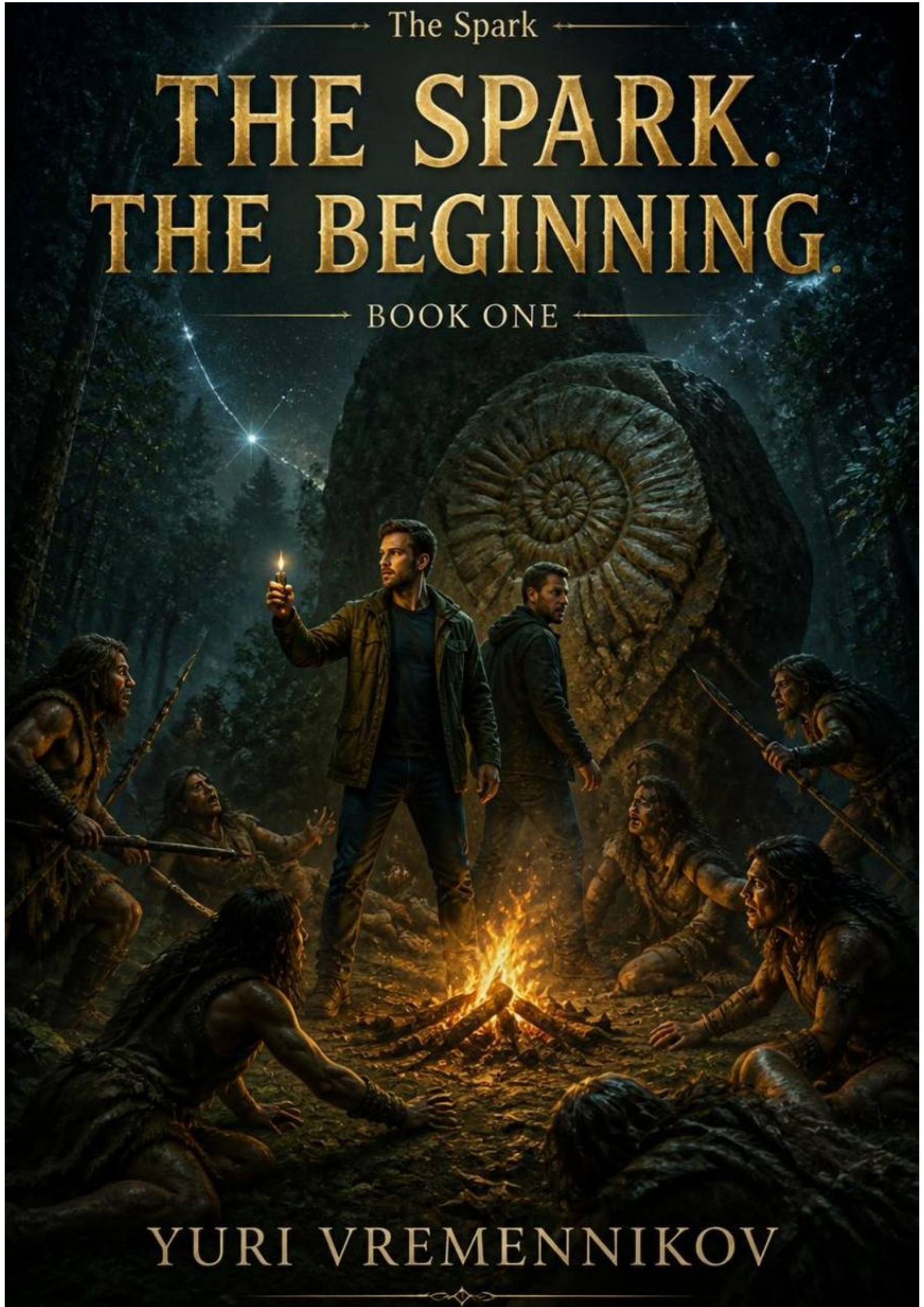
The Spark

THE SPARK. THE BEGINNING.

BOOK ONE



YURI VREMENNIKOV

Юрий Временников

Volume 1. The Spark. The Beginning

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Two brothers — paleontologist Miron and engineer Arsen — go for a barbecue in a forest near Moscow. A sudden landslide carries them away into a primitive world where there are no cities, no metal, not even familiar stars. They are met by the "Grey Lynxes" tribe, who take the strangers for fire spirits. To survive, the brothers use their knowledge: they teach people to make fire, mold clay pottery, craft spear-throwers and bows. Miron and Arsen become teachers, warriors, and friends to the wild tribe. But can their "spark" of civilization ignite a new world? The first book in a series about travelers who build the future where there is none.

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Юрий Временников
Volume 1. The Spark. The Beginning

Chapter 1. The Morning Before the Celebration

Miron woke up because the sun was shining right in his eyes. He stretched lazily, glanced at the clock — half past nine. Sunday, he could have slept longer, but today was a special day: his younger brother's birthday. Twenty-four years — a serious date, even though Arsen didn't like noisy celebrations.

Miron's apartment resembled both a museum and a workshop. Books on paleontology, archaeology, and anthropology crowded the shelves along the walls. In the corner stood a plaster cast of a triceratops skull, a gift from his academic advisor for successfully defending his thesis. On the desk — a laptop, with some excavation reports laid out beside it, pencils, a magnifying glass. Miron was just finishing an article for the journal "Herald of Paleontology" about new methods of dating bone remains.

He got up, walked to the window, and looked at the Moscow courtyard flooded with sunlight. In a couple of hours he needed to leave for the countryside — the company was gathering by the river, shashlik, guitar, campfire. Good. Arsen had been working a lot lately; he deserved a rest.

The phone rang. The screen displayed: "Arsen."

"Hey, brother," Miron answered sleepily.

"You're still asleep?" Arsen's voice was cheerful, as always. "I've already packed everything. The grill, the coals, the meat is marinated. Don't forget the guitar."

"I remember, I remember. How are you? Did you get enough sleep?"

"Yeah. I was thinking, maybe we could look for mushrooms too? It rained recently, there should be some."

"Well, you're something else," Miron laughed. "It's your birthday, and you're thinking about mushrooms."

"The forest is right there, it'd be a sin not to take a walk."

Arsen had always been like that: focused, practical, planning everything in advance. He worked as a design engineer at a defense institute, designing complex mechanisms. In his free time he read popular science, went hiking, and knew mushrooms and berries better than any forester. Since childhood he'd had a habit of analyzing everything and writing it down.

Miron, on the contrary, was impulsive and easily carried away, yet thorough in science. His passion was dinosaurs. At the age of five, after seeing the film "Jurassic Park," he firmly decided to become a paleontologist. At school he devoured books by Efremov and Obruchev, then entered the geology faculty and chose the paleontology department. Now he was a graduate student and often went on expeditions — searching for dinosaur remains in Siberia and southern Russia.

"Alright," Miron said. "I'll head over to your place in an hour. Wait for me."

"Come quickly, the friends are already calling, wanting to know what time we're gathering."

Miron got ready quickly: jeans, a T-shirt, a light jacket, threw a guitar into his backpack, sandwiches, a water flask, a lighter — the very one with the engraving, a gift from a friend last New Year. It was beautiful, metal, with an image of flames and the inscription "Fire is always with you." Miron grinned: it would come in handy for the campfire.

Outside it was already hot. He got into his old "Niva" and drove to his brother's place. Arsen lived in a neighboring district, in an apartment where perfect order reigned: books on engineering, physics, astronomy, a computer, a 3D printer on which he printed parts for his models. He even had a small workshop with a lathe.

When Miron walked in, Arsen was already loading bags into the trunk.

"Help me," he nodded. "I've got some firewood in the closet, grab it too."

"You prepared firewood too?" Miron was surprised.

"Last time I gathered some in the forest, but it was damp. I've got dry ones, from the hardware store."

Miron shook his head: his brother had thought of everything.

Half an hour later they drove out of the city. Music played in the car, Miron talked about the latest news from the excavations:

"Imagine, we found a fragment of a jaw from some sauropod. If it's confirmed, it's the northernmost representative of its kind. I'm actually writing an article about the dating right now."

"What method are you using?" Arsen asked, always interested in details.

"Radiocarbon for the upper layers, and for the deep ones — uranium-thorium. But there are complications with contamination. We have to recheck many times."

"Do you remember when we went to the paleontological museum as kids? You stood by the diplodocus skeleton all day."

"Of course! I firmly decided then that I would dig up bones."

"And you do dig them," Arsen smiled.

They turned onto a country road, birch groves and fields passing by. Soon the river appeared, and they turned toward a familiar clearing — the favorite spot of their company. Several cars were already parked there, and figures of friends could be seen.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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