

The Stone Age Artist



A cold wind blew but Red Fingers didn't shiver. Instead, she pulled her fur skin tight around her shoulders and crouched to view her painting. The sun was low in the sky, lighting the cave up with a bright, orange glow.

A voice called out. Red Fingers turned to see Fire Man lumbering towards her. He had his hands above his head, trying to make them look like antlers.

Red Fingers grunted with a shake of her head. She dabbed a finger into a small pool of brownish-red paint and gently rubbed it along the outline of her artwork.



Fire Man mumbled something and patted his belly. "Eat," he seemed to say.

Red Fingers shook her head again and dipped a second finger into the paint.

"Eat," Fire Man repeated. He rubbed his hands together and blew on them. Then, he flicked his arms into the air. He was trying to tell her about the fire he was making to cook their meal.

Red Fingers didn't look up. Her mouth curled, irritably. She waited for Fire Man to leave before continuing with her work.

All day, Fire Man had been wandering across the icy wastelands searching for food. He had returned carrying a beast with magnificent antlers on his back. Although she was hungry, Red Fingers didn't want to eat. Her painting was far too important.

She could hear Fire Man grunting and grumbling to the others but she didn't care. She held an earthy-looking rock over her paint and scraped at it with a stone. Tiny fragments of dust sprinkled down like red rain and she watched as they spread into her mixture. Red Fingers then spat into the paint, blending it together with a stick.



The smell of sizzling food wafted through the cave and Red Fingers' stomach rumbled. The Old One came hobbling towards her. She greeted Red Fingers with a whistle-like grunt and bent over her younger cave dweller. In her hand was a slice of the food Fire Man had been cooking. She offered it to Red Fingers. Red Fingers hesitated, then accepted the gift. She bit into the meat and nodded thankfully. It tasted so good. The Old One gave her a toothless smile before hobbling away. She had been right to insist that Red Fingers ate.



As darkness spilled into the cave, Red Fingers turned back to her painting, brushing the cold rock with her fingertips.

Pack hunters howled across the mountains as she sat back to view her work. Lit with a dull, orange glow, her picture showed a beast with magnificent antlers. It was running free across the icy wastelands.

That night, as she stared at the stars, Red Fingers thought about all her other cave paintings. She wondered how many winters they would last for and whether her children – or even her children's children – might one day get to see them.

A cold wind blew and Red Fingers pulled her fur skin tightly around her shoulder. Soon she was asleep, dreaming of pack hunters, night creatures and the beast with magnificent antlers.

Questions

1. **Red Fingers turned to see Fire Man lumbering towards her.** What words or phrases with similar meanings could replace **lumbering**? Tick **two**.

- walking awkwardly
- running
- walking slowly
- walking angrily

2. **“Eat,” he seemed to say.**

Why do you think it says ‘**seemed** to say’ instead of just ‘said’ to describe the way Fire Man spoke?

3. **Red Fingers didn’t look up. Her mouth curled irritably.**

What does this say about the way Red Fingers is feeling at this point? Explain your answer.

4. Why do you think Red Fingers is called Red Fingers and Fire Man is called Fire Man?

5. Why did Red Fingers spit into the paint?

6. What type of animal do you think the **beast with magnificent antlers** is?

7. Join the boxes to correctly describe the characters' feelings about things.

Red Fingers was full of respect for this

Fire Man was good at this

Old One was happy about this

eating

beast

hunting

8. Why do you think Red Fingers dreamt of the beast with magnificent antlers?
