

Palaeolithic Girl

My name is Sunset and I live in a cave with my family. If I stand on top of the high ground near to where I live, I can look out at the flat lands below stretching out as far as my eye can see.

My family

I live with my mother and father, two big brothers and my mother's brother. My grandmother lives here too with her sister. Sometimes my father's brother and his family come to stay during the cold seasons.

Home

We live in a cave during the cold times on high ground but when the air is warmer and we move to lower ground we make shelters from animal skins and branches. It is during the warm times that the men folk begin following the herd of woolly mammoth across the flat lands.

Hunting and new clothes

I am very happy today because the men in my family came home with a deer that they had hunted and killed. When the deer arrived, my mother and grandmother argued as to what should be done with it. My mother wanted the skin to make new clothes for me because I have grown and my boots are squashing my feet but my grandmother and her sister wanted the skin to be used for bedding now that the snows are coming. Luckily my mother won the argument and soon I will have new

clothes to wear. I know that they will be really warm on the inside where the soft fur is next to my skin and the shiny outside of the skin will keep the rain off especially after my mother has rubbed in the fat from the deer's carcass.

Tools and trade

Nothing goes to waste after hunting because not only will we have meat to eat but also the bones of the deer will be used to make all sorts of tools, including tiny ones like sewing needles. My father makes hammers out of the antlers that he uses to chip at the flint stone to make tools like axes and scrapers and weapons such as spears and arrowheads. We are lucky that my father's brother and his family visit us now and again because they follow animal herds much further than we do. He brings us presents from other groups of people he meets that we can copy. Last cold season he brought my grandmother a lovely necklace made from the hard outer covering of little animals that live in the big never ending waters. He called them periwinkle shells. I wanted one but he said that if I were to have one, I would have to give him something to trade with these people the next time he saw them. I carved a little figure of a mammoth from a piece of deer's antler. He said that I was very clever and wanted me to make some more so that he could exchange them for other things for us.

Burial

I usually love it when the men in my family come home from hunting, but 3 moons ago I was very sad because a huge woolly mammoth killed my mother's brother. They said that he thought that the mammoth was dead when he went close to it, but it wasn't and it hit him hard on his head with his trunk. The other men jumped in and killed the mammoth but couldn't save my mother's brother and he died.

My family put his body in the back of a cave and my grandmother put her periwinkle necklace around his neck. My mother covered his body in red clay and my father put the skull of the mammoth that killed him nearby. I made a belt by carving rods and circles from the mammoth tusks to put around his waist so that he looked beautiful. We all miss him very much because he used to make us laugh when he used to dance around the cave if he was cold!

Fire and food

My mother will cook the deer meat tonight over the fire. I love the brains best but my brothers like the eyeballs roasted on a stick. Yum! After we've all eaten we make sure that the fire never goes out because if we did then the lion that used to live in this cave might come back. Lions don't like fire, they are afraid of it, so while the fire stays alight then we know that we are safe. Once a huge woolly rhinoceros came really close to the entrance of our cave and we threw big stones at it and it went away. I was so afraid that my father

made me my very own axe that I keep close to me all the time in case it comes back.

Cave painting

Sometimes, we don't eat as much as we should and my tummy feels really tight. When I feel like this all I want is for the men folk of my family to find the horses and big cows for us to eat but sometimes they are nowhere to be seen. Recently I drew pictures of them on the cave wall with my fingers using the juice of berries because I was sure doing this would help to bring them near to us. I also drew my father and brothers hunting them with spears and catching them so that we could feast for days.

New growth

It must have worked because it wasn't long before we could see the herds of animals running across the flat lands below our cave. My grandmother is sure that more will come soon because they love the new trees and shrubs that have started to grow all around us. Some of the trees have round brown nuts growing on them and not only are they tasty but the hard shells make really pretty beads, especially if you cover them with red clay to stain them. Maybe I'll make a necklace out of them ready for the next time my uncle calls by and then he can trade it for something else - something pretty just for me.