The troops had been massing for days. The castle was surrounded. Gigantic siege engines had been rolled just out of arrow shot. Trebuchets were readied to bombard the castle, rocks and dead animals piled at its side.

Now was the calm before the storm. Troops either slept or talked quietly around camp fires. The sky was red, tomorrow would be a good day.

Inside the castle walls, lookouts anxiously patrolled the ramparts, waiting for the attack.

Far below the ramparts, a wooden door clicked open. Dressed in black, two figures emerged and crept towards the enemy camp.

1. When is this story set? How do you know?
2. What is a trebuchet ? What clues are in the text?
3. Use words or phrases to describe the rocks that are piled next to the trebuchet.
4. How many troops do you think will be camped outside the castle?
5. 'The sky was red, tomorrow would be a good day.' What does this mean? Could it mean more than one thing?
6. Who do you think the two figures are? What might they be about to do?

Be a detective.

When were castles first built?
What were the first castles made from?
What is the largest castle in the world?
Why did people stop building castles?
Search online for castles, which one is your favourite? Why is it special?

A Starter for 10