Episode #558
General Hannibal | Rome's Greatest Enemy
18th Jul, 2025

Transcript

[00:00:05] Hello, hello, hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English, 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.

[00:00:21] I'm Alastair Budge, and today we are going to be talking about Hannibal.

[00:00:26] He was the Carthaginian general who **marched on**[1] Rome, is remembered as one of the greatest **tacticians**[2] in military history, and almost destroyed Rome two hundred years before it could declare itself an Empire.

[00:00:41] OK then, let's get started, and talk about Hannibal: Rome's Greatest Enemy.

[00:00:49] There are lots of promises you might have made as a child.

[00:00:53] A promise to your parents that you'd always **tidy**[3] your room, or that if you got a dog, you would always take it out for a walk, even if it was raining.

---

[1] attacked with an organised army

[2] people good at making battle plans

[3] clean up or put in order

[00:01:02] Maybe it was a promise to a best friend that you'd be best friends forever, or a promise to a first girlfriend or boyfriend that nothing would ever **come between**[4] you.

[00:01:14] Now, most children–and I'd have to include myself in this category–are not so good at keeping promises.

[00:01:22] Life happens, we change, and after all, it wasn't that important in the first place.

[00:01:29] But for one young boy, a promise made before his tenth birthday would be something he would spend his entire life **consumed**[5] by.

[00:01:40] According to one legend, this nine-year-old swore to forever be an enemy of Rome, or to put it more precisely, he was forced to say, "I swear so soon as age will **permit**[6]...I will use fire and **steel**[7] to **arrest**[8] the destiny of Rome."

---

[4] stop you from being close

[5] completely filled or taken over

[6] allow

[7] a strong metal that is a mixture of iron and carbon

[8] stop or end

[00:01:59] The boy's name was Hannibal.

[00:02:02] Now, to understand why a father might make his child **swear**[9] **eternal**[10]

hatred towards another state, we need to look at the world Hannibal was born into.

[00:02:15] He was born in 247 BCE in Carthage, in modern-day Tunisia.

[00:02:23] At this time, Carthage was the heart of a strong **maritime**[11] power.

[00:02:29] Its **navy**[12] dominated the western Mediterranean, its **harbours**[13] were filled

with goods from across North Africa, southern Spain, Sicily, even as far as the British

Isles.

[00:02:41] Its strength came primarily from sea trade.

[00:02:46] Rome, on the other hand, was mainly land-based.

---

[9] promise strongly

[10] lasting forever

[11] relating to the sea

[12] the part of the army that fought at sea

[13] places where ships stopped and stayed

[00:02:51] At this point, in the late third century BCE, it wasn't yet the mighty empire

you're probably picturing.

[00:02:59] It was a regional republic with control over much of the Italian **peninsula**[14].

But many of the towns and cities it had "**brought into the fold**[15]" were **resentful**[16].

[00:03:11] Some had been defeated in battle and forced into uneasy **alliances**[17].

[00:03:17] Others had been diplomatically **absorbed**[18], **sucked up**[19] by this increasingly

dominant power.

[00:03:24] The term "Rome" at this point meant a powerful, rising state, but not an

empire. Not yet, at least.

---

[14] land almost fully surrounded by water

[15] brought into the group

[16] feeling angry about being treated unfairly

[17] groups or friendships between countries

[18] taken in or made part of

[19] pulled in completely

[00:03:33] This all changed with a war that came to be called the First Punic War.

[00:03:40] It began in 264 BCE as a struggle for control over Sicily, the large, wealthy island that sat between Italy and North Africa.

[00:03:52] It was under the control of Carthage, but Rome wanted it for itself.

[00:03:58] What followed was a **brutal**[20], 23-year **conflict**[21].

[00:04:03] Rome had no navy to speak of when it began, but it built one **from scratch**[22].

[00:04:10] Carthage, the great naval power, was pushed back, **humiliated**[23], and eventually forced to sign a peace **treaty**[24] that saw it lose Sicily and pay heavy **reparations**[25].

---

[20] very cruel and violent

[21] fight or war

[22] from the beginning

[23] made to feel very ashamed or embarrassed

[24] an agreement between the countries

[25] money paid for damage caused

[00:04:22] It was embarrassing and expensive.

[00:04:26] And it wasn't only the loss of territory that was problematic.

[00:04:31] Carthage tended to rely on **mercenaries**[26]–paid-for soldiers–and at the end of the war, there were tens of thousands of these **mercenaries** who hadn't been paid and were saying, "Where's our money?".

[00:04:46] Carthage didn't have the **means**[27] to pay, the mercenaries **rose up**[28], and there was a violent rebellion that almost destroyed the city. During all of this **chaos**[29], Rome **snuck in**[30] and also took the Mediterranean islands of Sardinia and Corsica.

---

[26] soldiers paid to fight

[27] money or resources

[28] fought back or rebelled

[29] complete mess and confusion

[30] entered secretly

[00:05:04] Now, that is a very brief summary, but it's in the **aftermath**[31] of these **twin**[32] **humiliations**[33], defeat abroad and **chaos** at home, that we find Hamilcar Barca, Hannibal's father.

[00:05:20] He was a talented general and a proud Carthaginian, and, perhaps reasonably, he **blamed**[34] Rome for all of this.

[00:05:29] In his eyes, it was Rome that had **dragged**[35] Carthage into a **ruinous**[36] war.

---

[31] what happened after

[32] two very similar things

[33] events that made them feel very ashamed

[34] said it was responsible

[35] pulled slowly or with force

[36] causing great damage or loss

[00:05:34] It was Rome that had **crippled**[37] Carthaginian power and taken advantage of its internal **disarray**[38].

[00:05:42] So, when Hamilcar set off to rebuild Carthaginian influence in Spain, where the silver mines were rich and the terrain made it an ideal place to **train**[39] **troops**[40] and launch future campaigns, he took his son Hannibal with him.

[00:05:59] And before they left, so the legend goes, he made Hannibal swear that he would never be Rome's friend.

[00:06:07] Hannibal was a man–or boy at that time–who clearly kept his promises.

[00:06:15] And it would be in the Iberian Peninsula–in modern day Spain–that he would learn the skills that turned him into such a **formidable**[41] military commander.

---

[37] badly damaged or weakened

[38] disorder or confusion

[39] teach or practise to get better

[40] soldiers

[41] strong and hard to defeat

[00:06:26] Like Alexander the Great, who grew up under the **watchful**[42] eye of his father, Philip of Macedon, Hannibal spent his youth in military camps, on campaign, learning not from books but from battlefields.

[00:06:41] He saw **sieges**[43], **skirmishes**[44], the management of supplies and **morale**[45]. By his late teens, he was already commanding men. He had no formal schooling; his education was war.

[00:06:57] After the death of his father and then his brother-in-law, Hannibal took command of Carthage's forces in Iberia.

[00:07:05] He was only 26 years old, but he would prove to be more than capable.

[00:07:12] He was **charismatic**[46], brave, and cool under pressure.

---

[42] always looking and careful

[43] attacks where a place was surrounded and cut off

[44] small fights

[45] how happy or confident soldiers felt

[46] having a strong and likeable personality

[00:07:17] His men loved him. His enemies feared him.

[00:07:21] And he was a master **tactician**[47], as we will come to talk more about in a few

minutes.

[00:07:27] But even with all of that, the idea of going to war with Rome was still a bold

move, some might even say **reckless**[48].

[00:07:38] So why did he do it?

[00:07:42] Most historians believe the plan was not necessarily to destroy Rome

completely, or to conquer the city, but rather to regain the territory that Carthage had

lost after the first Punic War: specifically, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica.

[00:08:00] The **surest**[49] way to do this, Hannibal thought, was to take the fight to the

Romans, in Rome.

---

[47] someone who planned battles well

[48] not careful, involving big risks

[49] most certain or safe

[00:08:09] After a couple of years fighting in Iberia, and then the successful **siege**[50] of a city that was allied with Rome, a city called Saguntum that's just north of Valencia, the stage was set.

[00:08:21] In the spring of 218 BCE, Rome declared war on Carthage.

[00:08:28] The only question was, where would the fighting take place?

[00:08:33] The Carthaginians were in modern-day Spain; the Roman army was in modern-day Italy.

[00:08:39] Two Roman **legions**[51] were sent across the Mediterranean to face Hannibal, but when they arrived, they found that Hannibal had done something they hadn't **bargained for**[52].

[00:08:51] Instead of taking the quickest route, by ship, he had marched his men northwards, up through Spain and southern France.

---

[50] attack where the place was surrounded

[51] large groups of Roman soldiers

[52] expected

[00:09:02] This Carthaginian force, which included tens of thousands of soldiers,

cavalry[53] and war elephants, would march across the Pyrenees mountains, through

Gaul [in modern-day France], and over the Alps into northern Italy.

[00:09:18] And this wasn't just a **ragtag**[54] group of Carthaginians.

[00:09:23] His army was a multi-ethnic coalition: Libyans, Numidians, Iberians, Gauls,

and Carthaginians.

[00:09:32] Each group brought different strengths.

[00:09:35] The Numidians, from what is now Algeria, were exceptional light **cavalry** —

fast, **agile**[55], and used to hit-and-run **tactics**[56] that confused heavier Roman formations.

---

[53] soldiers who fought on horses

[54] messy and not organised

[55] able to move quickly and easily

[56] smart plans for winning a fight

They didn't wear armour, rode **bareback**[57], and were masters at **harassment**[58] and retreat, so perfect for **skirmishing**[59] and **flanking**[60].

[00:09:58] The Libyans were often used as heavy **infantry**[61]. Though they were originally supporting **troops**, many of them had been trained and equipped in the Roman style, with long **spears**[62], **oval**[63] shields, and discipline **drilled**[64] into them by years of warfare. They gave Hannibal a solid, reliable **core**[65].

---

[57] without using a saddle

[58] bothering or attacking again and again

[59] having small fights

[60] attacking from the side

[61] soldiers who fought on foot

[62] long sticks with sharp points

[63] shaped like a long circle

[64] trained again and again

[65] the centre or most important part

[00:10:20] The Iberians, from what is now Spain, were fierce and mobile, and were especially suited to mountainous **terrain**[66]. Their weapon of choice was a **curved**[67] sword with devastating cutting power. They weren't as heavily armoured as the Roman troops, but they were **bold**[68] and **adaptable**[69].

[00:10:41] Then there were the Gauls, the recently conquered or allied tribes from southern France. They were unpredictable, loud, often drunk and at times **undisciplined**[70], but they could bring **raw**[71] power and **overwhelming**[72] force when **unleashed**[73] in a charge.

---

[66] the land and its features

[67] not straight, bent

[68] brave and not afraid

[69] able to change easily

[70] not well trained or behaved

[71] not trained, but strong

[72] very strong and too much to handle

[73] let loose or set free

[00:11:00] The army was a microcosm of Carthage itself: diverse, **pragmatic**[74], and driven by a combination of loyalty to Hannibal and a shared **loathing**[75] of Rome.

[00:11:13] And, of course, there were the war elephants. Not particularly **numerous**[76], but terrifying. Roman horses had never seen creatures like these, and neither had most Roman soldiers. The elephants were difficult to control and not always particularly reliable, but their presence caused fear and **chaos** on the battlefield.

[00:11:38] And it was this army that marched through Southern France and crossed the Alps in the summer of 218 BCE.

[00:11:49] It's still not clear exactly which route Hannibal took, but there was and still is no easy route across the Alps.

[00:11:59] Managing it was a **feat**[77] so **bold** that Roman historians centuries later still couldn't quite believe it had actually happened.

---

[74] practical or realistic

[75] strong hate

[76] many

[77] something hard that was done well, an achievement

[00:12:09] The terrain was **treacherous**[78], and the weather brutal.

[00:12:13] They lost thousands of men. The elephants struggled in the snow. Hannibal himself is said to have gone **blind**[79] in one eye from an infection during the crossing.

[00:12:23] But **against all odds**[80], they made it.

[00:12:28] And what Hannibal found when he descended into northern Italy was… opportunity.

[00:12:35] Many of the tribes and cities that had been brought under Roman control were not especially loyal.

---

[78] dangerous or not to be trusted

[79] unable to see

[80] even though it seemed impossible

[00:12:42] They **resented**[81] Roman taxes, Roman military **conscription**[82], and Roman **interference**[83] in local affairs.

[00:12:50] They would do almost anything to **be rid of**[84] their **oppressor**[85], and Hannibal was ready to take full advantage.

[00:12:58] He had no **illusions**[86] about being able to conquer Rome by himself.

[00:13:03] His strategy relied on breaking Rome's alliances, encouraging these Italian communities to join him and **rise up**[87] against the Republic.

---

[81] felt angry about them

[82] forcing people to join the army

[83] getting involved when not wanted

[84] remove or get free of

[85] the one who treated them badly

[86] false beliefs or ideas

[87] rebel or fight back

[00:13:13] If he could do that, if he could **isolate**[88] Rome, then maybe, just maybe, it would fall.

[00:13:21] And the first step in that plan?

[00:13:24] Win battles. Win them quickly, and win them dramatically.

[00:13:29] And that's exactly what Hannibal did.

[00:13:33] Now, there have been tens of thousands of pages written about the genius of Hannibal's military strategy, so if you are a military history **buff**[89], you'll have to excuse the **brevity**[90] with which we'll be covering them today.

[00:13:47] The first sensational victory came at the River Trebia in 218 BCE, not long after Hannibal had emerged from the Alps.

[00:13:57] A large Roman force was sent up to meet him. And just in case you need a reminder, Roman soldiers were incredibly well-**drilled** and well-trained.

---

[88] cut off or separate

[89] expert or lover

[90] shortness

[00:14:08] But they were ill-prepared for a master **tactician**.

[00:14:13] At Trebia, the Romans assumed Hannibal and his army would be weak, cold,

and **demoralised**[91] after the **gruelling**[92] crossing.

[00:14:24] They were wrong.

[00:14:26] Hannibal sent his light **cavalry** to the bank of the river to try to **draw**[93] the

Romans across.

[00:14:33] The Romans took the **bait**[94] and marched through the freezing river,

assuming[95] their **superior**[96] forces would have no problem defeating the seemingly

small number of Hannibal's **cavalry**.

---

[91] feeling low or hopeless

[92] very hard and tiring

[93] pull or attract

[94] something used to trick

[95] supposing or expecting

[96] better or stronger

[00:14:47] Little did the Romans know that it was a **trap**[97].

[00:14:51] Hannibal's men, well-rested and hidden in **ambush**[98] positions, attacked the Romans while they were mid-stream. It was a **slaughter**[99]. The Romans were **soaked**[100], **shivering**[101], and unorganised.

[00:15:07] Hannibal's **cavalry outflanked**[102] them, and a hidden unit he had concealed in nearby **reeds**[103] attacked from behind. The Roman line collapsed. Thousands were killed or taken prisoner.

---

[97] something used to catch or trick them

[98] surprise attack

[99] killing of a large number of people, massacre

[100] very wet

[101] shaking from cold

[102] attacked from the side or behind

[103] tall grass next to wet places

[00:15:21] It was a **textbook**[104] example of Hannibal's genius.

[00:15:25] He didn't just fight. He **manipulated**[105]. He shaped the battlefield to his advantage. He attacked not only the Roman army, but Roman **arrogance**[106], their assumption that strength alone would be enough.

[00:15:40] The following year, 217 BCE, the Romans sent another army to stop him. This time, they met at Lake Trasimene, in central Italy.

[00:15:52] Once again, Hannibal **lured**[107] them into a **trap**.

[00:15:57] He hid his army in the hills and waited for the perfect moment. As the Roman column marched along a **narrow**[108] path at the edge of the lake, his **troops** launched a

---

[104] a perfect example

[105] controlled them in a sneaky way

[106] thinking they were better than others

[107] tricked into going, drew

[108] thin or small in width

surprise attack from the high ground. The Romans were trapped: the lake on one side,

the hills on the other, and enemy soldiers **pouring down**[109] upon them.

[00:16:21] It was another **massacre**[110].

[00:16:24] Roman sources claim that 15,000 were killed, and another 10,000 captured.

[00:16:32] It remains one of the largest **ambushes**[111] in military history, and is quite a

testament to Hannibal's supreme authority and control over his men, men who would

have spoken dozens of different languages, and many who would be **itching**[112] for the

chance to **avenge**[113] murdered loved ones and relatives at the hands of the Romans.

[00:16:54] There were something like 40,000 men who lay hidden in the wood above the

hills, watching carefully as the Roman army marched far enough past for Hannibal to

give the order to finally attack.

---

[109] attacking them in large numbers

[110] killing of many people, slaughter

[111] surprise attacks

[112] wanting it very much

[113] punish them for what they had done

[00:17:08] And the result was, well, one of history's deadliest **ambushes**, and another devastating loss for Rome.

[00:17:17] Rome, at this point, was in a state of **panic**[114].

[00:17:21] This foreign general had marched across the Alps, destroyed two Roman armies, and was now in the heart of Italy.

[00:17:30] **Whispers**[115] began to spread. Would he march on Rome itself?

[00:17:37] But Hannibal didn't. Not yet. And this decision, perhaps more than any other, has puzzled historians for centuries.

[00:17:47] Why didn't he go straight for Rome?

[00:17:50] There are a few possible reasons.

[00:17:53] Firstly, Rome was well fortified. Its walls were high and thick. Hannibal didn't have the **siege** equipment to **breach**[116] them.

---

[114] sudden fear and confusion

[115] very quiet talking

[116] break into them

[00:18:03] Secondly, he may have hoped that with enough victories, Rome's allies

would **desert**[117] it, and the city would collapse from within. A **siege**, he knew, would be

long and costly, and his army had never been particularly good at **sieges**.

[00:18:21] **Ambushes** and surprise attacks on the field - that was his thing.

[00:18:26] And so instead, he continued his campaign through Italy, trying to weaken

Roman alliances, break their hold on the **peninsula**, and **draw** them into more battles.

[00:18:39] Which brings us to 216 BCE. To the fields of Cannae.

[00:18:45] Here, the Romans had had enough.

[00:18:48] They raised the largest army they had ever assembled. Estimates vary, but

some sources suggest up to 80,000 **infantry** and 6,000 **cavalry**. Two Roman **consuls**[118],

each commanding half of the force, led them out to finally crush Hannibal.

[00:19:09] Hannibal had perhaps 50,000 men. He was outnumbered nearly 2 to 1.

---

[117] leave behind or abandon

[118] leaders of the Roman Republic

[00:19:17] And yet, he won. Not just won; he **annihilated**[119] them.

[00:19:24] At Cannae, Hannibal demonstrated perhaps the most perfect example of battlefield strategy in ancient history. He deliberately placed his most lightly-armoured troops, mostly Gauls, whom the Romans viewed as fierce but **undisciplined** warriors, in the centre of his line.

[00:19:43] As the Romans advanced, this centre slowly gave ground, forming a **crescent**[120], then a sort of half circle.

[00:19:52] To the Romans, it looked like Hannibal was **collapsing**[121]. So they pushed harder, deeper, funnelling themselves into the **curve**[122].

[00:20:01] Little did they know that that was exactly what Hannibal wanted.

---

[119] completely destroyed

[120] moon shape or a shape curved like a "C"

[121] falling down or giving away

[122] bent or rounded shape

[00:20:06] Once the Romans were surrounded on three sides, his elite African **infantry** attacked from the sides. His **cavalry**, having driven off the Roman horsemen, came in from behind.

[00:20:19] The Romans were surrounded in every direction. They couldn't move. They couldn't fight; they were too packed together to lift their weapons. They couldn't even run.

[00:20:30] What followed was a killing field. Estimates vary wildly, but it's believed that around 50,000 Roman soldiers were killed in a single day.

[00:20:43] It was one of the worst defeats in Roman history, and by some measures, more Roman soldiers were being killed per minute than would be by **machine guns**[123] on the battlefield of the Somme.

[00:20:56] And still, Hannibal didn't march on Rome.

---

[123] fast-firing guns

[00:21:00] Why not? Again, we can only **speculate**[124]. Perhaps he **lacked**[125] **siege**

equipment. Perhaps he didn't believe the city would fall. Perhaps he hoped Rome

would finally **sue**[126] for peace.

[00:21:13] But Rome didn't.

[00:21:15] And this is where the **tide began to turn**[127].

[00:21:19] The Romans changed their strategy. They adopted what became known as

the Fabian Strategy, named after the general Quintus Fabius Maximus.

[00:21:30] Rather than face Hannibal in open battle, they avoided direct confrontation.

They **harassed**[128] his supply lines. They **wore him down**[129].

---

[124] guess about what might be true

[125] didn't have

[126] ask or request formally

[127] things started to change

[128] attacked or bothered many times

[129] made him tired or weak slowly

[00:21:41] Now, Fabius Maximus had been advocating for this strategy since the early Roman defeats, but it was not a popular one with the Roman leadership. Rome was a military power, Romans gained honour and glory in battle, and running away from the battlefield instead of towards it seemed the **antithesis**[130] of everything Rome **stood for**[131].

[00:22:06] Yet, after these three catastrophic defeats, it was agreed that perhaps Fabius Maximus might have a point.

[00:22:15] Years passed. Hannibal's army remained in Italy but was fighting a war of **attrition**[132].

[00:22:23] The Romans would launch little attacks on parties **foraging**[133] for food, they would burn fields and **crops**[134], and they would do everything they could to make surviving difficult for Hannibal's forces.

---

[130] the complete opposite

[131] meant or represented

[132] slowly reducing strength over time

[133] searching (for food)

[134] plants grown for food

[00:22:36] As for the Carthaginians, they were far from home, with no

reinforcements[135], no steady supply of men or food. Hannibal's **initial**[136] hope, that

Rome's allies would **rise up** and join him, had largely not **transpired**[137].

[00:22:53] Some did, but most stayed loyal to Rome.

[00:22:57] Eventually, Rome took the fight back to Carthage itself.

[00:23:02] A seasoned Roman commander, Publius Cornelius Scipio, fresh from

victories in Iberia, led a **daring**[138] campaign in North Africa.

[00:23:13] To **counter**[139] this threat, and because not much progress was being made in

the Italian peninsula, Carthage **recalled**[140] Hannibal and his forces.

---

[135] extra people or supplies for help

[136] first or at the beginning

[137] happened

[138] brave and risky

[139] respond or hit back at

[140] called back

[00:23:23] And it was there, at the Battle of Zama in 202 BCE, that Hannibal finally **met his match**[141].

[00:23:32] Scipio had studied Hannibal.

[00:23:35] He knew his tactics, he knew the advantages and disadvantages of his various types of soldiers, and he knew how Hannibal liked to fight.

[00:23:46] Scipio **outmanoeuvred**[142] him, used Roman discipline to resist the initial elephant charge, and then **exploited**[143] **gaps**[144] in the Carthaginian line.

[00:23:57] Hannibal was defeated, and Carthage was forced to surrender.

[00:24:02] Hannibal lived on for another couple of decades. He entered politics, tried to reform Carthage, and later went into **exile**[145].

---

[141] found someone just as strong

[142] beat him using smart moves

[143] used in a way that helped him

[144] empty spaces

[145] the state of having to live far from home

[00:24:12] He continued to advise other kings and even **plotted**[146] further campaigns

against Rome.

[00:24:19] In one display of particularly creative military thinking, in a battle between

two naval powers in modern-day Turkey, he advised for poisonous snakes to be put

into **clay**[147] **pots**[148] and then thrown onto the enemy ship, the **logic**[149] being that

soldiers on ships don't tend to wear many clothes, and they can't exactly run away, so

having hundreds of angry poisonous snakes **slithering around**[150] is pretty much any

sailor's worst nightmare.

---

[146] secretly planned

[147] soft earth used to make things

[148] round containers for holding things

[149] reasoning or argument

[150] moving with a smooth, gliding, and twisting motion

[00:24:48] Now, despite the fact that he had been **exiled**[151] from Carthaginian society,

Rome never forgot him. They pursued him across the Mediterranean, determined to

stamp out[152] the threat once and for all.

[00:25:02] Eventually, **cornered**[153] in what is now modern-day Turkey, and with Roman

forces **bearing down on**[154] him, Hannibal took poison rather than be captured.

[00:25:14] His last words are said to have been: "Let us now **relieve**[155] the Romans from

the fear which has long disturbed them."

[00:25:23] He was 64 years old.

---

[151] sent away and not allowed to return

[152] stop it completely

[153] trapped with no way out

[154] coming closer in a threatening way

[155] cause them to stop feeling it

[00:25:25] And yet, more than two thousand years later, the fear he **inspired**[156], the brilliance he displayed, the legacy he left behind… it still **lingers**[157].

[00:25:36] Hannibal didn't destroy Rome.

[00:25:38] But he very nearly did.

[00:25:41] And in so doing, he showed the world what a determined, brilliant mind could achieve with limited resources, a deep sense of purpose, and an oath made as a child that he never forgot.

[00:25:56] OK, then, that is it for today's episode on Hannibal.

[00:26:00] If you are interested, there are some really good videos about these battles on YouTube, with all sorts of people recreating them in **astonishing**[158] detail, so if that sounds like your kind of thing, just search for Hannibal on YouTube and you'll find some good stuff.

---

[156] created ot triggered

[157] stays around

[158] very surprising or amazing

[00:26:15] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds by Leonardo

English.

[00:26:20] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Marched on	attacked with an organised army
Tacticians	people good at making battle plans
Tidy	clean up or put in order
Come between	stop you from being close
Consumed	completely filled or taken over
Permit	allow
Steel	a strong metal that is a mixture of iron and carbon
Arrest	stop or end
Swear	promise strongly
Eternal	lasting forever
Maritime	relating to the sea
Navy	the part of the army that fought at sea

Harbours   places where ships stopped and stayed

Peninsula   land almost fully surrounded by water

Brought into the fold brought into the group

Resentful   feeling angry about being treated unfairly

Alliances   groups or friendships between countries

Absorbed   taken in or made part of

Sucked up   pulled in completely

Brutal   very cruel and violent

Conflict   fight or war

From scratch   from the beginning

Humiliated   made to feel very ashamed or embarrassed

Treaty   an agreement between the countries

Reparations   money paid for damage caused

Mercenaries   soldiers paid to fight

Means	money or resources
Rose up	fought back or rebelled
Chaos	complete mess and confusion
Snuck in	entered secretly
Aftermath	what happened after
Twin	two very similar things
Humiliations	events that made them feel very ashamed
Blamed	said it was responsible
Dragged	pulled slowly or with force
Ruinous	causing great damage or loss
Crippled	badly damaged or weakened
Disarray	disorder or confusion
Train	teach or practise to get better
Troops	soldiers

Formidable   strong and hard to defeat

Watchful   always looking and careful

Sieges   attacks where a place was surrounded and cut off

Skirmishes   small fights

Morale   how happy or confident soldiers felt

Charismatic   having a strong and likeable personality

Tactician   someone who planned battles well

Reckless   not careful, involving big risks

Surest   most certain or safe

Siege   attack where the place was surrounded

Legions   large groups of Roman soldiers

Bargained for   expected

Cavalry   soldiers who fought on horses

Ragtag   messy and not organised

Agile   able to move quickly and easily

Tactics   smart plans for winning a fight

Bareback   without using a saddle

Harassment   bothering or attacking again and again

Skirmishing   having small fights

Flanking   attacking from the side

Infantry   soldiers who fought on foot

Spears   long sticks with sharp points

Oval   shaped like a long circle

Drilled   trained again and again

Core   the centre or most important part

Terrain   the land and its features

Curved   not straight, bent

Bold   brave and not afraid

Adaptable   able to change easily

Undisciplined   not well trained or behaved

Raw   not trained, but strong

Overwhelming   very strong and too much to handle

Unleashed   let loose or set free

Pragmatic   practical or realistic

Loathing   strong hate

Numerous   many

Feat   something hard that was done well, an achievement

Treacherous   dangerous or not to be trusted

Blind   unable to see

Against all odds   even though it seemed impossible

Resented   felt angry about them

Conscription   forcing people to join the army

Interference	getting involved when not wanted
Be rid of	remove or get free of
Oppressor	the one who treated them badly
Illusions	false beliefs or ideas
Rise up	rebel or fight back
Isolate	cut off or separate
Buff	expert or lover
Brevity	shortness
Demoralised	feeling low or hopeless
Gruelling	very hard and tiring
Draw	pull or attract
Bait	something used to trick
Assuming	supposing or expecting
Superior	better or stronger

Trap	something used to catch or trick them
Ambush	surprise attack
Slaughter	killing of a large number of people, massacre
Soaked	very wet
Shivering	shaking from cold
Outflanked	attacked from the side or behind
Reeds	tall grass next to wet places
Textbook	a perfect example
Manipulated	controlled them in a sneaky way
Arrogance	thinking they were better than others
Lured	tricked into going, drew
Narrow	thin or small in width
Pouring down	attacking them in large numbers
Massacre	killing of many people, slaughter

Ambushes   surprise attacks

Itching   wanting it very much

Avenge   punish them for what they had done

Panic   sudden fear and confusion

Whispers   very quiet talking

Breach   break into them

Desert   leave behind or abandon

Consuls   leaders of the Roman Republic

Annihilated   completely destroyed

Crescent   moon shape or a shape curved like a "C"

Collapsing   falling down or giving away

Curve   bent or rounded shape

Machine guns   fast-firing guns

Speculate   guess about what might be true

Lacked	didn't have
Sue	ask or request formally
Tide began to turn	things started to change
Harassed	attacked or bothered many times
Wore him down	made him tired or weak slowly
Antithesis	the complete opposite
Stood for	meant or represented
Attrition	slowly reducing strength over time
Foraging	searching (for food)
Crops	plants grown for food
Reinforcements	extra people or supplies for help
Initial	first or at the beginning
Transpired	happened
Daring	brave and risky

Counter	respond or hit back at
Recalled	called back
Met his match	found someone just as strong
Outmanoeuvred	beat him using smart moves
Exploited	used in a way that helped him
Gaps	empty spaces
Exile	the state of having to live far from home
Plotted	secretly planned
Clay	soft earth used to make things
Pots	round containers for holding things
Logic	reasoning or argument
Slithering around	moving with a smooth, gliding, and twisting motion
Exiled	sent away and not allowed to return
Stamp out	stop it completely

Cornered   trapped with no way out

Bearing down on   coming closer in a threatening way

Relieve   cause them to stop feeling it

Inspired   created ot triggered

Lingers   stays around

Astonishing   very surprising or amazing

Language spotlight

1. Come between

- **Meaning:** To cause trouble in a relationship or situation by getting involved.

- **Synonyms:** interfere, get in the way, disrupt

- **Antonyms:** support, help, unite

- **Examples:**

  - I won't let anything **come between** me and my best friend.

  - Money problems started to **come between** them in their marriage.

2. Rise up

- **Meaning:** To fight back, especially against authority or unfair treatment.

- **Synonyms:** rebel, revolt, resist

- **Antonyms:** submit, obey, surrender

- **Examples:**

  - The workers decided to **rise up** against the unfair rules.

- In history, people have often **risen up** when they were treated badly.

3. Against all odds

- **Meaning:** To succeed even though it seemed very unlikely or difficult.

- **Synonyms:** despite everything, unexpectedly, miraculously

- **Antonyms:** expectedly, likely, easily

- **Examples:**

  - **Against all odds**, she passed the exam after missing weeks of school.

  - They won the match **against all odds**, even with fewer players.

4. Wore him down

- **Meaning:** To make someone weaker or more tired over time, usually by constant effort or pressure.

- **Synonyms:** exhaust, weaken, tire out

- **Antonyms:** energise, strengthen, motivate

- **Examples:**

- The long meetings slowly **wore him down** until he gave up.

- The enemy's attacks **wore them down** over many weeks.

5. Brought into the fold

- **Meaning:** To include someone in a group, organisation, or community.

- **Synonyms:** include, welcome, involve

- **Antonyms:** exclude, push away, reject

- **Examples:**

  - The new member was **brought into the fold** and quickly made friends.

  - After years of living alone, he was finally **brought into the fold** of the

    local community.

Quiz

Listening Comprehension Multiple Choice Questions

1. Why did Hannibal hate Rome so much?

a) They destroyed his hometown

b) His father made him swear to hate them

c) He lost a battle to them

d) He studied in Rome and disliked it

2. What was Hannibal's bold military move?

a) He invaded Rome by sea

b) He bribed Roman senators

c) He used elephants to build ships

d) He marched his army over the Alps

3. What was surprising about Hannibal's army?

a) It was a ragtag mix from different regions

b) It was very small but used war machines

c) It was made entirely of Roman soldiers

d) It only included cavalry units

4. Why was the Battle of Cannae so shocking?

a) The Romans easily defeated Hannibal

b) It was a naval battle

c) It ended in a peace treaty

d) Hannibal used a clever trap to kill tens of thousands of Romans

5. What happened to Hannibal in the end?

a) He became king of Rome

b) He was killed by the Romans

c) He went into exile and later died

d) He returned to Carthage and ruled peacefully

True or False

6. The Roman consuls at Cannae agreed to wait and gather more information before

attacking Hannibal. (True/False)

7. Crossing the Alps was an easy and quick journey for Hannibal's troops. (True/False)

8. Hannibal crossed the Alps with his army in the middle of winter. (True/False)

9. The Romans won every major battle against Hannibal. (True/False)

10. Hannibal took his own life rather than be captured by the Romans. (True/False)

Fill-in-the-Blank

11. When they arrived, they found that Hannibal had done something they hadn't

bargained ___.

12. His strategy relied on breaking Rome's alliances, encouraging these Italian

communities to join him and ____ up against the Republic.

13. The Romans were trapped: the lake on one side, the hills on the other, and enemy

soldiers _____ down upon them.

14. This is where the ____ began to turn. The Romans changed their strategy.

15. Romans gained honour and glory in battle, and running away from the battlefield

instead of towards it seemed the antithesis of everything Rome _____ for.

Vocabulary Practice

16. What does "**march on**" mean in the context of the podcast?

a) Start dancing

b) Move forward to attack or invade

c) Talk for a long time

d) Travel with music

17. What is a "**tactician**"?

a) A person who builds machines

b) A person who tells stories

c) A person who fixes ships

d)A person who plans battles and strategies

18. What does "**siege**" mean?

a) A fast attack

b) A peaceful negotiation

c) A long attack on a place to capture it

d) A boat race

19. What does "**reckless**" mean?

a) Careful and thoughtful

b) Very tired

c) Not caring about risks or danger

d) Strong and powerful

20. What does "**aftermath**" mean?

a) The time after something, usually something bad

b) A type of weapon

c) A plan for the future

d) The middle of a battle

<u>Answers</u>

1. b) His father made him swear to hate them

2. d) He marched his army over the Alps

3. a) It was a ragtag mix from different regions

4. d) Hannibal used a clever trap to kill tens of thousands of Romans

5. c) He went into exile and later died

6. False

7. False

8. False

9. False

10. True

11. for

12. rise

13. pouring

14. tide

15. stood

16. b) Move forward to attack or invade

17. d)A person who plans battles and strategies

18. c) A long attack on a place to capture it

19. c) Not caring about risks or danger

20. a) The time after something, usually something bad