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Finding Altamira

By Olivia Hetreed

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Looters. Speculators.

Grave robbers.

This is how Prehistorians
are perceived.

"The meek shall inherit the Earth."

Not those who arrogantly seek
to explain the miracle of Creation.

But our quest is for
the Origins of Mankind.

Think then of the peril
should your children

be exposed to their heresy.

It is imperative that we raise
the standing of our infant science,
as the great Charles Darwin
has done for Natural History.

Anyone who does not confess
that the world and all things in it...
are created for the glory of God:

let him be anathema,
cast out from the Church.

My name is Maria Sautuola.

When I was nine years old,
my world was torn apart.

Even so,

I don't regret for what we did,
for what we discover.

It all began
when Papa went to Paris
to hear the greatest archaeologists
of the age.

Papa was a scholar and a scientist,
but above all
a fearless seeker of truth.

Don Marcelino, are we looking at
our primitive ancestors?

Only a few steps from the cave.

I was trying to imagine
how I would behave if my house
were on display like a zoo.

We should go.

The lecture will be packed.

We must be rigorous, methodical,

scientific in our work,
or the forces of Reaction
will crush us.
Good speech, Cartailhac.
Allow me to introduce my friend,
Mister Sautuola,
a keen recruit to our field.
Another Jesuit?
No, sir.
A beginner,
an enthusiast without prejudice.
I'm learning so much
from your journal, sir.
It's men like you
we academics rely on.
The honest amateur
is our foot soldier.
Only do not let his dogma infect you.
Please, its for you.
Mama, mama.
Be careful with those, Maria.
Mero!
Oh, Marcelino, is that a hat?
From Paris?
- Yes... I mean, no.
- Thank you.
Forgive me, Conchita!
It's for my orchid collection and...
I shall wear it to church?
See what my husband has brought
from Paris.
We are joining Cartailhac's army.
Marcelino, you've only just arrived.
Can I come?
I must be old enough by now.
See how tall I am. Let's go.
No one is going hunting
or joining any armies.
- What beautiful they are!
- Maria, time for practice.
Maria Justina!
You practice, then we'll go.
NATURAL AND PRIMITIVE HISTORY OF MAN
EMILE CARTAILHAC

And Father Tomas says
I should be confirmed this Autumn
or it will be too late.
Too late! Why's that?
Because I ask too many questions.

Do I:

It's impossible to ask
too many questions
as long as you pay attention
to the answers.
The primitives
lived over 10.000 years ago.
So by digging down, we look back
a telescope of time.
This must have been a good place.
Sheltered.
Did they sleep on the mud?
And these were skilled craftsmen.
They could make what they needed.
What does it say in Genesis?
"Thou art dust and..."
"And to dust thou shalt return."
Even here,
protected from the elements,
only the hardest things
survive the ages:
stone, shells,
bone.
Now listen.
That muddy cave!
Prayers, Missy.
Dust to dust, ashes to ashes.
Amen.
- Oh, she's asleep.
- No wonder. Exhausted.
I'm not asleep. Show me now!
Maria,
look through this little window.
Ready?
Papa bought it in Paris.
Moving pictures.
Magical!
But how?

Twelve mirrors.
As the cylinder turns, the reflections
give the illusion of motion.
Why are there rainbows?
A prism, where the light
is bent by the glass-
It wants to grow that way.
Well,
if that's what it wants,
we can move the path.
Why not?
C'mon. Come here.
Yeah, right here.
Throw a line over here.
Over here.
We cannot fight nature, Mero.
To the right, to the right.
What if no one comes?
I hope no one comes.
Ah, don't say that!
I only want to look at you.
The Marquesa did promise...
No, no.
Not this time.
De Los Rios is coming.
You won't argue with him.
The Great Sage of Cantabria, wise
on every subject, informed on none.
Marcelino, please. Stop! Be serious.
Not a word. Unless he says
something very foolish.
Or should I say until? Yes, until.
Gentlemen, it is all ready for you.
Will be just a few more minutes.
Our ancestors lived
more than 10.000 years ago
in what is called the Old Stone Age
or Paleolithic Era.
We don't know the age
of our planet or when mankind...
Nonsense.
It has been calculated beyond a doubt
that the Earth is
eighteen million years old.

You can read it in my writings.
Calculated, yes,
beyond a doubt, no,
Seor De Los Rios
There are many who think
it may be a great deal older.
And as to the Origins of Man...
Doesn't the Bible tell us
what to think about Creation,
- Father Tomas?
- Yes, Doa Elena.
God created the World,
but Biblical time
cannot be reckoned like a calendar.
Thank you, Father Tomas.
- Time for some more music?
- Some music.
Everything we learned as children
is out of date.
New discoveries
are being made at such a rate
it's wise to keep an open mind.
An open mind is an empty mind.
And, to quote Plato, "an empty
vessel makes the most noise."
Who makes the most noise here?
Excuse me. What you said?
Dear friends,
I hope you will indulge a mother.
My daughter Maria Justina,
will play Iradier's Habanera
"La Paloma".
I can't bear performing children.
They're worse than trained monkeys.
Can I be sorry for my anger
and still be angry?
No, you can't.
- Then I don't want to confess it.
- That's naughty, Maria.
My dear, how are you?
Hello, Elena.
Take no notice of Seor De Los Rios.
I'm sure nobody else does.
What do you mean?

It's nothing.

Only he's telling everyone
that his quarrel with Don Marcelino
was the highpoint of the evening.

Monsieur Ratter.

Madame, this is an honor.

Good day.

This is my husband, Don Marcelino,
and our daughter, Maria.

It's in a poor state, isn't it?

Well, yes, it is.

You are truly an artist.

The colours are most impressive.

Maria.

You want to look at the carvings?

- Good day to you, sir.

- Good day.

I'll join you later.

It's so beautiful.

You know the trouble with anger?

It's a pistol that backfires.

It hurts you more
than the person you aim at.

Excuse me.

May I look?

- Is it Paleo...

- Paleolithic.

And it's perfect.

Making a cutting edge like this
requires of
a very sophisticated technique.

Thank you.

Please, where did you find it?

Good morning.

Modesto Cubillas.

You remember, sir?

I showed you the cave before.

Yes, indeed.

You found a way in...

No, it was the dog.

I'm hunting rabbits and he gets lost.

Then I search all over and then...

Woof, woof!

I pull back these brambles

and see the rocks have fallen in.
I put my head in and...
"Are you there?"
"Are you there?"
Up he jumps and licks my face, sir.
Let me see this.
Want to take a look?
Pedro, Nero, come here.
Widen the entrance a little more.
I would like to get in tomorrow.
Thank you, gentlemen.
Maria, let's go.
- Bye, Maria.
- Bye.
They were big animals.
The woolly mammoth
was bigger than an elephant,
the aurochs,
a cow like a cart horse.
Why?
It was very cold,
the end of the Ice Age.
It's broken.
See how they split the bone
to reach the marrow fat,
the richest part.
Where did you find it?
There.
Moving pictures!
Mafia?
Maria!
Oxen, Papa, oxen!
Look, Papa.
- Dancing drawings, papa.
- Let's go back. It's cold in here.
No! See? They move.
Let's see, my dear. What moves?
The stones!
What is it? The stones look like oxen?
No, look.
There are many.
It's wet.
Wet.
What is this?

It's a whole herd, Papa.
This one's standing
and this one isn't finished yet.
- Who painted them, Papa?
- I don't know.
Was it the primitives?
I don't know, Maria.
"Sealed up like a tomb"?
And you let our daughter go inside?
It was thousands of years ago,
a landslide.
There could be another landslide
at any moment.
How could you...?
Do you forget what day it is tomorrow?
Our baby's name day.
Of course I don't forget.
I know how you feel, my love,
but if we took no risks at all,
not even sensible, careful risks,
our lives would be very poor.
Maria made a real discovery today.
The wall paintings
in the church are very old.
But these paintings are older,
perhaps.
How old?
Ten thousand years. Maybe more.
This is even before the time
of Adam and Eve. How can that be?
You truly believe your cave people
could have been painters?
Whoever did this was a great artist.
As great as any in history.
Miss Maria.
Conchita, it's a miracle.
It's incredible.
If I wouldn't have seen it
with my own eyes...
I have to talk Professor Vilanova.
And then we should get in contact
with Cartailhac.
- This discovery is worthy of his genius.
- Enough!

- Yes, Cartailhac.

- Maria!

My discovery is worthy
of Cartailhac's genius.

What do you say to that?

Never heard of him.

Papa told you about the oxen?

Yes. And that you found them.

You're not cross with me?

Of course not, darling.

And you're not cross with Papa
about Adam and Eve?

Don't worry about such things.

Go to sleep.

Paleolithic, Palaeolithic.

Will you show me

your "long haired oxen", young lady?

They aren't hairy oxen, Professor,

but bison which inhabited

this region during the Ice Age.

Ahah! A young archaeologist.

Look at this.

And over here.

Look at this.

Look at his head.

It looks as if it were painted
yesterday.

I wonder if this dark cave
may have preserved them

perfectly down the centuries.

Dating the work is problematic
without geological layers.

The cave was sealed and we have found
nothing more recent

than the Upper Paleolithic,
10.000 years by your calculations.

There are carvings and engravings
from this period

but they're small, portable, much like
the work of primitive peoples today.

Nothing like this.

We found this shell

just there by the wall.

Traces of colour.

Which could be red ochre.
Yes, yes, it's quite possible.
So, Professor Vilanova,
what is your opinion?
I've never seen anything like it:
I don't believe anyone has.
It simply doesn't fit
our ideas of Prehistoric Man.
Perhaps all our ideas are wrong.
Gentlemen, please!
Respect for our distinguished visitor.
Some of you have yourselves seen
the evidence of the cave:
a polychrome wall painting
of extinct creatures
in pristine condition.
There is no other example
of such work
from the Paleolithic Era anywhere.
Because they aren't Paleolithic.
Sir.
This is Paleolithic.
And... this is Paleolithic.
I have an extensive collection
which the Council
is very welcome to see,
having made Prehistory
my study for several years.
I realise this is a profoundly
shocking discovery.
Or an absurd mistake
which will make us Cantabrians
the laughing stock
throughout the world.
May I ask, sir, how you would account
for the paintings?
Certainly.
They are the work
of runaway slaves
when this was a Roman province
some two thousand years ago.
No doubt this beasts
were still prevalent
in their barbarian homeland.

There isn't one shred of evidence
to support that.

There's nothing in the cave
less than ten thousand years old.
Nothing that you've presented,
but how can we be sure?

Do you think
I would distort the evidence?
Sir?

Gentlemen, please!
Allow the Professor to finish.
I know what we are suggesting
appears extraordinary
but these are the facts.
That's monkeys with paintbrushes!
We believe that if the cave
is properly cared for,
the international experts
we have invited to see the paintings
will share our view
that this discovery,
in our province,
is of enormous significance
in the History of Mankind.

- Isn't that the wife?

- Yes.

A good woman,
devout.
a great supporter of our church.
She must be in need of guidance.
Extraordinary.

Consider this:

a complete novice takes up
the latest Paris fashion
and immediately it makes an "extraordinary"
discovery on his very doorstep.

Don't you smell a fish?

Professor Vilanova
is a true friend of the Church.
He exposed the wild assumptions
made by the Darwinists
to support their theory.
I am surprised he should be party

to such rash speculation.

Exactly.

Only a child could be taken in
by such nonsense.

"Oh, my clever papa!"

Excuse me.

Father Tomas, Monsignor.

I hope you don't think...

Tush, tush.

Glory, glory, my child.

You'll come to me.

Listen to this. Tablanca writes:

"Sautuola seems more interested
in personal glory
than allowing proper investigation."

Who is this Tablanca?

His column is very popular.

A moral commentary
on affairs of the day.

An immoral commentary.

Every word is twisted.

No reply from Cartailhac.

Perhaps he disagrees with you.

No one can believe
it till they see them.

You know?

I was thinking
if I sent

some well-executed paintings.

My rough sketches give no idea
of the colours, the artistry.

That painter you have working
at the church,

what's his name again?

Paul?

Paul Ratter.

You want me to ask him?

Yes.

Monsieur Ratter.

- Madame, what a pleasure.

- Good day.

How is our mother, Eve?

Very cheerful

for someone about to bring

disaster on all Mankind.
Just wonder
if I should lessen her smile?
It's her last moment safe
in the Bliss of God.
Don't take that from her.
- I knew you would have the answer.
- Are you allowed to change it?
Maria, I am sure Monsieur Ratter
knows what he is doing.
No, it's a good question.
Sometimes a painting
is so faded or broken
it's hard to know what was intended.
You see here,
at the corner of her mouth.
Is that a curving lip
or a crack in the plaster?
But you'll be changing History.
Well, improving it a little.
Did you come to see Father Tomas?
I think he's in the sacristy.
No, it's you I wanted to see.
Me?
Isn't he handsome?!
Maria Justina!
It's a plain fact, Mama.
One need not be afraid
of stating facts.
A lady should avoid stating facts
whenever possible.
It's most unbecoming.
Did you know that earthworms
can dig up to six feet underground?
Really?
That's what Mr. Darwin says.
Did your father tell you that?
Only about the earthworms.
He never tells me anything
about Evolution
and those things you fight about.
Wait here.
The Bible speaks clearly
about Adam and Eve.

Correct.

And who gave you
your power of reason?

God.

So how could they be in conflict?

If Faith and Reason seem at odds,
isn't terribly important.

Our Holy Father instructs us
that False Opinion has taken
the place of True Reason.

I think of Galileo
and his punishment by the Church,
which now we know
to have been wrong.

Quite so,

Galileo revealed the true workings
of the Divine Universe,
but for the Darwinists
here is no Divine Being,
no plan for Humanity or Creation,
only the random workings of Nature,
poorly described by Science.

As we understand more,
might not they too be proved right?

This is not about
the orbit of Earth and Sun,
this is Man setting his puny intellect
against the majesty of God.

Rationalism...

seeks to destroy the deepest
foundations of human society:

Love, Honour, Family.

What use for them
in a purely rational world?

I do worry that Maria...

My husband... He takes
such a part in her education...

My dear child,

I share your concerns.

Deeply-

Who made the world?

God made the world.

Who is God?

God is the Creator

of Heaven and Earth
and of all things.
What is Man?
Man is a creature composed
of body and soul,
made in the image of God.
Why did God make you, Maria?
God made me to know Him,
to love Him
and to serve Him in this world.
And does God want you to serve Him
with half of your wits?
With one hand in the air?
No, Father.
No, He does not.
I was admiring his Creation, Father.
Did you know the very same bones
we have in our hands
are in dolphins' flippers
and bats' wings?
Isn't that marvellous?
- Who made the world?
- God made the world.
Who is God?
That's not good.
Your wife?
She sounds good to me.
Scarlatti.
Only in times of strife.
Wagner is the worst though.
Then it's better not to be here!
Thank you for the warning.
A bowl?
A discus?
We are groping in the dark.
Paleolithic. Paleolithic.
Professor Vilanova,
Monsieur Paul Ratter.
- How do you do, sir?
- A great artist.
Perhaps you can persuade my wife
to come and see the real thing.
I don't think so, no.
Please, come in.

Like this they seem random
but each one is placed carefully
in exact relation
to the rock formation.
What of the quality? As an artist,
what's your opinion?
To be honest,
I find them astonishing.
There is an understanding of movement,
an energy,
a direct observation of Nature
that seems wholly modern.
I have to rethink everything
I had assumed about art.
This is quite a shock.
Hardly the work of monkeys then?
Certainly not.
Do you see, dear lady,
what this means?
Ten thousand years ago
Mankind was as we are now,
created with a soul in God's image.
We have not evolved into Humanity,
we have always been so.
Do you think that the paintings
might be in accord with our faith?
Faith and True Reason.
Conchita, my dear.
If we are correct,
then, the Primitive Man,
at this time had the ability
to describe what he saw in paint.
That's all we know.
We shouldn't try to fit the facts
to a set of beliefs.
We have to wait for Cartailhac.
If the mountain
will not come to Mahomet...
With your permission
I would like to present our findings
at the International Conference
of Prehistory in Lisbon
next month.
It will be easy for the delegates

to come here afterwards.

- You'll do that? Really?

- Of course.

- Thank you, my friend.

- And you should come.

Thank you.

Conchita,

you think...

you think Religion and Science

can't coexist, right?

Right?

My love,

imagine...

imagine that I am Science

and you

are Religion.

Yes.

I don't know if that's Science,
but it is definitely not Religion.

Water is denser than air,

so as the light

passes through each drop,

it bends, the colours split

and we see a rainbow.

So Noah's rainbow

was only reflections, not a promise?

If we explore the mystery of Creation,

discovering how it works,

does that destroy its wonder?

You know that a piece of music

is made of notes, chords,

crotchets and rests,

but that doesn't stop it

sounding lovely

or inspiring beautiful thoughts.

It does when I have to learn it.

- My dear.

- This came by special messenger.

From Cartailhac?

Open it, Papa, open it.

Please.

It seems that...

His Majesty,

holidaying in the region,

would like to see the paintings.

- The King! Oh, Papa!

- Precisely.

The King! Alfonso XII.

This are our workers.

Very good work.

Congratulations.

Beg pardon, but this is the dog
that found the cave.

And I am the dog's owner.

So by rights I should get...

Please,

there is nothing to worry about.

It is only a sheep dog.

A now royal sheep dog.

A dog!

Yes,

it was sheer fluke this discovery.

De Los Rios,

your most humble servant.

As you may know, Your Majesty,

I myself have made

many important finds in the region.

Marquesa!

Sir, this is my wife, Conchita.

- Seora Sautuola.

- Your Majesty.

Your husband has given Spain

something to be proud of.

The whole world must know of this.

Thank you, sir.

And you must be

the little bull-finder.

Bravo!

A photograph, please.

Come along.

Don Marcelino,

congratulations once again

in your important discovery.

Long live to the King!

I was just thinking,

before it was our secret.

When you go to Lisbon

and tell Monsieur Cartailhac

everyone will know.

But it's good to share knowledge,
isn't it?

Yes.

Listen, Maria,

When I first visited the cave,
I saw nothing.

When I went back,
we discovered the bison.

Now, what was the difference?

You went to Paris and learned
from Monsieur Cartailhac.

No.

The difference

was that you were there.

You looked without prejudice.

It will always be your discovery,
Maria.

Shall we?

My lady.

Monsieur Ratter.

Monsignor.

Isn't it good?

Very good.

We made a wise choice
in Monsieur Ratter.

I'm sorry you missed the King's visit.

More excitement
than any of us can remember.

You enjoyed yourself, I'm glad.

But beware vainglory.

Pride, intellectual pride or...

a desire for worldly honour
is a trap

for the most pious.

Remember the Scribes and Pharisees.

Is this good enough
for Lisbon next week?

Do you still need to go?

Now the King has been.

It's the largest ever
conference of Prehistory.

Professor Vilanova does me
great honour to invite me.

And they'll come on here?
To begin the proper work
of examination, yes.
They are atheists.
It's a scientific meeting.
We don't discuss such questions.
What more can you need to know?
Everything.
Everything.
How were they achieved?
Were paintings common,
but all lost or undiscovered
until now?
Or is this the work of a lone genius,
the Leonardo of the Paleolithic?
The paintings are of bison,
yet we haven't found
one single bison bone fragment
in the cave.
What was their purpose?
Are we looking at a history?
Celebration?
Religion?
Do you agree with Professor Vilanova?
You want to find the souls
of your cavemen.
I want to understand the evidence.
You should come to church.
F sharp!
F sharp.
Pay attention.
Mama.
Monsieur Paul said
I could go drawing with him.
May I?
Drawing? Yes, I suppose so.
But I don't want you in that cave
anymore. Don't be long.
Yes, mama.
Do you know how to do that?
What are you doing?
We need colours to paint.
Did you know the world
used to be frozen all over,

even the seas?
So I could have walked
from here to America?
Skated.
Do you want to go to America?
Doesn't everyone?
Mama and Papa don't.
They have everything they want here.
Don't you?
[Me encanta tener
una guia tan experta como t1], pero...
I hope I'm not taking you
from your lessons.
Papa thinks the best way to learn
is by doing.
He's right.
He's a very wise man, you know?
Was your father a painter?
And his father too.
Perhaps your great great great
great great great grandfather
was a cave painter?
I never thought about that.
I like the idea.
Let's make a cave painting.
The cave master
must have planned it very well.
I can't.
Of course you can.
Painting is looking. That is all.
You know?
You'll always be the girl
who discovered
the oldest paintings in the world.
Not many people do anything in their
whole life that comes close to that.
Let alone at nine years old.
Is it true? Tell me.
Yes.
Try it.
This is too much.
I'll give you some.
It's late.
I must go home.

Hide your hands.
Good evening, sir.
What a face!
I would like to paint him.
He's a horrid old cave bear!
- Oh, no!
- What?
Wagner.
Thank you.
Maria! Maria!
Bravo!
Au revoir.
That's what I have been told.
That your husband
does not believe in the Bible.
That he's using the paintings
to harm the Church.
He would never...
He doesn't think like that, Elena.
I'm just telling you
so it doesn't catch you unaware.
Father Tomas.
I am glad you are here, my child.
I am always here, Father.
You have been working
for him in that cave.
Don't deny it.
The Monsignor has a special
message from the Bishop,
in the light of all the recent...
disturbance.
Your husband is coming?
He's preparing his findings
to present to the world's experts.
For the greater glory of God.
Beware
those who fall into the Abyss
of materialism and atheism.
They labour to destroy
the deepest foundations
of human society.
They call
the Divine Scripture "mythology".
They deny the Virgin Birth.

They attack the Holy Family.
Think then of the peril
should your children be exposed
to their heresy.
These are grave and bitter evils.
Anyone who does not confess
that the world and all things in it
are created for the glory of God,
let him be anathema,
cast out from the Church.
I'm going to the cave.
The primitives
didn't have an easy life.
No one has an easy life, Maria.
Visitors.
We were expecting you.
Edouard Harl,
at your service.
Sautuola.
You have come
on behalf of Monsieur Cartailhac?
Oh, yes.
You are very welcome.
Very welcome indeed.
You are on the way to Lisbon,
to the conference.
That's the one.
Ratter.
Please, won't you come in?
It will give me great pleasure
to show you the cave.
I would prefer to see for myself,
if you permit.
As you wish, yes.
Yes, please.
You're gonna need this.
Of course.
Look at the depth of colour,
the definition.
There is no sign of weathering.
The paint is actually fresh!
Half an hour.
What are they doing there?
That's good, a deer.

Whoever did paint this
he has quite a talent.
- Ratter.
- But those tiny legs...
He has the proportion all wrong.
It is all too evident
he has never seen an aurochs.
It's not an aurochs. It's a bison!
- Damn child again.
- Who is she?
What are you doing in here?
You are spying. Out! Go on!
Get out!
What are you doing here?
- This is my cave.
- Get out!
Go on!
Typical crackpot nonsense,
allowing a childplay in here.
This child made the discovery.
Whereas you, sir,
no one invited you here.
So take your malicious opinion
and get out.
Out!
He's a liar. And the other one
is an idiot who knows nothing!
Enough.
This is a very important visit
and it must be conducted
in a scientific manner.
Sir, please.
But they don't understand-
Ratter, please take her outside.
- Please, come.
- They don't.
Come with me. Come.
Shut up!
The rest of the cave. Sir, please.
Were have you been?
Maria, darling, are you alright?
Papa!
The air in that cave is bad.
- It's an evil place.

- There are other cases in town.
- They haven't been in the cave.
- Everyone's been in that hateful cave.
See what you've done,
digging up things best left alone!
Best left alone. Why?
So that we can continue
in ignorance and error?
You have no respect
for the way things are.
No. If they're wrong, no.
You're so arrogant.
You think anyone
who disagrees with you is a fool.
- No. But this blinkered dogmatic view...
- Dogmatic?
You've lost your Faith
and you want to take mine.
It has nothing to do with Faith,
only logic.
If your Faith gives you comfort...
Don't treat me like a child.
Do you think it's easy to believe?
To believe in a loving
all-powerful deity
who want only destroys his Creation.
No, I don't think it's easy.
You hate God for taking our babies.
I didn't say that,
don't twist my words.
You should not have care of a child.
It's not me that fills her head
with Sin and Hell.
I won't listen to this.
Because you have no arguments
on your side, my dear.
Please stop. I'm sorry, I'm sorry.
It's alright, It's alright.
Go. Go back to your cave.
Professor.
Marcelino.
It isn't better to reveal them
in your lecture?
I am told there is some resistance.

The very idea of paintings of this age
is difficult to grasp.
It's going to be a sensation.
Esteemed colleagues.
So many distinguished experts.
Perhaps we in Spain can't claim the...
eminence of France
but the good Lord has seen fit
to bless us with a miraculous discovery.
From this day we must begin again,
to construct a new history of Mankind.
This discovery is a profound challenge
to my own beliefs.
But it is not for me
to tell you about our findings.
You don't know him yet,
but I am sure he will soon
be a famous name around the world
Gentlemen, Don Marcelino Sautuola.
Marcelino, come!
Thank you, Professor Vilanova.

'1-

Gentlemen,
this is a very great honour, indeed.
I'm only a foot soldier
but here I am,
addressing the generals!
It seems quite plausible to suggest
that these remarkable paintings,
which mainly represent
animals not seen in the region
since the last Ice Age,
these masterpieces
date from the same period.
Thank you.
I take my hat off to you,
Professor Vilanova.
You have astonished us.
I do not blame Monsieur Sautuola,
a mere amateur,
for his failure to understand
the basic principles of our science.
We do not expect miracles,
those went out with the Enlightenment.

We have now a very complete record
of Prehistoric Man.

I must inform you, sir,
that this record does not include
any evidence of wall painting,
not even a stick man.

That's why we urge you
to visit the cave.

We were as amazed as you.

It is quite impossible
that primitive man,
with his rudimentary brain,
could create such elaborate works.

Do you deny Evolution, sir?

Indeed not.

But if there is evidence...

Show me this evidence that sweeps
aside the whole of Prehistory
as we, poor fools, understand it.

That's what we're trying to do.

It's all there, in the cave.

But... Hold on.

This.

You will see the same animal
in the same style
on a small stone
found on the site.

We are not discussing portable works
but a vast fresco painted by
a Paleolithic Michelangelo
or perhaps a tribe of Michaelangelos.

You don't want to admit evidence
that challenges your beautiful theory,
but that is not good Science, sir.

This is a very serious matter.

Monsieur Harl

has examined the paintings
and they are nothing more
than crude forgeries.

- What?

- C'est un scandal!

Monsieur Harl reports

that the paintings could not have been
made without artificial light

and yet there are no soot marks
on the ceiling
as would be inevitable
with primitive torches.
Furthermore,
in ancient rock paintings,
the pigment sinks into the stone,
but here it's on the surface
and quite fresh.
In places the pigment has even been
laid on top of a layer of calcite.
But in other places
it is beneath the calcite...
Evidence!
Here is the evidence.
Found at the site.
Fresh paint!
What is this?
Please, this is not the case.
I agree the freshness
of the paintings is surprising
but when you consider
that the cave was closed
for thousands of years, possibly...
A painter was seen painting
in the Altamira cave.
Do you deny it? Do you deny it?
I don't know what you are saying, sir.
Sir, you can't close your eyes.
It's against Science, against Truth,
Monsieur Cartailhac,
this could be
the greatest discovery of our age!
Won't you even look, sir?
I know what I would find, sir.
You are a forger.
You should be ashamed.
Papa?
I deeply regret any trouble I caused,
sir.
Your concern comes too late.
The damage is done.
You left a trail like
a murderer's bloody footprints!

They were technical studies.
I never thought they would twist it.
It's as if you worked for them, you
made it so easy to prove their case.
Every other objection
we could have answered...
Except the light.
The light.
I don't understand
why there are no soot marks.
I was trying to follow your own method
and experiment, that's all.
I can only say I'm sorry.
What else can I do?
Nothing, nothing.
You've already done
more than enough.
What are you doing? No.
Please!
Stop it, stop it!
He only did as you asked.
Don't shoot your anger at him.
I made us paint there,
I upset that horrid cave bear.
I found the bison. It's all my fault.
You hate him because he loves Mama.
Maria!
Go to your room.
Go to your room, now!
I hate it, I hate your cave.
I wish I'd never seen it.
I hate you, I hate you, I hate you.
Maria!
Maria!
I am so sorry.
Madame, I have met forgers
and those who commission forgeries
in my line of work, it's inevitable.
I know you wouldn't...
Yes, but a forgery is always
an expected piece,
one of a series
or like existing works.
So that the market will want it.

But no one would ever fake
something so original,
so unlikely
as the bison of Altamira.
Thank you, Paul.
You are a good man.
He is a good man.
A visionary.
This kind of man always attract
the envy of little man.
I've written to Ratter
to apologise.
I must apologise to you.
I spoke to Monsignor
of my fears for Maria.
You're right.
I never meant
you're not fit to be a father.
I shouldn't be near her.
I am a fool.
Or worse, a liar.
In all these years I have known you
I have never heard you say
one word that you knew to be untrue.
Please, Conchita...
Why would you choose to start now?
To make a name for myself.
Make fools of other Prehistorians.
To garner glory for Spain.
Spain.
Beautiful and...
so unfair.
To pretend an important discovery
could be made by a mere Spaniard.
None of those
could possibly be your motive.
Conchita, I believed in Science
with a dogmatic Faith,
forgetting it is made by men
in their own image.
I risked everything I hold dear
for nothing.
Forgive me.
- Where are we going?

- Confession.
Did you just sin?
To the church, please.
Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.
It is two days
since my last confession.
Since then I've discovered
your treachery, Father.
Or should I say "Seor Tablanca"?
Shame on you.
How dare you come here
and accuse me?
You accepted my confidences
and then used them
against my husband,
that's treachery...
We did not speak
under the seal of the confessional.
Oh, you and your rules!
To twist my words,
to accuse him
of "perverting a child's mind."
What does your husband do
but stir upon thinking minds
to doubt the teachings of the Church?
His cave obscures
the pure light of Divine Reason
with muddy accident.
I read your articles,
Monsignor Tablanca.
I don't care to hear them repeated,
however nice your phrasing.
My duty is to protect
the Faith of the Church.
My duty is to my husband,
who hasn't one deceitful bone in.
You place your husband before God?!
Not before God, before you.
It's time to make your confession,
my child,
before you sink deeper in error.
Confess to you, Monsignor?
And read my sins
in tomorrow's paper?

Mama, have you got the fever?
No, quite cool.
Not a word to papa.
Carried out by a mere amateur,
this research may yet help
men of Science
tear aside the veil of ignorance
and prove beyond doubt
that these paintings
are of truly ancient origin.
What is that?
Marrow fat.
Makes the best lamp oil.
Why?
Clear and steady. And no soot marks.
Why no soot marks?
It's a good question.
A very good question, indeed.
Excuse me, Pasi.
May I borrow that for a moment?
Maria.
A lamp?
This is Science.
An idea.
An experiment.
A proof.
Do you see how beautiful that is?
Yes, Papa.
If you're a good scientist,
no one can ever take
the truth from you.
Amen to that.
Now you can tell
Monsieur Cartailhac he's wrong.
He must apologise.
It won't be enough.
He accused you, in public.
No, he has all the more to lose.
It's not so easy to change direction
when you're set on a course.
I know.
Think of the garden.
If branches grow across our path,
we just have to move the path.

Marcelino,
will you...
will you take me to the cave?
You never told me
the artists were women.
Close you eyes.
Are you ready?
OP9" you eyes.
Have you decided what to say?
I always admired
his attention to detail,
rare in an amateur.
Will he demand a public apology?
He has never written
to complain in public.
Then your reputation will be safe,
professeur.
Here we are.
Let humility be your watchguard.
Emilio.
Mama.
Mesdames,
I am the Abb Breuil.
This is Monsieur Emile Cartailhac.
Dear Ladies.
Monsieur.
You are just as I always imagined.
We have waited too long.
Indeed.
I should have come long ago.
Seor Sautuola
will have heard of the cave paintings
discovered in the Dordogne
this last year.
There is no doubt of their antiquity,
since they were covered
by layers of earth
more than ten thousand years old.
And this is what brings you
to our door.
Twenty years after you ruined
my husband's good name.
I sincerely wish to make amends
for any injustice I did him.

May I apologize in person?
Papa.
He is here.
Cartailhac.
You cannot tell my husband,
Monsieur.
You can tell the world.
Please, Mero.
After you, gentlemen.
"After Altamira all is decadence.
We have invented nothing" - Pablo Picasso
Modern techniques date the paintings
up to 35,000 years ago,
even older
than Marcelino Sautuola imagined.
In the years
that followed the discovery,
my father and all our family
endured great sadness
as humiliation
and public rejection
followed the injustice
of accusations of forgery.
My father died in 1889.
Thirteen years later, in 1902,
after the discovery
of several caves in France,
Emile Cartailhac visited Altamira
and published his famous apology:
"Mea Culpa d'un Sceptique",
recognizing his errors, the honesty
of Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola
and the authenticity
and age of the paintings.
His honor was finally restored.
Dedicated to the memory of
D. Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola
and his great-grandson,
Emilio Botin-Sanz de Sautuola y Rios,
who shared his passion
for the arts and education,
his curious mind and deep intuition.
In loving memory of Jose Antonio Lasheras
for a life dedicated to Altamira.