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L'Ennui des Syrtes: Or the Boredom of Empires

The presentation aims at analyzing the boredom in Julien Gracq's novel *Le Rivage des Syrtes* (The opposing shore). The narrator, Aldo, is a young man from one of the ruling families of Orsenna, an oligarchic city-state loosely based on the Venetian republic and empire. Orsenna is in a state of "cold war" with Farghestan, a mysterious country across the sea. Both sides from decades haven't made any move, war is officially continued but virtually non-existent. Yet the state of languish unspecified tension and expectation seems to be a widely-spread collective mood of the citizens of Orsenna. Aldo due to boredom concluded his life as an aristocratic party animal and asked for an official assignment for civic duty. He is sent on a spying mission to a run-down fortress on the shore of the Syrtes at the far lodgement of the empire. The boredom of a border fortress and the state of "languorous suspense" will lead eventually to the catastrophe. In the presentation, I would like to analyze the role of abundance, decadence, and boredom in a life of empires.