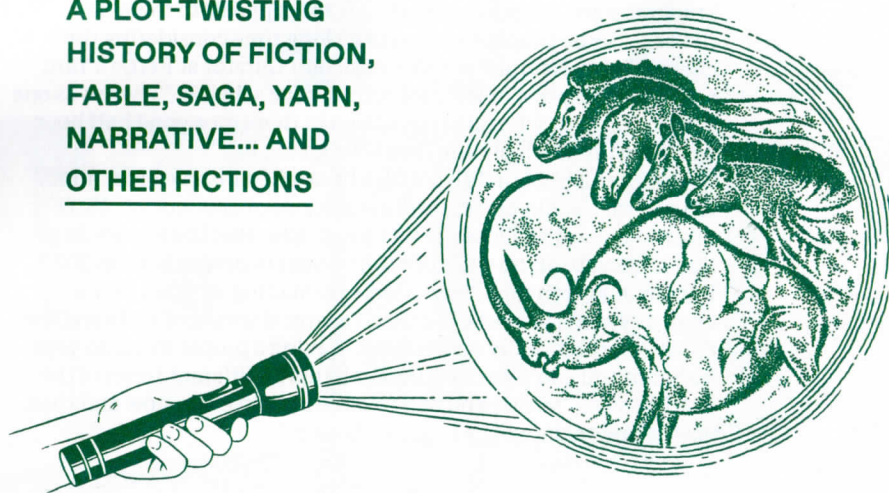


**A PLOT-TWISTING  
HISTORY OF FICTION,  
FABLE, SAGA, YARN,  
NARRATIVE... AND  
OTHER FICTIONS**



30,000–32,000 BCE

### **THE CHAUVET CAVE PAINTINGS**

Discovered on 18 December 1994 by three speleologists, the walls of the Chauvet-Pont-d’Arc Cave in France are covered with extraordinary animal paintings: mammoths, cave hyenas, ibex – and even rhinoceroses. A child’s footprints pattern the floor. One drawing appears to be an erupting volcano: the earliest known depiction of this event. “This is the birth of the modern human soul,” said film director Werner Herzog, who filmed the paintings for his 2010 documentary, *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*.

# Once upon a time...

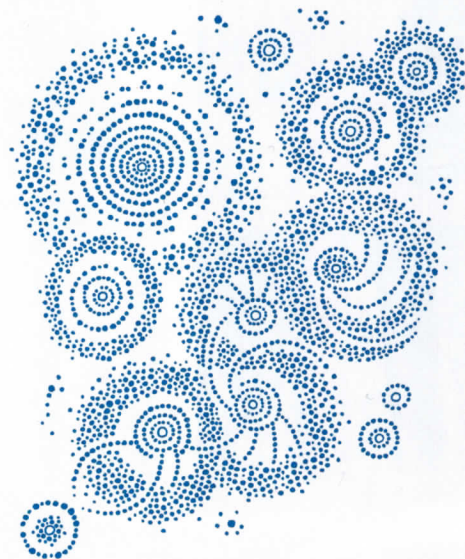
**Forget facts. If you really want to win an argument, sell someone something or win an election, make sure you’ve got a really good story. Because humans love stories.**

WORDS LUCY JOLIN ILLUSTRATIONS STUART PATIENCE

10,000 BCE

### **THE BRIGHT STAR MOINEE**

Palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal) stories relating the creation of the Bass Strait, 12,000 years ago, recall Moinee being a bright star near the South Celestial Pole at the time rising seas made Tasmania an island. Recent research from the University of Tasmania has shown that this is an accurate description of the sky and the star Canopus as it would have appeared 11,960 years ago. That means these oral traditions have been passed down through more than 400 successive generations. (There may be stories far older: Indigenous Australian culture stretches back around 50,000 years.)



**O**nce upon a time, on Columbus Day, Monday 10 October 1983, President Ronald Reagan watched a tape of a new TV movie, *The Day After*, showing the aftermath of a nuclear war with Russia in the town of Lawrence, Kansas. “It’s very effective & left me greatly depressed,” he wrote in his diary. “So far they haven’t sold any of the 25 spot ads scheduled & I can see why. Whether it will be of help to the ‘anti nukes’ or not, I cant [sic] say. My own reaction was one of our having to do all we can to have a deterrent & to see there is never a nuclear war.”

Of course, this wasn’t the only reason why Reagan became less hawkish about nuclear weapons, moving towards an agreement with the Soviet Union. “But one factor was watching *The Day After* and being enormously moved and depressed and upset by it,” says Dorian Lynskey (Downing 1992), podcaster, journalist and author of the upcoming *Everything Must Go: The Stories We Tell About The End of the World*. “It was the