Guillaume de Normandie and the Battle of Hastings

Guillaume, the Duke of Normandy, was not happy. He was angry! Why? Because Prince Harold was crowned king of England. But the throne of England was promised to Guillaume! Guillaume was so angry that he decided to invade England.

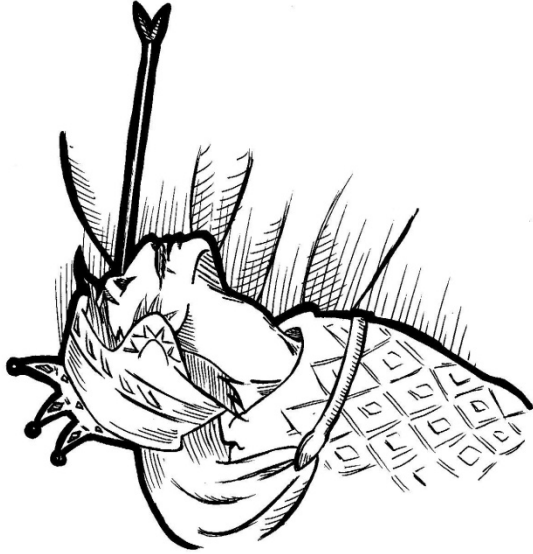In the fall of 1066, he was ready. He had a big army and hundreds horses -- all ready for battle. They sailed across the channel from France to England and arrived near a place called Hastings. Guillaume's soldiers built a fort for protection and they waited for their enemy to attack. Every day they prepared to fight King Harold, the man who had stolen Guillaume's throne.

When King Harold arrived in Hastings, his army set up their defence at the top of a hill. Who do you think had the advantage in the battle? King Harold and his army high on the hill? Or Guillaume, the Duke of Normandy, and his men down below on the plain?

King Harold had a strong army but most of his men were on foot. The Normans had horses to ride -- many more than Harold did. And the Norman soldiers knew how to use bows and arrows. People said that Guillaume de Normandie was so strong that he could shoot a bow and arrow

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while riding a horse! So maybe the Normans had the advantage? Who do you think won?

The Battle of Hastings lasted for nine hours and many men died, but finally, the Duke of Normandy and his soldiers were victorious. They killed King Harold -- an arrow in his eye! Then the Duke and his army marched to London and Guillaume de Normandie became William the Conqueror, King of England. He was crowned king on Christmas Day and he ruled England for many years.

William the Conqueror and his men never learned to speak English. So the English people had to learn some French. That explains why there are French words in English -- words for food like *dinner*, *dessert*, and *pork* – for example. There are many many more. Maybe you can think of some? Today, the English language still has thousands of French words in it because of William the Conqueror and the famous Battle of Hastings.