Still searching, Decarius hears the roar of the crowd;
realisation and panic flash across his face. He turns and
bolts back towards the Principia building.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEFORE THE PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE

The LEGIONARY on the floor begins to rouse. Groggy, bloody
and pissed-off, he climbs to his feet and runs at Aeronwen
while her back is turned.

PAULINUS (CONT'D) (V.O.)

For that man I will personally flog
until he can no longer stand...

The crowd alert her and she turns just in time, though he
still manages to throw his arms around her waist, using his
weight to drive her to wet ground.

ANGLE ON:

The LEAD GUARD looks around him and, finding a short length of
rope, smiles to himself. He reaches his hand out towards it.

WIDE SHOT:

The crowd are still reacting to the fight; money is changing
hands.

PAULINUS (CONT'D) (V.O.)

... After which, I will have the
worthless carcass crucified.

DECARIUS arrives to see Aeronwen being dragged across the courtyard by a rope around her neck.

The pair of soldiers let go of the rope and work the crowd.

PAULINUS (CONT'D) (V.O.)

Regardless of rank or status.

The spectators are becoming almost uncontrollable. Somewhere above them, on the steps of the principia, LUCANUS steps out of the shadows. Leaning against a column he simply watches.

The tag-team take up the rope once more and begin to pull in opposite directions. Aeronwen struggles, clawing at the rope as Decarius reaches her; cutting her free with his dagger and catching her as she crashes to the ground.

Around him the crowd 'boo' and jeer.

CUT TO:

INT. TABLINUM OF THE MAIN PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE

Paulinus' stare is intense, but sincere.

PAULINUS

You have my word.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEFORE THE PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE

DECARIUS is still holding AERONWEN, who does not move for a long time, concern drawn across his face. Eventually Aeronwen coughs and drags in a lungful of air.

MAN IN CROWD

(spitting)

Fucking savage!

Aeronwen glares at him, but cannot speak.

LUCANUS finally steps forward, pitching his military voice so that everyone can hear him.

LUCANUS

Go about your business. The show's over.

The crowd disperse with an almost-rehearsed efficiency. Lucanus approaches Decarius, who stands to attention. Lucanus nods his approval.

LUCANUS (CONT'D)

Take her and the sister to the
Procurator's house.

(beat, sneering)

You know the way.

DECARIUS

Sir.

LUCANUS

(for Decarius alone)

Do not idle there. The Governor would
speak with you alone.

Decarius nods and Lucanus turns his attention to the pair who
fought with Aeronwen.

LUCANUS (CONT'D)

You two. Come with me.

The men look very nervous, but obey and follow Lucanus as
BRANWEN emerges from the Principia.

Lucanus grins at her. It is not at all friendly.

AERONWEN (SUBTITLE)

(in Iceni)

You are afraid of him.

DECARIUS (SUBTITLE)

(in Iceni)

Of course I am. I have sense.

AERONWEN (SUBTITLE)

(in Iceni)

I thought you were dead.

DECARIUS

I told you. I promised I would -

AERONWEN

But, you are not dead.

(beat, looking at him)

You are a soldier of Rome.

Aeronwen shrugs off his support and stands, stepping away from
him. Hurting, Decarius bites his lip.

Branwen runs to Aeronwen.

BRANWEN

Aer'! What happened?

Spotting their ICENI companions also emerging from the
principia, Aeronwen places her hand over her throat to cover
any marks. She shakes her head at Branwen.

Decarius follows her gaze across the short distance to find

MAELO and the others standing there. The pain of lost years hangs in the space between father and son.

ARVO nods sharply at Decarius. Decarius salutes Arvo begins to lead the group away. Disgusted, Maelo turns from Decarius.

Last to leave is a particularly wild-looking young warrior with an air of barely-contained rage about him. His name is AGRO.

Agro takes several steps towards Decarius.

MAELO

Agro.

Maelo shakes his head meaningfully. Agro sneers. His eyes slide from Aeronwen to Decarius and back before he eventually turns away, trudging after Maelo and the rest.

BRANWEN

Aer', I'd like to go now.

DECARIUS

You will be safe, Branwen -

Aeronwen takes hold of her sister's hand.

AERONWEN

Of course she will. She is with me.

Aeronwen juts out her chin indicating that they should move.

Decarius clenches his jaw, but says nothing. He leads the way and the sisters follow; Aeronwen still rubbing at her throat.

CUT TO:

INT. THE ATRIUM OF CATUS DECIANUS' VILLA - EVENING

You can almost smell the wealth; taste the luxury.

As numerous SLAVES busy themselves with the household tasks, a tall and somewhat effeminate Greek slave in his fifties (KALLIMENES) crosses the atrium to welcome three newcomers to the house; DECARIUS, AERONWEN and BRANWEN.

His face lights up as he recognises the young cavalryman before him. Decarius steps away from Aeronwen and Branwen to greet Kallimenes.

KALLIMENES (SUBTITLE)

(Greek)

Decarius?

DECARIUS

Kallimenes.

KALLIMENES (SUBTITLE)

(Greek)

*Look at you. All grown up.
Quite the dashing young soldier.*

Decarius smiles.

A brief silence falls, during which Decarius becomes aware of Aeronwen's cold stare.

DECARIUS (SUBTITLE)

(Latin)

*These are the daughters of King
Prasutagus.*

Kallimenes follows Decarius' lead; switching to Latin. He is taken aback by Aeronwen's injuries.

*** From an audience point of view we initially hear the change in language (as Aeronwen and Branwen would), but gradually the words begin to flow and no longer need to be subtitled as Latin is the common language shared by all. (Ref: 'Vikings') ***

KALLIMENES (SUBTITLE)

(Latin)

*Asclepius' mercy! What happened to
you, child?*

Aeronwen does not answer, staring at him with open hostility.

DECARIUS (SUBTITLE)

(Latin)

Aeronwen has been making friends.

KALLIMENES (SUBTITLE)

(Latin)

*Is that an Icenian trait?
I remember the first year you spent
with us. The cuts, the bruises and
the breaks!*

DECARIUS (SUBTITLE)

(Latin)

They weren't all mine.

SABINA (SUBTITLE) (O.C.)

(Latin)

*No... That was half of the problem.
Keeping you out of trouble was a full
time job!*

Gliding into the room and the conversation the Domina of the house, SABINA Lupa, makes her entrance.

She is the young wife of Catus Decianus. Perhaps twenty-one years old, she is half the age of her husband.

SABINA (CONT'D)

My young Barbarian has returned!

Decarius bows and a smile breaks across Sabina's face as she shifts her weight from foot to foot; fighting the urge to throw her arms around him and embrace him.

Eventually, she takes his hands in hers and he touches them to his forehead.

Aeronwen suffers their reunion in silent resentment.

DECARIUS

You are the lady of the house now.

SABINA

I am.

Silence.

There is so much more to be said, but so little time and opportunity to speak it at present.

KALLIMENES

Domina, these are the daughters of King Prasutagus. Am I correct in assuming the girls and their father will be spending the evening with us?

Decarius nods. Sabina bristles.

SABINA

Catus said nothing of this -

KALLIMENES

I do not believe the offer was of *Dominus'* making.

SABINA

Ah. Paulinus.

Aeronwen turns her back on Sabina, addressing Decarius.

She joins the group in speaking Latin (which we are now accustomed to); much to the surprise (and annoyance) of Sabina.

AERONWEN

Is there a problem, Decarius? I would not wish to be the cause of any trouble.

Sabina is genuinely surprised to hear Aeronwen speaking Latin, but recovers well.

SABINA

You speak Latin?

AERONWEN

(nodding)

Latin.

(beat)

Trinovantes, Siluri, Catuvallauni,
Brigante, Belgae, Cantiaci. I speak
the tongue of our allies, and our
enemies.

SABINA

Impressive... or rather, it would be
impressive were they not all Keltoi
variants.

One barbarian tongue is, after all,
very much like another.

(beat)

But a Roman education teaches Latin
and Greek. With letters too.

Aeronwen seethes; *How dare she!*

SABINA (CONT'D)

(Iceni)(SUBTITLES)

*I even speak a little of your Iceni.
A party trick. I mean, there really
is no point in learning a dead
language.*

If the fire behind Aeronwen's eyes could set a blaze, Sabina
would already be charred.

Wanting to avoid bloodshed, Decarius steps in.

DECARIUS

Sabina, I must report back to Governor
Paulinus. Your husband and King
Prasutagus cannot be too far behind
and will - I am certain - appreciate a
good meal upon their arrival.

Sabina's cheeks flush, but she recovers.

SABINA

They shall not be disappointed.

(beat)

Kallimenes.

KALLIMENES

Domina.

SABINA

Stable our guests.

(beat)

It has been good seeing you again,
Decarius.

Without another word, Sabina turns and exits the atrium.

Kallimenes extends his hand to Branwen. She takes it without hesitation.

KALLIMENES

Come, little one. Let us find you a room. Then you can bathe before dinner and I will find you a treat from the kitchen.

Branwen grins as she is led away.

Aeronwen watches her sister go, before rounding on Decarius.

AERONWEN (SUBTITLE)

(in Iceni)

Stabled? They think us dirty and stupid!

DECARIUS (SUBTITLE)

(in Iceni)

They do not -

AERONWEN (SUBTITLE)

(in Iceni)

How can you defend them?

Decarius searches for an answer, but before he can even form words Aeronwen cuts him off.

AERONWEN (CONT'D)

Oh wait, you are them.

She turns from him and follows in her sister's wake.

Feeling hurt and dejected all over again, Decarius reflects; Romans see him as a 'Barbarian', but the Iceni view him as a product of Rome. He belongs to no one; he is alone.

Turning his back on his sometime home, he shows himself out.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GRANARY BARRACKS - SEVERAL MINUTES LATER

Several groups of soldiers idle in the square before the barracks. Some play at dice, others prepare to wrestle while their companions place their bets. Odds are shouted and money changes hands.

Two legionaries, JUNIUS and FLACCA, hang close to the barracks and watch with open disgust as ARVO shows MAELO and his men inside. Picking his teeth with a small knife, Junius pauses to spit upon the ground as the troupe pass by.

His contempt for the warriors extends to ARVO as well.

ARVO

This way.

At the back of the group, AGRO sneers at the legionaries.

CUT TO:

INT. THE GRANARY BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

The Iceni are greeted by a sparse and colourless, low-beamed room containing a number of wooden cots. Plain and simple; the epitome of Roman efficiency for the rank and file.

The ICENI warriors take a look around, unimpressed.

ARVO

You will be comfortable here.

TAIRO (SUBTITLE)

(in Iceni)

I would not keep my horse in this shit hole.

AGRO (SUBTITLE)

(in Iceni)

No, your bed is far more comfortable for her.

Tairo joins in the laughter at his expense and the men go about choosing their bunks.

Arvo turns to leave, but Maelo places a hand on his arm.

MAELO

You are not Roman.

ARVO

Atrebates.

MAELO

But, you follow them?

ARVO

No. I lead my men.

MAELO

You are *Ducarius'* commander?

ARVO

(nodding)

He is strong and dedicated -

MAELO

To Rome.

Maelo's eyes fill and he begins to turn from Arvo.

ARVO (SUBTITLE)
(in Atrebatas)
He is not Roman.

Understanding - their languages having similar roots - Maelo nods.

Arvo waits another moment before exiting the barracks.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEFORE THE GRANARY BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

JUNIUS and FLACCA talk loudly, trying to provoke ARVO.

JUNIUS
Took your time, Decurion.

FLACCA
Plotting something with your barbarian brothers.

Arvo stops and smiles at the pair. It is a dangerous and daring grin.

ARVO (SUBTITLE)
(Atrebatas)
We were discussing your mother's talents in the bedroom.

His comment raises a titter of laughter from those nearby who understand him; other auxiliary soldiers and men from his unit; including EPONA, FAUSTO and CARBO.

CUT TO:

INT. THE GRANARY BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

MAELO watches Arvo's exchange with the legionaries through the window of the barracks, a shadow of concern and irritation creeping over his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEYOND THE GRANARY BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

FLACCA holds out his arm to prevent ARVO from passing.

ARVO
I wouldn't.

In the background MAELO continues to watch at the window.

Flacca places his hand on Arvo's shoulder and, in one awful, fluid motion, Arvo takes hold of Flacca's arm and twists,

snapping his hand. He holds it in a horrible position even as Flacca howls in pain and Junius pulls out a small knife.

Arvo suddenly becomes the central focus of every legionary in the vicinity. His men make themselves known, but they are too few if things become heated.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GRANARY BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

Exclaiming, Maelo moves to the door. The younger ICENI men are hot on his heels.

FOLLOW TO:

EXT. BEYOND THE GRANARY BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

MAELO throws open the door and all around them, LEGIONARIES and AUXILIARIES turn to stare at the ICENI warriors. Many take-in the new odds and return to their business.

Some do not.

Arvo releases Flacca. The square is now a tinderbox of tension and testosterone!

FLACCA

He's broke my fuckin' hand!

EPONA

I bet it was your favourite wank-hand too.

JUNIUS

Cock-sucker!

FAUSTO

That's certainly what your friend'll be spending his money on for the next few months!

EPONA

Unless you're offering to help him out in that department.

Epona gestures explicitly. AGRO and the younger ICENI laugh, as do others in the crowd.

Somewhere, someone inevitably throws a punch and the square before the granary barracks falls into chaos. Arvo disarms Junius with ease as more men join in the scrap.

Maelo grins at Arvo who gives silent thanks and the IcenI throw themselves into the fray with enthusiasm.

CUT TO:

INT. TABLINUM OF THE MAIN PRINCIPIA BUILDING - AS BEFORE

PRASUTAGUS and CATUS DECIANUS are seated on one side of the great wooden table with PAULINUS sitting opposite them.

Fed up and irritated, Prasutagus scans the documents in his hands as Decianus speaks.

CATUS DECIANUS

...mounting debts and back taxes stretching to almost twelve years are still owed by the Iceni -

PRASUTAGUS

How can Rome tax us for inhabiting our own lands?

Catus Decianus struggles, searching for a diplomatic answer, but landing on none. Paulinus idly interjects.

PAULINUS

Because they no longer belong to you.

(pause)

The Iceni are a conquered people. You, Prasutagus, were *gifted* your crown by Rome.

PRASUTAGUS

As if Rome would ever let me forget.

PAULINUS

(ignoring him)

As an ally and client kingdom of Rome you now enjoy all the amenities of a civilised people; free trade and -

PRASUTAGUS

But, it isn't *free*, is it? Any of it!

CATUS DECIANUS

Well, as with any substantial infrastructure there are costs involved and -

PRASUTAGUS

(to Paulinus)

You expect me to ask starving people to yield up more than half our stores?

PAULINUS

No. I expect you to command them!

Silence.

Prasutagus does his best to remain calm.

CATUS DECIANUS
I understand this cannot be easy for
you, King Pras[utagus] -

PRASUTAGUS
(rounding on Decianus)
You *understand*?

CATUS DECIANUS
And I appreciate that the call for an
immediate repayment of all loans,
including interest -

PRASUTAGUS
Interest we knew nothing about. On
loans we never wanted -

PAULINUS
But used, none the less.

PRASUTAGUS
To buy food!
Because we were starving.
Because our winter stores had been set
alight. By our Roman *allies*.

CATUS DECIANUS
(looking to Paulinus)
Surely you are mistaken, King
Prasutagus.

PRASUTAGUS
Am I?

Very much a fish-out-of-water, Decianus opens and closes his
mouth while Prasutagus and Paulinus glare at one another.

LUCANUS enters the room, slicing through the tension with a
crisp salute. He does not wait to speak.

LUCANUS
Sir. Apologies, sir, but *Auxiliary*
Legionary Decarius has returned.

PAULINUS
Excellent. Send him in.

Lucanus salutes and exits once more.

CATUS DECIANUS
But, Governor... We are still -

PAULINUS

Come now, Catus.
Diplomacy is always so much better
when conducted away from state
buildings; a nice home-cooked meal in
your belly, a cup of wine in your
hand. The sight of that pretty, young
wife of yours.
(beat)
What man could resist?

Paulinus' eyes flick momentarily to Prasutagus, who is fully engaged in trying to follow the details of the accounts and tax records in his hands.

PAULINUS (CONT'D)

Leave me to conduct the military
business of the empire. And I will
leave you to collect Caesar's taxes...
however you see fit.

Decianus flushes red with anger and embarrassment at the insinuation that he might be dishonest.

Gathering up his papers, Decianus exits the tablinum.

Standing, Prasutagus reaches for the copy of his will, but Paulinus gets a hand to it first. He looks it over once more, before handing it over to Prasutagus.

PAULINUS

Good luck.
(nodding at Catus Decianus)
That fatted calf may be the Emperor's
money-man. But, you should know...
This Emperor is no Claudius.

Prasutagus gives a curt nod, taking the document from him as DECARIUS enters the room; Lucanus close behind.

Decarius instinctively bows his head to Prasutagus who smiles in return, though both men are acutely aware of Paulinus' gaze upon them.

PRASUTAGUS

It is good to see you well, *Ducarius*.

Prasutagus glances back at Paulinus; his smile vanishing instantly. He exits the tablinum.

Decarius remains stood to attention.

PAULINUS

Decarius.

DECARIUS

Sir.

PAULINUS
You know Prasutagus well?

DECARIUS
I... *knew* him. Sir.

PAULINUS
And his daughters?

DECARIUS
(guarded)
We were children together.

Paulinus grins.

PAULINUS
And tell me *soldier*, what do you know
of the isle of Mona?

Indicating the map on his desk, Paulinus tilts his head, a thin smile spreading across his face as he sees Decarius's eyes widen.

Lucanus steps in, unnervingly close to Decarius.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TRICLINIUM OF CATUS DECIANUS' VILLA - HOURS LATER

In the aftermath of their meal, Aeronwen and Branwen share a couch. Still seething, Aeronwen sits crossed-legged chewing the last of the meat from a small bone.

A slave hovers irritatingly close to her, fearing the mess she might make.

Catus Decianus and Sabina talk, eat and drink intermittently as they recline on separate couches.

Imitating their hosts, Prasutagus reclines stiffly on a fourth couch.

Soon platters of apple, cheese, grapes and olives arrive. Decianus begins picking at these and offers them to his guests. Delighted, Branwen tucks in, reluctantly Aeronwen follows suit, picking up and eyeing an olive with suspicion.

Sabina giggles openly at her and - glaring defiance - Aeronwen pops the olive in her mouth. An action that is swiftly followed by her gulping down a cupful of wine.

PRASUTAGUS
My thanks for the feast, Procurator.

Still eating, Decianus waves his hand towards Sabina who nods demurely from her couch.

CATUS DECIANUS

Catus, please. And your thanks,
indeed all our thanks, must go to
Sabina.

(beat, drinking)

Really, I don't know how she does it.

Holding her cup out to a slave for a refill, Aeronwen catches Sabina's eyes, before arching her eyebrow as she looks pointedly around the room at the various other slaves who have actually been responsible for cooking/serving the meal.

Prasutagus stands and, placing his hand over his heart, nods his head in thanks.

PRASUTAGUS

Lady Sabina, I know our visit to your
home came unannounced and -

Sabina stands and glides towards Prasutagus - all elegance - taking his hands in hers.

SABINA

King Prasutagus, it has been an honour
to receive you and your daughters.

Prasutagus smiles at Sabina, honest and open. Aeronwen notices the smile Sabina wears never quite reaches her eyes.

SABINA (CONT'D)

But, if you will excuse me, I have
household matters to attend.

Prasutagus makes another small bow as Sabina releases his hand. She glides once more towards her husband, who sits up to receive a kiss on the cheek.

As Prasutagus sits once more, *the will* falls from his tunic. Aeronwen watches as her father picks it up and replaces it within the pocket fold of his tunic.

BRANWEN

(shyly)

Thank you, Lady Sabina. For the food.

Sabina smiles at Branwen as she might a parrot; delighted and intrigued to hear it speak.

SABINA

You are very welcome, little princess.

Irritated by Sabina, Aeronwen focuses on her father.

AERONWEN

What did Paulinus have to say?

Both Sabina and Catus Decianus look at Aeronwen in horror; it is not her place to speak the about such matters. Sabina

places a soothing hand on her husband's shoulder

SABINA

Shall I have Kallimenes see the
children to their room?

Children! Aeronwen almost chokes on her wine.

CATUS DECIANUS

Thank you, Sabina. That would be
wonderful.

Sabina nods sagely before exiting the room.

Aeronwen's incinerating stare follows Sabina across the
triclinium, though it is partially concealed by the cup of
wine that she is all but inhaling.

Kallimenes arrives almost instantly. Aeronwen is indignant.

AERONWEN

Father?!

PRASUTAGUS

We will speak in the morning.

AERONWEN

But -

PRASUTAGUS

That is enough for tonight.

Steadying her breath, feeling hurt and betrayed, Aeronwen
rises from the couch. Next to her, fawn-like and inoffensive,
Branwen follows suit.

Now that she is standing, Prasutagus notices the darkening
marks around her neck. Concerned, he moves to her side to
inspect the injuries; close up he sees the bruises that are
also beginning to show on her face.

PRASUTAGUS (CONT'D)

Aeronwen. What happened?

AERONWEN

It has been an... eventful day.

Aeronwen kisses her father's hand; an action that is honest
and full of affection. She turns and, taking hold of
Branwen's hand once more, follows Kallimenes.

Prasutagus watches them go; emotions dancing beneath the
surface.

He rounds on Catus Decianus, furious that his daughter has
come to harm.

CUT TO:

INT. A BEDROOM IN CATUS DECIANUS' VILLA - NIGHT

AERONWEN and BRANWEN share a bed.

Branwen is turned away from her sister and trying to sleep. Heedless of this - and still furious - Aeronwen continues to talk at her sister.

AERONWEN
She called us children.

BRANWEN
(sleepy)
We are children.

AERONWEN
(indignant)
What?

BRANWEN
You seem like a child to her.

AERONWEN
(recovering)
Because I am not married to an *old* man?

Branwen shrugs, though she can't help but smile; her eyes still closed. She hopes that Aeronwen will let the matter drop, let her sleep. But...

AERONWEN (CONT'D)
There cannot be more than two summers between us. Three at most.

BRANWEN
And three hundred summers separating a people carved from very different stone to us.

AERONWEN
That girl is *certainly* carved from stone!

BRANWEN
That *girl* lost her mother during her eighth summer. And her Father the following winter. She lost a whole other life in Rome and had to grow up fast.

Aeronwen is momentarily stunned into silence.

AERONWEN
How do you know all this?

Branwen turns to face her sister.

BRANWEN

I listen.

AERONWEN

I listen!

BRANWEN

No. You don't.

(beat)

If Kallimenes spoke true, death stalks her.

AERONWEN

Sabina?

BRANWEN

(nodding)

She was with Decianus' first wife when...

She found her on the floor of the atrium.

AERONWEN

In this house?!

Branwen nods.

AERONWEN (CONT'D)

She probably she killed her.

BRANWEN

You can't say that!

AERONWEN

(absently)

Probably poisoned her.

BRANWEN

Aeronwen!

AERONWEN

We should *not* have eaten here.

BRANWEN

You are so disrespectful.

Silence.

Then, both sisters laugh together.

BRANWEN (CONT'D)

I just want to understand -

AERONWEN

She is Roman. There is *nothing* to understand.

Saddened and a little hurt by the outburst, Branwen backs

down, closing her eyes.

Aeronwen is annoyed with herself for snapping at Branwen. She opens her mouth to apologise, when a thought strikes her.

AERONWEN
(considering)
... understand...

BRANWEN
Hmm?

AERONWEN
You said you wanted to understand.

An idea catches light in Aeronwen's imagination; she watches it play out on the ceiling above her.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - EVENING - DAY X

As Aeronwen speaks, we fly over a large area that has been marked out with flaming torches into SEVEN CIRCLES; six outer (smaller) circles and one inner (larger) circle.

Within each circle a pair of warriors fight.

AERONWEN (V.O.)
Rome is an *idea*. Nothing more.
Nothing less.

CUT TO:

INT. A BEDROOM IN CATUS DECIANUS' VILLA - AS BEFORE

Branwen's eyes are still closed.

BRANWEN
Try telling that to the Romans!

Aeronwen can't help but smile at her sister.

She continues to stare up at the ceiling seeing the shadows of warriors and legionaries clashing in the moonlight and her imagination.

AERONWEN
Ideas only grow in strength - only
gain power - if people *believe* in
them.

Bitingly, Branwen turns to face her sister.

BRANWEN

What are you saying?

AERONWEN

The *might* of Rome only exists because people believe in the *idea* of Rome.

BRANWEN

(uncertain)

I suppose...

AERONWEN

What if there was a *new* idea? A new understanding. Sabina said it herself; we speak one tongue.

(beat)

So what about one tribe?

BRANWEN

Like Rome?

AERONWEN

No. Like *Us*. Like all of us. Together.

Branwen regards her sister with admiration and concern for a long time, before...

BRANWEN

You're serious about this.

AERONWEN

I am.

(beat)

The clans follow strength; prove your strength and you win the people. When enough people believe in you, the *idea* you present can become...

BRANWEN

As powerful as Rome?

Aeronwen smiles, devilishly.

BRANWEN (CONT'D)

And how do you know all this?

Smiling, Branwen is already drifting back to sleep.

Aeronwen's eyes shine with contemplation as she watches the action continuing to unfold inside her mind.

AERONWEN

(grinning)

I listen...

CUT TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - EVENING - DAY X

We see that it is AERONWEN herself fighting against a skilled warrior; his features are bathed in shadow.

The faceless warrior dodges a feinting pass from Aeronwen and, taking advantage, she makes short work of putting him on the ground.

She aims the spear-point at his throat and he holds up his hands, yielding. An unheard cheer erupts from the faces of the torchlit crowd.

CUT TO:

INT. A BEDROOM IN CATUS DECIANUS' VILLA - CONTINUOUS

Aeronwen continues to stare at the shadows on the the ceiling; at the images only she can see.

AERONWEN

...to all that is left *unsaid*.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMULODUNUM; THE FORUM - MORNING

The Forum is already busy with citizens, soldiers and traders as MAELO and the other ICENI men stroll into the square. They do not hide the fresh cuts and bruises that adorn their arms and faces.

A group of Auxiliary Soldiers (ARVO and his men) enter the forum in a similar state. Seeing Maelo and his troupe, they carve a path towards them.

The forum falls into an anxious, anticipatory silence.

Then...

Smiles break and spread across the faces of both sets of men and they fall into greeting one another fondly; comrades now.

ANGLE ON:

Maelo takes hold of Arvo's offered arm.

ARVO

(smiling)

I trust your night was quiet and...
uneventful?

MAELO

So quiet we could hear only the
rustling of mice.

Maelo raises his chin, indicating the spot where FLACCA, JUNIUS and others have now entered the forum. Sporting many injuries themselves, they cling to the shadows.

MAELO (CONT'D)
Once the rats had fled!

Arvo and Maelo laugh together; it is a booming, joyful sound.

WIDE SHOT:

In the distance, we see DECARIUS watching them. A heart beat later he makes up his mind to cross the forum; to try and speak with his father.

But as he does, a great commotion overshadows any opportunity for reunion as a boy on horseback hurtles into the square.

People dive out of the way to avoid being clipped by the horse and its frantic rider who can be no more than eleven years old.

Maelo recognises the boy.

MAELO
Caenos?

Maelo steps into the horse's path; calling to it and calming it. He takes hold of the reigns.

MAELO (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

Not twenty paces behind CAENOS, eight armed SOLDIERS race into the forum.

Seeing this, the Icenii, their Auxiliary friends and Decarius fall into a loose, but protective wall around the horse and boy.

LEAD GUARD
There he is!

Itching for a fight, Junius, Flacca and their four friends emerge from the shadows to join with these guards.

An air of uncertain terror grips many citizens, who scatter from the forum; several shops even close up their shutters.

Maelo looks at Caenos, repeating his question with a look.

CAENOS
The Coritani have attacked Icenium.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICENIUM FARMLAND - DAWN

As the morning fog begins to lift, CAENOS is already herding his family's sheep from their pens.

MAELO (V.O.)

When?

Seeing armed shapes emerging on the hillside, he stops. Snapping the pen shut once more, he races back to his home.

CAENOS (V.O.)

At first light.

CUT TO:

INT. CAENOS' HOME - CONTINUOUS

Inside the house CAENOS relates what he has seen to his MOTHER and FATHER.

We see Caenos' father tell his wife to go and relay this message to Queen Boudica. She nods, pulling a shawl around her shoulders.

As his mother disappears through a side exit of their small homestead, Caenos' father picks up an old shield and a short-handled scythe. Together they move outside to survey the approaching force.

MAELO (V.O.)

How many horses? How many warriors?

CUT TO:

EXT. ICENIUM FARMLAND - CONTINUOUS

While they have not moved any closer, the shapes have certainly grown in number. As CAENOS and his FATHER continue to watch many more warriors arrive.

Caenos' father nods towards their only horse. Caenos shakes his head. His father mouths 'GO!'

Caenos obeys.

CAENOS (V.O.)

Two hundred. Maybe more.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FORUM - CONTINUOUS

ARVO

That's no raiding party.

MAELO looks around the forum. The tension is still high.

DECARIUS has fallen in at Maelo's side. He takes him in with an arched eyebrow; this is all the welcome he offers his estranged son for his unwavering support.

MAELO
(looking around)
Where is Prasutagus?

A small, scrawny-looking boy (LUCCUS) hears Maelo and - smelling a profit - instantly runs off in the direction of Decianus' house.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEFORE CATUS DECIANUS' VILLA - MORNING

PRASUTAGUS and DECIANUS are stepping out onto the front portico, KALLIMENES and several armed slaves trail them.

Unseen, AERONWEN watches from the shadows of the portico.

PRASUTAGUS
... you can understand my need for security.

CATUS DECIANUS
While ever you are allied with Rome the future of your people will *always* be secure.

PRASUTAGUS
But, my daughters -

Before he can say anything more LUCCUS comes bounding around the corner, colliding with the slow-moving entourage.

CATUS DECIANUS
Watch your step, you little -

Prasutagus catches hold of the boy, saving him from falling.

LUCCUS
Sorry, sir. I need to find...
(beat)
Wait. You're 'im aren't ya?

Prasutagus stares at the Boy in amusement.

LUCCUS (CONT'D)
You're King Pras-ootie-gas. There's a messenger in the forum.
(beat)
Your 'ome's been attacked.

Prasutagus turns to Kallimenes.

PRASUTAGUS

Fetch my girls.

Kallimenes looks affronted and silently questions Decianus. But even as he flounders, Aeronwen steps out from the shadows of the portico.

AERONWEN

(calling back inside)

BRANWEN!

(to the boy)

The forum? Which way?

Surprised, Luccus turns and points along the road. Aeronwen nods her thanks and sprints off in that direction.

Prasutagus knows he needs to act fast. He still has not adequately secured the future of his daughters and his people. Thinking on his feet, he plays to Decianus' need to be seen as important by his peers.

PRASUTAGUS

Come with me. To Icenium.

BRANWEN appears on the portico.

CATUS DECIANUS

Me? I am no soldier.

BRANWEN

Father?

PRASUTAGUS

True. But you have the authority to command a detachment. Your support may win the day.

(beat)

Please. Our negotiations are not yet complete. I fear to place my trust - my family - in any hand but yours.

Branwen has made her way to Luccus and discovered his message. She sets off towards the forum.

Luccus is torn between following the sisters or waiting for Prasutagus.

LUCCUS

You 'ave to come, now!

PRASUTAGUS

Catus, please.

CATUS DECIANUS

(won over)

To Hades with Paulinus! I will show
him what kind of man I am. I will
join you... and command Rome's finest
to victory!

A smile breaks across Prasutagus' face as he brings his arm
across his chest; the flat of his palm resting over his heart.
With his free hand he squeezes Decianus' shoulder.

PRASUTAGUS

Thank you.

CATUS DECIANUS

Now go!

Releasing Decianus, Prasutagus runs along the narrow street to
catch up with the boy.

LUCCUS

(to Prasutagus)

You're gonna pay me, right?

CUT TO:

EXT. ICENIUM; AN OPEN PLAIN - EARLY MORNING

On foot, lines of ICENI warriors already clash with CORITANI
warriors in a bloody close-quarters fight.

Sat astride a striking grey mare, Boudica - battle-ready in
her leather armour, her face painted with woad - prepares to
lead her cavalry against the Coritani cavalry opposite.

She scans the enemy line; her Iceni forces appear outnumbered.

She looks to her right and her eyes find those of the warrior
seated on the horse next to her; the Iceni Flame Keeper,
JODAC.

He smiles, despite the odds and hands Boudica her spear.

She grins and, thrusting the spear into the air lets a roar
spill from her.

Around her, the mounted warriors charge forward.

Noise. Blood. Carnage.

We tilt up to the sky.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AN UNENDING EXPANSE OF BLUE SKY - MID-MORNING

Quiet. Stillness.

The clear sky is dusted with soft white clouds here and there and couldn't appear more prosperous or peaceful.

FALL TO:

EXT. A VERY LONG ROAD - AFTERNOON

EXTREME LONG SHOT:

Dust. Movement.

On the road from Camulodunum to Icenium, PRASUTAGUS and his troupe ride hard towards their home, fearing the worst.

MID-SHOT:

AERONWEN rides head to head with her father. BRANWEN is fiercely trying to keep pace.

CUT TO:

EXT. ON THE ROAD FROM CAMULODUNUM - LATE AFTERNOON

Further along the road a small detachment of cavalry and a cohort of legionaries keep pace with the wooden, horse-drawn carriage.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

Inside the carriage CATUS DECIANUS sits looking over tax records and treatises. Next to him sits a bag stuffed with scrolls.

KALLIMENES is seated opposite Decianus, taking down the notes dictated by his master on a clay tablet.

SABINA LUPA is seated next to Kallimenes. Her gaze travels from her husband to the view beyond the slatted window, before returning to Catus once more.

CATUS DECIANUS

- And send word to Gnaeus regarding the Brigantes. Queen Cartimandua has been more than accommodating, but her husband -

SABINA

Catus, what are we doing?

Irritation flashes across Decianus' face, but he is determined to finish his notes.

CATUS DECIANUS

- has become -

SABINA

- Catus -

CATUS DECIANUS

- rather more -

SABINA

- Catus!

CATUS DECIANUS

What is it, Sabina?

SABINA

Forgive the interruption. I simply wish to understand what it is that we are doing out here.

Decianus stares at Sabina, then glances at the scroll in his hand before passing it over to Kallimenes.

CATUS DECIANUS

Read this. You'll see what I mean.

Kallimenes nods, taking the scroll.

KALLIMENES

Dominus.

Decianus slides along the wooden bench until he sits opposite his wife.

CATUS DECIANUS

Sabina. You know what we are doing.

SABINA

But *why*, Catus? Why *are* we doing this? I cannot understand -

CATUS DECIANUS

A wife does not need to understand the decisions of her husband. She needs only to obey and support him.

Silence.

SABINA

Have I *ever* shown you anything but unwavering support and obedience? Husband.

CATUS DECIANUS

You have been a model wife.

Silence.

Sabina looks away from him, choosing to gaze out of the window and appearing hurt.

Feeling satisfied, Decianus nods to himself and begins to slide back towards his original place opposite Kallimenes.

SABINA

My only concern was for your
reputation; the reputation of a good
man -

Decianus stops in his tracks. Exhaling, he slides back towards Sabina.

CATUS DECIANUS

Sabina -

SABINA

- good men don't prosper in a place
like this, Catus. Most men in your
position would accept a bribe here and
there or -

CATUS DECIANUS

I am NOT most men!

SABINA

And that is my point, Catus.

(beat)

You are *not* most men. You are *honest*
and you are good, but you are no
soldier... racing in to save the day
like this -

Decianus shakes his head.

SABINA (CONT'D)

What? What is it?

Sabina watches as her husband considers his next words. She does not press him.

CATUS DECIANUS

I have always had a head for numbers.
I could spot inaccuracies in accounts
that my betters had already deemed to
be correct. I knew what they were
doing of course, but I said nothing.
It was not my place.

(beat)

When I was awarded the office of
Procurator here in Britannia, well, it
seemed to be the way of things... as
you say...

Decianus struggles.

Sabina waits.

CATUS DECIANUS (CONT'D)

The Trinovantes offered me several talents of gold to extend their land boundaries by half a mile.

(beat)

It was so easy, Sabina. And half a mile of grass and dirt on the other side of the world is nothing to the Emperor.

(pause)

But, the Gods knew that I had stolen from them. From their elected one...

(he struggles)

So, they took something in return.

Sabina's hand moves to her mouth.

SABINA

Julilla? The day I found her...

Decianus nods.

Silence.

CATUS DECIANUS

(downcast)

Prasutagus believes that I come to offer my support. But, my duty is to count the coffers. Appraise the value his land.

SABINA

Why do you care for the opinion of this barbarian king?

CATUS DECIANUS

Because he is the good man here, Sabina.

(beat)

And the opinion of one good man in a world seeded with corruption is worth more than all the voices of the senate put together. More than ten *thousand* talents of gold. More, perhaps, than even the Empire itself.

Decianus exhales slowly.

Sabina watches her husband, a new found admiration for him sparkling in her eyes. She touches his hand and smiles at him. He returns her smile, then slides back along the bench to pick up where he left off.

Sabina's hand falls to rest with pride over her belly as she turns her gaze once more to the window, spying the faintest echo of the rising moon.

FADE TO:

EXT. VAST OPEN LANDSCAPE - EVENING

The moon glows slowly brighter as the sky begins to darken.

A flutter of dark wings fills our vision, then carries us along with them.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

RAVEN POV:

We swoop through the heart of the town; the evening is early, but darkness has already come.

We swing left and then right, taking in all the sights and sounds; Iceni men and women drinking and celebrating life and victory over their enemies; singing, dancing and making love together.

We fly away from the town centre, up and out into an open expanse where rows of torches have been set up to light our way. We twist and turn and narrowly escape being set alight by a woad-painted, fire-eater spitting flame through the air.

We fly over a large area, which has been marked out with torches into SEVEN CIRCLES; six outer (smaller) circles and one inner (larger) circle. **It mirrors the scene from Aeronwen's vision.**

Inside each circle a pair of warriors are engaged in combat. The outer circles combatants wrestle without weapons. In the central sphere the fighters are armed.

We glide over this central circle to find AGRO and another warrior - SKUT - locked in a fierce dance of spears.

We swing past them and come to land on the shoulder of JODAC.

RAVEN POV OFF:

Jodac feeds a chunk of meat to the magnificent creature, stroking the feathers on its chest. He is standing at the edge of a tiered palisade filled with Iceni nobles.

On the top tier, occupying the central position, sit PRASUTAGUS and BOUDICA.

SABINA is seated next to Boudica with BRANWEN next to her.

Besides Prasutagus sit CATUS DECIANUS and then AERONWEN. Maelo is conspicuously absent as DECARIUS stands close by,

keeping watch for threats to Decianus and Sabina.

Boudica stands and raises her cup.

BOUDICA

To our honoured guests, Catus Decianus
and Sabina Lupa. May the Goddess
bless and keep you both.

The Iceni respond: "*Catus! Catus! Catus!*"

CATUS DECIANUS

You are too kind, Queen Boudica. You
had the battle well in hand long
before we arrived.

SABINA

And yet it is honest and correct of
you to remember my husband in your
victory over the... Cantiaci?

BOUDICA

The Coritani.

SABINA

(laughing)

Forgive me; they all sounds the same.

Drawing in an irritated breath, Aeronwen crosses to stand near
Jodac who has a better view of the contests below. He smiles
to see her and nods.

BRANWEN

Your name is also being celebrated,
Lady Sabina.

SABINA

But, I did nothing.

AERONWEN

(into her drink)

Just as your husband.

Jodac chuckles, but transforms it into a cough. Sabina throws
a hostile look in Aeronwen's direction as Jodac turns his
grinning face away.

SABINA

The honour is his first and foremost,
Princess. Men always come before
women, that is the way of it. A
Husband's glory stands before that of
his wife.

Boudica playfully raises her voice; opening the conversation up
to their two husbands.

BOUDICA

The only time a husband should go
before his wife is into the afterlife;
eagerly and with honour, protecting
those he loves and holds most dear!

Around them, Iceni cheer and toast to Boudica's statement. Prasutagus raises his cup and, catching his wife's eye, he smiles and drinks.

Branwen begins to sing a ballad.

It is clearly a favourite and is soon taken up by those around who sing/chant with enthusiasm, including Aeronwen who joins in with gusto as they continue to watch the bouts below.

BRANWEN

(singing)

*The sun to her back, the queen rides
out. Her horse so great and strong.
Her sword is true, as true as her
heart and though the path is long,
She carves her way across the land,
through the twisting vales and hills,
Until, with her army - her brothers
and sisters - onto the field she
spills.
Her husband, seeing her approach
redoubles against their foe.
On bloody ground, they cut them down;
a lasting seed to sow.
Oh hail the mighty King and Queen, all
hail the mighty two
Who, side by side and sword by sword,
the enemies they slew.
Oh hail the mighty Queen and King, all
hail the mighty two
Who, side by side and sword by sword,
all enemies they slew.*

The ballad concludes with a great cheer; many also throw the remains of their ale into the air.

Suitably spattered and shocked, Sabina wipes the traces of ale from her face.

Watching Sabina struggling to cope, Aeronwen stifles a laugh.

SABINA

Such... magnificent tales!

AERONWEN

They are commonplace in our lands. Is
it not so in Rome?

SABINA

Of course not! Such things would be
unseemly.

AERONWEN

Do you not believe a woman *capable* of fighting?

SABINA

Oh, I believe we have the capacity.
(beat)

The women of the *Lupanar* are known to fight viciously over a man paying a coin or two for their time.

BOUDICA

Whores don't employ the strategy of the field when baying for the attention of their patrons.

SABINA

You are correct, of course.
(beat)

Oh... and there are Gladiatrices. Barbarian women from defeated lands who fight in the arenas across the amuse meant of the crowd.

Aeronwen snarls at Sabina. Boudica smiles at her daughter.

BOUDICA

Fighting with honour, Lady Sabina, is a different sport entirely.

SABINA

You may call it *sport*, Queen Boudica. I call it 'inappropriate'.

Aeronwen scoffs.

BRANWEN

(uncertain)

Your *Lupanar*... this is a place where a man might pay... for...

SABINA

It is.

Branwen nods, falling silent; her cheeks and ears flush red.

Aeronwen grins, already knowing her sister's train of thought. She begins to laugh and Branwen lashes out, catching Aeronwen on the arm. This only makes her laugh all the more.

SABINA (CONT'D)

Have I missed something?

BRANWEN

Aer' don't. Mother, tell her!

BOUDICA

The Goddess gave your sister a voice
and the will to use it.

SABINA

Explain.

Aeronwen grins; delighted to oblige. Casually she holds out
her cup to a slave, who refills it with ale.

AERONWEN

My sister is as bright as your *Diana*
in the night sky. And quick as a wild
hare with a fox on its tail!

SABINA

I believe it. She is wise beyond her
years.

AERONWEN

Your name.
(drinking)
It is Sabina *Lupa*, yes?

SABINA

(reddening)
Indeed.

AERONWEN

(beat)
Surely you are not named for the abode
of a whore?

Prasutagus, who has appeared to be completely engrossed in his
conversation with Catus Decianus, now lifts his head. He
pitches his voice; stern, but not hard.

PRASUTAGUS

Aeronwen.

AERONWEN

Father.

Aeronwen finishes the ale in her cup and hands it to the
nearest slave (who happens to be her half-sister, MERLA).

She locks eyes with Sabina, who - equally fiery and determined
- holds her gaze.

AERONWEN (CONT'D)

You understand I meant no offence,
Lady Sabina.

SABINA

I believe I understand you perfectly.
Princess.

Aeronwen turns and makes her way down from the platform

without looking back.

Branwen covers her face, shaking her head even as Boudica smiles, leaning in close to Sabina.

BOUDICA

She is young.

(beat)

I make no apology for her. Youth
burns its own path and passion. And
no one soul can predict where such a
path may lead.

Sabina nods sagely, accepting the words as though they are -
in fact - the most perfectly formed and well-meant apology.

Boudica lowers her voice, speaking for Sabina's ears alone.

BOUDICA (CONT'D)

Though, speaking of passion, I must
say... Any man who comes before a
woman really is no man at all.

Boudica looks out across the circles, clapping with the crowd
for the latest win. She smiles innocently in spite of the
aghast expression now plastered across Sabina's face.

FOLLOW TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - THE FIGHTING CIRCLES - CONTINUOUS

AGRO has just put yet another warrior on his back.

Celebrating, he does not notice AERONWEN approaching. He does
not see her pick up a nearby spear. He knows nothing of her
presence until she clocks him in the back of the knee with the
spear-butt.

Off-balance, he whirls around; furious and ready to separate
the new-comer's head from their shoulders. But, agile and
lightning quick, Aeronwen ducks; avoiding the path of his
spear.

AGRO

Aeronwen.

Agro casts his weapon to the ground.

AERONWEN

Fight me.

AGRO

Your father will kill me if I do.

AERONWEN

I will kill you if you do not.
(she lashes out, wide)

AERONWEN (CONT'D)

Defend yourself.

Agro dodges, then turns to face the royal stand questioningly. Slowly, King Prasutagus inclines his head.

Agro grins, wolfishly. Hooking his foot underneath the grounded spear, he kicks it up and catches it. Spinning around, he falls into a fighting stance that mirrors Aeronwen.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - GRASSLANDS - EVENING

Some of the auxiliaries, including Arvo's men - FAUSTO and EPONA - are sat around a small fire. Arriving moments later, CARBO hands out two skins of wine. They all drink, passing the wineskins between them.

As Carbo takes his seat the shadow of a hand falls across the his face and he is dragged backwards into the darkness.

Before they can react, Fausto, Epona and the rest are also dragged backwards to the ground. In the relative darkness, we hear the sound of scuffling and punches being thrown. Somebody yelps.

Swords are drawn; firelight glinting off the blades.

A moment later TAIRO steps out of the shadows and bends to pick up a dropped wine skin.

He uncorks the wine and holds it to his lips, smiling. Beyond the firelight Fausto, Epona and Carbo are being held at sword point by three Icenii warriors.

Tairo does his best to look intense and menacing.

TAIRO

I think we have some unfinished business.

Fausto looks both confused and enraged.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - THE FIGHTING CIRCLES - AS BEFORE

AERONWEN and AGRO clash; each driving the other back. They circle one another.

AGRO

You think your pampered, royal arse can best me? Princess.

AERONWEN

I think that you can try your best,
but this *pampered royal princess* will
still put you on your arse!

Cheers and jeers erupt around them.

Aeronwen pursues Agro, who dodges and kicks dust up at her;
moving away.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - GRASSLANDS - AS BEFORE

As the dust from the scuffle settles, FAUSTO's eyes light on
someone approaching behind TAIRO.

Sensing something all-too-late, Tairo turns and is flipped on
to the ground by... ARVO.

Sprawled on the floor, Tairo holds out his hands and the
wineskin in acquiescence, laughing and coughing alternately in
the dust.

Arvo smiles and offers Tairo his hand.

He accepts it and, climbing to his feet, claps Arvo on the
back. Arvo turns to his men.

ARVO

Oh, lads. That was a piss poor show.

The Icenii warriors offer their hands to Fausto, Carbo, Epona
and the others, returning their weapons and helping them to
their feet. Two more Icenii appear, carrying with them several
medium-sized kegs of ale.

EPONA

(laughing)

You bag of cocks!

A young Icenii warrior, CALTICUS, steps into the light; his
hand covering one watery eye.

TAIRO

What happened to you?

CALTICUS

He poked me in the eye!

CARBO

Sorry.

(beat)

I thought I was being attacked.

ARVO

You were being attacked! Don't apologise, Carbo.

CARBO

Yes sir. I mean, no sir. Sorry, sir.

All around him laughter breaks out, somewhat at Carbo's expense. He takes it in good humour.

He is handed a cup of ale and immediately offers it to Calticus who nods his thanks, smiling. The pair toast and drink.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - THE FIGHTING CIRCLES - AS BEFORE

Enjoying herself despite AGRO's unsportsmanlike tactics, AERONWEN flashes a grin as he lunges forward with his spear. She parries the thrust effortlessly, spinning out of the way and dropping into a light, low stance.

Agro comes at her with a series of rapid swipes and thrusts, but Aeronwen continues to block, evade and dodge the blows.

Her plan is to wear him out and it seems to be working. She appears evermore the light-footed dancer; Agro the cumbersome and tiring bear.

INTERCUT WITH:

The Royal Stand.

Branwen watches - almost as horrified as Sabina - while Boudica sits tall and proud and still, taking in the scene before her.

BRANWEN

What is she doing?

Boudica smiles warmly, kissing Branwen's head; acknowledging how very different her daughters are.

INTERCUT WITH:

The Centre Fighting Circle

The fights around Aeronwen and Agro have all but ceased as the warriors pause to watch this central pair. There are calls of ridicule and encouragement for both Agro and Aeronwen.

Agro steps in again; attacking. This time Aeronwen side-steps and trips him with her spear shaft. Agro manages to stay upright. Just.

Aeronwen swings the spear butt round to tap him on his rear,

smiling as she does. Laughter breaks out around them.

AGRO
I didn't know you cared.

AERONWEN
I care for all my people.

Agro dodges a feinting pass from Aeronwen and, taking the advantage of his mistake, she makes short work of putting him on his back.

She aims the spear-point at his throat. She has won!

Anger flickers across Agro's face. He thought he *had* this!

AERONWEN
Yield.

All around them warriors cheer and begin chanting "Yie-ld! Yie-ld!"

AGRO
How could I refuse my future queen?

AERONWEN
Come then. Kneel and -

AGRO
Oh, you misunderstand me.

AERONWEN
How so?

AGRO
Well, a future Queen needs a future King and -

AERONWEN
You think I would marry you?

Around them, the other combatants begin to laugh. Aeronwen is momentarily stunned by Agro's dishonourable behaviour.

AERONWEN (CONT'D)
Agro, if I am to have *any* man stand at my side, it will be one who can actually stand...

Laughter erupts; this time the crowd are with Aeronwen. Agro seethes.

AERONWEN (CONT'D)
But, perhaps I will give you the honour of bearing my spear in battle.

He appears to concede and around them people clap and cheer. In the distance, another chorus of Branwen's song is taken up

as Aeronwen lowers her spear and offers Agro her hand.

Moving swiftly, Agro takes her hand, then sweeps her legs; scrambling to throw himself on top of her. He pins Aeronwen to the ground.

AGRO

Or perhaps I will give you honour of
bearing my children.

Aeronwen struggles, twisting this way and that in his grasp. Without a second thought she head-butts him square in the face.

Agro's nose bursts. Cursing he releases her, his hands flying to his face. Aeronwen twists her hips, flipping Agro off her as she rolls/scrambles to a safe distance.

Her face spattered with his blood, Aeronwen snatches up her spear, resolutely opposing him and prepared to continue their fight.

PRASUTAGUS (O.C.)

Enough!

INTERCUT WITH:

The Royal Stand.

Prasutagus is on his feet.

PRASUTAGUS

Today is not your day, Agro. My
daughter has the measure of you. And
so do I.

(beat)

Stand down.

INTERCUT WITH:

The Central Fighting Circle.

Agro climbs slowly to his feet, fixing Aeronwen with a terrible stare. She does not lower her spear as he nods a bow to Prasutagus and leaves the circle to shouts, cheers, jeers and laughter in equal measure.

INTERCUT WITH:

The Royal Stand.

The expression on Sabina's face is caught somewhere between begrudging respect and complete horror.

BOUDICA

You see? The Iceni are strong and our
women fight as fiercely as our men.

In the distance Aeronwen lowers her spear and begins to make her way back towards the stand.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - FIELDS - AS BEFORE

Their swords discarded near the fire, the group of Iceni/Auxiliary soldiers drink and sing together, unaware of the shapes emerging from the darkness.

SABINA (V.O.)

Rome will always have greater numbers.

In the shadows, JUNIUS grins, unsheathing his dagger. It glints dangerously in the firelight. FLACCA crouches beside him; his hand strapped up.

There are so many legionaries that they appear to outnumber the Auxiliary/Iceni group at least two-to-one.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - THE FIGHTING CIRCLES (ROYAL STAND) - AS BEFORE

BOUDICA

And we will always have our passion.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - FIELDS - AS BEFORE

Finally noticing them, the Auxiliaries and Iceni scramble to their feet. They stand together; ready to face off the approaching group as one.

SABINA (V.O.)

And is that enough, do you think?

CUT TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - THE FIGHTING CIRCLES (ROYAL STAND) - AS BEFORE

Aeronwen reaches the stand and is handed a cup of ale. She bows to her father who shakes his head, but cannot keep the smile - and the pride - from his face. Aeronwen raises her cup and the crowd cheer.

Branwen's song is taken up once more.

Behind Prasutagus, Decarius claps his hands discreetly, catching Aeronwen's eye and nodding his congratulations.

This private moment does not go unnoticed however; Sabina

stands, raising her voice so that it carries above the song.

SABINA

Congratulations princess Aeronwen. An impressive performance.

AERONWEN

Performance?

SABINA

You have trained with these warriors. You know how they fight. How they move. You know their strengths, their weaknesses -

AERONWEN

What are you saying?

SABINA

That your *show* lacked stakes.

The anger rises visibly in Aeronwen, who struggles to contain her rage.

SABINA (CONT'D)

But a challenge against Rome, say ...

Sabina's eyes glitter with malice as she turns her head towards Decarius. Suddenly all eyes are on him. He looks in horror from Sabina to Aeronwen.

PRASUTAGUS

Now, hold on a moment.

SABINA

A friendly challenge of course, King Prasutagus. For we are allies here, aren't we, *princess*? What do you say? Icenium versus Rome?

Before Aeronwen can give her answer the crowd are chanting; the mix of voices pronounce "I-ce-ni" and "Ae-ron-wen".

Jodac's raven suddenly takes wing; circling high above.

FOLLOW TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - FIELDS - CONTINUOUS

RAVEN POV:

We fly over the Royal Stand to see the Icenii/Auxiliaries group and the Roman Legionaries running to clash in flame and shadow.

AERONWEN (V.O.)
(already knowing)
And your champion would be?

Led by MAELO, more Iceni emerge from the grass and the night, coming to the support of their friends and comrades.

SABINA (V.O.)
Decarius, of course.

We dive down towards the ground and come so close that we have to twist and turn through the long grass, weaving between the warriors and soldiers.

We turn back towards the fighting circles and pick up above the tall grass at the last moment, just skirting the top of the Royal Stand with hairs-breadth precision.

FOLLOW TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - THE FIGHTING CIRCLES - CONTINUOUS

RAVEN POV:

We come to rest within the central circle.

The flames of the torches create an otherworldly glow as DECARIUS and AERONWEN make their way uneasily to stand inside the circle.

RAVEN POV - OFF:

Aeronwen and Decarius clasp forearms, silently communicating all that they cannot express in words.

AERONWEN (V.O.)
(quietly, seething)
Decarius is Iceni.

Aeronwen regards Decarius. His face fills her vision; he seems to frown.

FLASH TO:

EXT. ICENIUM - DAY X (PAST) - A MEMORY.

YOUNG DECARIUS
I will always be here.

RETURN:

EXT. ICENIUM - THE FIGHTING CIRCLES - AS BEFORE

SABINA (V.O.)
(whispered with venom)
Is he?

FLASH TO:

EXT. CAMULODUNUM - BEFORE THE PRINCIPIA BUILDING - MEMORY

DECARIUS is holding AERONWEN; battered and disheveled in the courtyard.

AERONWEN
(distraught)
You are a soldier of Rome.

RETURN:

EXT. ICENIUM - THE FIGHTING CIRCLES - AS BEFORE

Aeronwen draws in a breath and the pair separate, taking up their weapons. They each move to the edge of the circle and fall into a defensive stance. Around them the chanting continues with the addition of "Ro-ma, Ro-ma!" becoming more and more audible.

ANGLE ON:

Perhaps six feet from the pair, Jodac's raven caws loudly; bobbing from foot to foot and stretching out its massive wings.

We see reflected in its glassy eye the image of Aeronwen surrounded by flames as the Raven continues to caw ominously and the crowds continue to chant.

Both Aeronwen and Decarius hold their spears high and begin to run towards one another.

The Raven caws loudly with an awful finality. It leaps up, spreading its wings for flight and blue/black feathers smother our view.

SNAP TO BLACK.

The end.