

VOICEOVER

Headache Pills. Headache. Headache Pills. Pills for your headache. When your head aches, take Headache Pills.

BETTY

That's great Fred. I'll bet you're hungry. Why don't I go make you a little something to eat? What would you say to a little Brontosaurus burger snack?

FRED

What would I say? I'll tell you what I'd say. Yabba dabba doo!

Flintstones end theme music comes on, lights out, play over.

– THE END –

BETTY

I don't know. I feel like somebody's been playing drums on my head with a pair of heavy clubs.

FRED

Ugh. Tell me about it. I'm starving, my head is pounding. Hey, how about making me something to eat?

Betty looks as if she is about to fly into a rage. She speaks slowly, through clenched teeth.

BETTY

Fred, I just came in DON'T RUSH ME!

Just then Fred finds the bottle of headache pills. He grabs it and holds it up.

BETTY
(overjoyed)

Headache Pills!

VOICEOVER

Headache Pills. To help you cope with your hard life on the rockpile.

BETTY

Now we're talking.

VOICEOVER

Headache Pills.

FRED

That's a little better anyway.

BETTY (CONT'D)

You bet it is. Say, are you still angry that the workers don't control the means of production?

FRED

Yes I am. But I've learned that the most important thing is how you feel inside. And right now inside I am feeling fantastic.

GAZOO

I'm sorry. I'm afraid it's the Karl Kopter after all.

MARX

Whattaya say, Friedrich? Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

ENGELS

Lignite Lanes?

MARX

You got it, buddy boy!

MARX AND ENGELS IN UNISON

Let's go bowling!

Marx and Engels hustle offstage. Lights go down but the tinkly sound effect lets the audience know it's not over yet, another commercial is coming. Lights come up and we find Fred Flintstone lying on the ground, apparently lifeless, the slingshot still in his hand. After a few moments, he begins to stir. He moans and reaches for his head as he struggles to stand up.

FRED

Oh, man, have I got a headache! What hit me? Man, oh man. What I need are some Headache Pills.

VOICEOVER

Headache Pills.

Fred stumbles around, looking for a bottle of Headache Pills, groaning and holding his head. As he wanders around in a daze, BETTY enters through the front door, looking woozy herself, with her hand to her own head.

BETTY

Christ, what a day.

FRED

Betty! What happened to you? You look like hell.

MARX

You better watch out – there's snipers out there!

GAZOO

They cannot see me or hear me!

ENGELS

OK!

GAZOO

Honestly! They can't! Only the two of you can perceive me! I have come to help you get out of this mess!

MARX

How?

GAZOO

Using your own plans!

ENGELS AND MARX

What do you mean?

GAZOO

Just outside – I've materialized it!

ENGELS
(grabbing his plans)

You mean...

GAZOO

Yes! The Karl Kopter!

MARX

Hurrah!

ENGELS

You mean the Friedrich Flyer!

MARX

Without falling into the usual interpersonal power politics.

ENGELS

Exactly. If we can't, as individuals, transcend our own egos, in our little pressure cookers, what can we expect of society?

MARX

Well, I'm covering all that.

ENGELS

What?

MARX

In Volume Three. Honestly, it's all there.

ENGELS

Oh sure. Go ahead and jump in front of another parade. You know, I give up, I really do. I have had it. I...

Just then there is a great clap of thunder and some special lighting effects and a puff of pink smoke, ideally, and suddenly there before Marx and Engels stands the Great Gazoo.

MARX

Yowza!

ENGELS

What the hell is that?

GAZOO

Hello dum-dums!

ENGELS

Who the hell are you?

GAZOO

I am the Great Gazoo! I come from Planet Zircon! I have been sent here to help you!

ENGELS

But when you're pinned down by snipers, man –

MARX

I hear you.

ENGELS

It's like...

MARX

Say it.

ENGELS

You can't make a damn move!

MARX

Amen. Amen brother.

ENGELS

It's all you can do to deal with moment-by-moment reality. You know? And our best asset – each other – and we KNOW that, I mean, it's what all our work is about – it's like, it falls apart under that pressure.

MARX

Whew. You said a mouthful.

ENGELS

I mean, life becomes nothing but a series of petty squabbles, little, I don't know, ego battles, competitions. We somehow get locked into it. It's so hard to sort of rise above, to grab onto that bigger picture...

MARX

Uh huh. Uh huh.

ENGELS

...to grab onto it and DO something – something practical with it, you know?

MARX

Ah. Well, I'm sorry.

Engels goes to the window and fires off a few rounds, then returns to his spot. Both men sit in silence for a few moments.

MARX (CONT'D)

Would you like a sip?

He holds out the cup. Engels looks at it contemptuously for several seconds, then relents and accepts. He takes a sip and hands it back to Marx. There is more gunfire from outside.

ENGELS

This is shit.

MARX

Well observed. But don't worry. We will get out of this. Somehow.

ENGELS

No, that's not what I mean. I mean, this is shit too, being pinned down by snipers. But I'm talking about something bigger. Us. I'm talking about us, our relationship.

MARX

Oh.

ENGELS

I guess I'm talking about the human condition.

MARX

To which of its myriad shitty aspects do you refer?

ENGELS

Well, you know, the whole thing, all of this. We're under a lot of pressure here. We've got big dreams, you and I, you know that.

MARX

Yeah we do.

MARX (CONT'D)

Aahhhhh. Heavenly. Oh, that hits the spot. Even being pinned down by snipers is tolerable if you have a lovely coffee.

Engels continues to stare at him in disgust. Marx finally looks over and notices.

MARX (CONT'D)

Didn't I say thanks? Oh, please don't tell me you want the change. I mean honestly.

ENGELS

One.

MARX

One. What one? One what? Spit it out.

ENGELS

One cappuccino.

MARX

Hm?

ENGELS

You got one cappuccino.

MARX

Well, I only wanted – oh, I see. Did you want one?

ENGELS

It would have been nice.

MARX

Well you should have said something.

ENGELS

I hadn't thought it necessary.

ENGELS

What on earth do you need money for?

MARX

One must exist, one must live, one must eat, one must work.

ENGELS

Now! I mean what do you need money for now? What possible reason?

MARX

I need a cappuccino.

ENGELS

In the middle of a gun battle?

More gunfire.

MARX

Especially in the middle of a gun battle. Come on. Lend us a fiver.

ENGELS

“Lend.” Yeah right.

MARX

Come on. Please.

ENGELS

Aaaah.

Engels fishes around in his pocket, produces a note, and reluctantly hands it to Marx.

MARX

Good man. OK. Cover me.

Marx crawls offstage as Engels presses himself against the wall. Once Marx is out of view, Engels leaps to the window and begins firing like crazy out the window. There is much gunfire in return. Presently Marx returns, carrying one cappuccino in a take-out cup. He takes his place against the wall, removes the plastic lid, and sips his drink in a reverie of enjoyment. Engels stares at him in disgust.

ENGELS

How dare you?! I...

MARX

There's no "i" in team, Friedrich. It doesn't matter which of us did what. What's important is that the Karl Kopter flies.

ENGELS

The Karl Kop...oh no, oh no no no no no. That's the Friedrich Flyer!

MARX

Ooooh – ugly name. I don't think so.

ENGELS

I designed it!

MARX

You threw down a lump of clay. I molded it.

ENGELS

Lump of clay! You erased my rotor and drew it back in! You're still missing half the gears!

MARX

Petty bourgeois jealousy will get us nowhere. Have you got any money?

ENGELS

What?

MARX

Money, Friedrich, money. I'm tapped.

ENGELS

What else is new?

MARX

Don't start.

Engels shows him the pad. Marx studies it closely, nodding.

MARX

Yes, yes. It's not bad.

ENGELS

Thank you.

MARX
(gesturing at the pencil)

May I?

Engels hesitates, then reluctantly hands him the pencil. Marx begins his own scribbling, adding to Engels' work.

MARX (CONT'D)

Some good ideas, good raw ideas here, Friedrich. Let's just see if I can put a little flesh on these bones for you. You see – maybe this isn't obvious – it'll be unstable here without a back rotor. You have to be able to control pitch and yaw.

ENGELS

It HAS a back rotor – no! – don't erase that! You don't...

MARX

Don't get excited – watch and learn...

ENGELS

No no, you haven't understood the gear assembly, please, let me...

MARX

Patience, patience – there. I think you'll find it'll be loads more efficient this way. Do you see how it gets propulsion?

ENGELS

Yes I do. I designed it that way.

MARX

I'm hearing a lot of ego here. A lot of I, me, mine. I think we're going to have to get past that, don't you?

ENGELS

This is stupid. I'm not getting sucked into this.

More gunfire, returned shots. Engels continues to scribble.

MARX

Did you pay the rent?

ENGELS

What?

MARX

The rent. This month's rent. I can't afford to get kicked out, not now.

ENGELS

Of course I paid it. I always pay it.

MARX

Good, good.

ENGELS

God forbid you should get a job.

MARX

Indeed. Anyway, you're rich enough. Don't complain. It doesn't suit you.

More gunfire.

ENGELS

This is bad. But I think I've got it. Yeah. [*Puts the finishing touch on his scribbling.*]
I'm getting us out of here.

MARX

I'm all for it. How?

ENGELS

Take a look.

ENGELS

Yeah. Yeah. It is pretty intense.

MARX

We'll be famous one day my friend. People will know our names.

ENGELS

Whatever. I'll worry about that when we get out of here in one piece – if we get out.

MARX

Especially mine.

More gunfire. They both rise to the window and return fire, then press once again to the wall.

ENGELS

Especially your what?

MARX

My name. They'll especially remember my name.

ENGELS

Is that so?

MARX

Well, come on. You've been an excellent second banana but let's face it. It's my theory basically. My system. What's it going to be – Engelsism? Be real. But they'll remember you too.

Engels looks at Marx, looks at his gun, looks back at Marx.

ENGELS

Do you really think anyone but a few stodgy intellectuals will ever read your hopeless prose? I'm the one who brings the fire! You don't understand the first thing about PR. You think your stuff is accessible without me?

MARX

Don't even go there.

MARX

Bastards.

Engels reaches his arm out and takes a few shots of his own before retreating to his safe position against the wall.

ENGELS

I think I hit one of them.

MARX

Really?

Both men carefully peer out the window

ENGELS

No.

MARX

Damn.

ENGELS

They can't win. Not really.

MARX

Yeah...

Sound of incoming gunshots. Marx and Engels press themselves tightly against the wall.

MARX (CONT'D)

Pretty dramatic though, wouldn't you say?

ENGELS

What do you mean?

MARX

This! Right here, right now! Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, pinned down by sniper fire? Battling for their lives? We're in a goddamn gun battle here!

FRED

What have I done?

He starts to shuffle to the side of the room, where there is a table with a drawer.

WILMA

I'm calling the police.

Wilma exits as Fred continues to shuffle towards the table. When he reaches it, he opens the drawer, reaches inside, and pulls out a sturdy sling shot and a good-sized stone to load.

Fred drops to his knees. He's in a daze.

PEBBLES

Da da! Da da!

FRED

There's nothing left now. There's just...nothing. It's over. Goodbye, Pebbles.

Fred loads the slingshot and slowly draws back the stone, aiming at his own head. He looks up, facing the audience, then continues upwards with his eyes, looking to the sky. He closes his eyes.

The lights go out. There is a pinging sound, like a pebble hitting something. A man screams. There is more pinging – gunshots – and more screaming. The lights come up again. The scene has changed. Two men are crouching by a window in an apartment. They are KARL MARX and FRIEDRICH ENGELS. They have guns. Engels also has a pad of paper – when he's not shooting, he's scribbling on it.

ENGELS

Karl, are you all right?

MARX

(grimacing, grips his shoulder)

Yeah. Yeah. Just grazed me. It's nothing. Thanks for asking, Friedrich.

Karl Marx sticks his gun out the window and fires off a few rounds, then presses himself back against the wall.

ENGELS

They've got us totally pinned down here.

accidentally on Betty, who goes sprawling, smashing her head against the wall. Wilma screams.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

No! No Bamm Bamm! No!

Barney races over to Betty as she lies motionless on the ground. Fred and Wilma stand over him, looking on. Barney takes her limp arm and checks her wrist for a pulse.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

Oh god. Oh no. Betty. Oh, Betty.

FRED

Is she...

BARNEY

She's gone. Oh, my beautiful Betty. Oh my god. Oh no.

WILMA

Oh my god.

Wilma goes to hug Barney. They are both overcome with tears. Fred looks on tragically.

FRED

Yow.

BARNEY

I...I have to get her home.

WILMA

You shouldn't move her.

BARNEY

She's dead! It doesn't matter! I want her out of here. I want her home. Bamm Bamm, help me.

Bamm Bamm lifts up Betty and the Rubbles slowly leave. Fred appears to be in a state of shock.

WILMA (CONT'D)

Shut up Dino!

PEBBLES

Bitch! Bitch!

WILMA

That's right, Pebbles. Aunty Betty is a bitch.

BARNEY

Betty, why? Why, Betty?

BETTY

Barney, I'm sorry. It just happened. I never meant for you to find out this way.

BARNEY

I'm sure you never meant for me to find out at all.

FRED

Don't take it personally, Barn.

BARNEY

Shut your mouth.

FRED

I was just, you know, doing my job.

BARNEY

That's it. Bamm Bamm, get him!

Bamm Bamm gets up at his father's orders and rushes to attack Fred Flintstone.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

Yes! Go Bamm Bamm! Go!

Bamm Bamm makes a leaping attack at Fred, but Flintstone is able to avoid the punch, getting out of the way at the last minute. So instead, Bamm Bamm's mighty fist lands

WILMA

Oh my god. Oh my god.

FRED

That's right. Betty and I were together that night. And if you thought I gave the rock pile a good pounding...

BETTY

Oh, Fred...

BARNEY

You and Betty?

FRED

Oh yes.

BETTY

Wilma, I...

WILMA

Don't you even speak to me.

BETTY

I'm sorry! Wilma, I'm so sorry!

WILMA

Don't sorry me you little slut!

BETTY

Slut? Hey honey, if he was getting any at home I don't think he'd come sniffing around my door.

WILMA

Oh, you bitch!

Dino's barking is heard again from outside.

BARNEY

Say your piece, Flintstone.

FRED

Remember when I told you I was too sick to go bowling with you Barney?

BARNEY

Yes.

WILMA

When were you ever too sick to go bowling? I don't remember that.

FRED

You didn't know about it, Wilma. You thought I went out bowling as usual.

WILMA

When was this?

FRED

Three years ago.

WILMA

Three years ago?

FRED

Springtime.

WILMA

Springtime. I remember one time, wasn't it three years ago when...

BETTY

When I told you I was too sick to go to the opera with you.

BARNEY

Too sick to go to the opera? But you never...

FRED

Very good Pebbles. We always know, subconsciously, that death is always there, right over our shoulder. And we're terrified of it. That's why we run around so desperately after petty distractions. But it doesn't go away. We can't avoid it. But every once in a while, if we have the stomach for it, we can stop deceiving ourselves and see what's really important, and see how much crap there is in our lives.

WILMA

You sure know how to liven up a party, Fred.

FRED

That's what I'm talking about. Cheap jokes. Great. Anything but face the truth. Even if it means our whole lives turn out to be cheap jokes. Our relationships with each other, that's what's supposed to be real. That's what's supposed to be valuable. And what have I got? What have I really got when I look at it all honestly? I've got a wife who's never stood up for me, and a best friend who'll stab me in the back every chance he gets.

WILMA

Fred, that's just not fair.

BARNEY

Yeah, just hang on there, big fella...

FRED

I'm not finished. I'm saying that I'm sick of pettiness. I'm sick of cheap jokes. I'm sick of lies. I could turn away, we could all kiss and make up and pretend everything's fine, but we'd be lying. All I want right now is some truth. I'm not afraid of anything. Let's be real. Let's get it all on the table right now. You've taken a lot of things that are rightfully mine, Barney. I'm sick of it. Really sick of it. Well two can play that game, pal. I want you to know something. I want you to know I've had something of yours.

BETTY

Fred, don't. I beg you.

WILMA

What's going on?

FRED

Sorry Betty. I'm sick of all the lies. And I'm sick of Barney taking and taking and taking from me.

WILMA

Oh is that right?

FRED

Yeah that's right. Can't you see what's happening here? Can't you see what's really going on? They've got us running around all the time wanting things we don't really need. You've got the woolly mammoth shower system, oh, now you need the baby elephant vacuum cleaner, or the bee in the clamshell shaver, or the pointy bird beak sewing machine, or the pointy bird beak record player, or the pointy bird beak camera, or the pointy bird beak hedge trimmers, or the pointy bird beak...

WILMA

Yeah, we get the idea, Fred.

FRED

OK, well where does it end? Somehow we've been suckered into living these cheap little lives, hypnotized by commodities, constantly battling to get the upper hand on our neighbors, lying to ourselves and everyone else that we're happy, running all the time to escape the void at the center of it all.

BETTY

What void? What do you mean?

BARNEY

Yeah Fred, what do you mean?

FRED

You all know exactly what I mean.

WILMA

You lost me about ten minutes ago.

FRED

Oh no. You know it all right. You know it but you don't want to see it. Death! Every one of us is aware that death is at the center of everything, waiting for us to stop making fools of ourselves, always ready to send us back into the nothingness that we came from.

PEBBLES

Death! Nothingness!

BARNEY

...to the tune of six months without paying a dime, at which point the Grand Poobah informed me that your membership was to be revoked for a period of not less than one month, after which reinstatement could be considered by a peer council pending full settlement of all amounts due, including bar tab.

FRED

How do you live with yourself?

BARNEY

You need to take some personal responsibility here, Fred.

WILMA

Fred, he's just

FRED

Doing his job? I don't want to hear it. I'm sick of hearing these cold bureaucratic rationalizations for weaselly behavior. They always try to pit the workers against each other. Oldest trick in the book. And it sickens me that you've bought into it, Barney. Hook, line, and sinker. You're Mr. Slate's little bitch. You're the Poobah's little bitch. I used to think you had principles, you swine.

WILMA

Fred, why didn't you just pay your dues?

FRED

Oh, you've bought into it too, great. This isn't about dues, Wilma. Come on! It's about values. You know, the scales have really fallen from my eyes here today.

WILMA

What are you talking about?

FRED

I'll tell you what I'm talking about. I'm talking about all this. All of it. Everything. All this middle class stegosaurus shit. It's so hollow. It's unbearable. You all are getting wrapped up in the minor details, focusing on petty little problems, trying to get some petty little advantage all the time, meanwhile you're missing the big picture completely. Let me tell you something – I'm a big picture guy. I'm looking at the whole system. I'm the only one here who can see the forest for the trees.

BARNEY

You can't do that, Fred.

FRED

Oh can't I?

BARNEY

Actually, no. You can't.

FRED

Yeah? Who's going to stop me? You?

BARNEY

Nope.

FRED

I didn't think so. Like I say, I'm heading down to the ...

BARNEY

The Grand Poobah.

FRED

The Grand...What are you talking about?

BARNEY

Well, as duly elected Treasurer of the Royal Order of Water Buffalo, I...

BETTY

Oh Barney, you didn't...

BARNEY

I was making my report to the Grand Poobah and, as duly elected Treasurer I was honor-bound to note that a certain Fred Flintstone was delinquent in his dues...

FRED

You little son of a ...

BETTY

So Fred. Are you honestly saying if you had been offered that job you'd have turned it down?

WILMA

Ha! He was planning his life around that job this morning.

FRED

Sure, I might have made that mistake. I admit it. That's why I'm so glad Barney got the job. How does it feel, Barn? I'm clean. How do you feel?

BARNEY

I feel great, actually. Fantastic. Chance to use my brain. No more smashing big rocks into little ones like some kind of grunting buffoon.

BETTY

Barney, don't you start.

FRED

Oh, it's all right Betty. I think Barney should say exactly what he feels. So you feel great. That says a lot about you, doesn't it? You feel great entering the useless middle management class. You feel great betraying your fellow workers. You feel great betraying your best friend. You feel great taking a job you don't deserve because of family connections. What a guy!

WILMA

Give it a rest, Fred.

FRED

You know, that's another thing. Why are you always on his side? "Shut up Fred." "Give it a rest Fred." "That's enough, Fred." How about "You tell him, Fred." "Way to go, Fred." Huh? Is that too much to ask once in a while from my wife?

WILMA

Way to go, Fred.

FRED

Oh, the hell with your sarcasm. The hell with both of you. I'm going down to the Lodge.

FRED

Slate's nephew. Do you know how long I've worked on that rock pile, Barney? Do you?

BARNEY

Fifteen years.

FRED

Fifteen years. Smashing gravel. Day in, day out. Fifteen years. How long have you been there now Barn?

BARNEY

Fred, you already know exactly...

FRED

How long?!

BARNEY

Four months.

FRED

Four months.

BARNEY

Four months.

FRED

Four entire months. Just as I was saying. It's not your talent, it's not your loyalty, it's not your dedication, it's not how hard you work. It's your connections. It's your family. It's what you're born into, your breeding. In short, it's your class. More than anything else, it's your class. Congratulations, Lord Barney.

WILMA

What's all this nonsense about class and breeding? Barney grew up just like you, right here in Bedrock.

BARNEY

Don't even bother, Wilma. Fred's on a roll. You know how he gets. He's dead set on blaming me for everything, including apparently my relatives.

WOMAN

Oh, it's OK.

MAN
(cheerily)

Hey maybe I'll have time to help little Timmy with his homework before the PTA meeting! No rest for the weary in this nuthouse, eh?

WOMAN

You said a mouthful!

VOICEOVER

Headache Pills. Because it's a fucking nuthouse out there.

Spotlights out. "Pebbles" and "Bamm Bamm" go back to their places. Lights up on the scene and the play resumes.

FRED

I knew it! Nepotism! It had to be!

BETTY

Barney, you never told me that!

WILMA

It doesn't matter why you got the job, Barney.

BARNEY

I didn't want to mention it, Betty. I wanted you to believe I got the job on my own merit.

BETTY

Oh Barney. Do you think I'd care? Do you think I'm sitting here judging you?

WILMA

I'm sure you also deserved the job anyway, Barney. Maybe being Slate's nephew gave you an edge, but surely he wouldn't give you such an important job if he didn't think you could handle it.

FRED

“Just doing my job.” There’s the classic rationalization. How many cowards have hidden behind that one? I got you that job, you dog!

Dino’s barking is heard from off stage.

FRED (CONT’D)

Shut up, Dino!

BARNEY

Don’t you call me a dog, you...fat...blobbo! Yeah, you got me that job. Yeah, you got me the job at the rock pile. Yeah, I got the promotion you wanted. Can I help it if it turns out I’m Mr. Slate’s nephew?!

A shocked silence ensues.

The action freezes, lights down on the scene, two spotlights up on the front of the stage for another commercial interruption. Tinkly sound effect. Once again the actors portraying Pebbles and Bamm Bamm take their places in the spotlights and perform the commercial.

MAN

Christ, what a day.

WOMAN
(cheerily)

Oh you’re home! Better hurry up and dress for dinner, PTA meeting tonight!

MAN
(holding his head in obvious pain and rage)

Ellen I just got home DON’T RUSH ME!

Ellen rushes to the pill bottle and hands one to the desperate man, who eats it greedily.

VOICEOVER

Headache Pills. To help you cope with your hard day.

MAN

I’m real sorry, hon.

FRED

Thank you Betty. As I was saying, what's obviously really going on is that structurally, the class system remains intact. You have the laborers doing the actual work, paid as little as possible while creating all the wealth, and a privileged siphoning class of parasites getting rich while the others struggle. And then the worst class of all? The class traitors. Managers. Taken from the laboring class to watch over their former friends and count things. Small-minded and petty. Traitors, that's what they are. Selfish traitors.

BARNEY

Are you trying to say something Fred? Are you calling me a traitor?

FRED

I'm putting things in a context, Barney Boy. If you see a reflection of yourself there, I can't help it.

BARNEY

Well, if you're afraid to say something to my face...

BETTY

But Fred, don't you think people should have the right to take a better job, where they can earn more money without breaking their backs? Take better care of their families?

WILMA

Of course they do, Betty.

FRED

The right? Rights are complicated. Rights, obligations, morality, looking out for yourself versus looking out for other people – it's complicated. But yeah, let's just say people have the "right." I suppose people have the "right" to do all sorts of things. I suppose Barney had the "right" to take my television after I got him a job as a furniture reposessor.

WILMA

Oh Fred, let's not dredge up ancient history, OK?

BARNEY

I was just doing my job, Fred! We've been over this – I thought we had gotten past it.

WILMA

Evolutionary advances?

FRED

Evolutionary? Please. Let's not get into wacko pseudo-science here. I'm saying we can maybe control our fate as a species in very small, incremental steps, but in our own lifetimes, for ourselves, we don't have much room to maneuver. We're worker bees. Only real difference is people – some people – can get it in their heads that they're better than their station. They make fools of themselves by getting their heads full of fancy ideas.

BETTY

Like by trying to get a better job? I mean, are you talking about upward mobility?

BARNEY

Because we certainly have that.

WILMA

Barney's proven it. And it could have been you – or any of the other workers.

FRED

I think it's a bit more complicated than that though. Yes, this worker or that worker might become what's called petty bourgeoisie, which makes it seem like there are all kinds of possibilities, like we're living in some kind of meritocracy. I'll do you one better – the odd worker type might somehow manage to enter the owner class and control the capital, become a Mr. Slate. But it's irrelevant. An illusion – or a distraction, from what's really going on.

BARNEY

So what's really going on?

WILMA

Fred's getting a little loopy, that's what's going on.

BETTY

No no no, go on Fred. I think it's interesting.

FRED

Of course. Yes, well said Betty. The most important thing is a man's spirit. Strong. Free. Sense of manly camaraderie, between friends, among workers. Good will. Loyalty.

BETTY

Yes, I'll drink to good will and camaraderie.

WILMA

Absolutely.

They drink. Fred continues.

FRED

Equality. Justice. It's a question of values, really. One man lives selfishly, grasping at every personal advantage, elbowing others out of the way. Another man reaches for an ideal.

BARNEY

Where are you going with this, Fred?

WILMA

That's just what I was going to ask.

BETTY

Are you saying personal interest is incompatible with social responsibility? We should abandon self-interest completely? Like bees in a hive – or ants in a colony?

FRED

No, not exactly. It's interesting you mention bees and ants, though, because we're closer to them than you might think. I mean, we've got workers and royalty just like bees and ants and we're pretty much born to it.

BARNEY

Oh, I don't know about all that. Our roles aren't quite so predetermined. We can control our own fates a little more than insects I think.

FRED

Not by much. I mean, as a society, we can make little changes, little, I don't know...

FRED

Yeah. I think it's better that you got it, Barney.

BARNEY

You mean that?

FRED

I do. It fits you better, really.

BETTY

Why is that, Fred?

FRED

Well, come on, look at me. I'm working class. Can't see me putting a tie on and getting soft up in some office, telling other people what to do. Doesn't suit me. Barney, sure, he'd like it. I don't think he's cut out for the rock pile. Not built for it really. Let's face it, it's rough out there, a man's world. Takes a certain type I suppose, to handle it, a harder type. Me? I'm more of a man of the people I'd say. I like to be out there with the men, doing the actual work, seeing the product of my labor, feeling that satisfaction of honest sweat. I'd go nuts upstairs, pushing paper around, waving my fingers around to get people to do things for me. I'd feel...effete. That's the word. Like a little...well, like Barney'll be doing. I wish him luck, I really do. Give me a man's work any day.

BARNEY

More like donkey's work, on the rock pile. Stegosaurus work.

FRED

Naaaah. I like to feel the sinews of my arms moving, working. I like to know there's muscle wrapped around the bones of my legs.

BETTY

There's more to a man than muscle, Fred, don't you think?

WILMA

Well said, Betty.

BETTY

Do you need any help?

WILMA

Sure!

Betty and Wilma disappear into the kitchen momentarily, before emerging together struggling under an outrageously outsized roast that dwarfs the table they put it on. This thing should be five or six feet long, three feet high and three feet wide. It's so big that everyone has to slide their chairs back to accommodate it. They sit for a moment, trying to figure out how to deal with it. Wilma sits down in the seat behind the roast, and completely disappears behind it.

WILMA (CONT'D)

Well, this is no good.

Fred and Barney, on opposite sides of the table, rise and move the roast to a side table. Uneasily, they cooperate in slicing and serving, then retake their seats.

BETTY

Well this is nice.

BARNEY

Smells great, Wilma.

FRED

Is there ketchup?

WILMA

Right here, Fred.

They eat in silence for a short while.

FRED

You know what? I'm glad I didn't get that management job.

BETTY

Really, Fred?

FRED

Yabba dabba do.

BARNEY

Look...

FRED

No, really Barn. Congratulations. Well done. Feel good. Fantastic.

BETTY

OK. Listen, Wilma, maybe we should get going.

WILMA

No no, we're all right, this is going to be fine. We're all tired, we're hungry – let's face it, we're starving. Brontosaurus roast, anyone?

BETTY

I don't know Wilma. Are you sure you're still up for this?

WILMA

Yes. We're not going to let this silly thing deteriorate into low comedy. We're all adults here and we're going to start acting like it. Come on. We're celebrating. Let's eat. Let's.

FRED

Well I'm certainly going to.

WILMA

Come on everyone. Let's move to the table. I'll get the food. What we all need is a good hearty meal.

Fred, Barney, and Betty sit around the table as Wilma goes into the kitchen. She comes out right away with three bottles of Stoney's and hands them out to the adults, then goes back into the kitchen. Shortly she emerges with a small bowl of mushy baby food and gives it to Pebbles in her playpen. Once more she disappears into the kitchen, emerging with an enormous chicken leg, maybe three feet long, which she hands to Bamm Bamm. He bangs it on the floor a few times before beginning to gnaw at it.

BARNEY

You have to be kidding me. It was the Barney Copter! I designed it! I built it! It was mine! You came in and tried to make yourself president of the company!

FRED

The project was nowhere without me. It was the Flintstone Flyer!

WILMA

Oh, who cares? This is insane.

BETTY

All I remember is you both used it to go bowling after you promised to take me and Wilma to the opera.

WILMA

That's right. More broken promises. What else is new?

FRED

And now this. I put it for a promotion, and somehow you go in and steal it. How'd you do it this time, Barn? I mean it, I'd really like to know.

WILMA

Fred, knock it off! Please! Get out of your own bloated ego for one minute and realize the earth doesn't revolve around you!

FRED

Earth? Revolve?

WILMA

Oh, let's not start that old argument again. The point is, this is your chance to show that you're a big enough man to enjoy somebody else's success. Our good friends the Rubbles have had some good fortune. This is a celebration tonight, not a barroom brawl. Now don't you think it's time to rise above your pettiness and congratulate your best friend? Come on Fred, say something to show that you're happy for Barney and Betty.

There must be a pregnant pause here as Fred hesitates unhappily before reluctantly grumbling his signature line.

WILMA

Fred Flintstone, apologize! You apologize this instant!

FRED

Your child? He's not your child. He was mysteriously dropped on your doorstep one night after you wished and prayed for a baby like me and Wilma had. We don't even know if he's Homo Sapiens.

Betty starts crying; Wilma hugs and comforts her.

BARNEY

Flintstone, I am warning you.

FRED

Well it's true isn't it? You've always done things the easy way, haven't you? I mean, excuse me for being honest here. You've had little shortcuts. Little cheats. You've always stolen my ideas. We have a baby? Oh, you have to have one. Oh, you can't have one? Oh, you'll wish for one. And you'll get it. And that's fair?

WILMA

Fred, for the love of god...

FRED

I'm not finished. You tried to steal my helicopter.

BARNEY

What?

FRED

The Flintstone Flyer.

BARNEY

You mean the Barney Copter.

FRED

See? See? He admits it. I was in charge of that project, I was the brains of the operation. I let you help, and all of a sudden it's the Barney Copter? You cheater. You cheap little cheater.

FRED

You turncoat. You little backstabbing turncoat!

BARNEY

That's it. Grow up, Fred. I'm sorry you didn't get the job, I know it's awkward, I was hoping we could work it out, you'd be cool about it, but if you're going to go all Neanderthal on me over it...

FRED

Oh, you want Neanderthal? I'll give you Neanderthal. I'll crude-stone-tool your skull so hard you'll...

BARNEY

Watch yourself, chump, or I'll fire your primitive ass.

BETTY

Both of you stop! You're acting like a couple of children in the school yard!

WILMA

Exactly. Betty's right. Both of you calm down.

PEBBLES

School-yard! School-yard!

BAMM BAMM

Bam! Bam bam bam! Bam bam bam!

FRED

Hey, control your little freak before he breaks something.

BARNEY

Don't push me, Freddie boy.

BETTY

Don't you dare speak about our child that way.

FRED

But...

BETTY

Fred, Barney's been in an absolute state since he found out. He feels terrible.

FRED

But...

BARNEY

I'm sorry, Fred. I know you wanted that job. I want you to know I didn't apply for it. Mr. Slate came to me and offered it to me. Hey. Maybe I should've turned it down.

WILMA

But that would obviously have been ridiculous.

BETTY

But Fred, when he came home all he could talk about was you. He's been sick about it.

FRED

But...that was my job!

WILMA

I told you not to count on it, Fred. It doesn't matter. You should be glad for your friend.

FRED

This isn't real. This isn't happening.

BARNEY

I told you this was a bad idea, Wilma.

BETTY

Maybe we should go...

WILMA

No, don't be silly. We're all friends and this is good news. Fred obviously needs a little time to adjust, but he'll be fine. Won't you Fred?

FRED

Yeah?

BARNEY

Yeah. And you know what else? I don't really have to take it anymore.

FRED

Oh you don't huh?

BARNEY

No I don't.

FRED

And why is that, little man?

BARNEY

Because I'm your boss now, chump.

BETTY

Barney! Stop it!

BARNEY

No, I don't think I will.

FRED

What did you say?

BARNEY

You heard me. Chump. I got promoted. I'm your boss.

FRED

You got...

WILMA

Promoted, Fred. He was trying to tell you nicely but you wouldn't let him.

BARNEY

What?!

WILMA AND BETTY

Ewwwwww! Fred!

BARNEY

Fred, you've got it all wrong.

FRED

Oh have I?

BARNEY

Yeah, you have.

WILMA

You sure have, Fred. As usual. I am so sorry Betty.

BETTY

Oh, it's all right Wilma, it's not your fault.

WILMA

Fred, when you're finished humiliating me and making an allosaurus ass out of yourself, maybe you'd like to calm down and try getting a grip on reality. Listen to somebody else for a change. Barney has gone out of his way to come here and tell you something difficult, and the least you could do is spare us all these ridiculous histrionics.

BARNEY

Wilma, I don't know if this is the time now...

FRED

Oh, be a man for a change, Barn. Step up to the plate and tell me why you were hugging my wife.

BARNEY

You know what, Freddie? I am sick of you belittling me.

FRED

Oh, you and Barney have done a good enough job of that for me already, don't you think?

BARNEY

Now hang on a minute here people. I think I've lost the plot. What are you trying to say here, Fred?

FRED

So you deny it?

BARNEY

Deny what?

FRED

You tell me.

BARNEY

This is ridiculous. If you've got something to say, Freddie, say it.

FRED

Did you or did you not come over here with something to tell me?

BARNEY

Yes I did.

FRED

Were you or were you not in my house earlier this evening in a full embrace with my wife?

BARNEY

Um, I'd call it a hug, but yes, I was.

FRED

So go ahead, Barney boy, tell me what you came to tell me. Say it to my face if you have the nerve. Tell me you've been diddling Wilma!

FRED

You sure about that? Are you sure Barney's your friend? I'm not so sure he's mine.

WILMA

Fred, stop it.

FRED

Don't tell me what to do.

BETTY

Fred, what are you talking about? Of course Barney's your friend. Barney, say something.

BARNEY

Wilma, have you told him?

WILMA

No.

FRED

I don't need anyone to tell me what I've seen with my own eyes.

BETTY

What is it, Fred? What's the matter?

FRED

I'll tell you what's the matter, Betty, and I'm sorry to have to be the one to do it. When I came home from work today after ten hours smashing gravel on the rock pile, I found your husband and my wife here in flagrante delicto.

BETTY

In fla-granite what?

WILMA

Fred, please. I am begging you. You're making a fool of yourself.

PEBBLES

Bam bam! Bam bam!

WILMA

That's right Pebbles, that's Bamm Bamm. That's your little friend!

Fred hands the drinks around to Wilma and Betty when they're ready, but just sets down Barney's rather than hand it to him.

FRED

Yeah. Friend. A good friend is hard to find, Pebbles. A true, loyal friend who won't stab you in the back? Very, very hard to find.

BETTY

Let's drink to friendship.

WILMA

Oh, good idea Betty! To friendship!

BARNEY

I'll drink to that.

Wilma, Betty, and Barney raise their glasses and look at Fred. He stands contemptuous, shaking his head.

BETTY

Well what's the matter, Fred?

FRED

You think we're all friends here, Betty?

WILMA

Fred, don't.

BETTY

Why, of course, we are, Fred.

WILMA

No, don't you worry, everything's done, but let's just relax a minute before dinner, you've just arrived. Fred, why don't you make us some rocktails?

FRED

Yes, why don't I?

Fred mixes a pitcher of drinks and pours out four glasses as the conversation continues.

WILMA

So how's little Bamm Bamm?

BAMM BAMM

Bam! Bam! Bam bam bam!

BETTY

Well, he's fine. He's strong as a horse. To tell you the truth, though, he's kind of a handful. There are times I just can't keep up. Yesterday he knocked over the refrigerator. It landed right on top of him, too.

WILMA

Oh my god!

BETTY

Right? I was terrified. I go rushing over, screaming, and he suddenly throws the whole thing off himself and across the room. Barney was nearly crushed, it honestly just missed him.

FRED

What a shame.

BETTY

Puts a huge hole in the wall. And there's little Bamm Bamm, sitting there smiling, happy as Larry.

BAMM BAMM

Bam! Bam! Bam bam bam!

BETTY

Like the sound of what?

WILMA

Betty! How are you?

BETTY

Oh, fine, Wilma, fine, you know.

FRED

(leans over to Pebbles' ear)

Win-ner, win-ner. Da-da winner.

WILMA

(quietly, to Betty)

Congratulations – you must be so proud.

BETTY

Yes, well, we're happy, you know, but...

BARNEY

Hiya Fred.

FRED

Barney.

BETTY

Well thank you so much for inviting us over for dinner! That's so nice.

FRED

Yes. Wilma is very nice that way.

BETTY

I hope we haven't put you out though, coming by on such short notice. Is there anything I can do to help?

WOMAN
(cheerily)

Oh you're home! Better hurry up and change for dinner, PTA meeting tonight!

MAN
(holding his head in obvious pain and rage)

Ellen I just got home DON'T RUSH ME!

The woman knows just what to do: she grabs a handy bottle of Headache Pills and hands one to her husband, who greedily eats it.

VOICEOVER

Headache Pills. To help you cope with your hard day.

MAN
(all smiles now)

I'm sorry dear.

WOMAN

Oh, that's OK.

MAN
(cheerily)

Maybe I'll have time to help little Timmy with his homework before the PTA meeting!
No rest for the weary in this nuthouse, eh?

WOMAN

Tell me about it!

VOICEOVER

Headache Pills. Because it's a fucking nuthouse out there.

Spotlights out. "Pebbles" goes back and climbs into her crib, "Bamm Bamm" goes back to his parents' side. Lights up on the scene and the play resumes.

FRED

I don't think I like the sound of this.

Barney. And Betty too. I'll bet she'll be very interested to know what goes on in this house when you and Barney get a free minute.

WILMA

Fred, there's nothing going on between me and Barney! For crying out loud, don't be ridiculous!

FRED

I saw you embracing with my own eyes! You want to lie to my face?

WILMA

Barney is very concerned about something, but also, well, very happy. We were talking about it and we had a friendly hug, for Pete's sake. He came over here looking for you. He wants to talk to you about it. But it's good news, Fred. Remember that. We're celebrating. That's why they're coming over.

FRED

Celebrating what?

WILMA

Well, it's Barney's news. I think I should let him tell it.

FRED

I don't think I like the sound of this.

The Rubbles enter the Flintstones' house at that moment.

BETTY

Like the sound of what?

The action freezes, lights down on the scene, two spotlights up on the front of the stage for a commercial interruption. Some sort of tinkly sound effect would be good here. The actors portraying Pebbles and Bamm Bamm take their places in the spotlights as the characters in the advertisement, Woman and Man, respectively. No attempt at new scenery. They stand and perform, as if doing a radio spot.

MAN

Christ, what a day.

WILMA

No, Fred, it's not that, honestly. I think you can do anything you really put your mind to, I do. I just think, you know, just in case, it's good not to count on it too much. It'd be good to get it, but you don't need it. It wouldn't make you a failure not to get it.

FRED

Oh yes it would. That's exactly what it would make me. I've been there the longest. If I don't get it, they might as well say Fred Flintstone, you're a loser.

PEBBLES

Lo-ser! Lo-ser!

WILMA

Oh, did you hear that, Fred? Pebbles said a new word!

PEBBLES

Loser! Loser!

FRED

"Loser! Loser!" Great. Even my kid is joining in the chorus. Well I'm not going to lose this time. I'm going to get this promotion and things are going to get a little better around here. Our problem is there's too much struggling. We can't get our heads above water. We're chained to this crummy kind of subsistence-level, scraping-along existence. Well, I'm sick of breaking my back just to put a little brontosaurus roast on the table. By the way, where's dinner, I'm starving.

WILMA

Listen, that's what I was trying to tell you when you flew off the handle when you came in. Dinner's ready, but we're waiting for Barney and Betty.

FRED

Barney!?

WILMA

And Betty. And Bamm Bamm. They're coming over for dinner.

FRED

Oh that's just great. And I'm supposed to sit here and pretend like nothing's going on? What are you thinking? On second thought it's perfect. I've got lots to say to old

FRED

Yeah, well, I've still got one dream, and this time nobody's going to take it away from me.

WILMA

Now, Fred...

FRED

I'm going to become field manager at Slate's Gravel Pit. I've had it with smashing rocks all day like some brainless automaton. I'm moving upstairs.

WILMA

Fred, listen...

FRED

Now don't you start cutting me down, Wilma. I've got the inside track on that promotion. All the guys say so. I've been there longer than anyone else. I deserve it.

WILMA

I'm sure you do deserve it Fred, but maybe it's not the best idea to go putting all your hopes on it.

FRED

Here we go.

WILMA

I'm not trying to cut you down, Fred. I'm just saying there's always the chance you might not get that job. Don't count your pterodactyls before they hatch. You know how you get.

FRED

You see what you're doing, Wilma? What you're really saying is you don't think I'll get it. What you're really saying is you don't have faith in me. You don't think I've got what it takes. You see me as just a laborer. A dumb ox. You don't think I'm management material

FRED

He was all over you!

WILMA

He was teaching me to dance.

FRED

Anyway, the point is, we used to dream. But we never followed through. We've let our dreams die. Can't you see? We're not living anymore! Not really. We're just existing, one mediocre day at a time. It's eating away at us, Wilma. You know it and I know it.

WILMA

Oh, what did you expect, Fred? That life was going to be some fairy tale? Win the lottery? Become famous celebrities? That we'd miraculously beat the odds like the guy in that stupid movie you love so much?

FRED

Rocky.

WILMA

Yeah. But life's not like that, Fred, not for most people. Most people don't beat the odds; the odds beat them. The house always wins in the end. I'd have thought you knew that well enough by now, after you nearly lost our house down at the racetrack trying to raise money so you and Barney could open a nightclub. Some dream that was.

FRED

You've never supported me in my dreams.

WILMA

Don't you even start with me.

FRED

No. Don't you start. If there was one thing I could count on every time I had some dream, it's that you'd be there belittling it, ready to cut me down.

WILMA

Those weren't dreams, Fred. They were hare-brained schemes. They collapsed under their own weight.

WILMA

Oh Fred, don't you see? It isn't what you do. It's who you are. I didn't marry a dinosaur operator. I married a man. A man with dignity. A man with a sense of humor. A kind man. You've always been a little gruff. But inside, at the end of the day – you're just an old softie.

FRED

What's happened to us, Wilma? We were happy once, weren't we? Weren't we? It seems we've somehow just...lost our way.

WILMA

This is life, Fred. This is what it is. I'm not a little girl, dreaming of being a princess. I'm a housewife, a mother, married to a working man and living in a little house in Bedrock. This is what we've got. We're just like millions of other people out there. A modern stone-age family.

FRED

So that's it? No more dreams? Just play out our paltry suburban melodrama until one day, numb with disappointment, we finally die? Maybe pick up a few bowling trophies? Maybe become Grand Poobah of the Royal Order of Water Buffalo for a while? Remember when you wanted to learn judo, Wilma? Remember when you were learning ballroom dancing?

WILMA

I gave that up because of you.

FRED

What?

WILMA

That's right Fred. Because of your jealousy.

FRED

Me? Jealous?

WILMA

You couldn't even stand to think of me dancing with the instructor.

PEBBLES

Waaahhh! Waahhhh!

FRED

Sorry Pebbles. I'm sorry that I'm shouting and I'm sorry that I'm always working and I'm sorry that your mother's a whore!

Wilma slaps Fred hard across the face and storms out of the room.

PEBBLES

Waaahhh! Waaaahhhh!

FRED

Great. Aaaaggghhhhhhh!

Fred, in a frustrated rage, is primal screaming and punching the air violently out of sheer exploding angst. Wilma returns and stands in the doorway watching, hands on her hips, just as Fred, with a particularly big lunging punch, loses his balance and falls over the couch.

PEBBLES

Ha ha! Ha ha ha! Da-da! Ha ha!

FRED

Yeah, you got that right sweetheart. Da-da ha ha. Fred Flintstone. Big freakin' joke.

Fred strokes Pebbles' head tenderly. He still hasn't seen Wilma, who softens towards him as she watches.

WILMA

Fred.

FRED

I guess this isn't exactly what you bargained for either, huh? Married to some big lug who operates a dinosaur smashing gravel on a rock pile all day. Comes home too tired to care. Good for nothing but sitting around. I know it's been no picnic for you. When I've got any extra energy left I'm down to the Lodge, or off bowling. With Barney. You must despise me.

FRED

And with Barney Rubble! Of all people. I should've known. That little dog...

Dino the pet dinosaur is heard "barking" offstage.

FRED (CONT'D)

Shut up, Dino! Barney Rubble. Some pal. Oooh boy, when I get my hands on him. *[He begins to pace around, steps on his tender foot the wrong way.]* OUCH! DAMMIT!

WILMA

Fred, will you listen? You're being absurd.

FRED

Absurd, am I? You think I'm absurd? I'll tell you what's absurd. Busting my hump on a rock pile all day for this crap, that's absurd! Fred Flintstone, prize chump. That's what they can put on my gravestone. Biggest chump in Bedrock.

PEBBLES

Da-da! Da-da!

FRED

Not now, Pebbles! Ask for your mother. She's the one who wanted kids.

WILMA

Fred Flintstone, that is enough!

PEBBLES

Waaaaah! Waaaahhhh!

WILMA

Now look what you've done. *[She goes to soothe Pebbles.]* Only one who wanted kids, huh? *[Starts to cry.]* Oh Fred, how could you?

FRED

Well, it's true. Let's be honest with each other for a change. You know I never wanted to be tied down. Yeah, it's a cliché. Fine. So what. Kids and a mortgage. Slave to the grind. Working like a dog. And the wife who made it all happen gets bored. Now you want your cake and eat it too, huh? I'm stuck breaking my back on the rock pile while you're here getting all footloose with my great friend Barney Rubble.

FRED
(points at Pebbles)

Shut up!

Pebbles shuts up and makes a surprised/curious expression.

WILMA

Fred, what's the matter with you?

FRED

OK, you want to play it the hard way, fine. Let me spell it out for you. I just saw Barney Rubble leaving before I came in.

WILMA

You did? Did he tell you...I mean did you speak with him?

FRED

No I did not.

WILMA

Well why not?

FRED

I also saw you two hugging the daylight out of each other through the window. You two looked pretty damn cozy. Now you want to tell me what's going on?

WILMA

Oh, Fred.

FRED

Don't oh Fred me. I just came home from ten hours on a goddamn rock pile. You think that's some kind of joke? Huh? I am busting my hump out there every day for this family and I come home to find my wife in the arms of my best friend? Don't you dare oh Fred me. Don't you dare. Go ahead, tell me the whole story. How'd it start? Go on!

WILMA

Fred, stop it.

Barney and Wilma look at pebbles and laugh. Wilma gives Barney a reassuring hug.

BARNEY

Thanks, Wilma. You're the greatest.

Barney leaves. Moments later, Fred Flintstone walks in. He is not happy. He has a slight limp and he pushes straight past Wilma, offstage the other side into the kitchen.

WILMA

Fred!

Fred comes in again, holding a bottle of beer. NOTE: If at all possible, use STONEY'S beer. Fred takes a good slug from the bottle, staring at Wilma.

WILMA

Fred, what's the matter? Where have you been?

FRED

Where have I been? Maybe you want to tell me what you've been doing?

WILMA

What? Fred, what are you talking about?

FRED

Oh, I think you know.

WILMA

Know what?

FRED

I just spent ten hours smashing granite on the rock pile, and as I'm running down the road in the car on the way home, I step on some sharp flint and have to limp the rest of the way. Do you think I'm in the mood to play games?

PEBBLES

Da-da! Da-da!

BARNEY

Celebrate? Fred's going to hate me for this. Don't you get it? I'll be Fred's boss! I don't know what to say to him, I really don't. Look, Mr. Slate came to me, I didn't apply for it. I wouldn't have done that to Fred, I swear.

WILMA

Let's get one thing straight: You're not doing anything to Fred. They picked you out because you're a good man and they think you're right for the job. You and Betty are our best friends and we're happy for you. Period.

BARNEY

Yeah...

WILMA.

Period. Fred will understand, and he'll be happy for you too. We're celebrating. Listen, I've got a huge brontosaurus roast in the kitchen. It's a little burnt...

BARNEY

Just how I like it...

WILMA

And there's tons of it. Go get Betty and Bamm Bamm and bring them over. Fred'll be home soon. I'll help you break it to him. We'll celebrate.

BARNEY

Are you sure about this, Wilma?

WILMA

Positive. Barney, it's good news!

BARNEY

Well, OK. If you're sure.

WILMA

You bet I am.

PEBBLES

Cel-brate! Cel-brate!

BARNEY

I got the job. They gave it to me. I'm moving upstairs.

WILMA

Oh. I see. I mean, congratulations.

BARNEY

Wilma...

WILMA

No, really Barney, congratulations, I'm happy for you, I really am.

Wilma starts to cry. Barney moves in to hug her.

WILMA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I'm sorry...

BARNEY

It's OK, Wilma. I understand. I understand.

WILMA

I'm happy for you, I really am. I didn't mean to cry. It's just, I know how much it meant to Fred...

BARNEY

I know...

WILMA

...and money's been so tight, and we...

BARNEY

I know. Listen, I feel like a real heel.

WILMA

No, don't be ridiculous. This is great news for you and Betty. Great news for all of us. I'm being silly. I'm just tired, that's all. We should celebrate.

WILMA

Upstairs?

BARNEY

Yes. With management. That's what I wanted to talk to Fred about. When I came down, he was already punched out.

WILMA

Management? Oh my god – did he get the promotion?

BARNEY

Well, that's what I...

WILMA

He's been so excited about it. Since he hurt his back, you know, he's really wanted to get off the rock pile. All he talks about now is the management job. He's...

BARNEY

Wilma!

WILMA

What?

BARNEY

He didn't get it.

WILMA

Oh. Well. That's OK. I know he had mixed feelings anyway about moving upstairs with you still out on the rock pile, I mean, he never actually said in so many words, but...

BARNEY

I got it.

WILMA

What?

WILMA

What?!

Pebbles points to the toy on the floor. Wilma sighs, picks it up, and tosses it back into the playpen. The DOORBELL rings.

WILMA

It's open!

In walks Barney Rubble, looking troubled.

WILMA

Barney!

BARNEY
(gravely)

Hi Wilma.

WILMA

Barney, what's wrong? Has something happened? Is Betty all right? Bamm Bamm?

BARNEY

Everyone's fine, Wilma.

WILMA

You look like somebody died. Barney, where's Fred?

BARNEY

That's why I'm here. Isn't he home yet?

WILMA

No. I'm getting a little worried. Have you not seen him? Didn't you leave work together?

BARNEY

Well, no. I was in a meeting upstairs.

WILMA

(picking toy up and throwing it into the playpen)

Dammit, Pebbles, I'd swear you do this on purpose. You know Mommy's busy.

Pebbles picks the toy up again and throws it on the floor.

PEBBLES

Wah! Waaaahhhh!

WILMA

Pebbles!

Wilma bends over to pick the toy up, then stops, sniffs the air, and becomes alarmed.

WILMA (CONT'D)

Oh no! The dinner! Dammit!

She runs offstage to the kitchen. Some clatter is heard. She returns wearily and sits down. Pebbles has simmered down, but the toy is still on the floor.

WILMA (CONT'D)

Well, the brontosaurus roast is ruined. Just great. Just great.

PEBBLES

Mama... mama...

WILMA

This'll put Fred in a great mood when he gets home. If he ever gets home.

PEBBLES

Mama... mama...

WILMA

Where the hell is Fred anyway? Huh? Where's daddy, huh? Where's daddy?

PEBBLES

Mama! Mama!

BEDLAM IN BEDROCK: A FLINTSTONES TRAGEDY

John Schoneboom

CHARACTERS

Fred Flintstone, working man

Wilma Flintstone, Fred's wife

Pebbles Flintstone, Flintstones' infant daughter

Barney Rubble, Fred's best friend

Betty Rubble, Barney's wife and Wilma's best friend

Bamm Bamm Rubble, Rubbles' infant son

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, economic philosophers

Husband and Wife from TV Commercial, to be played by the same people who play

Bamm Bamm and Pebbles, respectively

Commercial Voiceover Man (all offstage, could be on tape)

The Great Gazoo (could be played by a green doll and offstage voiceover/tape)

SETTING

Flintstones' living room. If primitive stone furniture can be obtained or simulated, good; otherwise ordinary modern furniture will suffice. Fred, Wilma, Barney, and Betty should as far as possible be dressed exactly as in the cartoon. Pebbles and Bamm Bamm should be played by adults and dress in modern, preferably conservative 1960s, attire, as the actors portraying them will also be called upon to play at a moment's notice a husband and wife in two short simulated TV commercials.

Note that the humor in the play depends on everything being played absolutely straight, not campy, with an atmosphere of almost unbearable seriousness. If the audience laughs at any point, the characters should pause and look around, as if sensing indignantly that they are being laughed at by unknown persons.

At curtain, only Pebbles is onstage. She is in a playpen, playing. Kitchen sounds can be heard from offstage: the clatter of pots and pans and dishes being stacked, etc. After a minute or so, Pebbles drops a toy out of the playpen and begins to cry. Loudly. Wilma comes rushing in, harried, exasperated.

WILMA

What is it now, Pebbles?

PEBBLES

(points at toy on floor)

Wah! Waaahhhh!