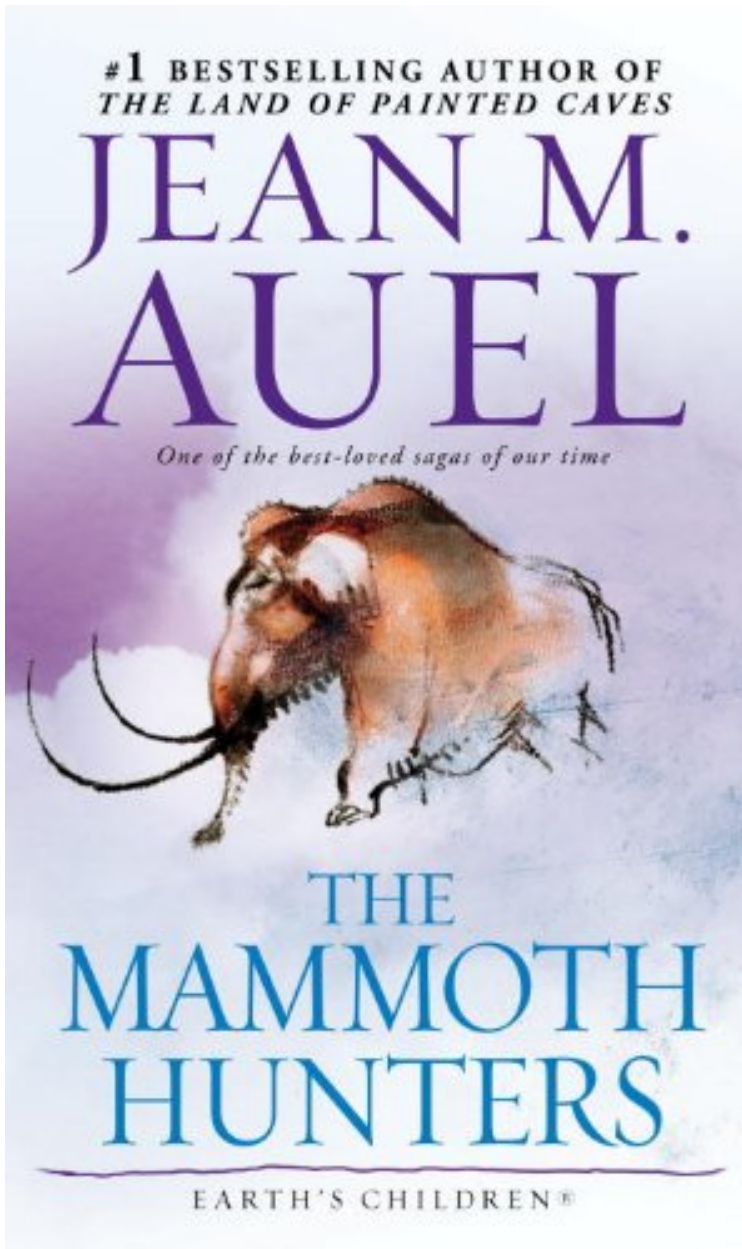


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# The Mammoth Hunters (with Bonus Content): Earth's Children, Book Three



*Par Jean M. Auel*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThis eBook includes the full text of the novel plus the following additional content: An exclusive preview chapter from Jean M. Auels The Land of Painted Caves, on sale in hardcover March 29, 2011 An Earths Children series sampler including free chapters from the other books in Jean M. Auels

bestselling series A QA with the author about the Earths Children series Ayla, the independent heroine of The Clan of the Cave Bear and The Valley of Horses, sets out from the valley on Whinney, the horse she tamed. With her is Jondalar, the tall, handsome, yellow-haired man she nursed back to health and came to love. Together they meet the Mamutoi--the Mammoth Hunters--people like Ayla. But to Ayla, who was raised by the Clan of the Cave Bear, they are the Others. She approaches them with mixed feelings of fear and curiosity. Talut, a powerful bear of a man with bright red hair, a booming laugh, and a gentle heart, and his tall, dark-haired sister, Tulie, are the leaders of the Lion Camp of the Mamutoi. It is here that Ayla finds her first women friends, but some among the Mamutoi dislike Ayla because she was raised by flatheads, their name for the people of the Clan. Ayla is haunted by her memories of the Clan because Rydag, a child of mixed parentage living with the Mamutoi, bears so strong a resemblance to her own son, Durc. It is the Mamutoi master carver of ivory--dark-skinned Ranec, flirtatious, artistic, magnetic--who fascinates Ayla. She finds herself drawn to him. Because of her uncanny control over animals, her healing skills, and the magic firestone she discovered, Ayla is adopted into the Mammoth Hearth by Mamut, the ancient shaman of the Great Earth Mother. Ayla finds herself torn between her strong feelings for Ranec and her powerful love for the wildly jealous and unsure Jondalar. It is not until after the great mammoth hunt, when Ayla's life is threatened, that a fateful decision is made. Set in the challenging terrain of Ice Age Europe that millions of Jean Auel's readers have come to treasure, The Mammoth Hunters is an epic novel of love, knowledge, jealousy, and hard choices--a novel certain to garner Jean Auel even greater acclaim as a master storyteller of the dawn of humanity.

Chapter 1 Trembling with fear, Ayla clung to the tall man beside her as she watched the strangers approach. Jondalar put his arm around her protectively, but she still shook. He's so big! Ayla thought, gaping at the man in the lead, the one with hair and beard the color of fire. She had never seen anyone so big. He even made Jondalar seem small, though the man who held her towered over most men. The red-haired man coming toward them was more than tall; he was huge, a bear of a man. His neck bulged, his chest could have filled out two ordinary men, his massive biceps matched most men's thighs. Ayla glanced at Jondalar and saw no fear in his face, but his smile was guarded. They were strangers, and in his long travels he had learned to be wary of strangers. "I don't recall seeing you before," the big man said without preamble. "What Camp are you from?" He did not speak Jondalar's language, Ayla noticed, but one of the others he had been teaching her. "No Camp," Jondalar said. "We are not Mamutoi." He unclasped Ayla and took a step forward, holding out both hands, palms upward showing he was hiding nothing, in the greeting of friendliness. "I am Jondalar of the Zelandonii." The hands were not accepted. "Zelandonii? That's a strange . . . Wait, weren't there two foreign men staying with those river people that live to the west? It seems to me the name I heard was something like that." "Yes, my brother and I lived with them," Jondalar conceded. The man with the flaming beard looked thoughtful for a while, then, unexpectedly, he lunged for Jondalar and grabbed the tall blond man in a bone-crunching bear hug. "Then we are related!" he boomed, a broad smile warming his face. "Tholie is the daughter of my cousin!" Jondalar's smile returned, a little shaken. "Tholie! A Mamutoi woman named Tholie was my brother's cross-mate! She taught me your language." "Of course! I told you. We are related." He grasped the hands that Jondalar had extended in friendship, which he had rejected before. "I am Talut, headman of the Lion Camp." Everyone was smiling, Ayla noticed. Talut beamed a grin at her, then eyed her appreciatively. "I see you are not traveling with a brother now," he said to Jondalar. Jondalar put his arm around her again, and she noticed a fleeting look of pain wrinkle his brow before he spoke. "This is Ayla." "It's an unusual name. Is she of the river people?" Jondalar was taken aback by the abruptness of his questioning, then, remembering Tholie, he smiled inwardly. The short, stocky woman he knew bore little resemblance to the great hulk of a man standing there on the riverbank, but they were chipped from the same flint. They both had the same direct approach, the same unselfconscious--almost ingenuous--candor. He didn't know what to say. Ayla was not going to be easy to explain. "No, she has been living in a valley some days' journey from here." Talut looked puzzled. "I have not heard of a woman with her name living nearby. Are you sure she is Mamutoi?" "I'm sure she is not." "Then who are her people? Only we who hunt mammoth live in this region." "I have no people," Ayla said, lifting her chin with a touch of defiance. Talut appraised her shrewdly. She had spoken the words in his language, but the quality of her voice and the way she made the sounds were . . . strange. Not unpleasant, but unusual. Jondalar spoke with the accent of a language foreign to him; the difference in the way she spoke went beyond accent. Talut's interest was piqued. "Well, this is no place to talk," Talut said, finally. "Nezzie will give me the Mother's own wrath if I don't invite you to visit. Visitors always bring a little excitement, and we haven't had visitors for a while. The Lion Camp would welcome you, Jondalar of the Zelandonii, and

Ayla of No People. Will you come?" "What do you say, Ayla? Would you like to visit?" Jondalar asked, switching to Zelandonii so she could answer truthfully without fear of offending. "Isn't it time you met your own kind? Isn't that what Iza told you to do? Find your own people?" He didn't want to seem too eager, but after so long without anyone else to talk to, he was anxious to visit. "I don't know," she said, frowning with indecision. "What will they think of me? He wanted to know who my people were. I don't have any people any more. What if they don't like me?" "They will like you, Ayla, believe me. I know they will. Talut invited you, didn't he? It didn't matter to him that you have no people. Besides, you'll never know if they will accept you--or if you will like them--if you don't give them a chance. These are the kind of people you should have grown up with, you know. We don't have to stay long. We can leave any time." "We can leave any time?" "Of course." Ayla looked down at the ground, trying to make up her mind. She wanted to go with them; she felt an attraction to these people, and a curiosity to know more about them, but she felt a tight knot of fear in her stomach. She glanced up and saw two shaggy steppe horses grazing on the rich grass of the plain near the river, and her fear intensified. "What about Whinney! What will we do with her? What if they want to kill her? I can't let anyone hurt Whinney!" Jondalar hadn't thought about Whinney. What would they think? he wondered. "I don't know what they will do, Ayla, but I don't think they would kill her if we tell them she is special and not meant for food." He remembered his surprise, and his initial feeling of awe over Ayla's relationship with the horse. It would be interesting to see their reaction. "I have an idea." Talut did not understand what Ayla and Jondalar said to each other, but he knew the woman was reluctant, and the man was trying to coax her. He also noticed that she spoke with the same unusual accent, even in his language. His language, the headman realized, but not hers. He was pondering the enigma of the woman with a certain relish--he enjoyed the new and unusual; the inexplicable challenged him. But then the mystery took on an entirely new dimension. Ayla whistled, loud and shrill. Suddenly, a hay-colored mare and a colt of an unusually deep shade of brown galloped into their midst, directly to the woman, and stood quietly while she touched them! The big man suppressed a shudder of awe. This was beyond anything he had ever known. Was she Mamut? he wondered, with growing apprehension. One with special powers? Many of Those Who Served the Mother claimed magic to call animals and direct the hunt, but he had never seen anyone with such control over animals that they would come at a signal. She had a unique talent. It was a little frightening--but think how much a Camp could benefit from such talent. Kills could be so easy! Just as Talut was getting over the shock, the young woman gave him another. Holding onto the mare's stiff stand-up mane, she sprang up on the back of the horse and sat astride her. The big man's mouth gaped open in astonishment as the horse with Ayla on her back galloped along the edge of the river. With the colt following behind, they raced up the slope to the steppes beyond. The wonder in Talut's eyes was shared by the rest of the band, particularly a young girl of twelve years. She edged toward the headman and leaned against him as though for support. "How did she do that, Talut?" the girl asked, in a small voice that held surprise and awe, and a tinge of yearning. "That little horse, he was so close, I could almost have touched him." Talut's expression softened. "You'll have to ask her, Latie. Or, perhaps, Jondalar," he said, turning to the tall stranger. "I'm not sure myself," he replied. "Ayla has a special way with animals. She raised Whinney from a foal." "Whinney?" "That's as close as I can say the name she has given the mare. When she says it, you'd think she was a horse. The colt is Racer. I named him--she asked me to. That's Zelandonii for someone who runs fast. It also means someone who tries hard to be best. The first time I saw Ayla, she was helping the mare deliver the colt." "That must have been a sight! I wouldn't think a mare would let anyone get close to her at that time," one of the other men said. The riding demonstration had the effect Jondalar had hoped for, and he thought the time was right to bring up Ayla's concern. "I think she'd like to come and visit your Camp, Talut, but she's afraid you may think the horses are just any horses to be hunted, and since they are not afraid of people, they would be too easy to kill." "They would at that. You must have known what I was thinking, but who could help it?" Talut watched Ayla riding back into view, looking like some strange animal, half-human and half-horse. He was glad he had not come upon them unknowing. It would have been . . . unnerving. He wondered for a moment what it would be like to ride on the back of a horse, and if it would make him appear so startling. And then, picturing himself sitting astride one of the rather short, though sturdy, steppe horses like Whinney, he laughed out loud. "I could carry that horse easier than she could carry me!" he said. Jondalar chuckled. It hadn't been hard to follow Talut's line of thought. Several people smiled, or chuckled, and Jondalar realized they must all have been thinking about riding a horse. It was not so strange. It had occurred to him when he first saw Ayla on Whinney's back. Ayla had seen the shocked surprise on the faces of the small band of people and, if Jondalar had ...Revue de presse"Lively and

interesting."--The Washington Post Book WorldFrom the Trade Paperback edition.