

# HIDE & SEEK

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Rising 128 metres, the white cliffs of Møns Klint stand sentinel, still and unsettling, their starkness alarming against the sky's comforting hues.

Their chalk walls jar confusingly against the soothing greens and nurturing browns of the idyllic woodlands that cover the clifftops; woodlands where wild Tall Lady orchids, Large Blue butterflies and peregrine falcons reside.

The cliffs disrupt the vista magnificently.

Built from the bodies of creatures long dead, they also unsettle our sense of time, bound to a timeframe that we with our millisecond human lifespans cannot fathom.

Their geological history is easy enough to understand.

70 million years ago, during the Cretaceous period, a tropical sea covered Denmark and most of Northern Europe. The shell remains of ancient coccolithophores - the suitably unpronounceable and scientific name for a type of single-celled algae - layered the seabed with chalk, snaring prehistoric mussels, squids, sea urchins, snails, fish and fungi, the fossil remains of which can still be found today.

Over the ages, as earth's slow-dance continued, continents drifted, collided and fractured. Life evolved, flourished and died to evolve again. Ice ages paralysed, thawed, and then froze the planet again and again.

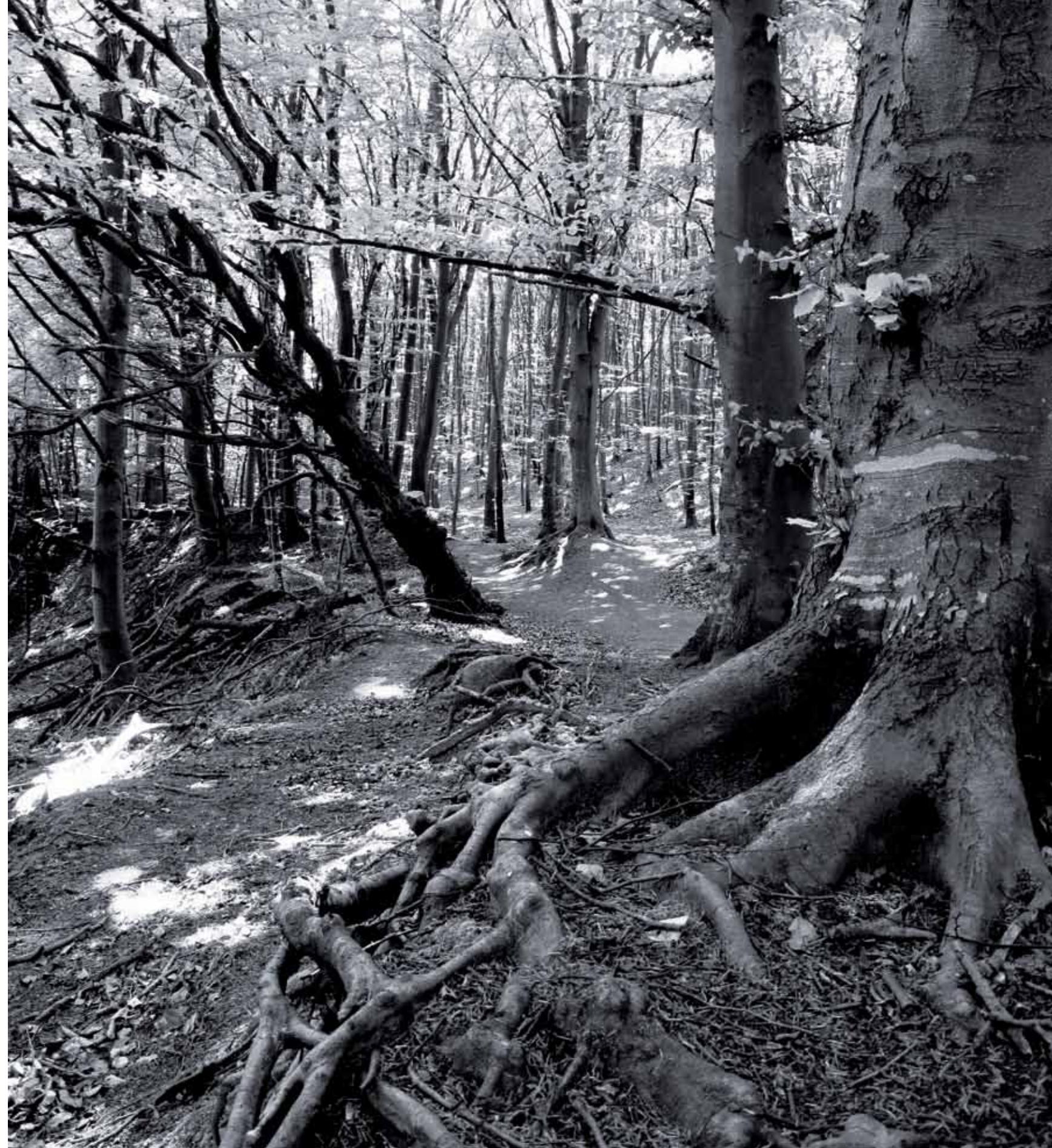
During the last glacial age, glaciers moving west buckled and squeezed the land, forcing the chalk seabed up vertically. When the glaciers melted 12,000 years ago, sea levels rose, Møns became an island and the white cliffs emerged like hidden scars.

The Baltic Sea has gnawed incessantly at the cliffs for the last 4,000 years, just as it continues to do so today, nibbling 20-40cm away each year.

In 10,000 years, Møns and its cliffs won't exist.

How can we, with our 80-100 years on this planet, possibly fathom such a timescale?

Perhaps through playing hide and seek with the tiny fossilised creatures that lived long ago and now hide in the cliff walls? •



*Steps lead to the shore, descending through time.*

*The sun wades through the purest blue sky, deceptive in its perpetuity.*

*Play a game of hide and seek across 70 million years.*

*Time incomprehensible waits to be found.*

*Cover my eyes and count to 10.*

*Hiding in cliffs of white gold and fingers of flint,  
sea urchins, pectens and sponges crouch immortalised,  
belemnite thunderbolts and rattle stones whisper through ages.*

*Open my eyes.*

*Tread slowly, intently, chisel in hand.*

*In chalk walls and stone veins, fossils of bygone emerald seas lie, patterned,  
layered and moulded.*

*Search, spy, uncover, pick up.*

*Primordial creatures in the palm of my modern hand.*

*Holding ancient time, I'm only a youngster.*

*Time incomprehensible found.*

*Let's play again.*

*Your turn.*