

I watched all that transpired as though I were there upon that very hour which now resides many a year in the dim past, from a height unattainable by mortal eyes, each detail alive and distinct.

I beheld the Sepphaillian fleet of seven hundred and seventy-four ships cresting the waves of the gentle sea, readying the fearsome catapults of fire they bore, and sporting twenty-three thousand sullen-eyed fighting men of Sepphaillia, eager to breach the towering walls of a majestic city which fronted the sparkling azure sea.

And there, over the plain of Tarnooss, came the marching horde of King Affershappudorias the Fourth, flanked by row upon row of Hurkebbitollean spearmen, archers, swordsmen, horseman, and charioteers, behind whom a score of siege engines the immensity of which the world had never before seen were towed by team upon team of ox and buffalo.

*... a journey of sorrows ...*

All too soon did fierce and awful fires reach up as though to sear the sky from within the ancient walls of proud Thozametarbus as the war legions flowed into the city like so many grains of sand blown in by desert winds. The cries of the lamenting, the suffering, and the dying, all rose to my ears, a choral tapestry of doleful anguish and bitter grief, interwoven only with the shouts of the angered, of the malicious, and of the victorious.

The sight eclipsed the words of Damshola Gatrosiam, that worthy chronicler of five hundred years past, who strove to render upon parchment the fall of the city-kingdom as he had actually beheld it, much as I have just done. Yet no matter how elegant the good Damshola's stanzas may be, they could not hope to compare admirably to the true woefulness of fallen Thozametarbus, for I dare believe it is beyond the power of mere words to convey.

At length I wished no more to look upon the sundered bones of Thozametarbus, so cruelly ravaged and cast down . . .