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**Ancient tales**

**This is the beginning of a stone age adventure… it’s up to you to write the rest!**

School was over for the summer, and we we’re off to France. We didn’t fly, instead we packed all our things into the car and drove… it took a long time, but it was fun.

We drove on for hours and hours until we came to a small village nestled in a deep gorge. I stared out the window, my breath fogging up the glass as we trundled through narrow streets. Our house, the house we had rented for the week was slightly outside the village, lurking at the end of a bumpy lane overshadowed by tangled, twisted trees. It was old, with a steep roof covered in red tiles, the front all crooked and covered in plants. The lady who owned the house was there to meet us, smiling and waving. While she showed the grownups around the house, I went exploring.

The garden was quite big, and wild! There weren’t really flower beds, but plants and shrubs burst from the edge of the daisy strewn lawn as though they were desperate to take it over. Rising steeply up behind it was rough hill, covered in scruffy little bushes and trees between outcrops of yellowish grey rocks. Higher up it became a tall jagged cliff, pitted with caves and hollows. I was staring at the dark caves high up above us when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ shouted that I needed to help get my things in from the car and choose which room I wanted.

As I carried my bag through the sitting room and up the creaky stairs, I noticed some strange things on a shelf and excitedly ran to show \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. “these are like stone age things, like stone age tools!” I said, remembering the pictures from a book at school. “Yes, they are, you’re right” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_said. “the old lady pointed them out when she was showing me where the blankets are. She said she finds them in the garden when she digs up her potatoes.. at least I think that’s what she said, my French never was very good”

The next day some of the grownups decided to drive to the nearest town for food but \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ announced \_\_\_\_\_ was very tired after the driving and asked if I’d would be all right playing in the garden for the afternoon.

I had been thinking about that cliff and the caves since yesterday;\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ had settled down on a bench in the shade under some trees and was reading a book, and didn’t notice me sneak out of the garden, and start to climb the slope at the back of the house.

It was hard work! The slope was even steeper than it looked, and the loose sandy soil kept getting into my shoes. Once, when I sat down to empty out a little trickle of grit, I noticed a funny coloured rock next to my hand… It wasn’t like the other rocks, which were crumbly and gritty, a bit like old concrete. It was dark grey, hard and smooth, with a point at one end. It looked a bit like some of the relics the old lady had displayed on the shelf at the house…flint tools from the Stone Age!

The tool stowed safe in my deepest pocket, I carried on up the slope but now I kept looking at the ground, Eyes peeled for more bits of flint.

When I reached the top of the hill I was out of breath, and sat down on a pile of boulders looking out over the valley. I could see the house, and the little speck that was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_still reading under the tree.

As I went to scramble up, some of the stones moved. They rolled and tumbled and stopped in the dust, but somewhere, underneath I could hear stones still falling.

I bent down and peered between the rocks. It was dark, and hollow! I started heaving and pushing, moving the rocks away from the dark entrance to a tunnel!

Shrugging off my old faded schoolbag that had been full of drinks and snacks from the drive, I dug about, sure it was in there somewhere. Out came an empty crisp packet, a crumpled Juice carton and a little torch!

“Excellent” I smiled, looking down into the blackness. The boulders and rocks made pretty good steps, and I slowly made my way down. It was quiet and completely still. The air cool, but not cold, and from somewhere deep in the rocks I could hear a steady drip... Drip... Driiippp…

I shone the torch around, at bumpy pale walls, and a muddy floor. The tunnel was not huge, but I could stand up without bumping my head. I walked forwards slowly, trying not to make a sound. It ought to have been creepy, but it wasn’t. It felt like I was in a very strict library, or maybe a church.

I pointed the torch at the up at the ceiling and gasped; It was a Mammoth! Definitely a mammoth. It had big tusks that curved up a like bananas, and someone had even drawn reddish lines to show the long shaggy hair!

Speechless, I shuffled forwards, gazing up at the ceiling and saw more! A big animal like a cow with a humped back, and vicious pointed horns, and another… and another.

Describe the paintings you can see on the tunnel walls; the colours, the animals, what else can you see?

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The next bit of wall was covered in handprints, some were red, some black, some yellow. There were big ones and small ones. When I held my hand up to the painting, I could see it was about the same size. The rock felt cold and damp, and when I pulled my hand away, it was covered in red paint! The painting was still wet! Feeling as though I’d done something wrong, I quickly wiped my hand on my clothes. Ahead, the tunnel branched, I was standing, shining the torch about trying to decide which way to go when I heard a noise… I Spun around, and the torch clattered to the floor, flickered, and went out!

It was instantly dark, I didn’t know it could be so dark. I could feel panic rising in my chest, I groped around on the earthen floor and found it! I shook it hoping it would come back to life, clicking the button again and again, but it was no good.

I reached out a hand and felt for the cold stone of the tunnel, thinking that if I followed it, the wall ought to lead me out.…. I shuffled along …testing each step and trying not to panic.

For a second I thought I saw a light ahead, the entrance of the cave! I moved a little bit faster, desperate to get out. There it was again, light! I moved even quicker. Suddenly my foot caught on something and I tripped over. A loud “OUCH!” was startled out of me as my knee hit the floor and the broken torch flew out of my hand and disappeared into the gloom.

I heard voices coming closer, the tunnel got lighter, and two people appeared in front of me holding a little stone bowl with three little flickering flames burning in the top of it……

*>What do these people look like? What are they wearing? Can you tell what they were doing in this cave? Are they the artists?*

 *>What do they do? Are they scared of you, maybe you’re scared of them!

>You can’t understand each other, even when you try saying something in French. Maybe you can try miming something or learning each other’s names.. that’s a start at least!*
They see your hurt knee and take you out of the cave. Only when you go outside, it looks very different! When you look down at the valley, you can’t see the wonky stone house, there’s a village of little huts, and some fires. Instead of the tiny stream that flows the other side of the house, there is quite a wide river! Is that a herd of animals? What else can you see?

Where are you? Or more importantly**... When are you!?**

**Ideas;**

 **Describe being taken to see the medicine woman. She might be a little frightening, but she knows how to use the magic of plants to heal. She’s very old and wrinkled, and wears loads of necklaces made of teeth, claws, bones, carved shapes, shells…What does she do for your hurt knee?

You spend your time with the other children, what do they get up to? Some of them are very good at finding food; eggs, small animals and tasty bits of certain plants.**

**Perhaps you have an encounter with a stone age animal! I hope you don’t get stomped on or eaten!**

**What about going fishing with the whole tribe using a big net? ( I hope you can swim..) What’s next? If you are lucky with your fishing, what will you do with it all? You’ll never be able to eat all that fish... maybe you ought to help cut the fish up for drying, but I don’t think its as easy as it looks!**

**Some one comes running into camp shouting that there are Mammoths coming! Do you think you might help out with the hunt? Maybe, or you could just watch with the other children, that might be safer. Stay safe, and make sure your tools are sharp, there will be lots of work to do if the hunters get one!**

**How will you get home?**