

Hundreds of spiked pig bladders ripped open and splashed down in front of the walls of Thebes. Burning brands arced down and started fires all along the wall. To the amazement of all, the conflagration didn't stop the advance of the Waspian. The burning dead piled up and more of the bugs moved over the top of the dead to climb the wall over the clinging bodies of more Waspian.

Cam-Thoth-A could see that everything possible was being done and it wasn't enough. The eighteen foot spears were now striking down at the heads of the giant bugs.

"Raise the red flag!" he shouted to those behind the gate. He waved the red banner signaling the last tactic for the defenders. High above the wall, the red flag of Ra could be seen over the walls. Four hundred yards to the west, out of the forest, most of the priests of the gods stepped fourth. In their hands were the blast pikes of the gods. The energy blasts of the weapons shot forth and smashed into the column of Waspian. At the same time a coordinated mass of javelins and arrows arced from the top of the walls. This wave could now encompass all of the Waspian left.

The line of priests split into two. The forward rank went to one knee and fired their lances again. The rear rank readied itself to fire and shot their lances several heartbeats later. The energy lances fired in waves and cut deeply into the mass of Waspian. The death toll mounted and it became clear to the Waspian they would not be able to scale the walls with their dwindling numbers.

All at once the bugs turned west and attacked the priests. The clerics of the gods stood their ground and fired blast after blast. There weren't enough lances to stem the tide of the hundreds of Waspian remaining. In heartbeats the priests were all dead and hundreds of Waspian were carrying back the lances of the priests. In seconds the monsters were out of javelin and bow range.

Cam-Thoth-A silently communicated the problem with the Pharaoh android.

"Open the gates!" shouted the Pharaoh.

The second the gates opened wide, the elite warrior chariots issued forth from Thebes. In seconds they chased down the remaining bugs. The metal scythes of their wheels cut at the legs of the Waspian. Chariot archers poured into the mass of retreating bugs. Even the Pharaoh blasted at the rear of the Waspian with his force lance. The people on the walls of Thebes were able to watch their Pharaoh and his warriors kill the last of the bugs two miles away from the gates. A roar of praise went up from the city for their brave Pharaoh.

Cam-Thoth-A had other things to deal with. He went to the crossbowmen. "Where were these made and who made them?" he demanded.

The fact that the hunters were alive and the Waspian were gone filled the men with glee. The unemotional android only wanted to get back to his quest to find the human who made the paddle-wheel skiff. Cam-Thoth-A raised his hand to quiet them. His serious demeanor calmed the men down.