



SOMEWHERE BETWEEN two and a half million and ten thousand years ago, in the era we now call the Pleistocene, small groups of people traveled around their known world, hunting for food, seeking shelter, and slowly becoming more like the people we are today. For some of that time, the northern parts of the earth were covered in huge sheets of ice. Gigantic animals, called megafauna, shared this space with humans.

Maybe as far back as forty thousand or more years ago, and then increasingly afterward, people began drawing pictures on cave walls, using the texture of the wall, and making paint from materials they could find there. A bit later, they carved images onto stones. Many of these pictures are of the animals they hunted and with whom they coexisted. Sometimes they are of people—usually drawn as stick figures—but most are of animals. Sometimes these pictures look like animation with, for example, many copies of legs, so it looks as though the animals are running. These pictures and stones would have been looked at in firelight, which may have made them flicker. People also left handprints on cave walls. We don't know what the purpose of these pictures was, though in some cases there seems to be proof that they were used for storytelling. But when we look at this very early art, we can't help but admire the extraordinary talent of the people who made these images. They aren't just scratches on the wall; they are great art.

In this book of few words, we see one very special young girl who seems to notice everything that happens around her as her people search for a cave to shelter in for the winter. And we can believe that she feels the absolute necessity to draw what she has seen, and to tell stories.

And afterward, everything was different.



Drawings in graphite and white ink on lilac 104 Canson paper.

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