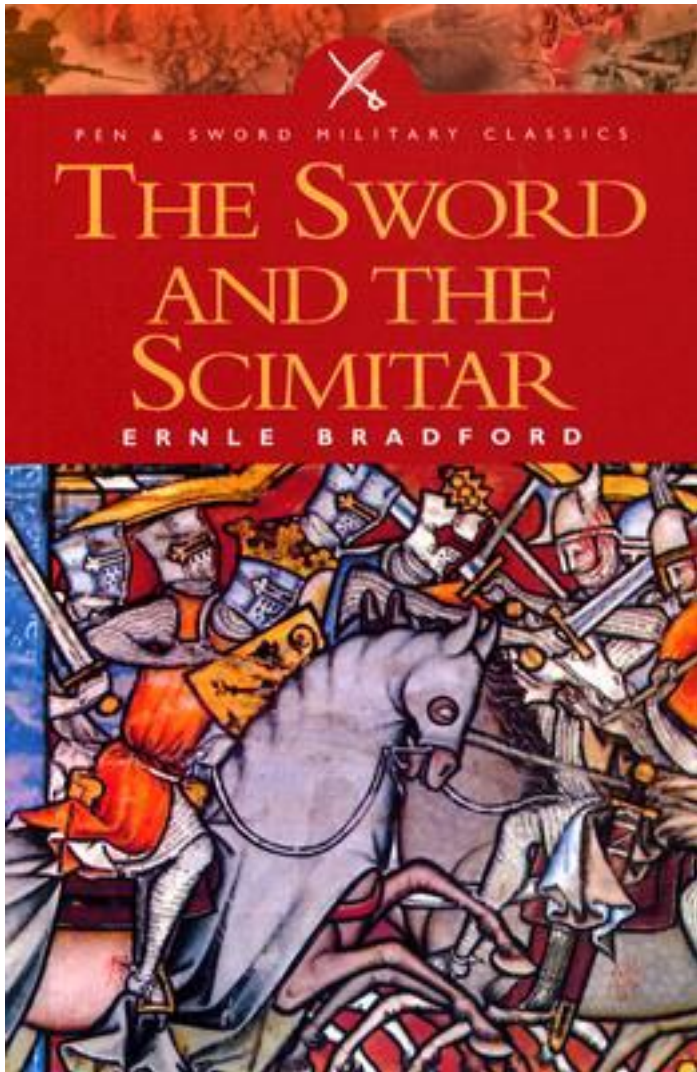


The Sword and the Scimitar



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From the cruelty of the slave markets of Algiers to the majesty of Topkapi, the sultan's seraglio in Istanbul, to the convent of the noble Knights of St. John in Malta, this is a novel of the timeless struggle between the religions and cultures of the east and west. Nico and Maria, Maltese brother and sister, are separated when young Nico is abducted by Moorish slavers. Taken to Algiers to be the personal slave of a wealthy merchant, he becomes a pawn in household politics and sets out to escape. Extraordinary events lead him to the court of Suleiman, the magnificent Sultan of the Ottomans. Maria, stranded in Malta with unsympathetic parents, makes her own plans to escape the island and find her brother. She joins a group of Jews - forced by their Christian rulers to renounce their faith - who continue their rituals clandestinely. French aristocrat Christien de Vries yearns to prove himself as a surgeon in the Order of St John, to which he was pledged as an infant but joined only as a result of a life-altering oath. These unforgettable characters find themselves caught up in the sweep of history as the Ottomans confront the Knights in the historic Siege of Malta, and the fate of Europe hangs in the balance.

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