

ENGLISH LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS



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Episode #143

The Great Siege of Malta

23rd Mar, 2021

[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:22] I'm Alastair Budge and today we are going to be talking about The Great [Siege¹](#) of Malta.

[00:00:30] It's often [portrayed²](#) as the story of East vs West, of Islam vs. Christianity, and of Goliath vs. David.

¹ a military operation in which enemy forces surround a town or building

² described

The Great Siege of Malta

[00:00:40] There are elements of all that in the story of the [Siege](#) of Malta, but it is also the story of two [ageing](#)³ military leaders, of the role of [morale](#)⁴ in battle, and of the importance of keeping [hydrated](#)⁵ on a small mediterranean island.

[00:01:00] And it's also just a fantastic story.

[00:01:03] We have got a lot to get through in today's episode - So, let's jump right into it.

[00:01:10] The islands of Malta sit just under 100 kilometres south of Sicily.

[00:01:17] There are, technically speaking, several islands, the main ones being Malta and Gozo, but I'll refer to it all here as Malta, [for sake of ease](#)⁶.

[00:01:30] If you've been there, you will know that it is very small, just 316 kilometres squared, about half the size of Madrid.

[00:01:40] It was to be on this small island that one of the most amazing battles in Mediterranean history took place in the summer of the year 1565, a battle that is now referred to as The Great [Siege](#) of Malta.

³ getting older

⁴ the mental and emotional condition

⁵ having enough water

⁶ to make it simpler or easier

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[00:01:57] Malta, given that it was such a small island but in such a [strategic](#)⁷ location in the centre of the Mediterranean, and because it didn't really have any [sizable](#)⁸ military at all, had been occupied by various different rulers and forces over the course of its history, from the Phoenecians to the Byzantines, then the Arabs and the Normans.

[00:02:23] In 1530, the islands of Malta were given to a religious order called The Knights of St John.

[00:02:31] This religious order, which contained Knights from all over Europe, traced its roots back to the 1060s, in Amalfi, in Italy.

[00:02:42] In 1099, the Knights of the order had set up a hospital in Jerusalem, to care for [wounded](#)⁹ Crusaders, which gave them another name you might have heard them referred to as - the Knights Hospitaller.

[00:02:57] After being [kicked out](#)¹⁰ of Jerusalem in the 1290s, they then settled on the island of Rhodes, where they stayed for just over 200 years before being [kicked out](#) again and arriving in Malta in 1530.

⁷ of great importance, usually regarding military operations

⁸ large, considerable

⁹ injured, hurt

¹⁰ pushed away

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[00:03:14] The Knights were allowed to have the entire island for the rent of one Maltese [falcon¹¹](#) per year, one bird, which was payable to the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V.

[00:03:28] Meanwhile, further to the east, lay the Ottoman empire, one of the world's most powerful empires, and importantly, an Islamic one, which was at that time [the sworn enemy¹²](#) of Christianity.

[00:03:44] The Ottoman Empire [originated¹³](#) in modern day Turkey, but its [tentacles¹⁴](#) [stretched¹⁵](#) across huge [swathes¹⁶](#) of central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

[00:03:59] It was led, at the time, by a man called Suleiman The Magnificent, who was the most powerful of the Ottoman emperors, and commanded an empire that [oversaw¹⁷](#) 25 million people.

¹¹ a wild bird of prey with pointed wings and a long tail

¹² the main, hated enemy

¹³ came from, had its beginning

¹⁴ long flexible limbs of animals, used here to show the reach of influence and control

¹⁵ reached as far as possible in a particular direction

¹⁶ large areas of land

¹⁷ watched and controlled

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[00:04:14] Although he is known in the West as Suleiman The Magnificent, in Turkey he is known as Suleiman The [Lawgiver](#)¹⁸, and is known mainly for his ability as a skilled governor and leader of an empire, rather than as a [ferocious](#)¹⁹ warrior.

[00:04:32] From his [throne](#)²⁰ in Istanbul, Suleiman ruled over his [vast](#)²¹ empire.

[00:04:38] The small island of Malta was one and a half thousand kilometres away.

[00:04:43] Neither its native [inhabitants](#)²² nor the Knights living there posed much of a direct threat to King Suleiman, yet in 1565 a [fleet](#)²³ of 40,000 Ottomans soldiers [set off](#)²⁴ on a mission to capture the island and destroy the Knights living there.

[00:05:04] Why?

[00:05:06] Interestingly enough, historians are a little divided about the actual reasons Suleiman decided to set sail for Malta.

[00:05:16] The Knights of St John were a little bit annoying.

¹⁸ the one who creates laws

¹⁹ cruel and violent

²⁰ the usually impressive chair used by kings and queens

²¹ extremely big

²² the people who live somewhere

²³ the ships in a country's navy

²⁴ began a journey

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[00:05:20] They would capture Ottoman trade ships on the route between Venice and the east, and in the summer of 1564, a year before the [siege](#), they captured a particularly valuable Ottoman ship which was on the way to Venice.

[00:05:38] So, there is one theory that the Knights of St John were a bit annoying, a [thorn in the side](#)²⁵ of the powerful emperor.

[00:05:47] The other theory goes that Suleiman was interested in Malta's value as a [strategic outpost](#)²⁶, a valuable point on the map, and he could use this as a base for further attacks into Sicily, up through Calabria, and as a route into Europe.

[00:06:07] From a strategic point of view, Malta is in an excellent location.

[00:06:13] It has a very deep natural [harbour](#)²⁷, so it's a good place to leave large ships. And from there you can relatively easily defend the Eastern Mediterranean, from ships wanting to travel from west to east.

²⁵ something annoying that causes problems

²⁶ a military camp or position far from the main army

²⁷ an area of water next to the coast where ships can stay safe

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[00:06:30] What Suleiman's true [intentions](#)²⁸ were perhaps we will never know, but he was a [shrewd](#)²⁹ leader, and the decision to attack Malta would not have been one he would have taken without careful [consideration](#)³⁰, and [adequate](#)³¹ planning.

[00:06:46] And so it was, on March 22nd 1565 one of the largest Turkish naval forces ever put together set sail from Constantinople, west, with Malta as their final destination.

[00:07:02] Accounts differ about exactly how large the invading forces were, but most estimates are around 40,000 men, and somewhere between 130 and 300 ships.

[00:07:19] The largest of these ships could have held 700 men. They did have sails, which obviously came in useful when the wind was blowing in the right direction.

[00:07:30] But they also had [vast](#) quantities of slaves who would pull huge [oars](#)³².

²⁸ things someone wants and plans to do

²⁹ clever, with a good judgement of things

³⁰ careful thought

³¹ good enough, efficient

³² long poles used for moving a boat

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[00:07:38] The Ottomans were great **takers**³³ of slaves, and one of the unfortunate destinies if you were taken prisoner by the Ottoman army was to become a **galley**³⁴ slave, someone tasked with **rowing**³⁵ these huge ships across the seas.

[00:07:55] A man who knew this all too well was Jean De la Valette, the **ageing**³⁶ Grand Master of The Knights of Malta.

[00:08:04] He had actually been taken prisoner himself by Barbary pirates, allies of the Ottomans, and been kept as a **galley** slave for a year, before being freed in a prisoner exchange.

[00:08:19] No doubt this was an experience that was hard to forget, and Jean De la Valette knew that if he or any of his men were to be taken prisoner by the Ottomans, this would be a **fate**³⁷ that would **await**³⁸ them, if they were lucky.

[00:08:35] It's worth pausing briefly to explain a little bit about the geography of the island of Malta, and explaining where things were at the time of the Great Siege.

³³ people who take possession of something by capturing

³⁴ a kind of ship used in The Middle Ages

³⁵ moving a boat by using oars

³⁶ getting older

³⁷ the outcome of a situation of which there is no control

³⁸ wait for

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[00:08:47] The capital was a town called Mdina, to the west, at the highest point of the island.

[00:08:54] The majority of the west coast of Malta is [characterised](#)³⁹ by high and dangerous [cliffs](#)⁴⁰ - not a place for ships to land safely.

[00:09:05] To the east of the island, which is only about 15km wide, is a deep natural [harbour](#), with a [peninsula](#)⁴¹, a sort of finger that sticks out into the sea.

[00:09:18] The Knights had built several forts in this area to protect the harbour from invaders.

[00:09:24] They were pretty well-built forts, but they also have the natural advantage that the land [shoots up](#)⁴² almost vertically meaning not only were the defending soldiers higher up and it was easier to fire cannons and weapons down onto invading forces, but it was also very difficult for an enemy ship to land safely and for soldiers to get up to the fort.

³⁹ having as a typical quality or feature

⁴⁰ a high area of rock with a steep side

⁴¹ a piece of land almost surrounded by water

⁴² stands tall

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[00:09:54] On the other hand, to the south of the island there are nice, [shallow](#)⁴³ [bays](#)⁴⁴, perfect for ships to land and for forces to come [ashore](#)⁴⁵.

[00:10:05] This was, of course, where the Ottoman forces [disembarked](#)⁴⁶, where they came off their ships and set their feet onto Maltese [soil](#)⁴⁷ on May 19th 1565.

[00:10:17] Their arrival did not take the Knights by surprise, they knew they were coming.

[00:10:23] Jean De la Valette had prepared the forts on the island, and outside the forts, in the settlements that the Ottomans were likely to pass through, Jean De la Valette had ordered for the wells to be poisoned, so that there was no drinking water, and for any food to be destroyed.

[00:10:43] The defending forces were seriously [outnumbered](#)⁴⁸ - there were reportedly around 700 Knights and around 8000 Maltese soldiers facing the 40,000 strong Ottoman army.

⁴³ of little depth

⁴⁴ parts of the sea surrounded by land on three sides, natural harbours

⁴⁵ towards the land coming from the sea

⁴⁶ left the ship

⁴⁷ ground

⁴⁸ less in number (when someone is outnumbered)

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[00:10:59] Even before the Ottoman forces reached land, there was disagreement about exactly which part of Malta they should attack first.

[00:11:08] This disagreement was between the two main commanders, Mustafa Pasha, who was in charge of the land forces, and a man called Piyale Pasha, who was in charge of the navy.

[00:11:21] The naval commander, Piyale Pasha won the argument, and the Ottoman forces marched north to attack a fort on the [peninsula](#) to the east of the island, called Fort St Elmo.

[00:11:35] It was believed that they could take this fort easily, just in a couple of days.

[00:11:41] In addition to the commander of the land forces and the commander of the navy, the Ottoman forces were joined by another supreme commander, an 80 year old man called Dragut, who was a [fearless⁴⁹](#) Ottoman military champion and was once called "the greatest pirate warrior of all time".

[00:12:02] To make matters even more confusing, both the commander of the navy and the commander of the army were told by Suleiman the Magnificent that they should ultimately answer to Dragut, so the [ageing](#) pirate Dragut was in charge of everything.

⁴⁹ showing no fear, brave

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[00:12:18] The fort proved to be not nearly as easy to capture as the Ottomans had thought, and it was only on the 27th of June, over a month after the attack first started, that they managed to take the fort.

[00:12:35] A few Maltese soldiers managed to escape, swimming across the [bay](#)⁵⁰ to the other side, but almost all the other men, both Knights of St John and Maltese soldiers were [slaughtered](#)⁵¹, around 1,500 in total, leaving only a handful as prisoners.

[00:12:54] But while this was a [strategic](#) loss for the Knights, the attack on the fort had cost the Ottoman forces dearly, with an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 Ottoman soldiers dead.

[00:13:09] And the loss of one particular Ottoman was even more [tragic](#)⁵².

[00:13:14] Dragut, the supreme commander, the greatest pirate warrior of all time was killed in the attack.

[00:13:21] He had been arguing with his soldiers about how to direct a [cannon](#)⁵³. The [cannon](#) fired, its ball knocked off part of a wall and killed Dragut [outright](#)⁵⁴, he had been killed accidentally by his own men.

⁵⁰ a part of the sea surrounded by land on three sides, a natural harbour

⁵¹ killed in a cruel way and in large numbers

⁵² very sad

⁵³ a large gun shooting metal balls

⁵⁴ completely or immediately

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[00:13:38] This was a great shock to the Ottoman forces, and just as it damaged their [morale](#), it was a great [morale boost](#)⁵⁵ to the Knights and the Maltese.

[00:13:49] The Knights were a religious order, and they saw this as a sign from God that he was on their side, and he was supporting them in their fight against the Muslim invaders.

[00:14:03] But even though the Ottomans had lost their supreme commander, as well as up to 8,000 of their men, they still greatly [outnumbered](#)⁵⁶ the defenders of the island, who by this time had retreated to another fort on the other side of the [harbour](#), as well as to the poorly defended capital city, Mdina, 15 km to the west.

[00:14:27] To try to [terrify](#)⁵⁷ the Knights into a surrender, to try to make them give up, Mustafa Pasha, the commander of the land forces, ordered for all of the Knights who were taken prisoner at Fort St Elmo to be [executed](#)⁵⁸, for their heads to be [chopped off](#)⁵⁹.

⁵⁵ improvement or increase

⁵⁶ had more in number (when someone outnumbers someone else)

⁵⁷ frighten very much

⁵⁸ killed as a legal punishment

⁵⁹ removed by cutting off

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[00:14:46] Their bodies were put onto fake [crucifixes](#)⁶⁰, fake crosses, and pushed out to sea, across the [harbour](#) to the fort that the remaining Knights and Maltese forces were defending.

[00:15:00] As a revenge for this, Jean De la Valette ordered for all of the Ottoman prisoners they were holding to be [executed](#), and for their heads to be used as [cannonballs](#)⁶¹ and fired back across the [bay](#) at the Ottomans.

[00:15:16] The entire Great [Siege](#) was, in many ways, a battle of [morale](#), with both sides trying to scare the other, and damage the [morale](#) of their troops.

[00:15:29] The Knights were offered the opportunity to [surrender](#)⁶², but Jean De la Valette [rejected](#)⁶³ it, [presumably](#)⁶⁴ knowing that a [surrender](#) would mean becoming a [galley](#) slave if you were very lucky, and probably something very [unpleasant](#)⁶⁵ if you weren't.

[00:15:46] What's more, summer was approaching, and if you have been to Malta in the summer you will know it gets very hot, and there isn't a huge amount of water.

⁶⁰ models of a cross

⁶¹ round metal balls fired from a cannon

⁶² stop fighting and accept defeat

⁶³ refused to accept

⁶⁴ saying something depending on what one knows without being sure about it

⁶⁵ not enjoyable at all

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[00:15:58] For the Knights, they had [ample](#)⁶⁶ supplies, they had enough food and water, and they could almost just [wait it out](#)⁶⁷.

[00:16:07] But the Ottomans didn't.

[00:16:09] They needed to make progress, and fast.

[00:16:13] After several failed attempts to take the fort on the southern [harbour](#), Fort St Angelo, they launched a huge attack in mid-August, which almost broke through the Knights' [defences](#)⁶⁸ and took the fort, which was being [guarded](#)⁶⁹ by the 70-year-old Jean De la Valette personally.

[00:16:31] The Ottomans were [nervously](#)⁷⁰ looking over their shoulders by this point, as they knew that a large force of [reinforcements](#)⁷¹ was on its way to help the knights but they didn't know exactly when it would arrive.

⁶⁶ more than enough

⁶⁷ wait until a hard period is over

⁶⁸ means and method of defending an area

⁶⁹ protected

⁷⁰ in a worried and anxious manner

⁷¹ extra forces sent to increase the size of an army

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[00:16:46] A smaller force had arrived, called Il Piccolo Soccorso, at the start of July. This consisted of some soldiers from Sicily, and although it was a help to the defending forces, it wasn't enough to completely [see off](#)⁷² the Ottomans.

[00:17:05] Throughout the rest of Europe, leaders were awaiting news from the [Siege](#), fearing that Malta would fall and be taken over by the Ottomans, who would be dangerously close to Christian Europe.

[00:17:18] Indeed, even back in England, Queen Elizabeth The First wrote "If the Turks should [prevail](#)⁷³ against the Isle of Malta, it is [uncertain](#)⁷⁴ what further [peril](#)⁷⁵ might follow to the rest of [Christendom](#)⁷⁶".

[00:17:34] The Knights knew this, and they [appealed](#)⁷⁷ to European monarchs for [reinforcements](#), for more soldiers to help them defeat the Ottoman invaders.

[00:17:45] They didn't just sit still though, they used some [cunning](#)⁷⁸ tactics to confuse the Ottomans, and trick them into thinking that [reinforcements](#) were on their way.

⁷² push an enemy away

⁷³ get control, prove more powerful

⁷⁴ not sure

⁷⁵ danger

⁷⁶ the Christian world

⁷⁷ made a request

⁷⁸ clever and with trickery

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[00:17:57] One example of how they did this was by allowing an Ottoman prisoner to [overhear⁷⁹](#) the news of huge forces arriving, then allowing him to return to his camp, where of course he told his commanders what he had heard.

[00:18:14] The one thing was, there was no big army arriving, or at least not at that point.

[00:18:20] It had already got to September, the Ottoman forces were [exhausted⁸⁰](#) and they needed to set sail East before Autumn arrived to avoid difficult sailing [conditions⁸¹](#).

[00:18:33] Also the Knights and the Maltese forces were [exhausted](#), and although they had managed so far to resist, they were still waiting for the [reinforcement⁸²](#) Europe had promised.

[00:18:46] Then, on September 7th [reinforcements](#) did finally arrive from Sicily, the so-called 'Grande Soccorso' 'The Great Relief'.

[00:18:55] This was an army of 7,000 men, a mixture of Spanish and Italian soldiers, sent to support the Knights. They were trained soldiers, they were ready to fight, and perhaps most importantly they were fresh.

⁷⁹ hear something without meaning to and without intention

⁸⁰ extremely tired

⁸¹ state of something, circumstances

⁸² extra forces sent to increase the size of an army

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[00:19:11] The [demoralised](#)⁸³ Ottoman troops, [weary](#)⁸⁴ after 4 months of solid fighting, were no match for them, and the very next day they retreated, [clambering](#)⁸⁵ into the remaining ships and sailing away on the 13th of September.

[00:19:30] Although this was [hailed](#)⁸⁶ very much as a victory for the Knights, a [triumph](#)⁸⁷ of West vs. East, of Christianity vs. Islam, and of David vs. Goliath, it came very close to being a very different result.

[00:19:47] If the Ottomans had managed to take control of Malta, they would have had a [stronghold](#)⁸⁸ in the Mediterranean, been able to defend the eastern part of the sea, and that part of the world may have looked very different to what it does now.

[00:20:05] But they didn't, and the Maltese have never forgotten it - The Great [Siege](#) of Malta is a source of huge [pride](#)⁸⁹ for local Maltese, and it is still to this day quoted as a

⁸³ having lost confidence and hope

⁸⁴ very tired

⁸⁵ climbing up with difficulty

⁸⁶ considered enthusiastically

⁸⁷ a great victory

⁸⁸ a position that is strongly defended

⁸⁹ a feeling of confidence and satisfaction coming from some personal success or from some specific location

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way of saying “we Maltese can do anything - we beat off the Turks in 1565 - we may be small but don’t [underestimate](#)⁹⁰ us”.

[00:20:28] That tiny [peninsula](#), the finger sticking out into the sea where the first [ferocious](#) battle was fought is now the capital of Malta, called Valletta, after Jean De la Valette, the grandmaster believed by many to have saved Malta from the Ottomans.

[00:20:46] The 8th of September, the day that the Ottoman forces turned around and [retreated](#)⁹¹, is a national holiday, Victory Day.

[00:20:55] It actually [recalls](#)⁹² the end of three historical [sieges](#)⁹³ made on the Maltese [archipelago](#)⁹⁴: the Great [Siege](#) of Malta we are talking about; the [Siege](#) of Valletta by the French Blockade ending in 1800 and the [Siege](#) of Malta during the Second World War by the Axis forces ending in 1943....but these are two great stories for another episode.

⁹⁰ think of something as worse than it is

⁹¹ went away from their enemies

⁹² brings into mind

⁹³ military operations in which enemy forces surround a town or building

⁹⁴ an area of sea in which there are many small islands

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[00:21:19] Everywhere you go in Malta you can buy little [souvenir](#)⁹⁵ Knights of St John, reminding you of the events of 1565, and still today in Turkey the Great [Siege](#) is taught in military [strategy](#)⁹⁶ schools as an example of military mistakes not to make again.

[00:21:39] Soon after the Knights' victory, the news of the Siege quickly travelled all over Europe, really [rejuvenating](#)⁹⁷ the order of the Knights of St John. Donations [flooded in](#)⁹⁸, with people [keen](#)⁹⁹ to support these men who were viewed as great defenders of Christianity.

[00:21:58] This money went towards great palaces, forts and churches, and went towards building the new capital city, Valletta.

[00:22:07] Even almost 200 years after The Great [Siege](#), Voltaire, the great French Enlightenment thinker, wrote “Nothing is more known than The [Siege](#) of Malta”.

[00:22:19] And while you might not have known what Voltaire was talking about 20 minutes ago, at least now you know a little bit more about this fascinating story.

[00:22:30] OK then, that is it for today's episode on The Great Siege of Malta.

⁹⁵ a thing kept as a reminder of a place

⁹⁶ the art of planning a course of action during a war

⁹⁷ giving new life and energy

⁹⁸ arrived in great numbers

⁹⁹ very interested in

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[00:22:36] If you have been paying attention in some of the other episodes, you may remember that I have actually been living in this little island of Malta for the past 4 years, and so The Great Siege is a subject I'm quite [familiar](#)¹⁰⁰ with.

[00:22:50] It is an amazing story, and knowing about it really helps you understand the Maltese [psyche](#)¹⁰¹, and helps you better understand the country.

[00:23:00] So, I hope you enjoyed it.

[00:23:02] As always, I would love to know what you thought of this episode. Did you know about the Great Siege of Malta?

[00:23:09] And especially for the Turkish members out there, what do you think of this event? How common is knowledge of it in Turkish history?

[00:23:18] I would love to know.

[00:23:19] You can head right in to our community forum, which is at community.leonardoenglish.com and get chatting away to other curious minds.

[00:23:29] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:23:34] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

¹⁰⁰ having good knowledge of

¹⁰¹ the mind, feelings, beliefs and way of life of a group

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The Great Siege of Malta

[END OF EPISODE]

Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Siege	a military operation in which enemy forces surround a town or building
Portrayed	described
Ageing	getting older
Morale	the mental and emotional condition
Hydrated	having enough water
For sake of ease	to make it simpler or easier
Strategic	of great importance, usually regarding military operations
Sizable	large, considerable
Wounded	injured, hurt
Kicked out	pushed away
Falcon	a wild bird of prey with pointed wings and a long tail
The sworn enemy	the main, hated enemy
Originated	came from, had its beginning

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Tentacles	long flexible limbs of animals, used here to show the reach of influence and control
Stretched	reached as far as possible in a particular direction
Swathes	large areas of land
Oversaw	watched and controlled
Lawgiver	the one who creates laws
Ferocious	cruel and violent
Throne	the usually impressive chair used by kings and queens
Vast	extremely big
Inhabitants	the people who live somewhere
Fleet	the ships in a country's navy
Set off	began a journey
Thorn in the side	something annoying that causes problems
Outpost	a military camp or position far from the main army
Harbour	an area of water next to the coast where ships can stay safe
Intentions	things someone wants and plans to do

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Shrewd	clever, with a good judgement of things
Consideration	careful thought
Adequate	good enough, efficient
Oars	long poles used for moving a boat
Takers	people who take possession of something by capturing
Galley	a kind of ship used in The Middle Ages
Rowing	moving a boat by using oars
Ageing	getting older
Fate	the outcome of a situation of which there is no control
Await	wait for
Characterised	having as a typical quality or feature
Cliffs	a high area of rock with a steep side
Peninsula	a piece of land almost surrounded by water
Shoots up	stands tall
Shallow	of little depth

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Bays	parts of the sea surrounded by land on three sides, natural harbours
Ashore	towards the land coming from the sea
Disembarked	left the ship
Soil	ground
Outnumbered	less in number (when someone is outnumbered)
Fearless	showing no fear, brave
Bay	a part of the sea surrounded by land on three sides, a natural harbour
Slaughtered	killed in a cruel way and in large numbers
Tragic	very sad
Cannon	a large gun shooting metal balls
Outright	completely or immediately
Boost	improvement or increase
Outnumbered	had more in number (when someone outnumbers someone else)
Terrify	frighten very much
Executed	killed as a legal punishment

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Chopped off	removed by cutting off
Crucifixes	models of a cross
Cannonballs	round metal balls fired from a cannon
Surrender	stop fighting and accept defeat
Rejected	refused to accept
Presumably	saying something depending on what one knows without being sure about it
Unpleasant	not enjoyable at all
Ample	more than enough
Wait it out	wait until a hard period is over
Defences	means and method of defending an area
Guarded	protected
Nervously	in a worried and anxious manner
Reinforcements	extra forces sent to increase the size of an army
See off	push an enemy away
Prevail	get control, prove more powerful

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Uncertain	not sure
Peril	danger
Christendom	the Christian world
Appealed	made a request
Cunning	clever and with trickery
Overhear	hear something without meaning to and without intention
Exhausted	extremely tired
Conditions	state of something, circumstances
Reinforcement	extra forces sent to increase the size of an army
Demoralised	having lost confidence and hope
Weary	very tired
Clambering	climbing up with difficulty
Hailed	considered enthusiastically
Triumph	a great victory
Stronghold	a position that is strongly defended

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Pride	a feeling of confidence and satisfaction coming from some personal success or from some specific location
Underestimate	think of something as worse than it is
Retreated	went away from their enemies
Recalls	brings into mind
Sieges	military operations in which enemy forces surround a town or building
Archipelago	an area of sea in which there are many small islands
Souvenir	a thing kept as a reminder of a place
Strategy	the art of planning a course of action during a war
Rejuvenating	giving new life and energy
Flooded in	arrived in great numbers
Keen	very interested in
Familiar	having good knowledge of
Psyche	the mind, feelings, beliefs and way of life of a group

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We'd love to get your feedback on this podcast.

What did you like? What could we do better?

What did you struggle to understand?

Let us know in the forum community.leonardoenglish.com