

VI -At the earths core

At the Earth's Core, Chapter VI, "The Beginning of Horror," dives into the heart-racing attempt of escape within the timeless and nightless world of Pellucidar. The narrator and his companions, aiming to evade their captors, the Mahars, find themselves instead caught amidst a hurried exodus of slaves escorted by the guard Sagoths. The rumor among the captives suggests a grim fate awaiting two recaptured escapees, leading the narrator to fear for the safety of Dian, a fellow escapee.

Forced to march to witness what is implied to be a brutal punishment, the severity of the situation becomes clear. The Sagoths treat the slaves with heightened cruelty, positioning the march as a stern lesson against disobedience. Amidst this, the majestic and terrifying Mahars make their entrance into an arena, settling on a high stone arrangement reserved for their kind, signaling their high status and the commencement of a savage spectacle.

In stark contrast to human customs, the Mahar's entertainment begins with a soundless 'music' performance, appreciated through visual movements, demonstrating the unique cultural aspects of Pellucidar's dominant race. The culmination of the grotesque event unfolds with the introduction of a man and a woman, captives destined for a merciless duel against prehistoric beasts, invoking a sense of primal fear and anticipation.

The arena becomes a field of terror as a bull-like creature, a thag, and a monstrous tiger, a tarag, are unleashed. The captives, armed with mere spears, face this dire challenge, sparking a raw and brutal confrontation that vividly illustrates the savagery of this underworld. Amidst the chaos, a desperate battle ensues between the thag and the tiger, depicting the relentless and unforgiving cycle of predator and prey, while the onlookers, human and Mahar alike, observe the ferocious display.

The narrative captures the essence of a world where the primitive and the advanced collide in an exhibition of power, fear, and survival, leaving the reader to ponder the stark realities of Pellucidar's merciless ecosystem and the lengths to which its captives must go to fight for their mere existence.