

The horned beasts essay



The Horned Beasts (pg. 60) When everyone has lain in their beddings in the cave and the fire burns low to an ember, the wilderness has a way of coming in to the depths of a man's subconscious, in that place where they call the Place of Dreams. In this realm, the strength of the men is tested. Their will as hunters are brought to the edge, because in this wild the predator becomes the prey, and there is no certainty of escape – no certainty of waking. The Horned Beasts – that is what they are.

Towering figures set behind fire, they roam in the night and look for human flesh. They live in this other-world, where physical strength is not enough, where it matters little. The Horned Beasts lurk in the shadows and wait for a chance to gnaw the sleeping man, that there is little rest even in his sleep. The hunter, the Indian, the man, must keep vigilant, ever watchful of his surroundings. He cannot thoroughly lose himself in his sleep, not when danger is just around the corner. The cave is a fortress, but the Horned Beasts can nonetheless penetrate its walls. Those living in the cave have taken to drawing the images in its walls partly as a reminder, part a warning, to all of them, and to all who will come after.

The Horned Beasts will come when it is least expected, and the cave can offer a false sense of security. The Horned Beasts have taken men in their sleep, some of them twisting as they screamed, some passing the night never to see the sun again. Are these Horned Beasts gods? Why do not they show themselves in the flesh, in daytime, when daylight breaks over the horizon? A death wish, the elders say. The Horned Beasts show themselves to those who are aggressive and restless, those who do not follow mores. Go over the cliff and up in the mountains by yourself, and you

will come across the Horned Beast. He will rip you apart and eat your flesh and drink your blood, and his wails of victory will echo in the mountains at night.

Maybe they are gods, gods of death. They have the power to dominate thoughts even when these are emptied out, they can make themselves visible even to those who have lost their sight. The Horned Beasts guard the caves, they live in the walls of the caves.

And if a stranger ever venture in those caves and pay the proper respect, he will surely meet those Horned gods in his dreams. What will happen when they meet in that other-world of sleep and dream? Who can tell, when no one has woken up to tell the tale?