

# STORY TIME!

## Setting the Stage

Delian League:

469 BC: Battle of Eurymedon River

465 BC: Thasos (city-state) tries to leave the Delian League

464 BC: Huge earthquake in Sparta

460 - 445 BC: First Peloponnesian War

431 - 404 BC: Second Peloponnesian War

Alcibiades:

Nicias:

Lysander:



# Alcibiades

Athens supports Egesta.

Sparta supports Syracuse.

Syracuse is attacking Egesta.

Athens and Sparta are not at peace, but thanks to Nicias, they have called a cease fire in 421 BC. Then Alcibiades gets involved . . .

## **The First Oops: 415 BC**

Alcibiades wants to help the city-state of Egesta, who is being invaded by Syracuse, so Athens can gain riches and power in the area. Nicias thinks this is a bad idea, so he proposes to the assembly that an outrageous number of ships are needed to invade, hoping that the assembly will be shocked and refuse to go to war. They decide to go to war.

## **The Night Before the Invasion (The Second Oops)**

The night before the troops leave, all the statues of Hermes (very important god) were . . . destroyed. Alcibiades is blamed.

The troops leave, but messengers are sent to retrieve Alcibiades so he can stand trial. When the messengers reach him, Alcibiades convinces them that he should take his own ship home.

He goes to Sparta instead, to tell them all of Athens' plans.

## **The Third Oops**

Sparta is supporting Syracuse. The conflict is escalating.

Nicias wants to retreat, so he asks the Assembly to approval.

The assembly sends more troops.

Once the troops arrive, they all decide it is wiser to go home, so they offer a sacrifice to the gods, asking for safe travels. They view the answer as the gods telling them to wait for the next full moon, 27 days away.

Meanwhile, Alcibiades gets to Sparta.

Sparta surrounds the Athenian army and destroys all ships and 40,000 men.

Athens is stunned.

## **It Gets Worse . . .**

Alcibiades goes throughout Athens and its allies, instigating rebellion.

He then goes to Persia in 412 BC and tells the Persian emperor that he should alternate his support for Athens and Sparta so the city-states will wipe each other out and Persia can take all the land.

He also sleeps with the Persian emperor's wife, so he runs for his life.

He goes back to Athens and tells them that he has access to the Persian emperor and Persian power. He says that the emperor will give Athens support and money if they move to an oligarchy.

He never actually spoke to the emperor about any of this.  
The assembly votes itself out later that year, and forms an oligarchy...  
but does not include Alcibiades.

### **Revolt!**

After the vote takes place, Alcibiades is furious that he doesn't get power, so he goes out to the Athenian fleet which is sitting off shore. All of the rowers and soldiers are lower class citizens who did not vote on losing an assembly vote. Alcibiades stirs up revolt, encouraging an overthrow for democracy, and takes control of the Athenian fleet in 411 BC.

### **Back in Power**

Alcibiades commands the fleet for a few years, winning numerous battles for Athens. Sparta is feeling the heavy losses and requests a peace treaty. Athens refuses. Alcibiades returns home a hero and is elected supreme commander of land and sea.

### **Yet Another Oops**

Alcibiades continues on smaller war campaigns. In 406 BC, a large portion of the Athenian navy won the battle of Arginusae, but took heavy losses. At the end of the battle, a storm was coming that would destroy the fleet, so the generals announced that they did not have time to collect their dead, and began their voyage home. This was a problem. Without proper burial, these souls would forever wander the earth without hope of an afterlife.

Athens was outraged and when the fleet returned, they executed all the generals. The next morning the city concluded this may have been a poor decision.

### **The Final Oops**

With a heavily weakened fleet and military command, Athens entered the Battle of Aegospotami in 405 BC, the last major naval battle. Spartan commander, Lysander, and his troops destroyed the Athenian fleet, leaving only 8 out of 180 ships.

Alcibiades was blamed for this loss.

Following the Battle of Aegospotami, Lysander sieges Athens for 8 months, until the city is forced to surrender in 404 BC.

### **The Aftermath**

After the Peloponnesian war came to an end, Athens survives, but must follow Sparta's requirements for peace. Athens must:

- tear down its walls,
- free all its captured city states,
- may only have 12 naval ships,
- and put in an oligarchy handpicked by Sparta.

Within a year, Athens overthrows the oligarchy to return to a democracy, but it is so weakened, that Sparta does not bother to fight the change.

Additionally, Sparta's resources were greatly weakened by the long war, leaving Greece without a superpower.