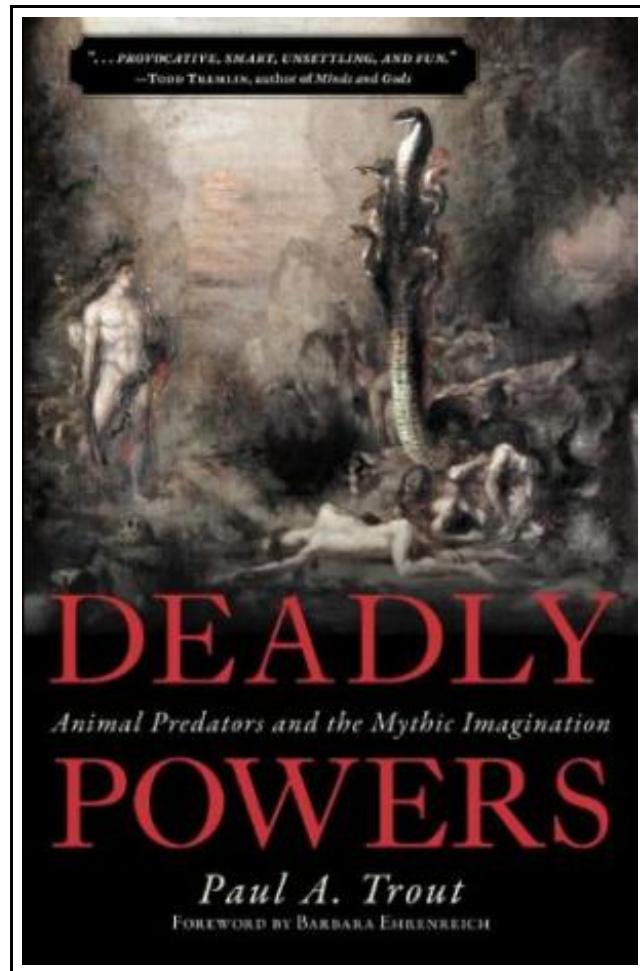


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Prometheus Books, United States, 2011. Hardback. Book Condition: New. New.. 229 x 155 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Devouring lions, giant bears, sharp-taloned birds of prey, deadly snakes, and snapping alligators--these and other animal predators in search of human flesh are a staple of ancient mythology, along with their mythic counterparts--dragons, griffins, gorgons, harpies, and more. The message is clear: for thousands of years our ancient human ancestors lived in fear of predatory animals and reflected the dangerous nature of their daily existence in the many animal myths that exist in almost every culture. In this illuminating and evocative exploration of the origin and function of storytelling, the author goes beyond the work of mythologist Joseph Campbell, arguing that mythmaking evolved as a cultural survival strategy for coping with the constant fear of being killed and eaten by predators. Beginning nearly two million years ago in the Pleistocene era, the first stories, Trout argues, functioned as alarm calls, warning fellow group members about the carnivores lurking in the surroundings. At the earliest period, before the development of language, these rudimentary stories would have been acted out. When language appeared with the evolution of the ancestral human brain, stories were recited, memorized, and much later written down as the often bone-chilling myths that have survived to this day. This book takes the reader through the landscape of world mythology to show how our more recent ancestors created myths that portrayed animal predators in four basic ways: as monsters, as gods, as benefactors, and as role models. Each incarnation is a variation of the fear-management technique that enabled early humans not only to survive but to overcome their potentially incapacitating fear of predators. In the final chapter, Trout explores the ways in which our visceral fear of predators is played...

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