

## Neolithic Boy

My name is Lightning because I was born during a great storm and I live in a small wooden cabin with my family near where the blue stones are. We have lived here a long while now but soon we will be moving away from this high ground to somewhere where the grain will grow better.

### My family

I live with my grandfather, mother and father and two baby sisters who were born at the same time. My mother was very tired all the time when they were small and so her sister helped out with the feeding as she had just had a baby too. My mother's sister and her man have a baby boy and a little girl the same age as me. We all live together in the same wooden hut but next to us, my father's brother has just built a hut the same shape as the moon when it's full. He has a woman now whose family live a long way away. They met when her family stayed with us on their way to the big waters and my new auntie decided to stay. They don't have any babies yet. She is very good at making baskets and has taught my mother and sister how to make cloth from the sheep's wool too. I don't think my mother will give up wearing her furs no matter how warm the woollen clothes are.

### Farming

My family has farmed here for a long while but the past few warm seasons have not been very good. Our

crops of barley, oats and wheat are not growing as tall or making as many seeds to grind into flour to make us bread. During the last cold season, when the sun was low in the sky and there wasn't much daylight, we were all very hungry because we didn't have enough grain stored or nuts to eat. This was because my mother hadn't been able to fill her clay pots with as much grain as she would have liked. We keep any grain left over in large pots in our hut so that the wild animals won't steal it.

### Pottery

My mother loves making pots from the clay that she finds at the side of the river. The last pot she made was so big one of my little baby sisters crawled right into it and couldn't get out. My father said that my sister was lucky that the pot didn't topple but my mother laughed and said that it couldn't because she'd made it with a flat bottom to stay steady. My mother has started to put her own special pattern around the top of her pots now and they look very pretty. She says that it stops her sister saying that the pots are hers when they are not.

### Stealing our food

We used to keep very big storage pots full of grain and food outside our hut but soon stopped doing that when my grandfather caught another family, who were travelling past our huts in the night, trying to steal his best seed. My mother also makes sure that our dog

sleeps outside, so that he will bark if a stranger comes too near when the sun has gone from the sky.

### Defending our homes

My uncle said that it would be a good idea if we all got together to put one big fence around our huts to stop these bad people if they ever came back. We had to chop down a lot of trees for the wood for the fence. We didn't mind doing that because it also gave us more room to let the pigs and cattle and the sheep graze. My grandfather makes axes from stone that are very, very sharp and also stone tools to dig up the ground ready to plant the seed at the time when the sun is higher in the sky. Believe me, that tool is much easier to use than a sharp stick!

### Flint tools

My grandfather is very good at making tools from a piece of stone called flint and he's started to teach me now too. The first thing he taught me to do was to put a thick piece of animal skin over my knees before starting to break the stone. That way nothing goes to waste because the skin will catch any small flakes that fall from the piece of stone as I hit it with either a pebble or small piece of a deer's antler. It also stops me from hurting myself if I miss the stone and hit my leg instead.

We make lots of things from flint, like arrowheads, spears and tools to scrape away the guts from the

skins of animals. We also make cutting stones to cut up the meat.

### Trade

Sometimes some of our family who live some way away visit us and we swap things with them. My father swapped a very sharp axe with his sister's son for a soft, brown bear fur for my mother to wear to keep warm. Sometimes people come to our huts that are not family and they swap things with us too. I had some flint arrows that I'd finished off with beautiful blackbird feathers and the man said he'd give me a necklace made from shiny pink shells if I gave him the same amount of arrows that I have fingers on my hand. I didn't want a necklace, what I wanted were the reindeer antlers he had in his bag but he said that I would have to give him a lot more arrows if I wanted that.

### Leaving home

After our last bad harvest my grandfather decided that it would be best if we were to move away from here, once the snows have gone, and go back to the place where he was born. No one has lived there since the family moved away so he says that the earth will be kinder to us there, now that it's had time to sleep.

### Burial mounds

He also says that the earth will welcome us as our ancestors are there too. He told me that near to where we are going to live there is a large mound held up by

large stones where the bones of the members of my long dead family can be found. He said that if we place presents for them in these tombs he's sure that they will be kind to us and look after us. I asked him what our ancestors looked like and he said that you couldn't see them any more but that they are all around us ready to help. To make sure that they do, my mother is going to put a clay pot in the mound and my father is going to put a black shiny axe, which he had to exchange for many wolf skins. I think I'll put one of my blackbird feather arrows in there.

### Moving on

It will take us many sun settings to get to the place of my ancestors and we'll have to pack everything that we own on to sleds. My father has trained our dogs to pull these heavy loads, which will help but I know that my mother will still expect me to carry one of my baby sister's on my back all the way to our new home. I just hope that she doesn't poo all over me!