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The ARMADA
Narrated by Charlton Griffin ✨



Information, Key Figures & Maps

The Armada by Garrett Mattingly is the most highly esteemed English language history of the mighty invasion force known as The Spanish Armada. In a concise manner, Mattingly reduces to layman’s terminology the complex tangle of 16th century foreign policy, religious fanaticism, court intrigue, aristocratic jealousy, and intricate military strategy. In a highly theatrical opening, we witness the event that finally precipitates this gigantic naval enterprise. On the morning of February 8, 1587 a hasty assemblage of English aristocracy was summoned to Fotheringay by the crown to witness an execution. A few hours later, Mary Stuart, the Queen of Scotland, bustled into the hall, placed her head upon a chopping block, and became for Catholics everywhere “The Martyred Queen.”



Elizabeth I
by George Gower, c.1588

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Seventeen months later, in August of 1588, a Spanish fleet of 130 ships departed from La Coruña under the command of the Duke of Medina Sidonia. Its purpose was to rendezvous with the Spanish army at the Dutch port of Sluys. At this point, the fleet was to act as a screen while the Spanish army was shuttled across the English Channel in barges. Upon landing, the Spanish invasion force – the finest professional army in the world led by the finest military commander in Europe – would march to London, seize the crown from Elizabeth, avenge the execution of her Catholic Majesty, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, and return the English crown to a Catholic ruler.

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Philip II of Spain
by Alonso Sánchez Coello, c.1565



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But there was one problem: the English fleet. Though much smaller than the Spanish fleet, it was a demonstrably superior fighting force of sailors, ships, naval technology, and guns. Its admirals, among them Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins, were unsurpassed. And, the Spanish admiralty was acutely aware of this. They hoped to overwhelm the English fleet by sheer weight of numbers, or at least keep it at bay long enough to allow their invincible Spanish army, led by the brilliant Duke of Parma, to be brought over to the English coast from Holland. On paper, it looked like a solid plan. As the Duke of Parma realized, however, the logistic details were going to be formidable. But Philip II of Spain insisted on sticking to a strict timetable for his “enterprise.” In order for the Armada to succeed, everything must be timed to perfection, and the tactics had to be flawlessly executed. The world’s first modern naval engagement was in the making, and neither side had the foggiest idea how to fight such a battle.

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There were four principal nations involved in the great struggle: England, Spain, France, and the Netherlands. As events unfolded, each of these participants were to play crucial roles, some from behind the scenes. In the end, it became a logistics nightmare for both sides...and it was to change naval warfare forever. Discover in this recording the marvelous heroism and endurance of Spaniard and Englishman. And, discover the incredible narrative power of Garrett Mattingly’s dramatic, Pulitzer Prize-winning history, **The Armada**.

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KEY FIGURES

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Sir Francis Drake
by Gheeraerts the Younger, c. 1591



Henry III of France
by Étienne Dumonstier, c. 1578



**Alessandro Farnese,
Duke of Parma**
by Otto van Veen, c. 1585



Sir John Hawkins
c. 1581



**Alonso Pérez de
Guzmán, 7th Duke
of Medina Sidonia**



The course of the Spanish Armada as it made its way through the English Channel. Beginning at Plymouth, there were five encounters between the two adversaries. After disasters at Brulotes and Gravelines, the Spanish fleet sailed away into the North Sea.





After clearing the English Channel, the battered Spanish fleet limped into the North Sea and then around the British Isles. A good portion of the fleet came to grief on the wild Irish coast.





A colored engraving based on the famous series of Armada Tapestries from 1595 which once hung in the English Parliament. This particular engraving depicts the Spanish Armada drawn up in the famous crescent battle formation.





The track of the Armada around Britain and Ireland. *Map by Robert Adams, 1590.*



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