



The Siege of Rhodes

Nanami Shiono

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The Siege of Rhodes Nanami Shiono
Knighthood's Final Hour?

By the early sixteenth century, Rhodes, the "Isle of Blossoming Roses," had become a thorn in the Ottoman Empire's side. Located only eleven miles from the coast of Asia Minor, the island was controlled by the Order of the Knights of St. John (later known as the Knights of Malta), former crusaders who by then had two specialties: tending to ailing Christians and pirating Muslim ships.

In 1522, Sultan Suleiman I resolved to put an end to it and unleashed a force of a hundred thousand troops to besiege the island. Rhodes's proximity to Ottoman territory ensured that the Turkish soldiers would be well armed, well fed, and quickly replaced if killed or injured. Facing them was a force of only six hundred knights, fifteen hundred mercenaries and three thousand native Rhodians.

In this, the second installment in *The East Mediterranean Trilogy*, Nanami Shiono weaves another rich and fascinating narrative around a key battle between Islam and Christendom. An inspiring portrait of nobility and courage in the face of overwhelming odds, it also offers a rare glimpse into the history of one of the most important knightly orders, one that helped establish the tradition of medical care in the West as we know it today.

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