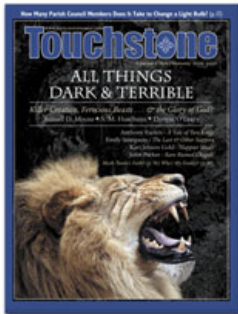


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# The Wild Side — A Theology of Dangerous Things

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Why are we so fascinated with beasts that can kill us? What is our fascination with all things wild and wonderful? The reality is that we share this earth with animals that will bite us, strike us, suffocate us, kill us, and even eat us. What are we to make of this?

I must confess to a fascination with dangerous animals that goes back further in my childhood than I can remember. Boys, it seems, are particularly interested in the animals that can seriously hurt us. From my earliest memory, I have been intensely interested in venomous snakes, alligators, and sharks, along with other wildlife. Given the fact that I grew up in Florida, I was never far from this trifecta of terror.

This wonderful world includes maneaters ranging from tigers and lions to sharks and crocodiles. What is the Creator telling us through these fearsome and fascinating creatures?

My colleague Dr. Russell D. Moore considers this question in his essay, "[All Things Terrible: Our Fearful Fascination with Wild Things & Other Monsters of God](#)," published in the June 2007 edition of *Touchstone* magazine.

"It is one thing to be dead. It is another thing to be meat," Moore observes. Most modern Americans sleep quite soundly without worrying about being carried off as prey by a big predator. We are more likely to injure ourselves as we rush to watch "Shark Week" on the Discovery Channel. Nevertheless, millions of human beings do live with that fear, as did most previous generations.

Moore points to the fact that the Bible itself is filled with fearsome creatures. These animals threaten us because of the Fall, and their existence is yet another reminder of our need for redemption.

As Moore argues:

*Perhaps we are fascinated with all kinds of dangerous creatures—as evidenced by everything from children's fairy tales to high-budget Hollywood vampire epics—because intuitively all people know that this is not the way life is meant to be. Even when we cannot verbalize it, we understand that there is an unseen enemy, a cosmic war. In our music, our artwork, and our literature, we all seem to recognize that in some sense, as Lewis put it, this universe is "enemy-occupied territory." And this is true even when we disagree about the identity of the enemy.*

*Could it be that our fascination with dangerous animals is really just part of a much larger longing for a Christ? After all, as the Genesis narrative tells us, the reason the original creation was not violent is not because of a "natural" animal tranquility. It was not violent because the Creator placed a vice-regent, formed in his image, over all of the animals. He was to rule "over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen. 1:28). All things were put "under his feet," as the Psalmist says (Psalm 8:6).*

Dr. Moore joined me to discuss our fascination with the wild side on Monday's edition of [The Albert Mohler Program](#) [listen [here](#)].

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