

SUBURBIA, B.C.

a Stone Age Comedy

by Lois E. Hobart

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STORY OF THE PLAY

It is early in the Cro-Magnon era. Philip, the Stone Age lord of an elegant cave suite, is something of a Neanderthal when it comes to change. Rumors of a new secret weapon worry him. So does the alarmingly barbaric tribe that has settled across the river – they live in boxes made of wooden logs with a panel that opens and closes!

Then there's his son, Thomas, who has dropped out of hunting-fishing-agriculture school and does nothing but play with inventions. His daughter, Sharon, befriends animals instead of attracting a nice caveman who will carry her off to a decent cavern in a good neighborhood. Cousin Rudolf arrives riding a monstrous creature that snorts and cavorts. He brings along a new mate, a sturdy Celtic girl of considerable muscle, who is charmed by him for sharing some of the drudge work.

It's the dawn of a new age that includes the wheel, running water, beasts of burden, the bow and arrow which can kill from afar, tamed animals you can pet, women who think for themselves – and Philip doesn't like it! How he copes with this whirlwind of change makes for a hilarious Stone Age romp that pokes delicious fun at our contemporary foibles.

*With special thanks to
Noel Rosenbaum, Bob Lind, Walter Reid, Mabel Fayant,
my son, Anthony H. Black,
and my friends in San Miguel Allende*

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 men, 3 women)

PHILIP: Lord of the cave manor, a man of dignity and substance, broad-shouldered and powerful in a restrained way. Well-tailored by caveman standards, but conservative. An aristocrat.

TANYA: His wife, a good-looking woman, in her 30s. Also of good family, a descendant of the inventor of spears. Tanya herself invented something called a hat, to shield herself from sun, snow and rain. She wears a lovely gray wolfskin cloak, a beautiful choker of seashells and a matching bracelet.

SHARON: Daughter of Tanya and Philip, of marriageable age, nearly 16. Lively and attractive, with glossy long dark hair. She is a student of animal behavior.

THOMAS: Her older brother, 18, tall and slender. He has the dreamy look of an intellectual or artist. His murals can be seen on the living room wall.

COUSIN RUDOLF: A traveling merchant, he is less impressive than Philip but stalwart and well-muscled. He wears the latest style, trousers of wool with matching cloak. Shrewd, active, but not athletic by nature.

MOLLY: A strapping, handsome Celtic lass from an island called Ireland. She has striking red hair in braids. She wears an ordinary bearskin wrapped around her and tied with a sash of leather.

BRUNO: An attractive, tall young man from a clan across the river. He, too, wears trousers.

TIME: The end of the Stone Age.

PLACE: A large cave in Southern France.

RUNNING TIME: 50 minutes.

SETTING

An attractive cave suite. A high-ceiling central living room adjoins a ledge that forms a veranda overlooking a river and a glade in the nearby woods. The room contains a caveman mural. The stump of a tree serves for a table, with flat-topped small boulders (sitables) placed around it and elsewhere in the chamber. A long slab of slate mounted on log stumps makes a kind of love seat. Small ledges of the cave here and there hold pottery. Outside is a large boulder that can be rolled in place to bar the entrance from bears or other invaders.

SR is a kitchen with a small separate entrance. Here, too, ledges hold pottery and spoon-shaped carved utensils. A fireplace and logs can be seen extreme SR. For an unexpected touch, running water can be piped in from the outer kitchen ledge: rainfall trapped in a large pot or two, SL of the kitchen.

SL is a glimpse of the bedroom with a large woven double mat mounted on cut logs. Fur pelts or cloaks may be hung on outcroppings of the cave. Several tiger or leopard skins cover the bed, and bearskins might be placed under the mat. A small exit SL leads to other chambers of the cave.

COSTUMES

Leopard or zebra skins are fashionable for women. Men wear coverings of fawn-colored antelope without patterns, and a cloak of bearskin for warmth. Men and women both wear sandals or low boots made of heavy skins.

SOUND EFFECTS

A soundscape of wild cats (saber-toothed tigers), hooting birds, trumpeting elephants (Mastodons), baying wolves, howling monkeys (of Mexico), and snorting boars at the top of the play would set the scene nicely.

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Scene 1

(AT RISE: A somewhat comfortably furnished cave apartment in southern France. TANYA is standing peering over the ledge at the rear of living room. PHILIP clammers up over the ledge and they enter the main chamber, where he slings down a pack and sits down.)

TANYA: What took you so long, Philip?

PHILIP: Nothing much. Stopped by after the hunt to visit with a friend in the village. I'd promised him some of my special new flints. What's for supper?

TANYA: Leftovers tonight – roast toes of mammoth.

PHILIP: Good, good. I'm hungry. Tanya, I brought you skins for a rug. You've been complaining about the damp floor. And how do you like this zebra skin? Could you use it for a cape?

TANYA: Darling, it's beautiful! *(Throws it over HER shoulders, feeling its softness.)* You don't think it's a little daring for me? Everyone else in our crowd wears leopard. But it's just right for a cold winter night when the glaciers move down.

PHILIP: You can wear things most women can't. *(Lapses into brooding.)*

TANYA: *(Looks at HIM, puts down the zebra skin.)* Philip, I know you. What are you worrying about now?

PHILIP: *(Attempts smile.)* Nothing, nothing.

TANYA: Come, tell me about it. I know there's something.

PHILIP: Rumors, nothing but rumors, that's all.

TANYA: Rumors about what?

PHILIP: Oh – some kind of new secret weapon. Just talk.

TANYA: Oh, Philip, ever since I can remember, people have been talking about secret weapons but when have we ever seen any? What could be more deadly than a hatchet or a spear or an ax? Forget those rumors.

PHILIP: I know, I know. But this time ... one of the women in the village was walking in the forest gathering nuts when a boar attacked her from a thicket. She screamed and ran for a tree but the boar overtook her – but suddenly something whizzed past and buried itself in the boar's hide. The boar plunged back into the thicket so she couldn't see what it was, but she thought it was some kind of stick.

TANYA: Not a spear? Was there someone nearby?

PHILIP: She didn't see anyone but she didn't wait to look. She ran home to take care of her wound.

TANYA: Could she have imagined it? Maybe something else scared the boar.

PHILIP: It's not very easy to scare away an attacking boar, my dear.

TANYA: (*With determined cheer.*) Probably another false alarm. Philip, don't let it worry you. What's the latest gossip in the village?

PHILIP: The usual chatter about the new tribe on the other side of the river. You know – why don't they live in proper caves like us instead of those flimsy little huts, and how barbaric they are, and how someone saw one of them walking around on four limbs.

TANYA: (*Sewing some skins.*) What makes people so snobbish? They look harmless enough to me and I never saw one walk on all fours. From a distance, two or three of them seem rather good-looking.

PHILIP: How do you know? Have you seen them?

TANYA: Once. The other day there was a wounded doe down by the river, and you know how Sharon is about animals. Nothing would do but we must run down and bind up the injured leg. One of the lads from the village saw us and swam across to help us. Very courteous of him, I thought. Not a bad-looking lad, either.

PHILIP: Now, Tanya, I'm no snob, but you should be more careful about acquaintances and not set a bad example for your own daughter. We don't know anything about that tribe and they just might be dangerous. I forbid you and Sharon to have anything to do with them!

End of Freeview

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