

## **THE VEGAN OPTION**

John Yunker

### **CAST LIST (2M, 2F)**

DAD/NOG	M, 40s
MOM/NAG	F, 40s
GREG/GROG	M, 20s
TINA/TIG	F, Late teens

**TIME:** Present Era and Paleolithic Era

**SETTING:** A dining table on the left side of the stage represents the Present Era. To the right, a cave wall near the back of the stage represents the Paleolithic Era, along with a small row of potted plants towards the front.

**SCENE 1**

*(Present Era. Seated at the table are MOM, DAD, and GREG. TINA is standing.)*

MOM

I don't understand why this couldn't just wait until dinner.

TINA

Dinner isn't the best occasion for this type of announcement.

DAD

You're gay.

TINA

What? No.

GREG

You always said your best friend Kaylee was hot.

MOM

Is that why you joined the field hockey team?

TINA

Mom, Dad, Greg, no. I'm not gay. I'm — I'm vegan.

DAD

Vegan?

MOM

*(to DAD)*

That means she's allergic to gluten.

TINA

No, Mom. This isn't an allergy—it's a choice. Vegan means I'm no longer eating meat. Or dairy. Or any animal product.

DAD

What about chicken?

TINA

That's meat.

DAD

White meat.

TINA

Dad, it doesn't matter what color it is.

MOM

I had meat loaf planned for tonight.

TINA

I know. That's why I wanted to deal with this now. How about I cook instead? I could prepare something that's completely plant-based.

DAD

What about the meat loaf?

GREG

What about my protein?

MOM

So now you're saying I can't cook for our family?

TINA

No. I'm just saying that, that meat is bad for the planet.

DAD

Since when?

TINA

Since we started raising animals for food. Look, every pound of beef requires 30 gallons of water. Not to mention the corn we grow to feed animals instead of people. The methane cows emit is far worse than all cars combined. This planet simply can't survive if everyone eats meat.

GREG

I can't survive without meat.

TINA

Of course you can. I've been vegan for the past three months, and I've never felt better.

MOM

Three months? I thought you were missing dinner because of field hockey.

TINA

This isn't about field hockey, Mom.

MOM

Then where on earth have you been sneaking off to every evening?

TINA

Kaylee's house. Her mom's vegan, too.

MOM

I see. Perhaps you should move in with Kaylee. Since you obviously despise living with us.

TINA

Mom—

MOM

I turn the lights off when I leave the room. I turn the water off when I brush my teeth. I don't flush the toilet as often as I'd like. I don't use plastic bags. I don't use bottled water. I recycle. I compost. I drive a Prius, for crying out loud. But nothing I do is ever good enough for you.

*(MOM throws up her arms and exits.)*

DAD

*(calling after her)*

You're still cooking meat loaf, right?

*(to TINA)*

What about pork?

*(TINA shakes her head. DAD exits.)*

TINA

*(to Greg)*

You could have had my back.

GREG

Don't look at me, sis. I'm on the paleo diet.

TINA

Great. So now you're taking dietary advice from cavemen.

GREG

It's in our DNA to eat meat. That's a fact, like scientific.

TINA

Humans are adaptable.

GREG

Humans are meat eaters. Always have been, always will.

*(GREG leaves.)*

TINA

*(calling after him)*

You're wrong. Humans can evolve. Even cavemen.

*(Paleolithic Era. Lights dim on the dining table and come up on the cave wall, positioned in the background.)*

*(MOM, as NAG, stands by the wall, cleaning it. DAD, as NOG, enters triumphantly, followed by GREG, as GROG. They are both carrying small sacks made of faux animal skins. They may also be wearing faux animal skins to indicate Paleolithic Era.)*

NOG

I am Nog.

GROG

I am Grog.

NAG

I am Nag. And you're late.

*(TINA, as TIG, crosses stage and stands by cave wall observing the others. She then begins to draw animals on the wall.)*

NOG

We traveled far.

GROG

We got lost.

NOG

We traveled the crooked hills. The animals were few. We traveled past the endless sands.

GROG

Then we got lost.

NOG

Gather 'round. We have returned from the hunt. We bring animals, so we may have meat. Tonight, we feast. We eat. We eat meat.

NAG

*(Points at the food they're carrying)*

Feast? That's not enough for a snack.

NOG

After we *snack*, we pack.

NAG

No. Nog, not again. I finally got the cave looking presentable.

NOG

Animals move. We must move.

NAG

And I have moved. Plenty. And did I ever complain about those run-down, drafty caves? Never. I followed you over the crooked hills, sweated my ass off across that endless desert. Nearly died on that mountain pass you thought was a shortcut. I packed. I moved. I unpacked. Again and again. But nothing I do is ever good enough for you.

*(NAG exits.)*

GROG

So, can I eat what she's not having?

*(NOG notices TIG drawing on the wall, approaches.)*

NOG

What is this? The invention you've been speaking of?

GROG

A new weapon?

TIG

This is not the invention, father, brother. This is the story of our people. The animals we share the land with. The gods we worship. Someday people will see this and remember us and our civilization, a testament to perseverance and—

GROG

You realize what you've done?

TIG

Set onto stone the first visual representation of our culture.

GROG

You've made a mess of a perfectly good cave wall.

TIG

That's a matter of opinion.

NOG

And you broke Rule 15 of the C.O.A.

TIG

C.O.A.?

NOG

Cave owners association. We're not the only ones who use this cave. And we'll be leaving soon.

TIG

I'm not going.

NOG

Yes, you are.

TIG

I'm staying with my plants.

NOG

Your what?

TIG

This.

*(Gestures toward the row of small plants)*

*This* is the future of our people. This is my invention.

GROG

Weeds.

*(TIG hands GROG a carrot.)*

TIG

Try it.

*(GROG takes carrot and handles it like a knife.)*