

The Philosophy of Cavemen

by Alex Acuff

Copyright © October Alex Acuff and Off The Wall Play Publishers

<https://offthewallplays.com>

This script is provided for reading purposes only. Professionals and amateurs are hereby advised that it is subject to royalty. It is fully protected under the laws of the United States of America , the British Empire , including the Dominion of Canada, South Africa and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including but not limited to professional , amateur, film, radio, and all other media (including use on the worldwide web) and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved; and any unauthorized use of the material may subject the user to any and all applicable civil and criminal penalties. For any information about royalties or to apply for a performance license please click the following link:

<https://offthewallplays.com/royalties-and-licensing-of-plays-sold-by-off-the-wall-plays/>

The Philosophy of Cavemen

Cast of Characters

TAD.	<i>Middle age.</i>
BRET.	<i>Middle age.</i>
WINSTON.	<i>Middle age.</i>

Scene:

A primal camp outside a cave.

Time:

Thousands of years ago.

*A (/) indicates where the next speech begins.

*No “caveman voices” should be used for any of the characters. Suggested wardrobe would be short khakis, with white t-shirt or no shirt.

ACT IScene One“Hard Rocks”

AT RISE: (TAD sharpens a spear at sundown. BRET skins a squirrel. The camp has various appliances for hanging up freshly killed animals, cooking materials, and whatever else a caveman might need.)

TAD.

Did you hear that?

BRET.

What?

TAD.

You didn't hear that?

BRET.

No.

Pause. TAD looks over his shoulder, then back. TAD repeats. BRET becomes aware of this, and does the same.

TAD.

Thought I heard something.

BRET.

What were we talking about?

TAD.

Awareness.

BRET.

Right.

TAD.

Awareness can't exist without this place.

BRET.

How do you figure that?

TAD.

It's first.

BRET.

What?

TAD.

Our awareness comes first.

BRET.

I disagree.

TAD.

(stopping.)
Did you hear that?

BRET.

No.

TAD.

I heard something.

BRET.

Nope.

TAD.

What were we—

BRET.

Awareness.

TAD.

Yeah, yeah. Awareness is part of this place, but this place isn't part of / your awareness.

BRET.

Without your awareness, you'd never know there was a place.

TAD.

Do you think it's solid?

BRET.

What?

TAD.

Like your spear.

BRET.

(laughing him off.)

No.

TAD.

Why not?

BRET.

I feel—

TAD.

How you feel isn't important.

BRET.

It's not?

TAD.

Where does it go when we sleep?

BRET.

Hmmmm.

TAD.

If awareness is solid, then it shuts off. We don't go anywhere. We stay here, but we're unaware of our staying here.

BRET.

During sleep time, I go places.

TAD.

You go places?

BRET.

I go places.

TAD.

You don't go anywhere.

BRET.

Then where do I go?

TAD.

Your mind turns itself off.

BRET.

I feel like I go somewhere. I see things that can't happen. I see people going up to the small circle and coming back.

TAD.

Winston should be back soon.

BRET.

He talks about the wildest things. He talks about his hunts, the animals he kills, but not ideas like me and you.

TAD.

"You and I" is the proper way to say that.

BRET.

The proper way?

TAD.

Like when you go to a learning cave, and there's an old person teaching you.

BRET.

Learning cave?

TAD.

Did you never go to one?

BRET.

No.

TAD.

They split open a guy's head.

BRET.

Stop playing.

TAD.

They did. Cracked like an egg, and there's yoke inside.

BRET.

Whaaaaaat?

TAD.

Yeah.

BRET.

Why would they do that?

TAD.

See what's inside. There was a squishy thing.

BRET.

Squishy?

TAD.

Yeah.

BRET.

What does that mean?

TAD.

You know...like squishy. Squishy, squishy, squishy.

BRET.

Squiiiiiiishy.

TAD.

There was one boy who had many things. Apparently, his family lived in a big cave and they had a lot of food.

BRET.

How much?

TAD.

An entire cold time's worth.

BRET.

No way. How could they afford that much?

TAD.

They know how to speak.

BRET.

It's not how you talk; it's what you talk about.

TAD.

(stopping, looking over his shoulder again.)

Did you hear something?

BRET.

Stop that.

TAD.

What?

BRET.

You're freaking me out.

TAD.

Sorry.

A pause.

BRET.

You mentioned the big circle. What do you think it's made of?

TAD.

It's hot.

BRET.

Is it?

TAD.

Yeah.

BRET.

How?

TAD.

When it rises, we feel hot.

BRET.

You said how we feel isn't important.

TAD.

It is with this.

BRET.

You can't do that.

TAD.

What?

BRET.

No.

TAD.

What?

BRET.

Have one set of rules for this argument, and another set of rules for another.

TAD.

What is *logic*?

BRET.

I honestly don't know. How's your hairy rat?

TAD.

(picking his teeth.)

What if there was an easier way?

BRET.

What?

TAD.

For getting food.

BRET.

Then I'd spend more time thinking.

TAD.

Wouldn't you trade pretty rocks so you don't have to hunt?

BRET.

You have interesting ideas.

WINSTON.

Winston back.

TAD.

There he is!

BRET.

What took so long?

WINSTON.

(like a genius, carrying a bow.)

Winston track animal. Also meet people. People give Winston new toy.

BRET.

What is that?

Piece of wood with string.

WINSTON.

How does it work?

TAD.

Tiny spear go through air. Hit animal.

WINSTON.

Ah-huh.

TAD.

Animal lay down and cry.

WINSTON.

Then what?

TAD.

I eat.

WINSTON.

Where's the food?

BRET.

Winston ate.

WINSTON.

What happened to my spear?

BRET.

Winston trade spear for tiny spears and wood / with string.

WINSTON.

We'll get you another one.

TAD.

That was lucky!

BRET.

WINSTON.

(giving him the bow.)

Wood with string better! Calm down! You make big deal over nothing!

BRET.

I don't know how to use this thing!

TAD.

Did you see any mammoths?

WINSTON.

Rat with tusk?

TAD.

Yes.

WINSTON.

Winston see guy.

TAD.

Yeah?

WINSTON.

Other guy hunt with Winston.

TAD.

Ah-huh.

WINSTON.

Other guy help kill rat with tusk. They have meal.

TAD.

Yeah?

WINSTON.

They hunt more.

TAD.

Okay.

WINSTON.

He step on guy. Guy smooshed in ground. Big rat come after Winston.

TAD.

And you didn't see anything else?

WINSTON.

One other animal.

TAD.

What?

WINSTON.

Um...

TAD.

What was it, Winston? What did you see?

WINSTON.

(going into the cave.)

I lay down.

BRET.

Well, great. We're toast. Going to be dinner for something, but who cares?

TAD.

What's your problem?

BRET.

He shouldn't have given away my spear.

TAD.

We'll get you another / one.

BRET.

How many times has he come back without food?

TAD.

He's family.

BRET.

Listen to the way he talks. "Winston eat now. Winston hungry."

TAD.

Thought you said it doesn't matter how someone talks?

BRET.

When did I say / that?

TAD.

You just said it's about what they say.

BRET.

He doesn't say much!

TAD.

He does hunting for us, so we can think more.

BRET.

Thinking leads me to this conclusion. I feel that some things are right, and others are wrong. He borrowed my property and didn't bring it back.

TAD.

You're not making sense.

BRET.

It's wrong.

TAD.

What harm has come to you?

BRET.

It's wrong.

TAD.

How?

BRET.

It's about making somebody else suffer.

TAD.

You haven't suffered.

BRET.

I have.

TAD.

Oh please.

BRET.

I'm without a weapon for defense. And apparently, something's out there!

TAD.

We'll be fine.

(looks around.)

Just have to stick together.

Blackout.

Scene Two
“Big Wheels”

AT RISE: (A few days later. BRET stis, alone. He looks around. A pause. WINSTON enters, pushing a big stone wheel.)

WINSTON.

Rollin', rollin', rollin'. Rollin', rollin', rollin'.

BRET.

(dumb voice.)

Tad not here.

WINSTON.

Winston have this now. It wheel. It roll. What do you do?

BRET.

What's that?

WINSTON.

Winston give other wheel trader. Trader use wheel to move thing.

BRET.

How many have you traded?

WINSTON.

Lot.

BRET.

More than ten?

WINSTON.

Winston have own big cave now.

BRET.

So?

WINSTON.

Need help make more wheels. From Tad, no you.

BRET.

How many?

WINSTON.

Lot.

BRET.

I can help.

WINSTON.

No.

BRET.

Why?

WINSTON.

I no dumb. You no like me, but you want food.

BRET.

If we both help, you'll make more wheels.

WINSTON.

You take more.

BRET.

I wouldn't take anything.

WINSTON.

(leaving.)

Tell Tad talk to me when he get back.

BRET.

(under his breath.)

Probably not even your idea.

WINSTON.

Winston smart! Winston have other thing work. After wheel, next thing fire. Fire keep warm when small circle come!

BRET.

Fire?

WINSTON.

Hot thing.

BRET.

What do you mean?

WINSTON.

It hot.

BRET.

You're saying you can create warmth?

WINSTON.

Yeah.

BRET.

Without the big circle?

WINSTON.

Yeah.

BRET.

You're lying.

WINSTON.

No lie.

BRET.

Oh yeah? You said you'd bring my spear back, and traded it for the wood and string. You lied to me and you didn't apologize.

WINSTON.

Wood and string better!

BRET.

Why don't you go back to your "big cave?"

You go!

WINSTON.

Go on.

BRET.

No.

WINSTON.

Winston go.

BRET.

Winston no go.

WINSTON.

Winston go!

BRET.

No!

WINSTON.

I'm telling you to leave!

BRET.

TAD.

(running on with his spear.)
I saw the thing! I saw the thing! I don't know what it was, but it was big!

WINSTON.

There Tad.

TAD.

Did you hear the noise?

BRET.

For the last time, there wasn't a noise.

TAD.

You didn't hear anything?

BRET.

No.

TAD.

I saw something.

(catches his breath.)

Where have you been, Winston? Had any luck on your hunts?

BRET.

(holding up his squirrel.)

There's no food.

TAD.

You—

WINSTON.

Winston have this.

TAD.

What?

WINSTON.

Carve with other rock.

TAD.

I can't eat that, buddy.

WINSTON.

It *get* food.

BRET.

Supposedly, it gets food from traders.

TAD.

What does it do?

WINSTON.

You no help.

BRET.

Nothing.

WINSTON.

(rolling the wheel.)

This.

TAD.

Traders give you food for this?

WINSTON.

(demonstrating with the wheel.)

Listen, listen, listen. Trader get flat wood.

TAD.

Ah-huh.

WINSTON.

Trader put wheel and other wheel under flat wood.

TAD.

Right.

WINSTON.

Then trader push stuff.

TAD.

Smart.

BRET.

Still haven't seen any food or pretty rocks.

WINSTON.

Back at other cave.

BRET.

There's no way that traders give him food for this thing. It's a rock. Rocks don't do anything but sit there.

WINSTON.

It wheel! You no good at imagine!

BRET.

It's a rock!

WINSTON.

Quiet!

TAD.

I can't leave.

WINSTON.

You stay in Winston cave.

TAD.

What about Bret?

BRET.

Yeah.

WINSTON.

He stupid.

BRET.

I've been hunting like you were / supposed to!

WINSTON.

Rock move thing!

TAD.

Can you go get the food, Winston? Then we can all make more wheels? You said you'd help us out, and that's both of us.

A pause.

WINSTON.

Then you help make more wheel?

TAD.

Of course.

WINSTON gives BRET a look, then exits.

TAD.

Why do you fight him?

BRET.

I'm tired of his stupidity. He should be hunting, not playing with rocks.

TAD.

He's not—

BRET.

Tad not serious.

TAD.

Don't.

BRET.

Oh yeah, he's really smart.

TAD.

Just because—

BRET.

We'll see if he even brings food.

TAD.

He will.

BRET.

You keep hearing these noises, right?

TAD.

You've heard them?

BRET.

We can't wait for things to happen, we have to go and make them happen. I'm not going out like that. I'm not trying to be kitty-food.

TAD.

It's nothing.

A pause.

BRET.

(nudging the wheel.)

You really think this is the next big thing?

Blackout.

Scene Three
“Pretty Rocks”

AT RISE: (A few weeks later. There are six or seven stone wheels laying around. TAD works on a new wheel, chipping away rock with the best tool he could make. He finishes. He tries to roll the wheel, but struggles. BRET enters, pulling a cart filled with various items.)

BRET.

What’s up, bitches!

TAD.

Hey.

BRET.

I’m back from the land, far in that direction!

TAD.

Could you give me a hand?

BRET.

Man, I have some stories to tell. All of these people...well, sort of people...they’re like “come with us” across some land bridge.”

TAD.

Could you give me a hand?

BRET.

(helping.)

Sure thing, my good ole’ friend.

TAD.

What’s that?

BRET.

Oh, it’s food.

TAD.

What’s all that other stuff?

BRET.

Things.

TAD.

Did you sell any more wheels?

BRET.

Yeah.

TAD.

How many?

BRET.

Let's see, there were three or four orders from traders in that direction, and ten orders for the traders even further.

TAD.

Ten orders?

BRET.

Yeah.

TAD.

Ten wheels?

BRET.

(attempting mental math.)

Plus the other four, so...carry the one...more than ten wheels.

TAD.

You're kidding.

BRET.

No, I'm not. You guys sent me because I'm the best at making deals, and that's what I did. I made deals.

TAD.

I know, but—

BRET.

And hey, listen...I'm thinking we have some good margins, but we can get them up a bit, you know?

TAD.

Ah-huh.

BRET.

Now, you obviously can't go faster, so I'm thinking we've got to find some other people, you know? Set up some interviews, get ourselves some type of production line going; maximize our output, increase margins, and from all of that, we should be able to increase gross profit by at least ten percent.

TAD.

How'd you get all of that stuff?

BRET.

(showing him a small bag.)

Pretty rocks.

TAD.

From five wheels?

BRET.

Well, some of it's five wheels, and some of it's from the other wheels that we're going to give them soon.

TAD.

They gave you pretty rocks for wheels we haven't made?

BRET.

We're *going* to make.

TAD.

I can't make ten more wheels by myself.

BRET.

Get Winston to help.

TAD.

He's busy.

BRET.

You got this. Tad's the man! If he can't do it...someone else can probably do it, but he's still good at doing stuff!

TAD.

I can't even walk, the pain shoots up my back.

BRET.

(looking through his cart.)

I've got some stuff for that.

TAD.

What?

BRET.

Rocks.

TAD.

Pretty rocks?

BRET.

No, you swallow these.

TAD.

Swallow rocks?

BRET.

(smiling.)

Yeah.

TAD.

How will that help?

BRET.

It does. These things make you feel loose. *Loooooose...*

TAD.

I can't keep making wheels.

BRET.

Somewhere...

TAD.

I don't even have time to think anymore; none at all. I can't remember that last time I had a thought.

BRET.

Hey, look at this.

TAD.

What?

BRET.

(pulls out a big thing of fur.)

They call it a 'rug'.

TAD.

How many pretty rocks did you give for that?

BRET.

A couple.

TAD.

It all adds up, Bret. Plus, these aren't your rocks to spend.

BRET.

Would you enjoy this with me?

TAD.

You're letting this—

BRET.

(demonstrating with his hands.)

Oh, check this out. Traders told me about this. Winston said he found a way to make it warm when the big circle went away; he said it was called fire. But I was thinking, if we can get him to make more...

I'm tired.

TAD.

(looking through the cart.)
I've got something for that.

BRET.

(enters holding tablet.)
What noise?

WINSTON.

There he is!

BRET.

Oh, that guy.

WINSTON.

What have you been up to, buddy?

BRET.

Working.

WINSTON.

That's nice.

BRET.

Not nice. Hard work. No force greatness.

WINSTON.

What do you have there?

BRET.

Notepad.

WINSTON.

BRET.
Oh, I see. I see. You got some new ideas? All kinds of ideas brewing up in that head of yours?
Huh?

WINSTON.

Maybe.

BRET.

(looking over his shoulder.)

What's that?

WINSTON.

Irrigation system.

BRET.

And that?

WINSTON.

Drawing of the body.

BRET.

Nice.

WINSTON.

That fire: thing I tell you about earlier.

BRET.

And that?

WINSTON.

Oh, that?

(Pause.)

I call them "pizza rolls."

BRET.

Speaking of the devil. How much food is left?

TAD.

A lot.

BRET.

(exiting.)

How much?

TAD.

Go look for yourself. There's enough for then cold times.

WINSTON.

I'm sad.

TAD.

I know.

WINSTON.

He help.

TAD.

We talked about this, buddy.

WINSTON.

I no like when call me buddy.

TAD.

You know why he's doing the trading, Winston. You're great, but you have trouble with—well, uh—with communicating.

WINSTON.

Winston think he have food, he be happy, but he not happy.

TAD.

Keep your head up, buddy.

WINSTON.

I not buddy!

TAD.

I didn't mean to say that, Winston.

WINSTON.

People think I talk this way, that I dumb, but I not. I not dumb. I make thing. I make wheel. I help make fire. I not dumb. I not talk like other people, but that not mean I dumb. They dumb. They push thing with hands and not have wheel.

TAD.

Want me to give you an arm wrap?

WINSTON.

No.

TAD.

Here I come...

WINSTON.

No...

TAD.

(hugging him.)

Give it a chance.

WINSTON.

No like.

TAD.

Don't you feel that warmth?

WINSTON.

Something poke me...

TAD.

Where are you going?

WINSTON.

That way.

TAD.

Yeah, why not? Get out of the cave for a bit. Maybe you can take the spear and kill something.
You love that.

BRET.

(entering.)

Man, there's so much in there!

WINSTON.

I go now.

TAD.

Be safe.

WINSTON.

(exiting.)

I not scared.

BRET.

Take back everything bad I ever said about him.

TAD.

My neck...

BRET.

Shouldn't let him do pictures on the walls though. No one wants a cave with pictures of animals everywhere; lowers the property value.

TAD.

Who are you?

BRET.

Didn't you want a new cave?

TAD.

That was then.

BRET.

So?

TAD.

I changed my thoughts. We're capable of change, aren't we?

BRET.

When did you—

TAD.

I don't want a new cave anymore.

BRET.

Why?

TAD.

Don't you miss thinking? Why not go back to that?

BRET.

Look...

TAD.

I'm tired.

BRET.

I'm tired too!

TAD.

Don't make this about / you.

BRET.

Your back hurts from making wheels and my feet hurt from walking so much. But we've got a good thing here.

TAD.

You haven't been trading for food.

BRET.

I have.

TAD.

(looking through the cart.)

What about this stuff?

BRET.

That's—

TAD.

(pulling an item out.)

What are these things?

BRET.

Earmuffs. They keep your ears warm during cold time.

TAD.

What's this?

BRET.

Another rug.

TAD.

This?

BRET.

A crock...pot.

TAD.

What about this thing?

BRET.

I believe they call that a "dildo". Don't know what it's used for. I think they use it to ward off evil spirits.

TAD.

(pulling another item out.)

What's this?

BRET.

That's—

TAD.

We don't need any of this!

BRET.

You say that now.

TAD.

I don't want more things, Bret. Things don't make me happy.

BRET.

They make me happy.

TAD.

They don't!

BRET.

It's not about things. It's about food. It's about survival. I want more food.

TAD.

We have more mammoth than we could ever eat.

BRET.

You don't / know that.

TAD.

Don't you see how this has changed you?

BRET.

Not really.

TAD.

I'm done, Bret. Trade these wheels and get pretty rocks; they're the last ones, unless you want to make more yourself. I'm not changing my mind. Tomorrow, I'm going to think about *what* the big circles are, and *why* we're here.

BRET.

What do you mean?

TAD.

(*simply.*)

Why?

BRET.

What?

TAD.

Why are we here?

BRET.

Because—

TAD.

Why does the big circle rise and fall?

BRET.

It just does.

TAD.

Why are we here?

BRET.

We just are.

TAD.

Why do we exist?

BRET.

Exist?

TAD.

Why did old people leave?

BRET.

I don't know.

TAD.

Where did they go? Where do any of us come from?

WINSTON.

(entering.)

I back.

TAD.

Where do people go?

WINSTON.

What wrong?

BRET.

He's thinking.

WINSTON.
What you do?

BRET.
Nothing.

WINSTON.
Something!

BRET.
I didn't do anything.

TAD.
Why can't we spend more time thinking?

WINSTON.
(hugging TAD.)
You okay.

TAD.
I'm not okay.

WINSTON.
Winston give you arm wrap.

BRET.
Give him some space.

TAD.
Why?

BRET.
He's okay.

WINSTON.
He not! He say he not! You not listen to him!

TAD.
Why?