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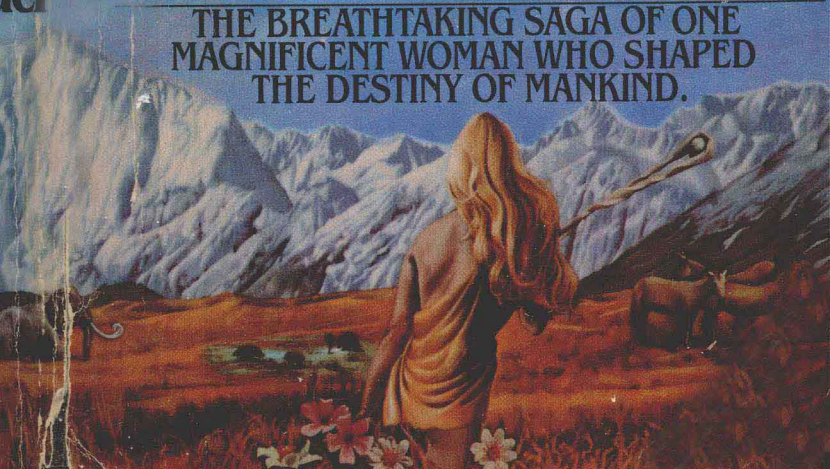
THE ASTONISHING BESTSELLER  
BY THE AUTHOR OF  
THE CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR

# the Valley of Horses

Jean M. Auel

THE BREATHTAKING SAGA OF ONE  
MAGNIFICENT WOMAN WHO SHAPED  
THE DESTINY OF MANKIND.

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**THE  
VALLEY  
OF  
HORSES**

**A NOVEL**

**JEAN M. AUDEL**

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**EARTH'S CHILDREN**



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**Bantam Books by Jean M. Auel**

**THE CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR**

**THE VALLEY OF HORSES**

*a dangerous journey to a place that is his destiny,  
to the woman who is his fate.*

*They come together at the dawn of man  
in . . .*

## THE VALLEY OF HORSES

*Ayla could not get enough of looking at him, and she studied his face as though she were trying to satisfy all at one time her years of yearning for the sight of another human . . .*

She had been trying to think of some way to begin to learn his words. Steeling herself, she looked directly into his eyes, tapped her chest, and said, "Ayla."

"Jondalar," he said. "My name is Jondalar of the Zelandonii."

Ayla strained to make her mouth work the same way. "Duh-da," was as close as she could come.

He said his name again, slowly, "Jon-da-lar . . . Jonnn-dah-larr."

"Don-da-lah," she tried again.

"Much better!" he said, nodding approvingly and smiling.

Her look of surprise was so funny that Jondalar had to suppress a chuckle, but his smile deepened and his eyes sparkled with amusement. "Oh, woman," he said, "you may not talk much, but you are lovely when you smile!" The maleness in him began to see her as a woman, as a very attractive woman, and he looked at her that way.

Ayla didn't know what it was about his look, but her body did. It recognized the invitation and responded with the same drawing, tingling sensations deep inside that she had felt when she was watching Whinney and the bay stallion. His eyes were so compelling that she had to force herself to look away. . . .

*Ayla . . . young, beautiful, left to survive alone on the cruel windswept plains, now begins her odyssey of discovery—of new skills, of new experience, of a new sexual awakening. Jondalar . . . tall, bold and charismatic with his vivid blue eyes, has braved*

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***THE VALLEY OF HORSES***

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**—Fred Down, UPI**

**"A powerful story . . . Auel is a highly imaginative writer. She humanizes prehistory and gives it immediacy and clarity."**

**—Chicago Sun-Times**

**"A panorama of human culture in its infancy . . . *The Valley of Horses* is great fun."**

**—The New York Times Book Review**

**"Ayla is an unforgettable heroine of fierce courage, determination and sensitivity. A wonderful exciting story."**

**—St. Louis Post-Dispatch**

**"Entertaining and provocative . . . A kind of prehistoric romance, replete with graphic descriptions of Ayla's awakening sexual interest . . . An old love story in a totally unpredictable and delightfully drawn setting."**

**—Chicago Tribune Book World**

**"A fascinating and original novel."**

**—Los Angeles Herald-Examiner**

**"Auel makes a plot come alive . . . She writes with innocent sensuousness, good humor, and compassion."**

**—Houston Chronicle**

**Now, turn the page  
for an excerpt from  
*The Valley of Horses* . . .**

**The  
Valley  
of  
Horses**



# Acknowledgments

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In addition to the people mentioned in *The Clan of the Cave Bear*, whose help has been of continuing assistance for this *Earth's Children* book, and for which I am still grateful, I am further indebted to:

The director, Dr. Denzel Ferguson, and staff of Malheur Field Station, in the high desert steppes country of central Oregon, and most especially to Jim Riggs. He taught, among other things, how a fire is made, how a spear-thrower is used, how bulrushes make sleeping mats, how to pressure-flake a stone tool, and how to squish deer brains—who would have thought that could turn deer hide into velvety soft leather?

Doreen Gandy, for her careful reading and most appreciated comments so I could be assured this book stands alone.

Ray Auel, for support, encouragement, assistance, and doing the dishes.

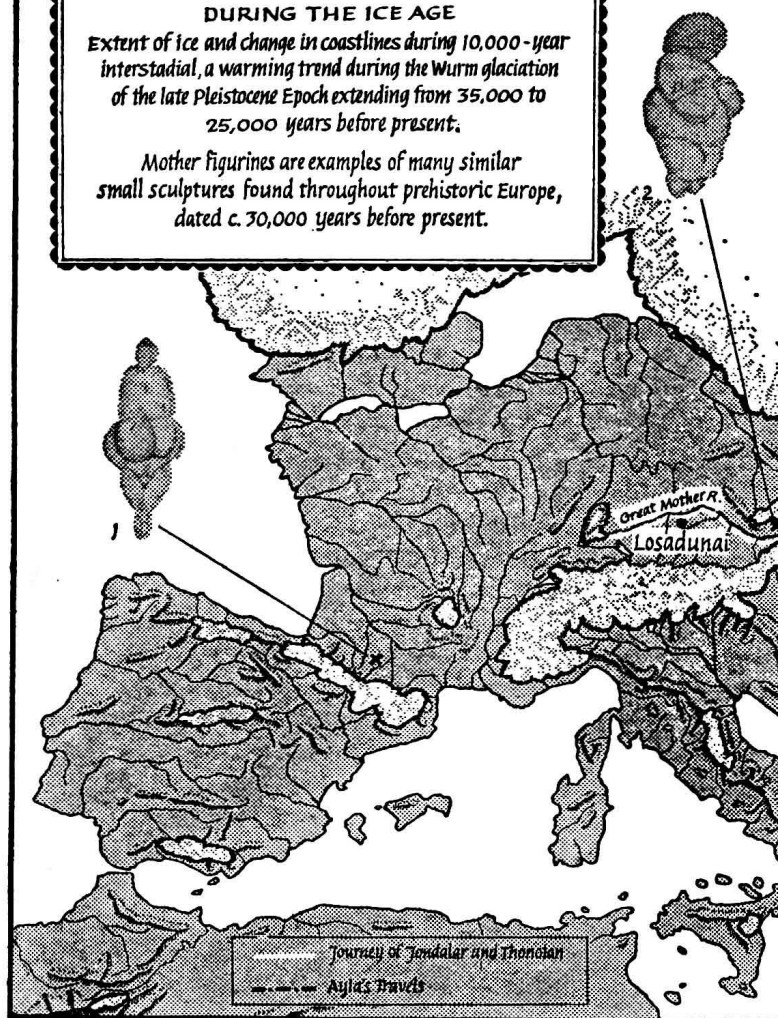
1. "Venus" of Lespugue. Ivory (restored).  
Height 14.7 cm/5  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. Found Lespugue  
(Haute-Garonne), France.  
*Musée de l'Homme, Paris.*
2. "Venus" of Willendorf. Limestone with  
traces of red ochre. Height 11 cm/4 in.  
Found Willendorf, Wachau, Lower Austria.  
*Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna.*
3. "Venus" of Vestonice. Fired clay (with  
bone). Height 11.4 cm/4  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. Found Dolní  
Vestonice, Mikulov, Moravia, Czechoslovakia.  
*Moravian Museum, Brno.*
4. Female Figurine. Ivory. Height 5.8 cm/  
2  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. Found Gagarino, Ukraine, USSR.  
*Ethnographic Institute, Leningrad.*
5. Lady of Brassempouy. Ivory (fragment).  
Height 3.2 cm/1  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. Found Grotte du Pape,  
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*Musée des Antiquités Nationales, Saint-Germain-en-laye.*

## EARTH'S CHILDREN

### PREHISTORIC EUROPE DURING THE ICE AGE

*Extent of ice and change in coastlines during 10,000-year interstadial, a warming trend during the Wurm glaciation of the late Pleistocene Epoch extending from 35,000 to 25,000 years before present.*

*Mother figurines are examples of many similar small sculptures found throughout prehistoric Europe, dated c. 30,000 years before present.*



0 MILES 400  
0 KM 400



The Valley of Horses

Yumal

Slater R.

Sharamudoi

Great Mound

Mamutoi Camp

Clan's Cave

BERAN SEA

© Map by Palacios after Auer

For K A R E N ,

*who read the first draft of both,*

and for A S H E R

*with Love*

She was dead. What did it matter if icy needles of freezing rain flayed her skin raw. The young woman squinted into the wind, pulling her wolverine hood closer. Violent gusts whipped her bearskin wrap against her legs.

Were those trees ahead? She thought she remembered seeing a scraggly row of woody vegetation on the horizon earlier, and wished she had paid more attention, or that her memory was as good as that of the rest of the Clan. She still thought of herself as Clan, though she never had been, and now she was dead.

She bowed her head and leaned into the wind. The storm had come upon her suddenly, hurtling down from the north, and she was desperate for shelter. But she was a long way from the cave, and unfamiliar with the territory. The moon had gone through a full cycle of phases since she left, but she still had no idea where she was going.

North, to the mainland beyond the peninsula, that was all she knew. The night Iza died, she had told her to leave, told her Broud would find a way to hurt her when he became leader. Iza had been right. Broud had hurt her, worse than she ever imagined.

He had no good reason to take Durc away from me, Ayla thought. He's my son. Broud had no good reason to curse me, either. He's the one who made the spirits angry. He's the one who brought on the earthquake. At least she knew what to expect this time. But it happened so fast that even the clan had taken a while to accept it, to close her out of their sight. But they couldn't stop Durc from seeing her, though she was dead to the rest of the clan.

Broud had cursed her on impulse born of anger. When Brun had cursed her, the first time, he had prepared them.

He'd had reason; they knew he had to do it, and he'd given her a chance.

She raised her head to another icy blast, and noticed it was twilight. It would be dark soon, and her feet were numb. Frigid slush was soaking through her leather foot coverings despite the insulating sedge grass she had stuffed in them. She was relieved to see a dwarfed and twisted pine.

Trees were rare on the steppes; they grew only where there was moisture enough to sustain them. A double row of pines, birches, or willows, sculptured by wind into stunted asymmetrical shapes, usually marked a watercourse. They were a welcome sight in dry seasons in a land where groundwater was scarce. When storms howled down the open plains from the great northern glacier, they offered protection, scant though it was.

A few more steps brought the young woman to the edge of a stream, though only a narrow channel of water flowed between the ice-locked banks. She turned west to follow it downstream, looking for denser growth that would give more shelter than the nearby scrub.

She plodded ahead, her hood pulled forward, but looked up when the wind ceased abruptly. Across the stream a low bluff guarded the opposite bank. The sedge grass did nothing to warm her feet when the icy water seeped in crossing over, but she was grateful to be out of the wind. The dirt wall of the bank had caved in at one place, leaving an overhang thatched with tangled grass roots and matted old growth, and a fairly dry spot beneath.

She untied the waterlogged thongs that held her carrying basket to her back and shrugged it off, then took out a heavy aurochs hide and a sturdy branch stripped of twigs. She set up a low, sloping tent, held down with rocks and driftwood logs. The branch held it open in front.

She loosened the thongs of her hand coverings with her teeth. They were roughly circular pieces of fur-lined leather, gathered at the wrist, with a slit cut in the palms to poke her thumb or hand through when she wanted to grasp something. Her foot coverings were made the same way, without the slit, and she struggled to untie the swollen leather laces wrapped around her ankles. She was careful to salvage the wet sedge grass when she removed them.

She laid her bearskin wrap on the ground inside the tent, wet side down, put the sedge grass and the hand and foot coverings on top, then crawled in feet first. She wrapped the

fur around her and pulled the carrying basket up to block the opening. She rubbed her cold feet, and, when her damp fur nest warmed, she curled up and closed her eyes.

Winter was gasping its last frozen breath, reluctantly giving way to spring, but the youthful season was a capricious flirt. Amid frigid reminders of glacial chill, tantalizing hints of warmth promised summer heat. In an impulsive shift, the storm broke during the night.

Ayla woke to reflections of a dazzling sun glinting from patches of snow and ice along the banks, and to a sky deep and radiantly blue. Ragged tatters of clouds streamed far to the south. She crawled out of her tent and raced barefoot to the water's edge with her waterbag. Ignoring the icy cold, she filled the leather-covered bladder, took a deep drink, and ran back. After relieving herself beside the bank, she crawled inside her fur to warm up again.

She didn't stay long. She was too eager to be out, now that the danger of the storm had passed and the sunshine beckoned. She wrapped on foot coverings that had been dried by body heat and tied the bearskin over the fur-lined leather wrap she had slept in. She took a piece of dried meat out of the basket, packed the tent and hand coverings, and went on her way, chewing on the meat.

The stream's course was fairly straight and slightly downhill, and the going was easy. Ayla hummed a tuneless monotone under her breath. She saw flecks of green on the brush near the banks. An occasional small flower, bravely poking its miniature face through melting patches of snow, made her smile. A chunk of ice broke loose, bumped along beside her for a pace, then raced ahead, carried by the swift current.

Spring had begun when she left the cave, but it was warmer at the southern end of the peninsula and the season started earlier. The mountain range was a barrier to the harsh glacial winds, and maritime breezes off the inland sea warmed and watered the narrow coastal strip and south-facing slopes into a temperate climate.

The steppes were colder. She had skirted the eastern end of the range, but, as she traveled northward across the open prairie, the season advanced at the same pace. It never seemed to get warmer than early spring.

The raucous squeals of terns drew her attention. She glanced up and saw several of the small gull-like birds



wheeling and gliding effortlessly with wings outstretched. The sea must be close, she thought. Birds should be nesting now—that means eggs. She stepped up her pace. And maybe mussels on the rocks, and clams, and limpets, and tide pools full of anemones.

The sun was approaching its zenith when she reached a protected bay formed by the southern coast of the mainland and the northwestern flank of the peninsula. She had finally reached the broad throat connecting the tongue of land to the continent.

Ayla shrugged off her carrying basket and climbed a craggy outcrop that soared high above the surrounding landscape. Pounding surf had cleaved jagged chunks of the massive rock on the seaward side. A bevy of dovebies and terns scolded with angry squawks when she collected eggs. She broke open several and swallowed them, still warm from the nest. She tucked several more into a fold of her wrap before climbing down.

She took off her footwear and waded into the surf to wash sand from mussels pried loose from the rock at water level. Flowerlike sea anemones drew in mock petals when she reached to pluck them from the shallow pools left stranded by the receding tide. But these had a color and shape that were unfamiliar. She rounded out her lunch with a few clams instead, dug from the sand where a slight depression gave them away. She used no fire, enjoying her gifts raw from the sea.

Surfeited on eggs and seafood, the young woman relaxed at the foot of the high rock, then scaled it again to get a better view of the coast and mainland. Hugging her knees, she sat on top of the monolith and looked out across the bay. The wind in her face carried a breath of the rich life within the sea.

The southern coast of the continent curved in a gentle arc toward the west. Beyond a narrow fringe of trees, she could see a broad land of steppes, no different from the cold prairie of the peninsula, but not a single sign of human habitation.

There it is, she thought, the mainland beyond the peninsula. Where do I go now, Iza? You said Others were there, but I don't see anyone at all. As she faced the vast empty land, Ayla's thoughts drifted back to the dreadful night Iza died, three years before.