

"This is madness, no one attacks the rat horde," complained Creeper.

"Just so," replied Animal, "they'll never suspect it. Maybe I'll be generous and allow them to surrender."

Having said that, he walked into the darkness in the direction of the Beast Master camp. The night was overcast with no moon, but his human eyesight was better than normal with the werewolf enhancement. Toward dawn he came upon the camp. It was huge, but nothing like the numbers described at the Battle of Last Stand. Animal suspected that this was not a major invasion, merely a probe to look for weaknesses. The rat men had no armor. They carried no weapons. Apparently the rat men did not create weapons or know of metal craft. There were a few goat men and huge bull men scattered through the mob. The goats looked exactly like the mythological character Pan, the goat man, except these also had the heads of goats too. The bull men were exact duplicates of the Minotaur we see pictures of in Greek mythology.

Animal made no announcement of his presence to draw attention to himself. "Might as well drop in and say hi," he thought. While walking deliberately into camp he saw a couple of wagons that were obviously used for cooking. These were managed by human slaves, which were chained to the wagons. His presence began to be noticed, first by the captive slaves, who stared bug-eyed, and then by the rat men. The sudden appearance of an enemy in their very ranks, seem to greatly unsettle the rat men. A few standing nearby, pissed themselves, hissing and snarling. "It's show time," shouted Animal. "Let's welcome onstage the very charming, the very talented, Animal X." With that being said, he drew the Roman short sword, Gravedigger, with his left hand. Widow Maker appeared in his right hand as if by magic, sighing of blood and death, as it hummed through the air. Without pause, Animal tore into the ranks of rat men. Body parts flew in all directions as he carved his way toward the large central tent. This commotion alerted the entire camp and suddenly the cowardly rat men's behavior was radically altered. They stopped peeing themselves and running away. Now they came at him with a vengeance. "About time you found your balls," growled Animal. His skills with swords and long hours of practice began to be tested in earnest, as rat men threw themselves at him with reckless abandon. Animal avoided using stabbing or impaling movements because withdrawing the blades cost him time, time he didn't have in the cyclone of blood and fur all around him. With no protection at his back, he began a deadly dance of steel. Spinning in a circle, his blades seemed to be everywhere at once, slicing, carving and chopping away hands, arms and heads. Any rational creature would have given way before such a killing machine and Animal recalled the account of "Last Stand." It appeared that the Beast Master was now orchestrating the horde. Animal lost all sense of time and direction as the battle intensified. No longer did he try to progress toward the camp center, now his total concentration was on survival. Everything became a blur of motion with showers of blood, flying entrails, crushed, snarling rat faces and heads flying from bodies. By now he was completely covered in his enemies' blood. Gravedigger sliced with every movement, forward as well as backward. Widow Maker howled a song of destruction, as she devastated anything that was unlucky enough to come near her. He began to understand the battle madness that drove the ancient Norse to become berserkers. That was his last thought as the world went dark and he knew no more.