

Stone Age Boy

An amazing thing once happened to me. I was wandering in the woods when I tripped and found myself falling down, down, down. When I woke up, I was in a cold, dusky place, lying face down. In the distance, I could see a glimmer of daylight and I stumble apprehensively towards it. Outside the strange place, everything was different. I realised I was lost. Completely lost. So I walked and walked and walked. . . Then, to my relief I saw someone – a girl. She was about my age, but she didn't look like any of the girls I knew. And I don't think I looked like any of the boys she knew. She took me home to meet her family – and what a family it was! They looked very strange, but they were kind of me and gave me some delicious stew. I couldn't understand anything they were saying, though I worked out my new friend's name was Om.

The next morning, Om showed me round the camp. Everyone seemed busy and had a job to do. Om's people had no knives and forks, no plastic, no metal even. Everything they had was made of wood, stone, animals skins or bone. I saw them.. making fire, making tools, cutting a slice out of a bone, skinning a deer and boiling soup by putting a red-hot stone into a leather bag. One sunny afternoon we went to the riverbank. The little ones picked berries and nuts, but Om and I watched the men fishing. They held their pointed spear high and stood as still as trees.

Then, suddenly, swoosh! Their spears dropped down like lightning and came up again spiking wriggling silver fish. Suddenly a boy ran up, shouting and pointing to the hills. At once several people grabbed their spears and followed him. Om and I followed them. Slowly, slowly, we crept forwards until we saw – a delicate reindeer! It was standing alone, munching the grass. At a signal, the others ran towards it, yelling and throwing their spears. It was so exciting! A spear caught the reindeer in its side, and it fell firmly to the ground.

That night we had a party to celebrate. We cooked the reindeer over a great fire and there was music and dancing. I joined in on air guitar. As the days became weeks, Om and her people taught me many things. I was very happy. Then one day Om took me to a special, unfamiliar place. We walked a long way until we came to the mouth of a mammoth cave. Om struck flint stones together to make fire. She lit a torch and we wandered in. WOW! It took me a moment to realize the animals were only paintings. In front of me, the flickering light of the torch made them look real, as if they were running around us. Om went over to the tools and paints the artists had left on the grubby, humid floor and began to draw carefully. Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I saw something move abruptly in the darkness. It was a bear, a big furious cave bear! I shouted at Om to run and turned to face the bear with my spear. I felt very small.

Suddenly the ground beneath me gave way. . . and I found myself falling down, down, down. When I woke up the bear had disappeared. So had Om. I rushed outside. The air felt. . . different. Warmer. I looked for Om but never found her. Instead, I was back home. When I told my family what had happened, they didn't believe me. Years passed, but I never forgot my friend Om. I am an archaeologist now. Everywhere I go, I look in the past for signs of Om. And I never stop learning from her and her people. Was it a dream? Maybe.. Maybe not.