



## **THE ELECT OF THE SUN**

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### **The Campaign against the Rats of the Nile**

Among others, there was a very ancient custom at the Sparrow-Hawk Hut: when the governor left the fort, no one could leave his or her respective house, not even His Excellency's wife. It is obvious that such an abstruse practice had nothing to do with the police activities of the fortress, since the rigorous vigilance and the extensive interrogation and torture of prisoners could never cease, under any circumstances. That is: the resident employees of the fortress were compelled to shut themselves in their respective quarters, which doesn't mean that they remained there idly. None of that—they worked behind closed doors.

As a consequence, the Egyptian scribe ended up sequestered in his barracks during the seven days that the campaign against the MLPRAFRENTE<sup>1</sup> lasted. The Vanquisher of the Sphinx insisted that someone owed him an explanation, but no one was authorized to give one under any circumstances. Only the Governor. The scribe resigned himself. And without another word, he waited for Ramses to return. In order to kill time, since no one had commissioned him to paint anything, he started to experiment with taming his various companions in seclusion, beginning with the Himalayan centipedes. There was nothing easier, since these fierce biters were subdued as soon as their tamer showed them the image of Horus-Sparrow-Hawk that was colored yellow. The Babylonian scorpions responded to the march "Oh Pharaoh, We Salute You". The bedbugs from the

Valley of the Kings and the Persian fleas, incredibly, detested all shades of red. After various experiments, the scribe found a solution: the voracious little suckers loved sky-blue mixed with a little lettuce-green. Neither music nor colors produced any result with the native cockroaches. “There is no way out from this angle,” murmured the scribe. After various futile attempts, the Vanquisher of the Sphinx remembered to serve them a piece of his tunic soaked in vinegar. With this he had some luck. “They are hunger strikers,” he whispered, after which he made a cane flute, played it and put them all to bed. The tarantulas from Lower Egypt showed themselves to be great aficionados of cauliflower, a “fruit” abundant during that time of year and served as a dessert to well-behaved prisoners. Thus, at that moment, these particular problems were straightened out. But the rats of the Nile wanted to devour the other comrades. “They are obstinately anti-social,” concluded the Vanquisher of the Sphinx at the end of four days of failure upon failure. Neither colors nor music nor food brought him any closer to success. “For such wild animals, a wild animal-and-a-half,” declared the scribe. “I’m going to request a Siamese cat.” But the only person who could authorize the entrance of a Siamese cat to the fort was the Governor Ramses, who, as we know, was on his campaign. “I’ll beat them down and then we’ll see,” said the scribe. But a few moments later, he had a brilliant idea. “I’ll organize a battalion of Eurasian tortoises to confront the blue rats. Thus I’ll kill two birds: the tortoises will keep busy and the rats will find themselves up against a wall, as long as the other animals cooperate,” said the scribe, who, full of enthusiasm, got ready to outline his plan (tactics and strategy) regarding the campaign against the blue rodents.

## **The End of the Campaign against the Rats of the Nile**

When the Supergeneral returned to Karnak, covered in laurels and trophies (millions of human heads stuck on lances), an unknown commander of another war was in his third day of the campaign against the rats of the Nile.

The Eurasian tortoises, well protected by their shells, ended up being excellent fighters. Very disciplined and aggressive, despite being slow in certain types of maneuvers. The Egyptian scribe said to himself, “This is how I’ll prepare myself for bigger battles, when the time comes, naturally. In the meantime, I am a simple artist for His Excellency.” Immediately, the dream he had had days before came back to him and he thought, “It could be that the wife of the renowned Governor isn’t the dimwit I imagined in my fit of bad humor. By the way, why is a person as important as Ramses sharing his bed with such a dog in a country so full of beautiful women? Nah! It’s a good idea to observe first and judge later. Until then, on with the campaign; the blue rodents still haven’t given up.”

The war between the Eurasian tortoises and the rats of the Nile had reached the “point of no return,” to use an expression from the military jargon of Ancient Egypt. In other words: either the armored combatants had to capitulate to the ferocious biting attacks of the blue rodents or the rats had to send up the little white flag signaling their surrender. As of yet, neither one nor the other had occurred. Suddenly, the two battling armies confessed that they were fed up with so much war, and so the armistice was agreed upon automatically and with no further demands on either part. The general, somewhat disheartened, could not help thinking that this was a very odd way to put an end to a war. “It’s fine,” he said, “bury the dead and let the uninjured take care of the wounded.” Just then, he heard a loud knock at the door. Ramses wanted to speak with him immediately. “I hope to have the opportunity to see the Governess... or Governor’s wife,” he hesitated at the linguistic embarrassment, although he was a very competent scribe versed in three philologies—Egyptian, Semitic and Aryan.

And thus the Vanquisher of the Sphinx was again ushered into the presence of His Excellency the Governor Ramses, Vizier of Karnak and Constable of Thebes. In spite of the guards’ fierce looks and the shouts and moans coming from the innumerable torture

chambers, the scribe entered in complete control of himself, and the Queen's image from his dream came back to him. "The wife of the Governor must be a..." He held back the word already on the tip of his tongue, and opted for another, less impulsive one: "A terribly pretty lady."

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<sup>1</sup> MLPRAFRENTE- parody of the many pro-independence party acronyms in the Lusophone world.