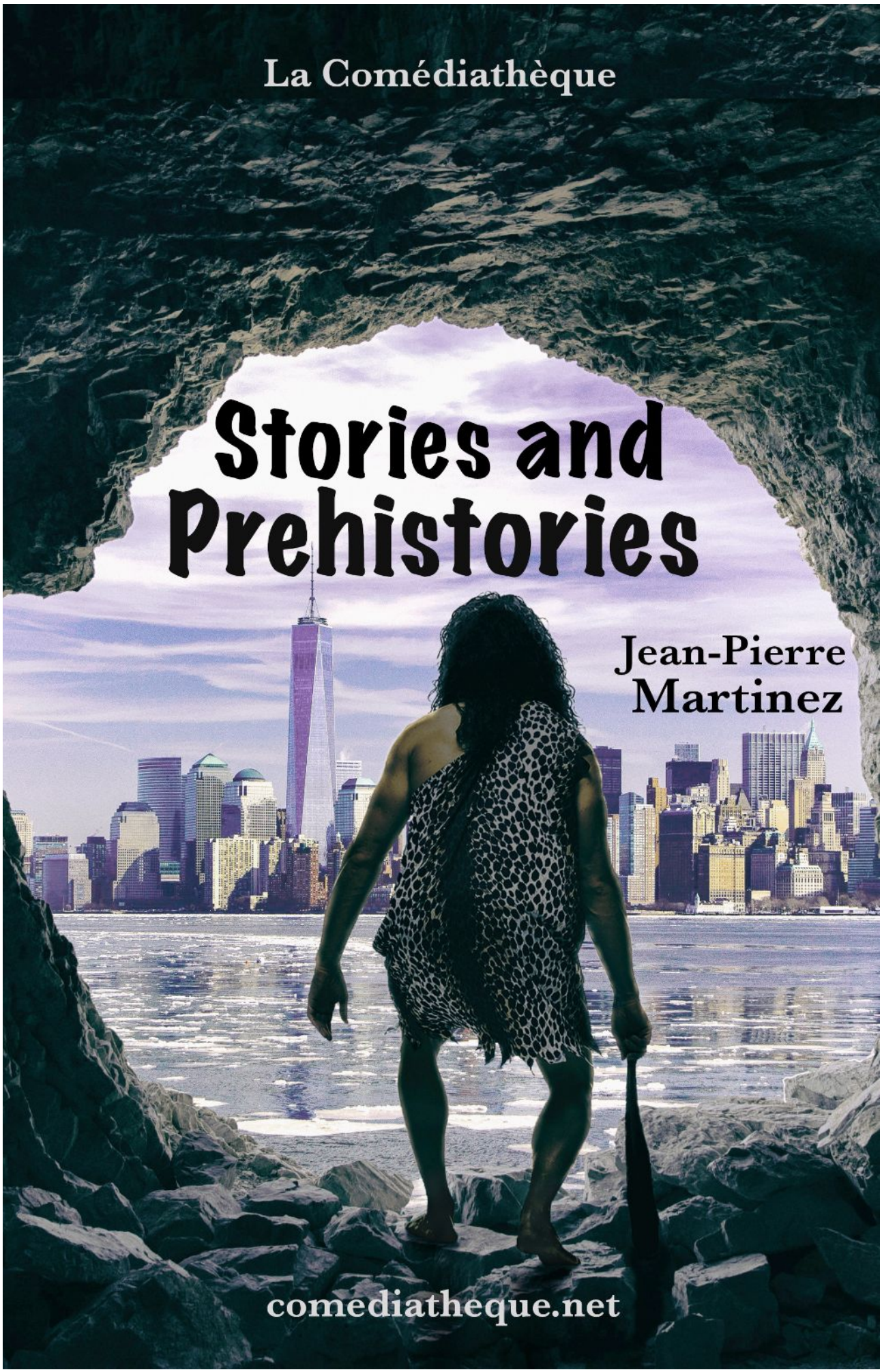

La Comédiathèque
Stories and Prehistories
Jean-Pierre Martinez
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Stories and Prehistories

Jean-Pierre Martinez

Translation by the author

In a prehistory that may still lie ahead, Bohosapiens and Newanderthals coexist in perfect harmony. But if two human species share the world, isn't that 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, wearing an animal skin, is using a piece of flint to drill holes in something we cannot quite see. Mika enters, similarly dressed and shivering, carrying a bundle of firewood.

Kea – Looks cold out there.

Mika – I wonder if another ice age is on the way.

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

Mika – I'll light a fire. That should warm us up.

Kea nods.

Kea – Look, I brought some flint.

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

Kea – What's for lunch, then?

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

Kea – I hope it's not mammoth again. Aren't you sick of it?

Mika – The trouble with a mammoth is, once you've killed one, you're eating mammoth for breakfast, lunch and dinner for a month.

Kea – They ought to make them in smaller sizes. Much more practical.

Mika looks at her somewhat perplexed.

Mika – And what have you been tinkering with?

Kea shows Mika the skull she is working on.

Kea – It's Granny's skull. I'm drilling holes in it so we can use it as a colander.

Mika – Very nice... *(A pause.)* Who's Granny?

Kea – Dad's mother! She was trampled by a herd of aurochs just outside the cave.

Mika – Oh, that's right... I'd completely forgotten.

Kea – This way we'll think of Granny every time we drain the vegetables.

Mika – You're too sentimental, Kea...

Kea – And look, I made a necklace out of her teeth!

Mika – It's very pretty!

Kea smiles.

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

Mika – Why shouldn't we?

Kea – I don't know... Eating the dead makes me a bit uncomfortable. 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 gather for a meal and remember them as we chew.

Mika – And for once we don't have to rack our brains wondering what to cook.

Kea – Zora says it also lets us absorb the souls of our dearly departed.

Mika – I'm not entirely convinced about that part.

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

Mika – Oh really?

Kea – A year or two ago, I think.

Ken, the clan leader, arrives dressed like the others, but with an extra ornament, perhaps a headdress, to mark his status.

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

Mika – Aki's still out hunting, Great Chief.

Ken – Game's getting harder and harder to find.

Mika – And Zora promised those paintings at the back of the cave would bring the mammoths back.

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 worry when your man doesn't come back from hunting, too... Though I must say he looks good enough to eat.

Mika – Don't tempt fate, Kea. I'd rather he wasn't on today's menu.

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

Mika – Anyway, I'm running behind with the cooking.

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 get the fire going, Mika. It'll give me something to do while we wait.

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

Ken – Aki's out hunting! And you know what they say...

Mika – No, I don't.

Ken – When the hunter's away, the chief gets to play!

Mika – I've never heard that one.

Ken – Of course not. I just invented it! Someone has to invent the proverbs in the first place.

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's it supposed to be?

Zora – I'm going through my animal period. Hunting scenes, mostly.

Kea – Why not go hunting yourself instead of smearing paint all over the walls? Art won't put food on the table.

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

Kea – Posterity? Good thing nobody goes into that part of the cave. Imagine if we had guests!

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 – Fair point.

Zora – We could hold an opening. Invite the neighbours.

Kea – An opening?

Zora – A little reception. To show off my paintings.

Kea – Right. And perhaps sell them too?

Zora – They might be worth something one day.

Kea – And how would the buyers take them home? Carry off an entire wall of our cave?

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 – Brilliant! I could call them still lifes. 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's that awful thing?

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

Zora and Kea lean in to examine the body.

Zora – Oh... I could use 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 manage that?

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 his clothes, followed by Mika, who looks rather dishevelled.

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 a problem, 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 body)* – Bloody hell, Aki! Tell me you didn't do this.

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 look like monkeys, but they won't be happy we killed one of theirs. Only human, really.

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 technically, it's involuntary manslaughter?

Zora – Couldn't we reach an amicable settlement?

Ken – An arrangement?

Rac – With those monkeys?

Ken – First things first, let's eat. I'm too hungry to think.

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 – I could barbecue her. It would make a change.

Kea – And it's quick to prepare.

Ken – At this point, why not...

Rac – Medium-rare for me. Last time it was practically charcoal.

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 improvised barbecue. Barely anything remains but bones. They noisily wipe their mouths on their sleeves.

Kea – Newanderthal isn't half bad, actually.

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

Zora – Yes, it tastes like turkey...

Mika – It's all in the cooking. A little mammoth fat keeps the meat beautifully tender.

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

Aki – And the mushrooms go really well with it.

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

Ken – Let's hope this barbecue doesn't come back to haunt us.

A moment of silence.

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

Rac – So, Chief, what do we do about those apes? Go in and give them a good hiding?

Ken – I don't know... Newanderthals may be a bit backward, but they're cunning.

Rac – Clever as monkeys...

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

Ken – I suggest we call a meeting of the clan council.

A moment of hesitation.

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

Ken – All? But where are the others?

Kea – The others?

Ken – Weren't there more of us before?

Mika – We ate the others, Chief...

Another moment of hesitation.

Ken – Right, then. I declare the meeting open. Zora, you examined that Newanderthal's entrails. You even ate them. What do the gods advise?

Zora – The gods advise us to avoid a dispute with the neighbours, Great Chief. And to arrange a grand opening to celebrate our reconciliation.

Rac – We've just eaten one of them! That's not a great start to friendly neighbourly relations.

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

Mika – It's not as if we'd woken them up by mowing the lawn at dawn on a Sunday.

Ken – So, what do we do?

Zora – We could give them something as compensation.

Rac – Why not pay them compensation while we're at it?

Zora – One of my masterpieces, perhaps.

Aki – Something to eat, rather.

Ken – They may look like monkeys, but I doubt a couple of bananas will do. Someone's dead, 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 calm them down, Great Chief...

Ken – A banana tree?

Kea – Are there still banana trees around here?

Aki – Not since the last ice age.

Ken – A whole bunch of bananas?

A moment of contemplation.

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

Rac – It was a female monkey.

Ken – A banana tree?

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 – No! She's the only one who can cook a decent meal!

Zora – Mika?

Ken – No! She's the only one who's any good at... *(Aki gives him a stern look.)* She's the only one who knows how to light 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 – And if we sent a man, there'd be more women to go round for those of us left behind.

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 – He can't tell an ape from a Newanderthal! This whole thing is his fault. 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 – Besides, he's the only one who knows how to... fight a war, I mean.

Zora – So, what options do we have left?

All eyes turn to the Chief.

Ken – May I remind you I'm the chief of this clan.

Rac – We know that...

Ken – Sorry?

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

A shrill, very upper-class female voice calls from offstage.

Jacky – Hello? Anyone in this cave? Bohosapiens?

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, bloody hell.

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, everyone! How are my little Bohosapien neighbours? Hope I haven't woken you up!

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

Jacky – Do forgive me for interrupting your Sunday family lunch...

Ken – Please, sit down. We're 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, actually. I wouldn't dream of disturbing you.

Kea – We're terribly sorry about this unfortunate incident, madam.

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

Ken – And we're quite prepared to reach an agreement acceptable to both sides.

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

Ken – We're willing to meet all your demands, if it means preserving peaceful relations between our two species.

Aki – We could even issue a formal apology.

Ken – Name your terms. We're all ears.

Jacky is very impressed by their solicitude.

Jacky – Well, thank you. I really am touched by your cooperation. You see, my husband and I were walking through the forest. We wanted somewhere quiet for a quickie...

Kea – You mean a picnic?

Jacky – Isn't that what I said? Anyway, I sent my mother-in-law off to pick mushrooms while we laid out the food. And now she's vanished.

A moment of silence among the Bohosapiens.

Ken – Believe me, madam, we're very distressed to hear it.

Aki – Although of course we had absolutely nothing to do with her disappearance.

Zora – Is there anything we can do for you?

Jacky – You haven't happened to see her, have you?

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

Jacky – Well... like any ordinary 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 she might have been eaten by wild animals.

Kea – Unfortunately, that's also a possibility.

Zora – Or she could have eaten some hallucinogenic mushrooms. She might be running naked through the forest right now, screaming that the end of the world is coming.

Jacky – Really? I must say I'd quite like to see that.

Rac – Mushrooms are tricky if you don't know what you're picking.

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're quite right... A simple life. Healthy food. Sometimes I wonder what civilisation has really given us Newanderthals. *(Her mobile phone rings. She answers.)* Edouard? I'm in the cave, with the Bohosapiens... I'll hang up; there's hardly any signal in here. You're coming? Lovely. See you in a moment. *(She puts away her phone.)* If I ever went back to living like an animal, like you, the first thing I'd throw away would be my mobile.

Ken – Are you sure you wouldn't like some...?

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! A lovely gamey flavour. What is it?

Aki – Turkey...

Jacky – Really? I didn't know you'd taken up 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... Delicious. Though it tastes rather strong. Has it been hung for a while?

Jacky – Still no sign of your mother, though.

Edouard – We'll find her sooner or later. *(He looks around condescendingly.)* Charming place. Very picturesque, isn't it, Jacky?

Jacky – So authentic. Have you ever thought of opening a bed and breakfast? You'd make a fortune.

Edouard – A weekend in a cave. That could be quite an experience.

Jacky – And you'd earn enough to afford a few modern comforts. Even a television!

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

Jacky – Though progress isn't always a blessing. Sometimes I wish I could live half-naked like you, eating raw meat in a filthy cave and having sex with my relatives.

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

Mika returns.

Mika – Shall we move to the living room?

Zora – What if I showed you my cave paintings?

Edouard – You actually paint on the walls?

Jacky – How fascinating!

Edouard – And very trendy.

Rac *(aside to Ken)* – Why don't we eat those two as well? I'm still a bit hungry.

Ken *(aside)* – We can't eat everyone we have a disagreement with over the garden fence.

Zora – Follow the guide...

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

They leave. Blackout.

ACT 3

The Bohosapiens and Newanderthals return.

Jacky – Oh, they're beautiful... So... colourful. Aren't they, Edouard?

Edouard – Yes, very... primitive art, I suppose?

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

Edouard – Certainly looks very caveman-ish.

Zora – Do you really like it?

Jacky – You really ought to exhibit.

Edouard – Or open a gallery. Though it's tricky when the paintings are on the walls.

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'd have taken one or two home for the living room, but we forgot to bring a pneumatic drill.

Edouard – You never think to pack one when you're going for a picnic. Such a pity.

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 enormous when you don't know your way around, isn't it?

Edouard – And in the dark, too.

Jacky – We should have fitted Mother with a GPS tracker. Keep her out of trouble.

Edouard – All those tunnels winding on for miles...

Jacky – Like one enormous digestive tract.

Edouard – Well, primitives, we'd better be going. Not that we're 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 meant taking a Bohosapien home! We could roast one on the barbecue in the garden tonight. The truth is, Jacky, we're just not made for picnics in the woods.

Jacky – I don't know, darling. A barbecue can be so smoky. And the smell! The neighbours might complain.

The Bohosapiens look at each other in horror.

Mika – Are you cannibals too?

Kea – We thought you were civilized people...

Aki – Coming from us, that's not necessarily a compliment.

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

Edouard – So technically, it wouldn't be cannibalism.

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

Edouard – To us, you're just meat.

Kea – Have you ever heard meat talk?

Zora – And paint grandiose frescoes on walls?

Edouard – Let's not get sentimental.

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 – Perhaps a bit too fatty. You know how much smoke that makes, and the neighbours... *(To the men.)* What about a male?

Jacky – Oh yes, why not?

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

Edouard points his gun towards Aki.

Aki – Hold on. There's a bone of contention...

Jacky – A bone?

Mika – Your mother-in-law... She's never coming back with those mushrooms.

Edouard – Mum?

Jacky *(noticing the empty basket)* – Good heavens! That's my mother-in-law's basket!

Aki – It was an accident...

Mika – A hunting accident, to be precise.

Rac – We thought she was 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 – We took her to the zoo once. The keepers wouldn't let us take her home! We had to speak to the manager. Are you certain she's dead?

Ken – Absolutely. I can guarantee it.

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

Jacky – I was very fond of my mother-in-law.

Edouard – I'm utterly devastated...

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

Kea – For tonight's barbecue?

Edouard – To mourn her properly!

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

Ken – Of course...

Mika – Actually, that brings us to the bones...

Rac – Quite a few bones, in fact.

Edouard – What now?

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

Jacky – And why is that?

Rac – We ate the old girl.

Edouard – You ate my mother?

Rac – Not a lot of meat on the bones, but she wasn't bad.

Mika – And you tried some yourselves.

Edouard – Ah, I see...

Jacky – I thought it was rather chewy.

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 – Very thoughtful of you to remind us.

Ken – That would make you cannibals, all right. Just like us.

Kea – You could say we're practically the same species now.

Aki – A merger by acquisition, as they say.

Jacky – I must admit, there's a certain logic to that. So what do we do, Edouard?

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

Jacky – Take what, darling?

Edouard – A Bohosapien.

Jacky – As a souvenir of what?

Edouard – In memory of my mother!

Jacky – Of course!

Blackout.

ACT 4

The scene changes to the Newanderthals' loft. Prehistoric-style paintings hang on the walls. Edouard and Jacky sit on the sofa; Ken and Mika lie at their feet like pets. A little Christmas tree blinks in the corner.

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

Edouard – They keep us company now that Mother has gone.

Jacky – May her soul rest in peace.

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

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

Edouard looks fondly at Mika and strokes her hair.

Edouard – All they're missing is the gift of speech.

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

Edouard – Oh yes, they used to talk. But 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 – Bohosapiens aren't really suited to apartment life, I suppose.

Edouard – Just as well we took a pair.

Jacky – Do you think they can reproduce in captivity?

Edouard – I doubt it.

Jacky – Why not?

Edouard – I had the male castrated.

Jacky – Ah, that explains it. I did wonder...

Edouard – What?

Jacky – Oh, nothing...

Edouard – To think we almost ate them. Remember?

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

Edouard – It would feel rather odd to find one of them on my plate now.

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, Bohosapiens! Up you get. It's feeding time!

Edouard – Are we having soup?

Jacky – It's just an expression, Edouard. I try to use simple words with them.

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 – Right, you two can lay the table. We'll go and make ourselves beautiful for Christmas Eve.

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

Ken – I can never remember. Does the fork go on the left or the right?

Mika – It depends...

Ken – Depends on what?

Mika – Whether they're left-handed or right-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 – No, wait... I think it's the other way round. 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's become of the others.

Ken – There weren't that many of us to begin with.

Mika – We never learned to evolve. That's our problem.

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

Mika – The trouble with evolution is that sooner or later it leads straight to decadence.

Ken – Exactly! Those Newanderthals are completely degenerate. Yesterday the female tried to jump me in the bathroom. And we're not even the same species!

Mika – They may be degenerates with a taste for other species, but we're the ones they keep as pets.

Ken – I prefer 'companion animals'. It sounds more dignified.

Mika – If they need pets for company, they must be bored to death.

Ken – We never got bored, do you remember?

Mika – We always had something to do...

Ken – Just trying not to starve to death was a full-time job.

Edouard and Jacky return in their Christmas finery, complete with party hats and 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 – They've put the fork on the wrong side again.

Jacky changes the place settings.

Edouard – Well, something has to set them apart from our superior species...

All four sit down to eat. The Newanderthals play with their party novelties, trying to look cheerful. The Bohosapiens watch impassively. Before long, the Newanderthals are bored.

Edouard – Well, Bohosapiens? Tell us something amusing.

Mika – Nothing.

Jacky – What do you mean, nothing?

Ken – You bore us to death.

Mika – We've got nothing to say to you.

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

Jacky – Aren't they funny?

Edouard – Hilarious.

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

Edouard – We could adopt them.

The doorbell rings.

Jacky – Who could that be at this hour?

Edouard – Mother?

Jacky – Your mother's dead! They ate her!

Edouard – Friends?

Jacky – They're all dead too!

Edouard – Right...

Jacky – We're the last of the Newanderthals.

Edouard – Santa Claus?

Jacky – You know Santa Claus doesn't exist.

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

Jacky – I'll go see...

She gets up and opens the door.

Jacky – You! What a lovely surprise! Edouard, it's the Bohosapiens! They've come to spend Christmas with us!

Aki, Rac, Kea and Zora enter, bearing gifts like the Three Wise Men.

Edouard – What are you doing here?

Aki – We were looking for a capon and a turkey to roast. We thought we'd drop by and 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 axe!

Jacky – A cuddly dinosaur!

Edouard – Thank you, really!

Jacky – It means a lot to us...

Edouard – Reminds me of that wonderful afternoon in your cave. *(To Zora.)* Still painting, are you?

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 – We're a little too old to go back to the wild now.

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 – Give our regards to everyone back home!

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 television viewers.

They gradually slump dead on the 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 mixture of the two previous settings: a cave resembling a Christmas nativity scene, with a tree in one corner and a television in the other. The Bohosapiens are eating.

Ken – Well done, Mika. Absolutely delicious.

Kea – Cooked to perfection. I'll have a little more, actually.

Rac – Make the most of it. These were the last of them. The species has just died out.

Aki – Yes, we are the superior species now.

Zora – What exactly did the Newanderthals die from?

Mika – Boredom. They died watching television.

Ken – Even if we can't shake off that theory of evolution, we'd better beware of that devilish machine.

Rac – You can count on us, Chief. We'll do everything in our power to carry on doing absolutely nothing.

Kea – Isn't it wonderful having the whole family together for Christmas? Just like 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. Said it was just a little procedure. When I woke up, my balls were gone.

Aki – Well, that baby can't have been conceived by 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 different species. I didn't think they could have children together.

Mika – Someone must have got their wires crossed.

Zora – Or a miracle!

The baby cries again.

Ken – I have a feeling we're in for some trouble with this little holy child.

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

Rac – What are they talking about on TV?

Ken – They say dinosaurs are back.

Kea – So the ice age must be over.

Mika – Sounds like global warming to me.

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

Kea – The end of history?

Zora – Whatever happens, it's the end of this prehistory.

Blackout.

The End.

About the author

Born in 1955 in Auvers-sur-Oise (France), Jean-Pierre Martinez first took to the stage as a drummer in several rock bands before becoming a semiologist in advertising. He then worked as a television screenwriter before returning to the stage as a playwright. He has written around a hundred scripts for television and 123 plays, some of which have become classics (*Friday the 13th, Strip Poker*). His plays have been performed in more than 100 countries and translated into around 50 languages.

Amateur and professional theatre groups looking for plays to perform can download Jean-Pierre Martinez's plays for free from his websites :

https://jeanpierremartinez.net/

https://comediatheque.net/

However, performance rights, which constitute fair compensation for the author's work, are a legal obligation. Whether you are an amateur or a professional, you must request authorization to perform the play and pay the corresponding royalties for the production.

Jean-Pierre Martinez is represented by the Society of Dramatic Authors and Composers (SACD).

To get in touch with Jean-Pierre Martinez and request authorization to perform one of his works, please use the contact form on his websites.

Jean-Pierre Martinez recently returned to music, writing original songs inspired by his poems and plays.

With **Jean-Pierre Martinez Music**, he extends that creative universe through original songs: short stories in musical form, humorous or melancholy, in which each song sometimes becomes a miniature theatrical scene.

https://jeanpierremartinezmusic.com/

Other plays by the same author translated in English:

Monologues
Happy Dogs
Like a fish in the air
Short Stories

Comedies for 2
A Thwarted Vocation
EuroStar
Heads and Tails
Him and Her
Is there a pilot in the audience?
Last chance encounter
New Year's Eve at the Morgue
Not even dead
Pentimento
Preliminaries
Running on empty
Russian Roulette at the Kremlin
The Costa Mucho Castaways
The Dressing Gown
The Joker
The Rope
The Window across the courtyard

Comedies for 3
A brief moment of eternity
A simple business dinner
An innocent little murder
Cards on the Table
Cheaters
Crash Zone
Fragile, Handle with care
Friday the 13th
Horizons
Ménage à trois
One small step for a woman, one giant leap backward for Mankind
The Ways of Chance

Comedies for 4
A Cuckoo's nest
A hell of a night
A Skeleton in the Closet
Back to stage
Bed and Breakfast
Casket for two
Crisis and Punishment
Déjà vu
Family Portrait
Family Tree
Four stars
Friday the 13th
Gay friendly
Hangover
Happy Hour
How to get rid of your best friends
Is there a critic in the audience?
Is there an author in the audience?
Just a moment before the end of the world
Lovestruck at Swindlemore Hall
One marriage out of two
Perfect In-laws
Quarantine
Requiem for a Stradivarius
Strip Poker
Surviving Mankind
The Deal
The Fishbowl
The Perfect Son-in-Law
The Pyramids
The Smell of Money
The Tourists
The Worst Best Man Ever

Comedies for 5 to 6
All's well that starts badly
Christmas Eve at the Police Station
Crisis and Punishment
Critical but Stable
Dead End Boulevard
In lieu of flowers...
King of Fools
The Castaways of New Year's Eve
The President's Draw
The Rebels
Traffic Jam on Graveyard Lane

Comedies for 7 or more
At the bar counter
Backstage Comedy
Blue Flamingos
Check to the Kings
Christmas Eve at the Police Station
False exit
In flagrante delirium
Just like a Christmas movie
Miracle at Saint Mary Juana Abbey
Music does not always soothe ...
Neighbours' Day
Nicotine
Of Vegetables and Books
Offside
Open Hearts
Reality Show
Save our Savings
Special Dedication
Stories and Prehistories
Such a lovely village
The House of Our Dreams
The Jackpot
The Performance is not cancelled
The Most Beautiful Village in France
The Worst Village in England
Welcome aboard!
White Coats, Dark Humour

Collection of sketches
Apocalypse
Backstage Bits
Blackouts
Don't panic!
Dramedies
Enough is Enough
Ethan and Eve
Every Colour under the Sun
For real and for fun
Funny Stories
Him and Her
Hold on, Butterfly
Killer Sketches
Lockdown Shorts
Lost time Chronicles
Memoirs of a Suitcase
No Sense Off Limits
Now and then
Of Animals and Men
Open Hearts
Open Letters
Park Bench Shorts
Sidewalk Chronicles
Stage Briefs
Stories to die for

All of Jean-Pierre Martinez's plays can be downloaded

free of charge from his websites:

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Avignon – August 2023
© La Comédiathèque
ISBN 978-2-37705-974-4

Play available for free download