

Stone Age Boy

By Satoshi Kitamura.

An amazing thing happened to me. I was wandering in the wood when I tripped and found myself falling down, down, down. When I woke up, I was in a cold, dark place. I could see day light and I stumbled towards it. Outside, 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 to me and gave me some stew. I couldn't understand anything they were saying, though I worked out my new friend's name was Om. Then I must have fallen asleep.

The next morning, Om showed me round the camp. Everyone seemed busy and had a job to do. Over the next few days I saw so much I'd never seen before. Om's people had no knives and forks, no plastic, no metal even. Everything they had was made of wood, stone, animal skins or bones. I saw them.....making tools, using tools, preparing and cooking food.

One afternoon we went to the river. The little ones picked berries and nuts, but Om and I watched the men fishing. They held their pointed spears high and stood as still as trees. Then, suddenly, swoosh! Their spears dropped like lightning and came up again spiking wriggling 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 reindeer! It was standing alone, munching the grass. At a signal, the others ran towards it, yelling and throwing their spears. Om and I didn't have spears, but we yelled anyway. It was so exciting! A spear caught the reindeer in its side, and it fell 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 the 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 place. We walked a long way until we came to the mouth of a cave. Om struck flint stones together to make fire. She lit a torch and we went in. WOW! It took me a moment to realise the animals were only painting. In the flickering light of the torch they looked real, as if they were running all around us. Om went over to the tools and paints the artists had left and began to draw. Suddenly, I saw something move 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 gave way.....and I found myself falling down, down, down. When I woke up the bear had gone. So had Om. I rushed outside. The air felt.....different.

Warmer. I walked a long way, calling for Om. But I never found her. Instead I found I was back home. When I told my family what had happened, they didn't believe me. They said I'd only been gone a few hours and I must have fallen asleep and dreamt it.

Years passed, but I never forgot my friend Om. I am an archaeologist now [that's me in the glasses]. Everywhere I go, I look for signs of Om. And I never stop learning from her and her people.

Was it a dream? Maybe.....Maybe not.