



An amazing thing once happened to me.

I was wandering in the woods
when I tripped and found myself
falling down

down

down.



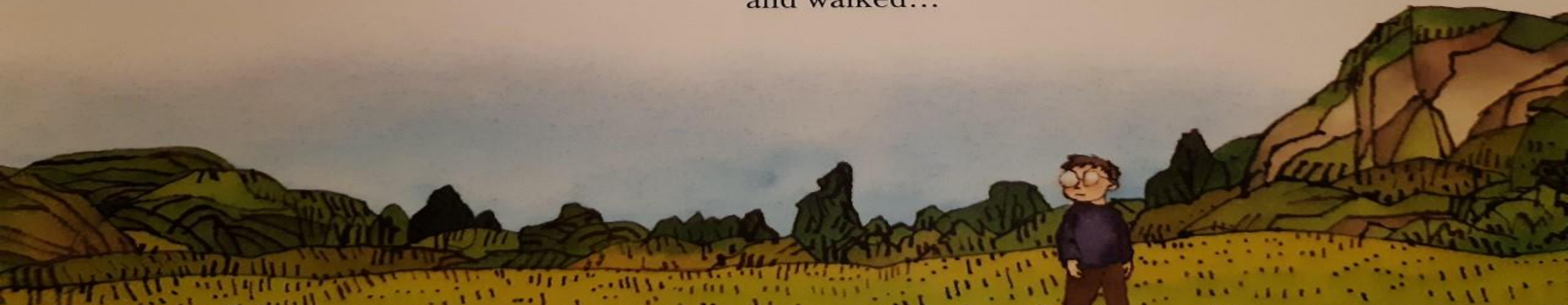


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When I woke up, I was in a cold, dark place.
I could see daylight in the distance and I stumbled towards it.

Outside, everything was different.
I realized 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...





By striking flint stones together or turning a wooden drill. Fire is used for cooking, to keep warm and sometimes to scare animals.

MAKING TOOLS



By flint knapping.



The flints are chipped, trimmed and sharpened, and then made into knives, spearheads and scrapers for cleaning animal skins.



I had a go, but it was very difficult.

USING TOOLS



Tools are used to make wood, antlers and bones into bowls, spears and ornaments.

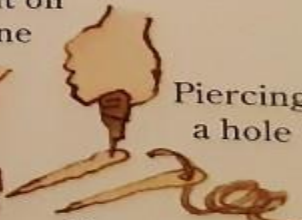
Cutting a slice out of a bone



Sharpening it on a grindstone



Piercing a hole



It's a sewing needle!



Ornaments



Using a throwing stick you can throw

PREPARING & USING ANIMAL SKINS



Skinning a deer



Scraping the hide clean



Drying it



Cutting it



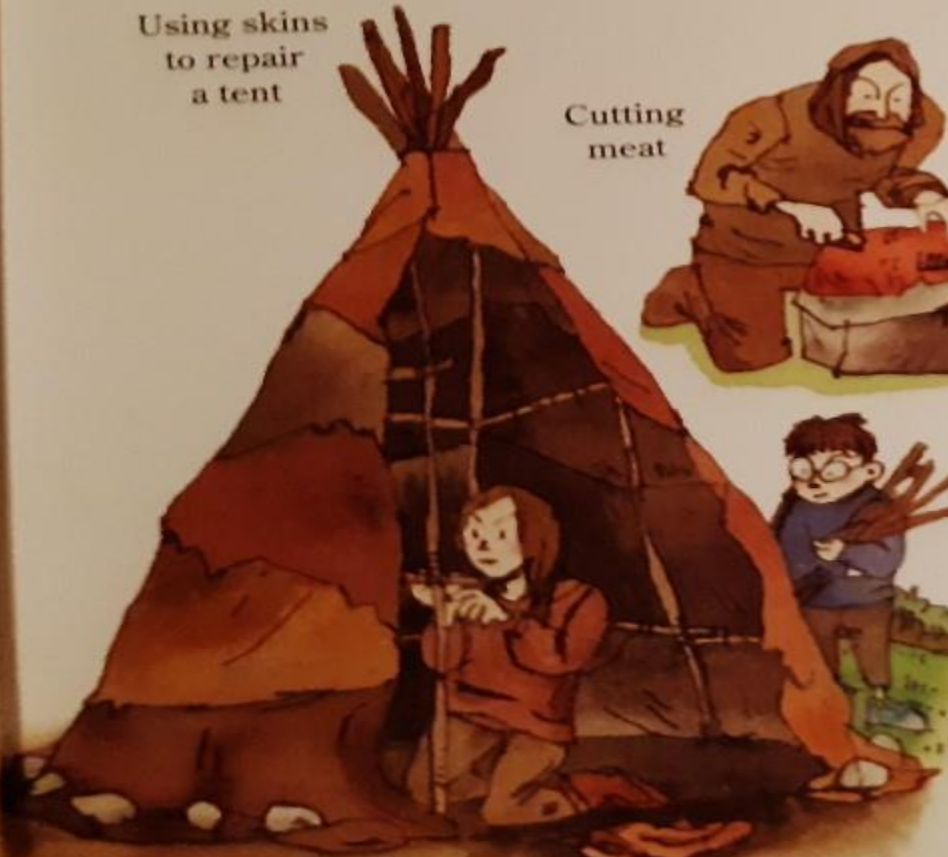
Piercing holes



Sewing it together.



Using skins to repair a tent



Cutting meat



Drying meat



Boiling soup by putting a red-hot stone into a leather bag

Smoking meat



Drying fish



Grilling meat





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 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 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 air guitar.



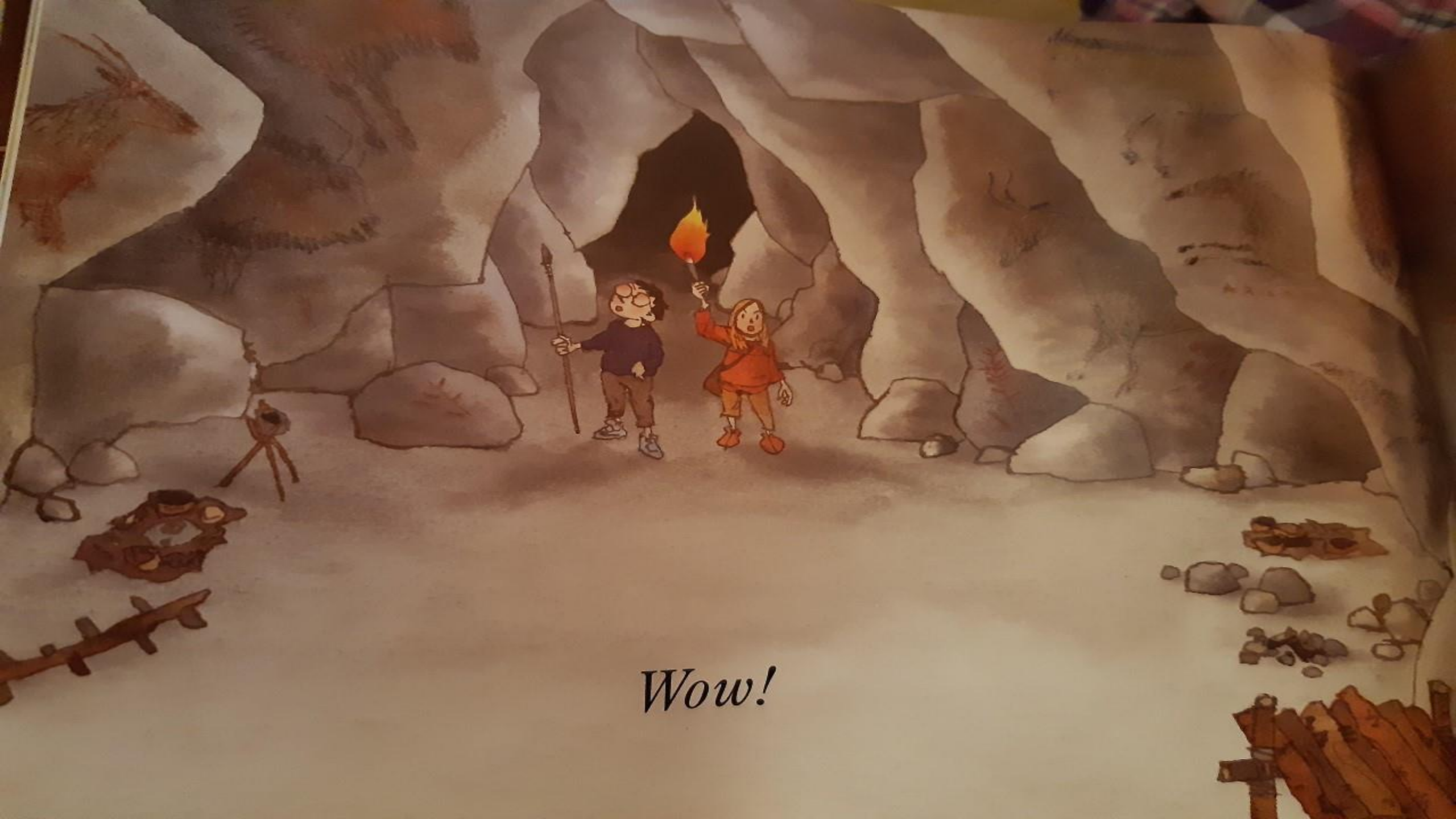


As the days became weeks, Om and her people taught me many things. I was very happy.

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 realize the animals were only paintings.
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 in the past for signs of Om.
And I never stop learning from her and her people.

Was it a dream? Maybe ...





Maybe not.