

# THE WINHAM PAPERS

## 6. The Real Original Sin (2021)

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In case you hadn't noticed, the Bible often takes considerable liberties with time scales. Did any human really live for 900 years? So, it may not come as a surprise to learn that the Original Sin as outlined in Genesis actually occurred 56,000 years ago. It *did* occur in what is now northwestern Israel. Unfortunately, the passing down of the story through the millennia has resulted in considerable changes from what really happened. Here, I provide the true story.

At that point in history, most of Europe and parts of western Asia were inhabited by humanity's cousins, the Neanderthals. There were no modern humans in these regions. One population of Neanderthals extended down into just the northern parts of Israel. The Middle East then had a wetter climate and an interesting mixture of fauna and flora from the Mediterranean coastal area, northern Africa, and the nearby Asian steppes. Modern humans had just begun to move out of Africa, with some populations moving up the Mediterranean coast and others moving east towards the Red Sea and eventually India.

Our story begins with a dozen modern human men who had left their cave settlements in southern Israel and were moving north along the coastal plain. They were looking for suitable areas for a future habitation that contained abundant game, local vegetable foods, water, and caves in which to live. Caves were not abundant along the coastal plain, so this group explored some of the valleys extending to the east from the plains as they move northwards.

The group was led by the tribal shaman Gor-Li. While none of the men had been in this area before, Gor-Li had heard from other explorers that if you went far enough north you might encounter small populations of Shagorum. This word meant “animal-people” in their language. While these looked a bit like humans, they were thought to be the offspring of humans mating with animals. Such matings were considered a hideous crime, and both the perpetrators and their offspring were to be killed whenever possible. Gor-Li explained all of this to his group before they set off but, so far, they had not encountered any of these “monsters”. Of course, we now know that the Shagorum were Neanderthals and were not the result of any kind of bestiality. They were just a different species related to humans.

Gor-Li led the group off the coastal plain and into a promising looking valley. They soon encountered abundant game and a number of fairly steep cliffs that ought to have habitable caves. After coming out of a particularly dense patch of woodland, the human spotted a group of what they first thought were other humans standing at the base of a steep hill. The group included several adults of both sexes and lots of offspring of different sizes. There were about fifteen of them. When they turned towards the intruding humans, it became obvious that they were not human beings. They were Shagorum! The humans hesitated long enough for the Shagorum to takeoff running as fast as they could to the east and up the valley. They clearly knew their way and seemed to have trails to follow. The humans ran after them brandishing their spears and shouting. When he first reached the place where the Shagorum had been standing,

Gor-Li noticed an extensive series of trails going up the hill and expanding across the valley in all directions. He halted and glanced up the hill and saw what looked like the entrance to a cave. He decided to check it out and the group moved up the path to the cave. It was clearly the Shagorum residence. The humans peered inside and saw a large fire smoldering in the middle of the main chamber. Scattered around the fire were tanned skins arranged as if for beds. There were racks of dried meat, large stacks of tubers and other edible plants, hide buckets full of water, and other evidence that a sizable group lived here full-time. Two of the men briefly explored the back of the large chamber and poke their heads into a few of the side chambers. They returned to say they had found no evidence of any more Shagorum. The whole group had evidently been gathered outside the cave when they were forced to flee.

Gor-Li decided to leave one member of the group to keep scavengers and other animals from occupying the cave, while the rest of the group tracked down the Shagorum and made sure that they never returned alive to this place. He asked his son Adm to stay and guard the cave until the group came back. He said it might be several days as he did not know how far they would have to track the Shagorum to catch them, and he also wanted to check out the availability of game further up the valley. Adm was 17 and already one of the best hunters in the group. He was extremely agile with his spear and had an uncanny knack for sneaking up on game. Adm agreed to stay and guard the cave until the group came back. There was clearly plenty of food and water and he was curious to see what else the Shagorum had collected in the cave. He watched while the group went back down the hill and headed up the valley at a quick trot. They soon disappeared from sight.

There was a stack of partially burned palm stems by the side of the cave that were obviously used for torches. Adm lit one in the fire and, holding his spear in one hand and the torch in the other, began to explore the cavity. It was very well organized and clearly quite comfortable. He was a bit surprised that “animals” would live like this. As he moved to the back of the cave he saw several side chambers and began to explore them. One of them had a large stack of tanned skins that were not currently being used. At the very back of the main cave was a small passage leading to another chamber. As he walked into it he suddenly saw a gigantic snake lying on the floor in front of a huge pile of what appeared to be dried fruit. He froze so as not to arouse the snake. It was jet black with shiny scales and longer than a man is tall. He recognized it as a species that could be very vicious and kill you if it bit you. It was not uncommon, and the human approach was always to kill them when they were encountered.

The snake lifted its head off the floor and considered Adm. He did not move but stayed stock still watching. Then, one of the rats which were so common in his own cave came out of a crevice and advanced warily on the pile of dried fruit. When it got close enough, the snake struck like lightning, grabbed the squealing rat, gave it a few chews and then swallowed it. Adm watched in fascination as the rat became a lump in the snake, gradually moving down toward the center of its body. At that point he noticed there were several other lumps further down along the snake, and a few of its scats to one side of where it was lying.

He watched the snake return to its earlier position and wondered why the Shagorum had allowed such a dangerous snake to live in their cave. But then it occurred to him that if the snake had arrived there by chance, keeping it guaranteed protection of the fruit pile from rats. That

would be very clever and not something you would expect animals like Shagorum to realize. Or even more unlikely, might the Shagorum have brought the snake when it was small to live near the fruit pile to protect it? That would be even more clever. Everything his father had told him made him doubt that they were this clever, but he was already wondering whether this might not be true given the order in which the Shagorum lived in this cave.

As Adm turned to go back to the main part of the cave, he heard another noise behind the fruit pile. He whirled around holding up his torch and brandishing his spear. To his shock, a round light-skinned face with giant eyes poked over the fruit pile and stared at him. When he did not immediately attack it, it rose to its full height and he could see that it was a young but adult Shagorum. And it was clearly a female. He knew he was supposed to slay it immediately, but the way it held his gaze made him hesitate. After what seemed an eternity, the young Shagorum edged from behind the fruit pile, calmly stepped over the snake, and reached out to take a small handful of dried fruit from the pile. Then holding his gaze steady she moved forward towards Adm. He anticipated some kind of trick and adjusted his spear for maximum attack angle. She stopped opposite him and held out her hand with the fruit like some sort of peace offering. He looked from her face to the fruit and back and held his position. Never stopping to watch him, she took her other hand and slowly placed one of the fruits in her mouth and ate it. Then she looked at him again and smiled! She smiled! So, the fruit wasn't poisonous, but even if he wanted to try it, both of his hands were occupied and needed to stay that way. Finally, a look of comprehension came over her face and she moved closer to him holding out one of the fruits in her fingers. Very slowly and keeping her eyes on his, she leaned in and place the fruit on his lips. Adm had eaten nothing since before dawn this morning, and as the sweet sugary fruit invaded his lips and tongue, he compulsively chewed it and swallowed it. She lowered her arm to her side and again giving him a gentle smile, she slowly slipped past him and into the main cavity of the cave. Adm was flabbergasted by this whole performance and by her. He lowered his spear and warily followed her back into the cave's main chamber.

She poked at the fire and added some additional wood from a nearby pile. Then she bent down and began arranging the firs that were assembled in little piles around the fire. They had been somewhat disrupted when Adm's group members did their cursory check of the cave. She stood up and walked slowly to the entrance of the cave where she stood for several minutes looking down into the valley in all directions. She must have seen that there was no one else out there, either Shagorum or human. She turned around with a sigh and went back into the cave and sat down next to a small stack of stone knives. She picked up one and Adam immediately grew wary again, but then she reached over and grabbed a skin and began scraping the fat and other tissues from its interior side. While she worked she made small humming sounds and occasionally looked up and smiled at him again. That smile was getting to him. He had never seen an animal smile like that! Adm sat with his spear across his knees and a sharp knife that he always carried handy at his belt. In this way, they spent most of the remaining morning.

Toward mid-day, she got up and walked slowly towards the entrance of the cave where she paused and looked over her shoulder, clearly inviting him to come. He rose and, holding his spear at the ready, followed her to the entrance. She left the cave and took a small trail along the side of the hill to a place where she stopped, looked over her shoulder for a minute, and then squatted to do her business. She stood up and turned to him with a questioning glance while

pointing with her hand at the same area. She was clearly giving him permission to do his business as well. Holding his spear at the ready, he did. She honored him with another of those warm smiles and he followed her back to the cave. She then put some water in a leather pouch and added some strips of meat, a few of the tubers cut in sections, some seeds of some kind, and some of the dried fruit. She set it by the fire so that it was stable and dropped a couple of very hot rocks from the fire into it. The water immediately began to bubble and boil, and she sat down next to the leather pot and occasionally stirred it with a stick.

After a few minutes she raised her face to look at Adm and began to speak. Yes! Speak! It was not a language he knew and it was full of weird clicking and guttural sounds. But it was clearly meant as words. He then tried to tell her in his own language that he did not understand her. She looked puzzled so he shook his head hoping this would indicate he did not understand. She was quiet for a few minutes. Then she pointed to herself and looking at Adm emitted a weird short sound. He again shook his head in consternation, and she pointed at herself again and this time slowly sounded out the utterance “EEEE-VO-click”. He was initially perplexed, but she did it again and this time he figured it out: she was telling him her name! Since what she had sounded out was like “Ivo”, a girl's name in his language, he pointed back at her and said “Ivo!”. She smiled from ear to ear and then pointed at him with a questioning look. He pointed to himself and said “Adm”. She tried to repeat his name at first incoherently but with a little practice it actually came out pretty close to his own version. She pointed to herself again, said “Ivo”, then pointed at him and said “Adm”. They exchanged smiles with each other and she turned back to stir her pot.

Adm took her preoccupation with the cooking to give her the first serious look since she had appeared. Her face was a lot like a human one, but she had a broader flatter nose, big lips, and those giant eyes. Her body was like a human body, perhaps a bit shorter in legs and arms, and clearly strong. She had young conical breasts not unlike those he had seen on the girls in his clan. She was very agile when she moved and always seem to have a clear idea of what she wanted to do next. Adm knew he was supposed to feel hostility toward her, but instead, he had already developed some kind of affinity. It was totally strange.

She divided the cooked meat, vegetables, fruit, and grains into two smaller leather bowls and they ate. It was delicious and Adm had not realized given all that had happened how hungry he was. When he was finished, he set the bowl down and watched her as she tidied up and did some other minor chores. He marveled at how efficient she was and could not imagine how someone, especially an animal, could deal with what had happened today the way she had. Did she realize that the rest of her family might be dead? Why had she been so willing to accept him the way she had? He wondered if some of the Shagorum were more people than animal despite their parentage. If so, maybe she had been one of the lucky ones. She was definitely more like a person than an animal. And he was now convinced that though he had threatened her multiple times, she had no desire to harm him or leave.

As the sun set behind the hill, Adm went to the cave entrance and looked both up and down the valley for any sign of either humans or Shagorum. Nothing. He noticed a nice little herd of antelope grazing just down the hill in an open grassy area. For the first time he noticed a small stream running down the hillside to one side of the cave. The Shagorum had built a small dam on

it that formed a pool, making it easy to collect water. Ivo came out and stood beside him holding a large leather container. She then moved down to the pool and filled it with water to take back to the cave. Adm went down with her and after it was full, he reached out for it and carried it back to the cave himself. This certainly earned him another one of those smiles.

As it got dark, Ivo stoked the fire and pulled one large group of skins into position where the person who slept there could easily see the cave entrance. Then turning to him she patted the skins and said “Adm”. He went to where she indicated and lay down on the warm skin, putting his spear nearby in case he needed it. She went to an adjacent pile of skins and said “Ivo” and lay down on her pile and covered herself with the fuzzy ones. They both went to sleep to the sounds of the crackling of the fire, the distant calls of hyenas, and the flapping of a few bats that flew in and out of the cave.

Adm woke up well before dawn. He was sleeping on his side, and something was pressing against his back. He raised his free arm and reached behind himself and felt Ivo's soft warm thigh. She must have moved her sleeping furs next to his during the night and was now fully snuggled up to his back. It was nice in the morning chill, and he drifted back to sleep. When he woke at dawn, he turned on his back and extended out the arm nearest to her. She lifted her head and snuggling closer, laid her head and a palm on his chest. He pulled his arm in to enclose her and hug her tight. It felt good. And despite all his father's warnings, it felt right, so very right.

After they got up, Ivo made them a breakfast of boiled grass seeds and dried fruit. Then she got up and filled a small leather bowl with water from the big water container near the cave entrance. She then took a torch and lit it in the fire and turning to Adm with an invitation on her face started to walk to the back of the cave. He followed as they entered the chamber with the snake and the dried fruit. She stuck the base of the torch in a crack in the side of the cave wall and bending down scooped the water out of a small depression in the floor of the cave. Then she poured the water she had in the bowl into the depression. She next picked up the scats that the snake had left at various places on the cave floor and put them in the bowl. As Adm watched, he realized that Ivo was probably the official caretaker of the snake and had likely been doing her duties when the rest of the group had been at the foot of the hill preparing for some other activity and the humans had encountered them. That was why she had been here when they arrived.

Her tasks completed, Ivo pointed at the big snake, which was totally ignoring them, and uttered a guttural clicking sound. Adm was at first not sure what she was up to, but she repeated it and he then realized she was saying the name of the snake in her language. She then pointed at the snake and said “Adm?”. He saw what she was up to and said the word for snake in his language. She immediately tried to say the word in his language. It came out all wrong, so he said it again. She tried again three times and finally uttered a pretty good rendition of the word. Adm nodded and she showed her brilliant smile. On a roll, she bent down and stirring the water she had just put in the depression with a finger said a word in her language. Then she turned to Adm and waited for him to say the word for water in his language. Again she repeated it several times but this time she got it sooner than she had gotten the word for snake. When he nodded she gave him another of those intoxicating smiles. Then she pointed at the scats in the bowl and said a word in her language. Adm laughed and said the word for poop (feces) in his language and again she repeated it until she got it pretty close to the way he said it. She had an amazing memory for

sounds and while he was trying to memorize even one of her words, she had already nailed three of his.

Back in the main part of the cave, Ivo went about various housekeeping chores, while Adm examined a corner of the cave near the entrance where someone had been making stone tools. There were lots of chips laying around, and a number of carefully selected rocks for starting points. A few of these rocks were very dark and almost transparent (what we now know as obsidian). Where they had been chipped already, they had razor sharp edges making them very attractive for knives and spearheads. Adm had become quite adept at making his own stone tools in recent years and sat down to experiment with this new material. One piece showed great potential for a new knife that he could carry on hunts.

In early afternoon, Ivo pulled out a very large rolled skin with leather straps hanging from all sides. She pointed to the dwindling stack of firewood at the side of the cave and said the word for firewood in her language. Then she turned to Adm with that same questioning look she had used in the snake chamber. He now knew the game and immediately said firewood in his language. This was a somewhat complicated word, and it took her a while to master it, but she again did so.

She then picked up the rolled leather affair and led him out of the cave and up a trail to the woods just over the top of the hill. The entire way she kept practicing the words for snake, water, firewood, and poop in Adm's language. When they reached a spot she found suitable, she unrolled the large skin on the ground and began collecting dry firewood from around the forest. She was good at stacking it and interweaving it into as tight a mass as possible. When it pretty much filled the space available on the leather rectangle, she rolled up the sides and tied them tight. The package was clearly much heavier than one person could carry, so she handed Adm the remaining straps on one end and picked up the straps on the other herself. Together they carried the heavy load back to the cave, while the entire time Ivo practiced the new words she had learned.

Later, after finishing their main afternoon meal, they were both sitting by the fire. Ivo turned to Adm and holding out one hand, moved her first two fingers as if walking away from herself. She then said the word in her language for what she had just done and waited for Adm to tell her the word in his language. He was a little puzzled at first but then figured she must want the word for "go". He said it very carefully and she repeated it until she had it down. Then holding her fingers away from herself she walked them back to her and said a word. Adm said the word for "come" in his language. She then practiced that until she had it down. Although she often had problems making some of the sounds that were key to his language, she always managed to invent some version that he could understand.

Shortly before the sun went down, she stood up and turning to Adm said very clearly, "Ivo go poop". Adm laughed and nodded and she turned around and left the cave briefly. Adm had noticed that when she was housekeeping the cave, she had left her sleeping skins next to his. He got up and went to his skins and lay down. When she came back in and looked at him, he reached over and patted her skins next to his and said, "Ivo come". With that gigantic smile she did.

Adm awoke from a very pleasant dream in the middle of the night. He slowly realized that something was feeling pretty good down in his groin area. He opened his eyes and saw that Ivo was bent over that area of his body doing something with her hands. He did not want her to stop so he just lay back and closed his eyes. Soon she gave a grunt of approval and climbed up on top of him. She used her hand to guide part of him into her and began some rapid and very energetic movements. He did not want her to stop and put his hands on her shoulders as she worked away. She gave out a lot of moans and sighs as she sped up and suddenly a wave of pleasure swept over Adm. Soon after, Ivo squealed and shuddered and then collapsed on top of Adm. As they lay like that for some time, Adm felt a peace and contentment with the world that he had never felt before. Soon both of them were asleep.

Adm again woke before dawn with Ivo sound asleep and curled up against him. He realized that what they had done last night was mate. Although he had never done it himself before, Adm had often seen other humans including his parents do this. However, they did it differently with the woman on her hands and knees and the man behind her entering from the rear. He had never seen anybody do it with the man on his back and the woman on top. But still, he knew what they had done. In his tribe, a human who mated with an animal was committing the worst crime imaginable. As noted earlier, it was punishable by death. But Adm could no longer think of Ivo as some sort of animal. She was a person, just kind of different, with all the feelings, cleverness, ability to communicate, and skills that people had. And she was a lot easier to be around than many of the young girls that he had known.

The next morning after their meal of seeds and fruit, Ivo was energetically husking some large tubers that she had taken from one of the storage piles. She looked up at him and said “Adm go snake?”. He paused to think of himself being near that giant monster alone, but he picked up a bowl and filled it with water. Grabbing a torch, he went off to do the task. When he entered the chamber alone, the snake raised his head and clearly looked at him. He put the torch in the crack in the wall and slowly bent down to scoop the now dirty water out of the depression. He poured in the fresh water and stood up. The snake had lowered its head and it was now waiting for rats. He moved around slowly picking up the scats and putting them in the bowl and then feeling very proud of himself, picked up the torch and went back to the cave entrance to toss them outside.

They spent most of the day inside. Ivo was making something with small bones and a sinew. Adm did not see what it was but was preoccupied trying to make the new knife he had envisioned from the black glossy rock. It was trickier to chip than flint, but he soon got the hang of it and the knife began to take shape. Throughout the day Ivo continued building her vocabulary by pointing to things or making motions, saying the word in her language, and waiting for Adm to say it in his. Amazingly, she mastered the words for food, knife, fire, meat, roots, hand, foot, eat, and sleep. Adm was waiting for her to ask the name of the word for what they did last night, but she did not ask. Adm did learn a few words in her language: “egan-click” (dried fruit), “gosha-grunt” (spear), and “ska” (knife).

After they had eaten that evening, Ivo led Adm over to their joint pile of sleeping furs. She squatted down on her haunches and patted the spot in front of her for Adam to do likewise. She then just sat there scanning every inch of his face and upper torso with those giant eyes of hers, a gentle smile on her face. Then she raised her hands and put one on each side of his forehead. She

slowly slid her hands down to his chin. Then closing her eyes, she made the same movements on her own head. She repeated this sampling of his nose, lips, chin, and ears with her fingers followed by an identical sampling of her own face. Adm had seen reflections of his own face in containers of water and knew that he looked a lot like the other men in his group. He guessed that Ivo had never seen her reflection or understood that it was her face, but knew that Adm looked different from her father and brothers so suspected she also was different from him. Finally satisfied with her analysis, a big smile graced her face, and she leaned forward to push Adm gently onto his back. She then used her fingertips to trace his body as he closed his eyes and just gave in to the sensual pleasure. She gradually moved on to what she had done the prior evening, and after they had both reach that ecstasy that was so new to him, they lay in each others' arms. Stimulated by her comparisons earlier of their bodies, he used his own hands to trace out the dimensions of her arms, legs, and torso. She was definitely shaped differently from the young girls he knew in his own clan. But somehow, she seems to fit perfectly against his body, and enjoying the warmth they shared, they both fell into a deep sleep.

The next morning Ivo came running back into the cave after making her early lavatory stop. She waved her arms and said "Adm come! Meat!". He grabbed his spear and went to the cave entrance and quickly saw that the small herd of antelope he had seen earlier had returned to the grassy sward at the foot of the hill. He snuck through the hillside vegetation until he was downwind of the animals. Then very cautiously he approached using his extensive skills in stealth. When he was right at the edge of the grassy sward, he picked a female who had her head down and was grazing close by. He rose and hurled his spear directly at her flank and caught her right behind her front leg. She went down immediately. He ran in while the other antelope scattered and slit her throat with his knife. Ivo appeared magically out of the forest behind him and together they dragged the antelope up the hill to a place she indicated was used by her group to butcher their prey. They work together as an efficient team to butcher the animal, saving the skin, some of the entrails, and a large amount of meat that they sliced up and prepared for drying in the cave. They then went to the stream and washed off all the accumulated blood and gore. As they turn to walk back to the cave, Adm held out his hand and Ivo took it in hers. Together they walked back to the cave.

They spent the rest of the day doing their respective handicrafts. Adm had found a good shaft for a new spear and soon had an obsidian spearhead that was as sharp as anything he had ever used. It seemed to have a good balance and would throw well. He started work on a second obsidian knife. Ivo was bent over whatever she was making for an hour or so when she finally stood up and came up to Adm. She held up what she had been creating for him to see. It was a necklace decorated with alternating small bones, claws from some large animal, and a very unusual kind of seed. In the very center was a curly black seed that looked just like a snake! Adm had never seen anything quite like it. She reached out to tip his head down and then around his neck to tie the sinew thread in the back. Then she stepped back to admire him and his new necklace. And that night they mated again. This time Adm knew more about what to expect and was able to time his own ecstasy to shortly after hers.

The next morning Ivo bustled around the main part of the cave cleaning out some sections and re-organizing various food piles. At one point she picked up the water bucket and said, "Ivo go water". Adm looked up briefly and smiled at her and she turned and went out the cave entrance.



A short time later Adm heard Ivo scream “Adm! Adm!” He jumped up, grabbed his two spears and ran out to the waterhole. There he saw Ivo high up on a boulder that had fallen from the cliff next to the stream. All around her, snarling and snapping, were six hyenas. Adm ran at the hyenas, carefully looking for the biggest and likely most dominant female. Female hyenas had an unusually large fake penis that identified their sex at a distance. The most likely candidate was the one closest to Ivo and looked ready to try and spring up the boulder. Adam threw his new spear with all his force at the female hyena. It hit her in the side just below her shoulder blades and she screamed and fell to the side, blood spurting in all directions. He then took his other spear and began stabbing at the rear ends of the rest of the hyena group. They turned around and started to snarl at him but he kept them at bay by jabbing at them and hitting several in the face and throat. From the corner of his eye, he saw Ivo jump down from her boulder. She pulled his first spear out of the dying hyena and began stabbing at the rest of the group from behind. Suddenly attacked from both sides, the smallest hyena in the pack turned and fled. The others soon followed suit and ran down the hill.

Adm and Ivo dragged the bodies of the two hyenas they had killed over to a nearby cliff and threw them off. They tumble down the steep side and ended up almost at the bottom of the hill. They did not want rotting bodies near their water source. Ivo refilled the water container, which had been tipped over in the commotion, and they went back to the cave. As they walked Adm realized that without the normal traffic of multiple Shagorum to scare them off, the smell of drying meat would have been irresistible to the hyenas. Knowing how well they could smell, it was surprising that hyenas had not tried to investigate sooner.

Back in the cave, Ivo went to work scraping the skin of the antelope they had killed the other day. Adm sat down at his tool making site, but he was too distracted to start a new knife or spearhead. Instead, he faced up to some things he had been putting off thinking about. He had just risked his life to save hers, and he knew he would do it again. While they had only been together a few days, it seemed like years now. Things had changed so much! When they were together, they worked as a team so comfortably. Being with her made him happy in a way he had never experienced before. And he thought that he made her happy too. Somehow a bond had been formed between them, a very strong bond, one that he did not think would ever break. He swallowed hard as he thought about the eventual confrontation with his father and other tribal members. He could not see any way to resolve what was sure to happen. That night they mated as soon as they were under the furs. It seemed like they both were desperate for physical contact, a confirmation that the other was still alive and there, and somehow an expression of appreciation that they had found each other. They did not have words to share about all this, but then they didn't need any.

The next morning after they had eaten, Adm stood at the entrance of the cave and did his daily scan for the return of his father and other humans. And this morning he saw them coming down the valley from the east. He felt dread rising in his throat as he tried to figure out what he could say. He noticed that the small herd of antelope had just come out onto the grassy sward below the hill. His father's group was coming down from a high point and also spotted them. They immediately spread out and moved into the adjacent vegetation. Three of them stayed behind watching. The rest of the group quietly encircled the small herd and then suddenly broke out of the forest and began spearing one after another. The three who had stayed behind continued on their way and started coming up the hill to the cave. Adm could see it was his father and two of

the young men he had known all his life. Ivo came up behind him and quickly saw the advancing men. Adm pushed her back into the cave and indicated with his hand that she should stay there out of sight. He grabbed his new spear and went back to the cave entrance.

As his father got closer he saw Adm watching their approach and waved at him. Adm waved back. When they were close enough to shout, his father asked, "Everything good?" Adm said "Yes, Father". His father stopped a short distance below Adm and turned to see what was happening with the hunt. Adm held his breath. Soon the other two humans coming up the hill reached his father, who turned around to close the distance between them and Adm. Now quite close, Adm's father suddenly spotted the necklace on Adm. "What is that?!" he demanded angrily. At the angry words Ivo stepped out behind Adm and clutched his arm. One of his father's companions shouted "A Shagorum!" and raised his spear. Adm stepped in front of Ivo, raised his own spear and said "No! I will kill anyone who tries to hurt her!". His father and the others looked stunned, but his father recovered quickly and ordered the other two humans to go inside the cave and kill any other Shagorum they found there. Adm and his father stared at each other for several minutes, his father shifting his glance towards and away from the female Shagorum standing behind Adm. Suddenly there was a commotion in the back of the cave. One of the men shouted "Aiee! Kill it! Kill it!". There was the loud sound of a large rock crashing on the cave floor and then a violent thrashing. Adm knew they had found the snake. He was not sure whether Ivo understood what had happened, but she gripped his arm even tighter. The other two men came back and one said "No more Shagorum, but we killed a big cobra they seemed to be keeping in the back of the cave!".

His father turned his attention back to Adm. "What is this?! Why are you with a Shagorum? Why did you not kill it?" Adm swallowed and said, "She is my mate." His father turned red in the face, which was always a bad sign as he had a terrible temper. He shouted "What? How can you have an animal for a mate?" Adm gave his father a steady gaze and said, "We have mated many times already." The look of disgust that crossed his father's face said it all. After a long minute of silence, his father said in a harsh voice, "That is the worst crime a human can commit. By our customs, we should kill you both right here and now." The ensuing silence seemed to last forever. Finally, his father said, "Because you were once my son, I will give you and your animal time to collect a few things and leave. You must be gone and out of sight before the rest of the men get up here with the antelopes they have killed. You are banished from our people forever. If any of us ever see you again we will kill you, your animal and any offspring you produce. Go! I never want to see you again!".

Adm turned, and pulling Ivo with him, rushed back into the main part of the cave. He pulled down two of the skin bags that the Shagorum used to collect fruit and tubers. He said to Ivo, "Ivo Adm go! Ivo Adm go!". Comprehension came quickly and she joined him in putting dried meat, tubers and fruit, their best knives, and a water bag into the carriers. She rolled up several of the sleeping skins and after tying them tight, latched them onto one of the bags. Adm grabbed his two spears and new knife, and the two of them rushed out of the cave with what little they had collected. Adm could hear the rest of the human group coming up the main trail, so led them both down a back route to the more heavily forested part of the hill. When they reach the bottom of the valley, he turned them west toward the coastal plain. They walked as fast as they could, stopping only once to fill their water bag.

And so began an epic and difficult journey. Adm hunted small game like rabbits and birds, they only slept in safe places where lions could not sneak up on them, and they only stopped to build fires a few times. Once they reached the coastal plain, they turned north using the distant Mediterranean coast as a guide. When the coastal plain ended with mountain ridges that came all the way to the sea, they turned east along those mountains. Eventually, they came to a giant valley running north and south with a steep escarpment on the west side. They again turned north, staying close to the escarpment on the west side of the valley. Weeks later, they came to a nice side valley that clearly hosted caves, game, water, and plants that Ivo new how to prepare. Adm hoped they had gone far enough north that the wave of modern humans moving up towards them would not arrive in their lifetimes. They had encountered no other humans, but they twice saw Shagorum. Once they were walking on the crest of a hill and down in the valley saw a group of male Shagorum who had encircled a large buffalo and were trying to kill it. The group was so intent on its activity it never noticed them passing. The second time they were in the valley and they spotted a group of female Shagorum spread out on the side of the hill collecting tubers. The Shagorum stopped what they were doing and watched Adm and Ivo as they hurried past. None of them shouted and no one seemed to follow them later. They soon found a very nice cave that was larger than the one they had just left and had a stream running into an out of it. They decided to make this their new home.

About a year after they had settled here, Ivo gave birth to their first son. They named him Cian. As he grew up, it was clear he would look a lot more like Adm than his mother. Like his father, he was clever and agile, but unlike his father he grew up to be very selfish and manipulating. Their second son, Ebel, was just the opposite: he looked like his mother and was a sweet and friendly soul. This made him particularly vulnerable to exploitation by his older brother, who always tried to get the larger share or the only sample of something they both wanted. As the boys grew older, they often fought physically, and by the time they were adults, they largely stopped interacting. Ebel never returned from a solitary hunting trip he took as an adult. They never figured out what had happened to him.

Adm and Ivo's third child was a girl they named Awano. She was a beautiful combination of both of their physical features as well as their temperaments and personalities. She and her mother were very close and spent much time together out in the field collecting foods and preparing them in the cave. While there were some sparse Shagorum groups in the area, when she became adult she mated with her brother Cian. The fourth child was a son named Set. Like his sister, he combined the best features of both of his parents, being clever and good-natured. Both he and his sister and their brother Cian could have passed for pure humans to someone not looking carefully. When Set was an adult, he decided he wanted a human mate, and knowing from his parents' stories that there were modern humans further south, he left to explore those regions. As it turned out, he eventually settled in what is now northern Israel, found a human mate, and had lots of children.

Adm and Ivo had a number of additional children whose names have been lost. Infant mortality was very high in these populations so some of those certainly died before they grew up. Their sons tended to have difficulty fathering children for reasons that we now know are genetic incompatibilities between the two species. But the daughters did pretty well even though some of them had to interbreed with their brothers. Although Adm and Ivo both died before the northward wave of modern humans reach their area, their grandchildren were absorbed by that

wave as it passed them by and many of their descendants went on to be early settlers in Eurasia, gradually replacing all the Neanderthals.

While Adm and Ivo were alive, they often told their descendants the story of how they had met and ended up where they were. It became a family legend. Because they felt that the snake had played a key role in preventing Ivo from being murdered with the rest of her family and had been the agent that brought Adm and Ivo together, it featured significantly in the story they told. They referred to the snake as the Guardian of Egan (“egan” being the Neanderthal word for the dried fruit). So as the tale was passed from generation to generation, it became known as The Story of Adm, Ivo, and the Guardian of Egan.

So how did this story ever turn into the biblical tale of Genesis? The names of Adm and Ivo have largely been retained. Not so the “Guardian of Egan.” Even the most ancient of Hebrew scribes would not have known that “egan” was the Neanderthal word for dried fruit. The closest Hebrew word was obviously “Eden”, which referred to God. The transmogrification of guardian into garden seems obvious in English, but is not so clear for ancient Hebrew. Later Latin scribes might have confused the words “custos” (guard) and “campus” (plain or field). In any case, none of these early cultures of humans would have ever imagined that someone in their right mind would husband such a poisonous snake to eat the rats that attacked their piles of dried fruit. So the word “guardian” would make no sense to them. A substitution needed to be made and somehow it became “garden”.

In Adm and Ivo's telling, the snake was a benevolent agent who brought them together. Since most people do not like snakes, it is not surprising that the legend gradually made the snake a sinister agent, even a representation of the devil. Given the widespread misogyny of many Middle Eastern cultures, it is also not surprising that the revised version retained Ivo's close association with the (now evil) snake and painted her seduction of Adm as a bad thing. His participation was of course a violation of the customs of Adm's tribe and thus a "sin". A very *original* sin and one that from the tribe's point of view justified his banishment by his father. And it was easy to substitute Adm's Father in Heaven for his biological father. What about the apple? Once the legend was being copied by cultures outside of the Middle East, the relevant scribes would know nothing about dried dates and figs. So they substituted a fruit that they knew: apples. You see, it all makes sense!

What? You don't believe this story? Yes, I know that tens, maybe hundreds of millions of people believe the Genesis version. But then, think how many people used to believe that the world was flat! I guess you need some proof. OK: I suggest you go get your DNA analyzed and then get back to me....

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