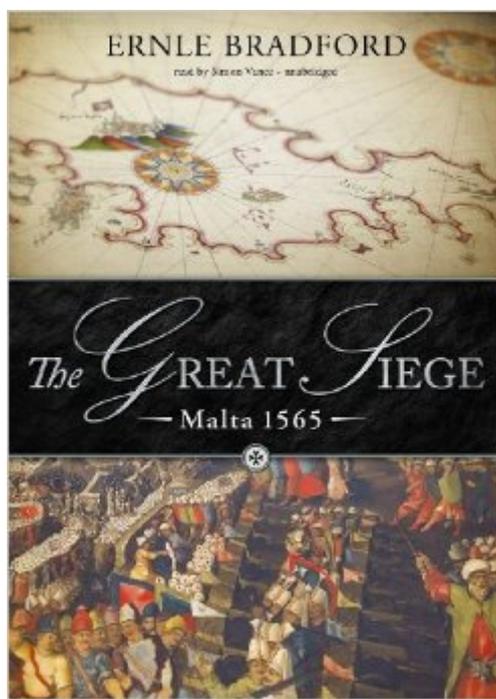


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The Great Siege: Malta 1565



Synopsis

[Read by Simon Vance] Suleiman the Magnificent, sultan of the Ottoman Empire and the most powerful ruler in the world, was determined to conquer Europe. Only one thing stood in his way: a dot of an island in the Mediterranean called Malta, which was occupied by the Knights of Saint John, the cream of the warriors of the Holy Roman Empire. A clash of civilizations was shaping up, the likes of which had not been seen since Persia invaded Greece. Determined to capture Malta and use its port to launch operations against Europe, Suleiman sent an armada and an overwhelming army. A few thousand defenders in Fort Saint Elmo fought to the last man, enduring cruel hardships. When the Turks captured the fort, they took no prisoners and mutilated the defenders' bodies. Grand Master La Vallette of the Knights reciprocated by decapitating his Turkish prisoners and using their heads to cannonade the enemy. Then the battle for Malta began in earnest: no quarter asked, none given. The Siege of Malta is not merely a gripping tale of brutality, courage, and tenacity but the saga of two mighty civilizations struggling for domination of the known world.

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Customer Reviews

In the mid 1500's the Ottoman Turk Suleiman the Magnificent was a septagenarian, but he still was the most powerful ruler in the world. He had carved out an empire in the Middle East, and he wanted to expand it into Europe. A small group of men on a miniscule island in the Mediterranean didn't exactly stand in his way, but they were a bloody nuisance. They were the Knights of St. John of the Hospital, a relic of the Crusades. Driven from the Holy Land, they had settled in Rhodes and become pirates preying on Moslem shipping. The Turks had twice beseiged Rhodes and finally

driven out the pesky Knights, but the Knights took refuge on Malta and continued to be a thorn in Suleiman's flesh. Suleiman decided to destroy them, capture Malta, and use its port as a base of operations against Europe. He sent an armada and an army to do the job, and a few thousand defenders faced off against tens of thousands of invaders. The Turks decided to capture the harbor first so that their ships would have a safe haven against possible storms. A small fort called Fort St. Elmo stood in their way. They figured they could overwhelm the Fort in less than a week, occupy the harbor, and the rest of the island would soon fall to their attack. When we think of famous last stands, we think of the Alamo and Thermopylae. The Spartans withstood the Persians for 3 days at Thermopylae. The Texans withstood the Mexicans for 13 at the Alamo. Fort St. Elmo stood for an entire month before it finally succumbed. The defenders of Fort St. Elmo fought stubbornly and to the last man, enduring unimaginable hardship, and they wrought terrible slaughter on the Turks. When the fort fell, the Turks took no prisoners and mutilated the bodies of the fallen defenders.

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