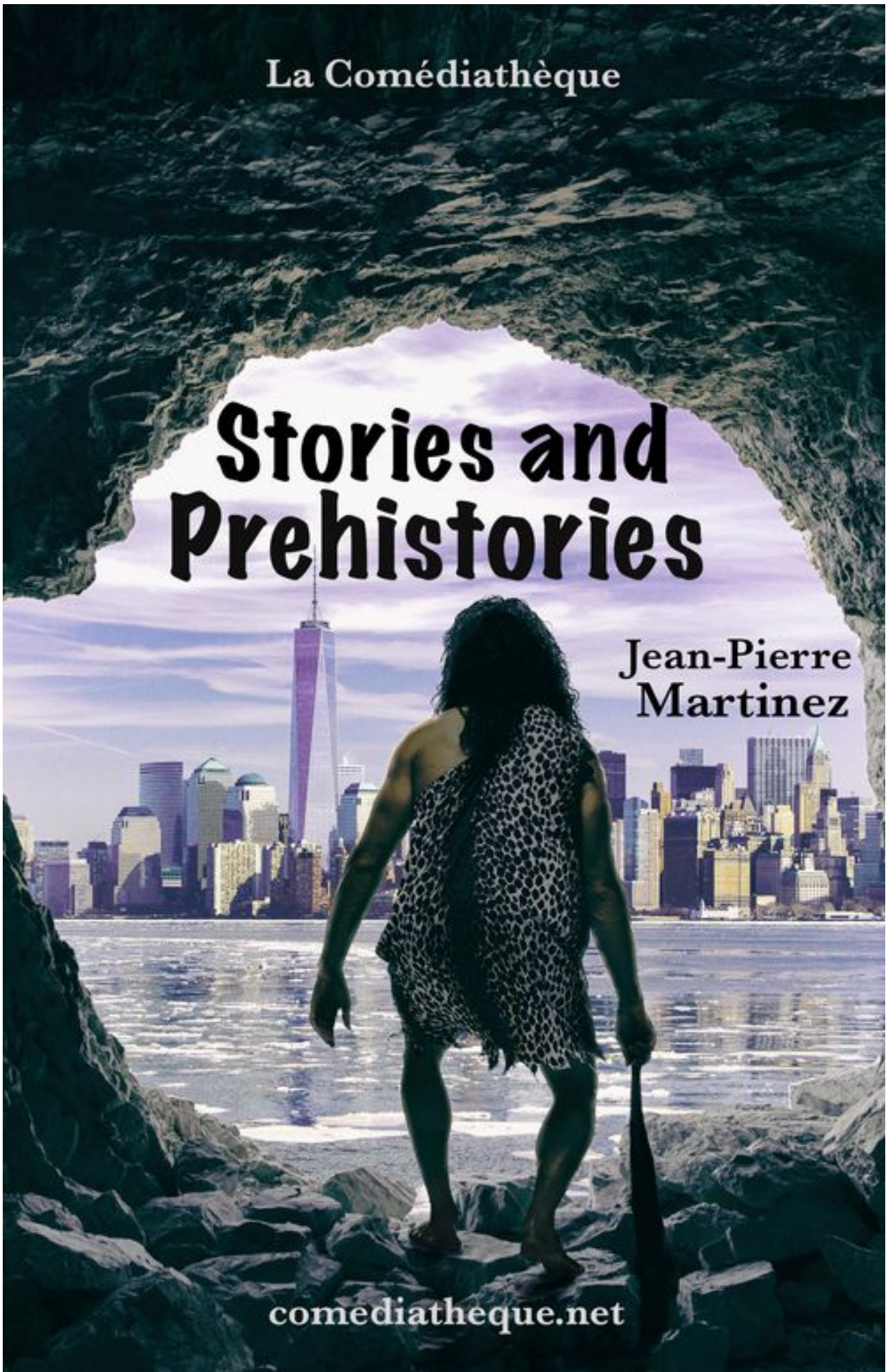


La Comédiathèque

Stories and Prehistories

Jean-Pierre
Martinez

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Stories and Prehistories

Jean-Pierre Martinez

Translation by the author

Set during prehistoric times that might well be yet to come, Newanderthals and Bohosapiens live together in perfect harmony. But two human species... isn't that at least one too many?

Characters

Ken: the leader

Rac: the warrior

Aki: the hunter

Zora: the artist

Mika: the cook

Kea: the tinkerer

Edouard: Newanderthal

Jacky: Newanderthal

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ACT 1

Kea, dressed in a beast's skin, is making holes with a flint in an object that is difficult to make out. Mika arrives, dressed in a similar style, looking cold. She carries a bundle of wood.

Kea – It doesn't seem warm outside.

Mika – I wonder if we're heading towards a new ice age.

Kea – Thankfully, your man just gave you a new fur coat.

Mika – I'll make a fire, that will warm us up.

Kea nods.

Kea – Here, I brought some flint stones.

Mika – Anyway, I need to start cooking...

Kea – What delicious meal are you preparing for lunch?

Mika – Aki went hunting. I don't know what he'll bring back for us...

Kea – Hopefully not mammoth again. I'm getting a bit tired of it, don't you think?

Mika – The problem with mammoth is that when you kill one, you're stuck eating it for a whole month, every morning, noon, and night...

Kea – They should have smaller sizes, it would be more practical.

Mika looks at her somewhat perplexed.

Mika – And what about you, tinkering away? What are you working on?

She points to the skull she's working on.

Kea – It's Granny's skull. I'm making holes in it, so we can use it as a strainer...

Mika – Very well... *(A pause)* But who is Granny?

Kea – Dad's mother! Before she got run over by a herd of aurochs, just outside the cave.

Mika – Oh yes, I remember now... I had completely forgotten about that...

Kea – This way, we'll remember Granny every time we use the strainer...

Mika – You're too sentimental, Kea...

Kea – And with her teeth, I made myself a necklace, see?

Mika – It's very pretty!

Kea smiles.

Kea – And when Dad dies, will we eat him too?

Mika – Why wouldn't we eat him?

Kea – I don't know... It bothers me a little to eat the dead, especially when they're family...

Mika – It's tradition.

Kea – You're right... That way, they continue to be a part of us.

Mika – Exactly.

Kea – When someone dies, we have a good meal while revoking the memory of the deceased as we chew...

Mika – And on that day, at least, we don't have to rack our brains about what to cook...

Kea – According to Zora, it would also be a way to appropriate the souls of our dear departed...

Mika – Yes, I must admit I'm not entirely convinced about that...

Kea – Actually, thinking about it, I wonder if we haven't already eaten Dad...

Mika – Oh really?

Kea – I think it was a year or two ago...

Ken, the clan leader, arrives, dressed like the others but with an additional ornament, like a headdress, signifying his role.

Ken – I'm getting hungry. What's on the menu?

Mika – Aki still hasn't returned from the hunt, Big Chief...

Ken – The game has become scarcer in recent times...

Mika – Zora had, however, promised us that with her paintings deep inside the cave, it would bring back the mammoths...

Kea – And that it would bring luck to our hunters...

Mika – Poor Aki... I hope nothing happened to him...

Kea – You were the one who said I was sentimental...

Mika – What?

Kea – You also worry about your man when he takes too long to return from the hunt too... He looks good enough to eat...

Mika – Don't jinx it, Kea. I'd rather he not be our lunch...

Ken – At least we'd have something to sink our teeth into...

Mika – Well, I'm not getting any younger, and I still have things to do...

Mika bends down to pick up her bundle of wood, and Ken's eyes are drawn to her backside. He puts a hand on Mika's rear.

Ken (*with a knowing look*) – I'll help you start the fire, Mika, that'll keep me occupied while waiting...

Mika – But, Big Chief... What about Aki?

Ken – Aki is hunting! And you know the saying...

Mika – No, I don't.

Ken – "Out of sight, out of mind"

Mika – I've never heard that saying...

Ken – It's normal, I just made it up... Even proverbs have to be invented by someone someday!

Mika – Well... See you later, Kea...

Kea – Sure, go rekindle the flame...

Ken and Mika exit. Zora arrives, dressed like the others but with a zombie-like touch, adorned with various charms.

Kea (*startled*) – You scared me, Zora... So, how's the painting coming along?

Zora – I'm almost done. You'll see, it's going to be magnificent!

Kea – What does it depict?

Zora – Right now, I'm in my animal-themed period. I'm painting hunting scenes.

Kea – You'd better go hunting yourself! Instead of smearing the cave walls. Painting doesn't feed anyone...

Zora – You'll never understand cave art... I work for posterity, you know!

Kea – Posterity... Thankfully, we never go to that part of the cave. Can you imagine if we had guests over?

Zora – But we never have anyone over! That's the problem. And when we do have someone for dinner, they usually end up as the main course...

Kea – Yes, that's not untrue.

Zora – What if we organized an art exhibition? We could invite the neighbours...

Kea – An art exhibition?

Zora – A small reception! To showcase my works...

Kea – Sure... And why not sell them too...

Zora – They could increase in value.

Kea – And to take them home, they would have to take an entire cave wall! Our cave wall!

Zora – You're right, I wonder if I should change the medium...

Kea – You could paint on skulls! At least you wouldn't mess up the walls...

Zora – Oh yes, that's an idea... I could call them still lifes... Do we have any skulls left?

Kea – There was Granny's, but I turned it into a strainer...

Aki, the hunter, arrives, dragging a body by the feet.

Kea – What on earth is this horror?

Aki – Let's call it a hunting accident...

Zora and Kea lean in to examine the body.

Zora – Oh my, I could salvage the skull...

Kea – That's not someone from our tribe.

Zora – It's a Newanderthal... The Chief won't be happy...

Kea – How did you do this?

Aki – I mistook her for a large ape...

Zora – There is a family resemblance, but still...

Kea – What is she holding in her hand?

Aki – It's a basket of mushrooms...

Ken returns, straightening out his clothes a bit, followed closely by Mika, looking a bit disheveled.

Ken – What's going on?

Aki remains bewildered by Ken and Mika's disheveled appearance.

Aki – I could ask you the same question...

Ken – Yes, but I asked first.

Zora – We've got an issue here, Great Chief...

Kea – He mistook a Newanderthal for an ape...

Rac arrives. He has a warrior-like appearance and carries a hatchet at his belt.

Rac – Aren't Newanderthals just apes?

Zora – Not quite, though...

Ken (*leaning over the corpse*) – Oh no, bloody hell, Aki, you didn't do this, did you?

Aki – Well, from afar... It's not always easy.

Ken – As if we didn't have enough troubles at the moment.

Rac – You're right, Aki, we should beat the crap out of these monkeys.

Ken – They may be monkeys, but they won't be pleased that we've knocked one of theirs off. That's human nature...

Rac – But they're not humans!

Ken – I'm wary of these Newanderthals...

Rac – Let's attack them first! They're a bunch of degenerates, anyway!

Ken grabs him by the fur and glares at him.

Ken – Shut up, will you? I can't concentrate!

Rac – Sorry, Chief...

Ken – We managed to live in peace with them until now. We're not going to jeopardize all of that for a simple hunting accident...

Aki – So, it's just involuntary manslaughter, right?

Zora – What if we offered them a peaceful arrangement?

Ken – An arrangement?

Rac – With those monkeys?

Ken – Anyway, for now, let's eat... I'm starving, I can't think straight...

Mika – With all this going on, I haven't prepared any food... What do we do?

All eyes turn to the Newanderthal's body.

Mika – If you want, I can make it on the barbecue, that'll be a change...

Kea – And it's quick to prepare.

Ken – At this point, why not...

Rac – Medium-rare for me. Last time, it was totally burnt...

Kea – Medium, please.

Zora – Can you keep the skull and shoulder blades for me when we're done eating? I need them for portable frescoes.

Blackout.

ACT 2

Ken, Rac, Aki, Mika, Kea, and Zora finish their impromptu barbecue. Almost only the bones remain. The guests wipe their mouths loudly with their sleeves.

Kea – It's not as bad as one might think, this Newanderthal...

Aki – It's a bit like poultry, really.

Zora – Yes, it tastes like turkey...

Mika – The secret is the cooking. With a drizzle of mammoth fat, it becomes very tender meat.

Rac – Otherwise, it can be a bit dry, that's for sure...

Aki – And with mushrooms, it pairs very well.

Zora – Yes, mushrooms, we never think of that.

Ken – I hope this barbecue won't give us indigestion...

A moment of silence.

Kea – It's true that in principle, we're not supposed to eat our neighbours.

Rac – So, what are we going to do with those monkeys, Chief? Do we confront them head-on?

Ken – I'm not entirely sure... These Newanderthals are a bit degenerate, that's true, but they're also very clever...

Rac – Clever as monkeys...

Aki – So, what do you suggest, Big Chief?

Ken – I suggest we convene the clan council.

A moment of hesitation.

Kea – But we're all here already, Big Chief.

Ken – All? But where are the others?

Kea – The others?

Ken – Weren't we more than this before?

Mika – We ate the others, Chief...

Another moment of hesitation.

Ken – Well then, I declare the council open... Zora, you consulted the entrails of this Newanderthals. You even ate them. So? What do the Gods advise us?

Zora – The Gods recommend us to avoid any neighbourhood conflicts, Big Chief. And to organize a grand reconciliation art exhibition...

Rac – You're kidding! We just ate one of theirs! Avoiding neighbourhood conflicts seems pretty unlikely...

Kea – It is indeed a serious matter, Chief...

Mika – We're not talking about waking up the neighbours early on a Sunday by mowing the lawn, or something like that...

Ken – So, what do we do?

Zora – We could give them something as compensation.

Rac – Why not damages as well?

Zora – A masterpiece painting, for example...

Aki – Something to eat, rather.

Ken – Even though they really look like monkeys, I doubt they'll settle for two or three bananas. It's a case of a human death, after all...

Rac – But they're not humans!

Ken gives him another stern look, and he falls silent.

Zora – No, we need a much more significant gesture...

Ken – A bunch of bananas?

Zora – I'm afraid that won't be enough to appease their anger, Big Chief...

Ken – A banana tree?

Kea – Are there still banana trees around here?

Aki – Not since the last ice age.

Rac – And yet, there are still monkeys...

A moment of contemplation.

Ken – By the way, was it a female or a male?

Rac – It was a female monkey.

Mika – I suspected it, their meat is always more tender.

Ken – What if we offer them one of our women in exchange?

Mika – A woman?

Aki – Since it was a female that we ate.

Rac – We don't have that many women left as it is...

Aki – Barely enough for each of us.

Rac – And that's if we count Zora too.

Zora – Are the Newanderthals cannibals?

Aki – We don't belong to the same species! If they eat one of our women, it's not really cannibalism...

Mika – Well, let's not split hairs...

Ken – If we give them one of our women, they're not obliged to eat her.

Rac – They'll do whatever they want with her.

Mika – Oh, please...

Aki – Which one would we give them?

Rac – Kea?

Aki – Oh no! She's the only one who can cook reasonably well!

Zora – Mika?

Ken – Oh no! She's the only one who can... (*Aki gives him a stern look.*) She's the only one who knows how to start a fire.

A moment of silence.

Mika – And why don't we give them one of our men instead?

Ken – A man?

Kea – We ate one of their women. That doesn't mean we can't give them a man in return, on the contrary.

Aki – Why on the contrary?

Mika – You seem to think a man is worth more than a woman...

Rac – So what?

Kea – That way, they get a better deal. That should calm them down...

Zora – Besides, whether it's a man or a woman, it's still meat.

Ken – It's true that if we give them a man, there will be more women left for those who remain...

Zora – That's a very masculine point of view...

Ken – Well... Any volunteers?

Silence.

Ken – Aki?

Mika – He's the only one who knows how to hunt properly!

Rac – You're kidding, he mistakes a monkey for a Newanderthals! It's true, all this is his fault, after all! It would only be fair...

Ken – But then we'd have nothing left to eat...

Zora – Rac?

Ken – In case things turn sour with the Newanderthals, we would still need his deterrent force...

Mika – And he's the only one who can... engage in warfare effectively.

Zora – So, what options do we have left?

All eyes turn to the Chief.

Ken – I remind you that I am the chief of the clan.

Rac – We know that...

Ken – Sorry?

Rac – Oh, nothing at all, Big Chief...

Then a high-pitched feminine voice offstage is heard with a posh tone.

Jacky – Is anyone in this cave? Bohosapiens, are you there?

All clan members freeze.

Ken – Are we expecting someone for dinner?

Kea – No...

Aki – It must be them...

Zora – Who are they?

Mika – The Newanderthals!

Rac – Oh, damn it...

Ken stands up, a bit embarrassed, to welcome the guest.

Ken – Yes, yes, we're here! Come in, please, it's open...

Jacky enters, dressed in a futuristic style like a high-tech jumpsuit.

Jacky – Hello, hello! So, how are you, Bohosapiens? I hope I'm not disturbing you?

Kea – Sorry for the mess... We didn't have time to tidy up... If we had known we were going to have visitors...

Jacky – I apologize for interrupting your Sunday family meal...

Ken – Please, have a seat. We are not savages, after all...

Jacky hesitates for a moment before deciding where to sit, then takes a seat.

Mika – Have you already eaten?

Kea gives her a disapproving look.

Jacky – We were about to have a picnic, but I certainly don't want to disturb you...

Kea – We are truly sorry for this unfortunate incident, dear Madam...

Jacky – So, you already know the reason for my visit?

Ken – And we are more than willing to find a compromise that can satisfy both parties...

Jacky – That's very kind of you, but...

Ken – We are ready to comply with all your demands to preserve the good relations that have existed between our two species so far...

Aki – If necessary, we would even go as far as to repent.

Ken – We are all ears, your wishes will be our commands...

Jacky is very impressed by their solicitude.

Jacky – Well... Thank you for your cooperation, really. I'm deeply touched... So, I was walking in the forest with my husband. We were looking for a quiet spot for an afternoon delight...

Kea – You probably mean to say a picnic, right?

Jacky – Isn't that what I said? Anyway, I had sent my mother-in-law to pick some mushrooms while we set up the table... And since then, we have no idea where she's gone.

A moment of silence among the Bohosapiens.

Ken – Please believe us, dear Madam, that we are truly concerned to hear this.

Aki – Even though, of course, we have nothing to do with this worrying disappearance.

Zora – How could we possibly have caused it?

Jacky – Has anyone of you happened to see her, by any chance?

Ken – What did your mother-in-law look like?

Jacky – Well... like a normal mother-in-law.

Ken – Has anyone here seen Madame's mother-in-law?

The others pretend to know nothing.

Jacky – She might have fallen into a hole...

Aki – There are quite a few of them around here...

Jacky – Or maybe she got devoured by wild beasts...

Kea – Unfortunately, that's also a possibility.

Zora – Or perhaps she accidentally ingested some hallucinogenic mushrooms, and by now, she's running around the forest, half-naked, screaming that the end of the world is near.

Jacky – Really? I must admit I would be quite curious to see that...

Rac – Mushrooms are very tricky, if you're not familiar with them.

Jacky – Anyway, it smells wonderful in here...

Mika – Yes, we... we had a barbecue. And mushrooms, actually.

Aki – But those were edible ones.

Jacky – You are right... A simple life... Healthy food... Sometimes, I wonder what civilization has really brought us, the Newanderthals... *(Her mobile phone rings, and she answers.)* Edouard? No, I'm in the cave right now, with the Bohosapiens... I'll hang up, the reception is very bad in this cave... Are you joining us? Okay, see you in a bit... *(She puts away her phone.)* Excuse me... The first thing I would throw away if I were to become a beast like you is my mobile phone...

Ken – Are you sure you don't want to...

Jacky – That's very kind of you, I can't resist... May I?

Kea – Please...

Jacky takes a piece of meat and tastes it.

Jacky – Absolutely delicious! It has a slight gamey taste. What is it?

Aki – Turkey...

Jacky – Oh, really... I didn't know you were into farming. I thought you were still hunter-gatherers...

Kea – It's wild turkey.

Aki – Mika, could you clear the table...

Mika picks up the scattered bones and takes them backstage. Another male voice is then heard.

Edouard – Jacky, are you around here?

Jacky – Yes, darling, I'm here with the Bohosapiens!

Edouard enters, dressed in the same style as his wife.

Edouard – Ah, I was starting to wonder if you had disappeared too... Ladies and gentlemen, bon appétit!

Jacky hands him a piece of grilled meat.

Jacky – They had a barbecue... It's absolutely divine... Here, taste it...

Edouard takes a bite.

Edouard – Oh yes, it's... It's exquisite... But it's quite strong, isn't it? Is it gamey meat?

Jacky – However, there's no sign of your mother...

Edouard – We'll eventually find her... (*Glancing condescendingly at the decor*) It's really charming here. Very picturesque, isn't it, Jacky?

Jacky – Yes, it's typical... Have you ever thought about opening a bed and breakfast? I'm sure it would be a hit.

Edouard – Spending the weekend in a cave. It could indeed be quite amusing.

Jacky – And it would allow you to earn some money to access modern comfort! You could buy a television!

Edouard – But you know, darling, that our Bohosapiens friends are a bit resistant to evolution...

Jacky – It's true that progress isn't all good! Sometimes, I too would like to live half-naked, like you. Eating raw meat in an unhealthy cave and fornicating with family...

Edouard – Forgive her, it must be the fresh air...

Mika – Shall we move to the living room?

Zora – What if I showed you my cave paintings?

Edouard – You paint on the walls?

Jacky – How utterly fascinating!

Edouard – And very trendy.

Rac (*aside to Ken*) – What if we ate them too? I'm still a little hungry...

Ken (*aside on the other side*) – We can't eat everyone we have a little neighbourhood dispute with...

Zora – Follow the guide...

Kea – It's all the way back in the cave...

They exit.

Blackout.

ACT 3

The Bohosapiens and Newanderthals return.

Jacky – No, it's really beautiful... Very... Very colourful, isn't it, Edouard?

Edouard – Yes, it's very... It's primitive art, right?

Jacky – Of course, it's primitive art! What else would it be?

Edouard – It's very cave-like, in any case.

Zora – Do you really like it?

Jacky – Oh, you should exhibit, I assure you.

Edouard – Or open a gallery, that would be more practical. Since the paintings are on rocks...

Ken – Well, it didn't help us much with hunting, that's for sure.

Aki – No, from that point of view, we can't really say that...

Jacky – We would have taken one or two for our living room, but we didn't think to bring a jackhammer with us...

Edouard – One rarely thinks of taking a jackhammer when picnicking in the forest, it's a shame...

Zora – Oh, but I also paint on skulls, if you want. Or shoulder blades.

Jacky – Really?

Edouard – Oh, by the way, that reminds me that we still haven't found my mother...

Jacky – Ah, yes, true, I almost forgot about her...

Edouard – Do you think she could have gotten lost while trying to pick mushrooms in one of these caves...

Jacky – It's clear that when you don't know... It's immense, isn't it?

Edouard – And in the dark, too.

Jacky – We should always equip our mother-in-law with a GPS tracker. To avoid bad encounters...

Edouard – All these galleries that wind on infinitely...

Jacky – It's as long as a digestive tract...

Edouard – Well, primitives, it's not that we're getting bored...

Jacky – Yes, we won't disturb you any longer...

Edouard (*turning to the Bohosapiens*) – What if we still bring one home?

Jacky – They're frescoes, Edouard. They're directly painted on the cave walls!

Edouard – I was talking about bringing a Bohosapiens back! We would have a nice barbecue in the garden tonight. We have to face the facts, Jacky, we're really not made for forest picnics...

Jacky – You think so? The barbecue always smokes a bit, you know. Not to mention the smells. I wouldn't want to have trouble with the neighbours...

The Bohosapiens look at each other in horror.

Mika – Are you cannibals too?

Kea – We thought you were civilized people...

Aki – Which, from us, is not necessarily a compliment.

Jacky – Come on, now! We're not of the same species...

Edouard – So, we can't really talk about cannibalism.

Rac – That's what I keep trying to explain to them.

Edouard – To us, you're just meat, after all.

Kea – Have you ever heard meat talk?

Zora – And paint grandiose frescoes on walls?

Edouard – We're not going to sink into sentimentality, either.

Jacky – Come on, don't act like children, be reasonable.

Edouard takes out a futuristic weapon, like a laser gun, and points it at the Bohosapiens.

Edouard – Which one do we take, darling?

Jacky (*pointing to Mika*) – That one looks quite plump.

Edouard – Maybe a bit fatty too... So if you don't want to smoke too much, for the neighbours... (*Turning to the men*) And why not a male?

Jacky – Oh yes, why not?

Mika – That's what I was telling them earlier...

Edouard points his gun towards Aki.

Aki – Wait, Newanderthals, I think there's a catch...

Jacky – Make no bones about it!

Mika – Your mother-in-law... She will never come back with her mushrooms...

Edouard – Mum?

Jacky (*spotting the empty basket*) – Oh my God, it's mother-in-law's wicker basket!

Aki – It was an accident...

Mika – A hunting accident, to be precise.

Rac – We mistook her for a macaque.

Jacky – It's sad, but it had to happen someday. Admit it, Edouard, your mother really resembled a macaque...

Edouard – Oh my God...

Jacky – You know, once we took her to the zoo, and the keepers refused to let us leave with her. We had to talk to the director! And are you sure she's really dead?

Ken – Oh, absolutely sure, I can guarantee it.

Edouard – These Bohosapiens are really animals... And we were almost considering roasting one...

Jacky – I really liked my mother-in-law.

Edouard – I'm utterly devastated...

Jacky – Can we at least retrieve the remains of the deceased?

Kea – For your barbecue tonight?

Edouard – To mourn her properly!

Jacky – We're not cannibals, for heaven's sake! I've been telling you that.

Ken – Of course...

Mika – But there's a catch, precisely.

Rac – A bone of contention...

Edouard – What now?

Mika – It won't be easy to retrieve the body...

Jacky – And why is that?

Rac – We feasted on the old lady.

Edouard – You ate my mother?

Rac – There wasn't much to eat around the bone, but still. It wasn't bad.

Mika – And you tasted her too.

Edouard – Ah, I see...

Jacky – I thought so... This meat is a bit tough...

Edouard – If you could refrain from talking about my mother in terms of meat...

Jacky – I'm sorry, Edouard...

Zora – So, if you eat us, just like we ate one of yours, you would be eating a bit of your own flesh...

Kea – In fact, you've already started.

Jacky – It's very delicate of you to remind us...

Ken – No doubt, it would make you cannibals. Just like us...

Kea – Yes... We're a bit of the same species now.

Aki – Through fusion absorption, as someone would say...

Jacky – I must admit that it's a reasoning that makes sense... So what do we do, Edouard?

Edouard – Let's take one with us anyway... As a souvenir.

Jacky – Take what, darling?

Edouard – A Bohosapiens.

Jacky – As a souvenir of what?

Edouard – In memory of my mother!

Jacky – Of course!

Blackout.

ACT 4

Change of scenery. We are in the loft of the Newanderthals. Some paintings of prehistoric inspiration hang on the walls. Edouard and Jacky are sitting on the couch. Ken and Mika are lying at their feet, like pets. A small blinking Christmas tree stands in a corner.

Jacky – It was a very good idea to bring these Bohosapiens home.

Edouard – Now that my mother is no longer here, they provide some company...

Jacky – May her soul rest in peace.

Edouard – They sleep most of the day, though...

Jacky – That's still better than your mother...

Edouard looks fondly at Mika and strokes her hair.

Edouard – They only lack the power of speech.

Jacky – But they do speak, don't they?

Edouard – Oh yes, that's right... They used to speak... But they speak less and less, have you noticed?

Jacky – They talk less than your mother, that's for sure.

Edouard – Why do they sleep all day like this? Maybe they're bored...

Jacky – Having Bohosapiens in an apartment is not ideal, that's for sure, but still...

Edouard – And yet, thankfully, we took a couple.

Jacky – Do you think they can reproduce in captivity?

Edouard – I doubt it.

Jacky – Why not?

Edouard – I had the male neutered.

Jacky – Oh, that's why, I was wondering...

Edouard – What?

Jacky – Oh, nothing...

Edouard – Can you believe we almost ate them? Do you remember?

Jacky – Yes, it's silly, but we've grown attached to them...

Edouard – It would feel strange now, I think, if we were to have one of them on our plate.

Jacky – What time is it, by the way?

Edouard – Almost ten o'clock.

Jacky – Oh my God, already! It's time for our Christmas Eve meal then...

Edouard – Oh yes... Otherwise, we'll be late for midnight mass...

Jacky claps her hands to wake up the Bohosapiens.

Jacky – Come on, come on! Wake up, Bohosapiens. It's time for some soup!

Edouard – Are we having soup?

Jacky – It's a figure of speech, Edouard... I try to use simple words with them, so they can understand.

Ken and Mika shake themselves and get up.

Edouard – The advantage, compared to ordinary pets, is that they cook for us...

Jacky – And if I may say so, much better than your mother ever did.

Edouard – They even make conversation at the table... Well, less and less, but still...

Jacky – Alright, we'll let you set the table, Bohosapiens... We'll go freshen up a bit for the Christmas Eve celebration.

Edouard and Jacky leave. The two Bohosapiens start to get busy, setting the table and arranging the dishes.

Ken – I can't remember, is the fork on the right or left?

Mika – It depends...

Ken – Depends on what?

Mika – Whether the person is right-handed or left-handed.

Ken – Are our masters right-handed or left-handed?

Mika – She's right-handed, and he's left-handed, I think.

Ken arranges the cutlery in a certain way.

Mika – Uh, no... I think it's the opposite. He's the right-handed one.

Ken switches the cutlery around. Then his gaze falls on one of the paintings.

Ken – Do you remember when we used to live with the others in the cave?

Mika – Less and less...

Ken – Don't you miss it?

Mika – At least here it's heated. The fridge is always full, and the kitchen is fully equipped.

Ken – But I still miss the great outdoors sometimes...

Mika – And our big family meals... on the occasion of a relative's death.

Ken – Or a hunting accident.

Mika – I wonder what happened to them.

Ken – We were already not very numerous.

Mika – We didn't know how to evolve, that's our problem.

Ken – But look at the Newanderthals. Where has evolution led them?

Mika – The problem with evolution is that after a certain point, it inevitably leads to decadence...

Ken – Exactly. These Newanderthals are completely degenerated! Yesterday, the female even tried to jump on me in the bathroom. Even though we're not of the same species...

Mika – They may be degenerate and zoophiles, but in the meantime, we are the ones serving as their pets...

Ken – I still prefer the term "companions," it's less degrading...

Mika – If they need companions, it's because they're bored to death.

Ken – We never got bored, do you remember?

Mika – We always had something to do...

Ken – Just trying not to die of hunger kept us busy all the time.

Edouard and Jacky return, all dressed up for Christmas Eve, with party accessories like streamers.

Jacky – Is everything ready for the party?

Mika – We can sit at the table now!

Edouard – It all looks delicious! What is it?

Ken – Mushrooms.

Jacky – Oh, they've put the fork on the wrong side again.

Jacky changes the place settings.

Edouard – Something has to distinguish them from our superior species...

They all sit down and start eating for a while in silence. The two Newanderthals play a bit with their confetti, trying to be cheerful, while the Bohosapiens look uninterested. However, the Newanderthals quickly grow bored.

Edouard – So, Bohosapiens, what entertaining stories do you have to share with us?

Mika – Nothing.

Jacky – What do you mean, nothing?

Ken – We're so bored with you.

Mika – We really have nothing to say to you.

Ken – If this continues, we might completely lose the use of speech.

Jacky – They're funny, aren't they?

Edouard – Hilarious.

Jacky – It's almost like they're our children...

Edouard – Maybe, we could adopt them.

The doorbell rings.

Jacky – Who could that be at this hour?

Edouard – My mother?

Jacky – Your mother is dead! They ate her.

Edouard – Friends?

Jacky – They're all dead too!

Edouard – Right...

Jacky – We are the last of the Newanderthals.

Edouard – Santa Claus?

Jacky – You know Santa Claus doesn't exist.

Edouard – You shouldn't say that in front of them... I'm desperately trying to teach them some metaphysics.

Jacky – I'll go see...

She gets up and opens the door.

Jacky – You? What a divine surprise! It's the Bohosapiens, Edouard, coming to spend Christmas with us!

The rest of the Bohosapiens enter: Aki, Rac, Kea, and Zora. They bring gifts, like the Three Wise Men.

Edouard – What are you doing here?

Aki – We were looking for a capon and a turkey to roast on a spit. We thought we'd take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas.

Jacky – That's very kind of you, but you shouldn't have brought gifts...

Edouard – And we didn't plan anything for you... Honestly, it's a bit embarrassing...

Jacky – What is it?

Edouard and Jacky open their respective presents.

Edouard – A stone-cut axe!

Jacky – A plush dinosaur!

Edouard – Thank you, really!

Jacky – It means a lot to us...

Edouard – It reminds me of that wonderful afternoon we spent with you in that cave.
(*To Zora*) Are you still doing paintings?

Zora – Would you like to spend Christmas with us? I'll show you my latest works!

Edouard – That's very kind of you, but...

Jacky – For us, going back to the wild, you know... It's a bit too late...

Mika – Well then, we won't disturb you any longer...

Edouard – You can take these two with you if you want... They have no conversation, anyway...

Jacky – You can eat them for New Year's.

Aki – Then Merry Christmas!

Edouard – Goodbye and take care!

The Bohosapiens leave. Edouard and Jacky are alone.

Edouard – What should we do? Shall we turn on the gas?

Jacky – Let's just turn on the TV.

Edouard – You're right, it's safer...

He turns on the TV.

Jacky – What is this?

Edouard – A documentary about the extinction of the last TV viewers.

They slowly collapse onto their sofa. Ken returns with Mika, followed by the other four Bohosapiens.

Mika – I guess those mushrooms didn't agree with them.

Ken – Are we going to leave all this food?

Mika – It would be a shame to waste it...

Blackout.

ACT 5

A mix of the two previous settings. A cave resembling a Christmas Nativity scene with a Christmas tree in one corner and a TV in the other. The Bohosapiens are eating.

Ken – Well done, Mika, it's truly delicious.

Kea – Yes, the cooking is perfect. Actually, I'll have another serving...

Rac – Enjoy it while it lasts, because they're the last ones... The species just went extinct...

Aki – Yes, we are the superior species now.

Zora – What exactly did the Newanderthals die from?

Mika – They died of boredom... in front of the TV.

Ken – If we don't completely break free from the theory of evolution, we must at least be wary of this diabolical device.

Rac – Count on us, Chief. We'll do everything possible to continue vegetating as we have done so far.

Kea – In any case, what a joy to be all together to celebrate Christmas as a family. Just like in the good old days...

Baby cries are heard.

Mika – We'll try not to eat that one... If we want to have a chance to perpetuate the species.

Ken – This one looks nothing like me... Are you sure he's mine, Mika?

Mika – Why wouldn't he be yours?

Ken – Edouard took me to the vet a year ago, talking about a minor procedure, and when I woke up, I didn't have balls anymore.

Aki – This child definitely wasn't born through the operation of the Holy Spirit...

Kea – Maybe he's the son of Santa Claus.

Mika – Unless he's Edouard's.

Kea – I thought Bohosapiens and Newanderthals were not the same species and couldn't crossbreed...

Mika – Must be a mix-up...

Zora – Or a miracle!

The baby cries again.

Ken – I have a feeling we haven't finished being bored with this divine child.

A moment passes as they continue to eat, watching TV, mesmerized.

Rac – What are they talking about on TV?

Ken – The reappearance of dinosaurs.

Kea – The ice age is over then.

Mika – Yes, it feels like global warming.

Aki – Do you think it's the end of the world?

Kea – The end of history?

Zora – In any case, it's the end of this prehistory.

Blackout.

The End.

About the author

Born in 1955 in Auvers-sur-Oise (France), Jean-Pierre Martinez was first a drummer for several rock bands before becoming a semiologist in advertising. He then began a career writing television scripts before turning to theatre and writing plays. He has written close to a hundred scripts for television and as many plays, some of which have already become classics (*Friday the 13th*, *Strip Poker*). He is one of the most produced contemporary playwrights in France and in other francophone countries. Several of his plays are also available in Spanish and English, and are regularly produced in the United States and Latin America.

Amateur and professional theatre groups looking for plays to perform can download Jean-Pierre Martinez's plays for free from his website La Comédiathèque (<https://comediatheque.net/>). However, public productions are subject to SACD filing.

For those who prefer reading or working from books, printed versions of his plays can be purchased from Amazon for a price similar to that of photocopying this document.

Other plays by the same author translated in English:

A Cuckoo's nest
A sailor went to sea...
A simple business dinner
All's well that starts badly
An innocent little murder
Bed and Breakfast
Casket for two
Cheaters
Check to the Kings
Crash Zone
Crisis and Punishment
Critical but stable
Eurostar
Four stars
Fragile, handle with care
Friday the 13th
Heads or Tails
Him and Her
In lieu of flowers
Is there a pilot in the audience?
Is there an author in the audience?
Just a moment before the end of the world
Last chance encounter
Lovestruck at Swindlemore Hall
Miracle at Saint Mary Juana Abbey
New Year's Eve at the Morgue
One marriage out of two
Preliminaries
Quarantine
Running on Empty
Strip Poker
Surviving Mankind
The Costa Mucho Castaways
The Ideal Son-in-Law
The Jackpot
The Joker
The perfect Son-in-Law
The Performance is not cancelled
The Smell of Money
The Window across the courtyard
The Worst Village in England
Welcome aboard!

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