

Ants To The Gods

by

Wouldn't You Like To Know

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EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Garbed in animal hide, PEEKO (8) picks green berries and puts them in his satchel. He sings to himself in his native tongue.

ALL DIALOGUE WILL BE SUBTITLED UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.

PEEKO

The Gods will come... and take
their world... I hope that they
cannot see me... the Gods will--

A bellowing moan echoes through the trees. Peeko freezes.

PEEKO

...and take their world... I hope--

A haunting, deep voice calls.

VOICE (O.S.)

I do see you Peeko. We all do.

Peeko drops his satchel and runs blindly into the jungle. The dirt around him flies into the air.

Something drops from the trees and tackles him. Peeko cries.

PEEKO

Do not take me Gods. Do not--

He stops his words after recognizing the laughter of his brother WAHTI (15).

PEEKO

Not funny, Wahti.

WAHTI

I think it is. You'd better pick up
your berries.

Peeko walks over to his satchel and picks it up.

PEEKO

How'd you make the dirt rise?

WAHTI

Easy.

Wahti walks to a seemingly random spot and stomps down. A stick hidden in the ground pops up, launching the dirt.

PEEKO

You spent all morning doing that while I was picking berries?

WAHTI

Smart of me, wouldn't you say?

PEEKO

Father wouldn't. These berries need to be picked before the seasons change.

WAHTI

You're not even picking the right ones. You should take the red ones.

PEEKO

The red ones drive you mad.

Wahti picks red berries out of a bush and eats them.

PEEKO

No! What's wrong with you. You want to be like Old Taum, crazy and wandering.

The giant leaves of a nearby bush begin to shake.

WAHTI

Old Taum?

Like hairy lightning, a young boar dashes out knocking Wahti to the ground. Peeko chuckles.

WAHTI

That damn boar again!

Wahti chases it into the jungle. He runs bent over and grabs at the animal's legs. The boar runs between two adult legs.

CHEELO (38) stands firm in front of his son. The animal escapes.

CHEELO

What are you doing, Wahti?

WAHTI

That damn boar has knocked me down three times already. I'm going to kill it.

CHEELO

No you are not.

WAHTI

But father--

CHEELO

No! That boar must grow so it can make other boars. If you kill it now, you'll have one boar to eat, but sacrifice many. Just like you must still grow into a man to be a warrior, it must grow to serve its purpose.

Head down, Wahti walks off. Cheelo notices Wahti in the brush and gives him a stern smile.

EXT. VILLAGE CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Small huts surround the fire as ceremonial dancers flail around. Drums are beaten and wood horns are blown.

A MOTHERLY WOMAN tries to feed her BRATTY CHILD plantains but the kid pushes the mush out with his tongue. Some elders laugh at the child which prompts an angry look from mom.

A filthy old man, TAUM (50's), picks at a roasted hare meant for the group. An ELDERLY WOMAN spots him.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Taum! Stop picking with your dirty hands.

Taum makes ridiculous faces at her.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Yes you. You're filthy and--

Taum starts to crazily lick his palms. The woman shoos him away back into the jungle.

Wahti keeps to the shadowy outside, snacking on red berries.

Peeko sits transfixed while Cheelo preaches across the fire.

CHEELO

This harvest is complete. The stores are hidden. We are thankful that the Gods did not notice. We are thankful they did not come.

PEEKO
 (innocently)
 Why are the Gods so mean?

The music stops. All around look at the child. Cheelo slowly walks around the fire and crouches down next to Peeko.

He fingers around in the ground and pulls out a single ant.

CHEELO
 Do you see this ant, my son?

PEEKO
 Yes.

CHEELO
 What concern do I have of this ant?
 I could squash him now and it would
 make no difference in my world.
 Just as the concerns of the world
 in the grass do not bother me, our
 concerns here in the jungle do not
 bother the Gods.

PEEKO
 I would never squash that ant.

CHEELO
 Let's hope the Gods become as nice
 as you.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

A hand covers a formerly sleeping Peeko's mouth. His eyes flash open. Wahti shushes him and nods to come outside.

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

Wahti walks through the foliage with purpose. His movements are strangely exaggerated. Peeko tries to keep up.

PEEKO
 If father finds out he'll whip us
 both. Where are we going?

WAHTI
 I have to show you something.

PEEKO
 Why now. Why were you up?

WAHTI
I could not sleep.

PEEKO
You were eating red berries again!

WAHTI
This is more important.

PEEKO
What is so important that you drag
me from my bed and now father
will--

WAHTI
The Gods have come.

Peeko stops.

PEEKO
You lie. You're crazy from the
berries.

Insulted, Wahti reaches into a bush and drags out a bloody
mess.

WAHTI
Then you must be crazy too.

Peeko stares at it; the young boar drenched in blood.

PEEKO
You killed it.

WAHTI
No I didn't. I was walking and I
heard voices. Whispers of the Gods.
Then the boar squealed and the Gods
screamed the loudest sounds I've
ever heard. I waited for them to
leave. That's when I found this.

Peeko runs his hand an inch above the animal. Multiple,
strange holes in its side.

PEEKO
It could have been another animal.

WAHTI
The flesh is not torn. The wounds
are like they were bored in.

PEEKO
We have to tell the others.

WAHTI
No. They will blame me.

PEEKO
Why?

WAHTI
Because... I know my senses are off, but you have to believe me. Hopefully the Gods have had their fill. But the boar's too heavy for me to lift. Help me.

Peeko stares at the carcass, then his brother.

PEEKO
You swear you didn't do it?

WAHTI
I swear.

Peeko thinks it over, then grabs the boar's hind legs. Wahti smiles, and grabs the front legs and they pull.

WAHTI
Thank you, brother. There's a spot in the marsh not too--

Wahti's words stop, confusing Peeko. Peeko turns around and sees Cheelo staring disapprovingly.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Wahti is tied by jungle vines to a stump. Cheelo looks at his disgraced son and then enters...

INT. HUT

...Where the village elders wait.

Assorted ELDERS, all in their 40's, voice concerns.

TATTOOED ELDER
He has broken the law.

EARRINGED ELDER
I know he is your son but he has effected us all. Can you not control him?

OLDEST ELDER

He's a slave to the spirits. He
must be punished. Like Old Taum.

Cheelo sighs with shame.

CHEELO

Wahti has always been a wild
spirit. It pains me to...

Cheelo notices light coming in from the hut doorflap. Peeko
enters sheepishly.

PEEKO

What's going to happen to Wahti,
father?

Oldest Elder is insulted by the child's presence.

OLDEST ELDER

(to Cheelo)

Do all your children act so rudely?

(to Peeko)

This is not your place child.

Cheelo turns and fires harsh eyes, silencing the man. He
motions Peeko to come over.

CHEELO

We have not decided what will
happen to your brother yet. Killing
a boar that young is forbidden.

PEEKO

But he didn't.

CHEELO

Yes he did. I have known for too
long that Wahti indulges in spirit
berries and have done nothing. But
his altered state does not release
his accountability.

PEEKO

He told me didn't. He told me...

CHEELO

What did he tell you?

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Cheelo storms out of the hut to Wahti and slaps him across the face. The whole village is taken aback.

CHEELO

You fill your head with madness and
try to stain your brother's mind
too!

WAHTI

Father, please.

CHEELO

The Gods!

Wahti, lip trembling, looks over at Peeko, ashamed.

WAHTI

I know what I saw.

CHEELO

You know nothing, little boy!
Except how to abandon your reason
and bring me dishonor.

WAHTI

I swear it was them.

CHEELO

Impossible. The harvest is over. No
open food, no reason for them to
come.

Wahti begins to cry.

CHEELO

If you weren't my son I'd have
already banished you.

WAHTI

You should.

CHEELO

What did you say?

WAHTI

You should! You won't treat me like
a man but won't let me act like a
child. I hate you!

CHEELO

You tongue has grown too large.

Cheelo raises a backhand.

BOOM! A thunderous noise shakes the jungle. Smoke rises in the distance.

TATTOOED ELDER

Can it be they have come?

CHEELO

No, but something has. Get your weapons.

Cheelo grabs a knife and points it at Wahti.

CHEELO

As for you...

Wahti shuts his eyes, anticipating the blade. Cheelo, instead, cuts the vines that bind him.

CHEELO

...You want to be a man. Show me.

MINUTES LATER

Dressed in rough animal hides, the men enter the jungle with spears.

The women of the village huddle together.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Where's Peeko.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Peeko follows the men at a distance. Earringed Elder looks back as Peeko ducks behind a tree.

Peeko peeks out from behind the tree. Cheelo grabs him.

CHEELO

Why are all my sons so defiant?

PEEKO

I can help too.

CHEELO

No. It is much too dangerous.

OLDEST ELDER (O.S.)

Cheelo! Come quickly!

Jerking Peeko by the arm, he rejoins the group. They stand over a small pit, with Old Taum, ripped in half, inside.

TATTOOED ELDER

The boy was right.

CHEELO

It could have been an animal.

EARRINGED ELDER

No animal tears a man like that.

OLDEST ELDER

Cheelo. You lead this tribe but I must say, they have come.

Cheelo looks over the scared faces of his sons.

EXT. MAKESHIFT CAMP - NIGHT

The party lay in a circle, covered in large leaves. Cheelo holds Peeko in his arms, belly to back.

PEEKO

I don't want to die, father.

CHEELO

Neither do I but there are worse things that could happen.

PEEKO

Nothing could be worse than death.

CHEELO

Well, if we die, we will be with your mother again. You still remember her, don't you.

PEEKO

Of course.

CHEELO

Well she's waiting for us.

PEEKO

I do miss her, but I hope she has
to wait a little longer.

CHEELO

Me too.

Cheelo kisses Peeko's hair as the boy closes his eyes. A
smile crosses the leader's face. But then it leaves.

He looks up to see the treetops blow, then swirl in every
direction. A pulsating noise grows. All the men sit up.

CHEELO

Wahti, hide your brother.

WAHTI

What's going on?

CHEELO

Do it!

A giant bright pupil-less eye looks down from the tree tops.
It shines a ray down at the men and howls ungodly.

EARRINGED ELDER

The Gods! They have come to bring
death!

CHEELO

Let us bring some ourselves.

Cheelo and the others throw their spears in the air but none
hit the eye.

The jungle itself turns into men. They point clubs that
flash and scream at Tattooed Elder and his body begins to
explode in violent patches.

Wahti brings Peeko to a hollowed out stump and stashes him
in.

WAHTI

Stay in here Peeko.

PEEKO

I don't want to die.

WAHTI

Just stay in here.

Wahti runs off to join the fight. Peeko, alone, can't see
anything even if he could open his eyes.

The elders scream as explosions fill the air. Then they stop.

ALL GOD DIALOGUE IN ENGLISH.

GOD #1

Over there. Another one.

Footsteps run towards Peeko's stump. A shot rings out and something falls in front of Peeko's hiding spot.

Terrified, Peeko opens his eyes. Wahti's dead body lay in front of him. It stares at him as an ant crawls across his brow.

More footsteps walk towards Peeko's stump.

GOD #1

Wait a minute. Here's another one.

A hand reaches in. Peeko tries frantically to push it away but it grabs hold and pulls him.

It belongs to GOD #1, dressed in full camouflage with a M-16 in his other hand. Other GODS point their weapons at the boy. LEAD GOD jumps in, knocking GOD #1's hand off Peeko, who crumbles to the ground.

LEAD GOD

Dammit Henderson. He's just a kid.

GOD #1

Sorry Sarge.

Peeko looks at the lifeless, bullet-ridden corpses.

LEAD GOD

Bad enough we kill his whole tribe.

GOD #1

They attacked us first. The helo.

LEAD GOD

They weren't gonna hit any goddamn helicopter. Jesus Christ.

Lead God kneels down to Peeko who scurries back into his stump.

LEAD GOD (O.S.)

Whose holding? Finkle, I know you got a bar on you.

Lead God pokes his head into the stump, offering a chocolate bar. He pretends to eat.

LEAD GOD
C'mon kid. Take it. Eat it,
goddammit.

Shaking, Peeko takes the bar and holds it against his chest.

LEAD GOD
(remorseful)
There you go, kid. Happy Halloween.

THE END