

The Origins of the Species

By Riley Smith

Suggested Casting:

Blarg- Logan

Iqa- Yasna

Derk- Michael Devine

Mawa- Sriparna

Ugg- Mikey

Ona- Kaitlyn

Karl- Matthew Chagnot

Beka- Monica

Old Man Ergenerg- Corey

Scene: A group of cavemen holding a meeting around a fire. Blarg stands central, leading the discussion. Next to him stands Iqa, who has a child. Various standing and sitting around them are the pairs of Derk and Mawa (who is pregnant), Ugg and Ona, and Karl and Beka. There is also, off to one side, sleeping, Old Man Ergenerg.

Blarg- As the first of our kind, this is a very big decision. We're all agreed? Our new name is Homo Sapiens?

Everyone agrees.

Blarg- Homo Sapiens it is then.

Ugg giggles.

Blarg- What is it, Ugg?

Ugg- "Homo" sapiens.

Blarg- What's funny about that?

Ugg- I don't know yet. It just seems funny.

Blarg- Okay... Next order of business, is everybody matched with a mate? Yeah? So everyone can start procreating? Some of us already have (*winks at Iqa*)

Everyone looks at their mate and nods, mostly nicely, although Ona is a little disappointed with Ugg and Karl does not look at Beka at all.

Ona- I have a question about the mate thing...

Blarg- Sure.

Ona- Do we have to stay with the same person? Can we mate with other people?

Various agreement and disagreement noises.

Blarg- No, no. I don't think that's a good idea.

Iqa- Why not?

Blarg- Say you make a child. How do I know that the kid is mine?

Beka- What does that matter?

Ona- We're just collectively raising them anyway.

Blarg- But... which one's are mine?

Derk- I'm with Blarg on this.

Mawa- It doesn't make any sense-

Derk- No. I need to know. What if mine are the best ones? Then I made the best ones.

Mawa- (*ticked*) You made them?

Derk- (*conciliatory*) We made them.

Mawa- I could just tell you that they were yours. I mean, I would know. Based on the moon and the time since—

Derk- (*visibly upset*) I wouldn't know for sure!! Okay, let's just, stick to one mate. No sharing. It will just make things easier.

Mawa- Alright, alright.

Karl- Do we have to pair with girls?

Blarg- We already talked about this, Karl. Children don't happen when two guys pair up. It's science.

Derk- Took us too long to figure that one out.

Karl- We could run more experiments—

Blarg- Next order of business! We have to eat. Ugg, I believe you have a proposal?

Ugg- (*standing*) Uh, yes. It would seem that our two main modes of sustenance are hunting and gathering. I suggest a division of labor: half of us go hunting, and half of us stay behind, performing domestic tasks like child-rearing and cooking, and gathering of nearby fruits.

Karl- Nose goes!

Many follow suit and also put their fingers to their noses.

Ugg- No, no. I have a different idea. I think it would make sense for the men to go out hunting, and the women to stay here.

Noises of agreement or disagreement.

Ugg- It's a simple system, and I think it would be the best one.

Mawa- What if I want to go hunting?

Derk- You can't go hunting, you're super pregnant. That'd be dangerous.

Mawa- What about when I'm not pregnant?

Derk- *(snickering, proud of himself)* You're never going to not be pregnant.

Mawa- Eventually I will.

Derk- What?

Mawa- I'm going to get older.

Derk- What?!

Iqa- I'd also like to hunt. My dad was a neanderthal, so I have a lot of rage to work out.

Blarg- Hun, I think that rage could better be worked out here. Like through weaving. You could weave something to work out your aggression.

Iqa- Or I could stab a mammoth in the heart. One of those seems more satisfying.

Ugg- Are you tall enough to stab a mammoth in the heart?

Iqa- I'm tall enough to stab you—

Ugg- Woah, woah! Let's keep a cool head, here. Save that energy for weaving later.

Iqa- Oh my gods.

Blarg- I really think Ugg has a point. It's just simpler. The women should be here, since they'll either be pregnant or taking care of children—

Karl- What if I want to take care of the child? My mom was a bear, so I have a really strong maternal instinct.

Ugg- You can't. Because you'll be hunting.

Karl- With all the men, on the road, for days?

Ugg- Yeah.

Karl- Okay, I'm in. Guys hunt, girls stay at home.

Girls respond to this suggestion negatively.

Blarg- Hun, Iqa, baby. Listen. It just makes sense. We can't risk losing any of the women, but if all but one of us guys died being gored by a monstrous prehistoric behemoth, it'd be fine. So you should stay here, where it's safe. *(Iqa is still unmoved)* Let's just give it a trial run. We'll try it just one day, and see what we think, okay?

Iqa- *(sighs)* Fine.

Blarg- Great! Gentlemen, grab your weapons!

Guys do so.

Beka- What if something dangerous comes here? There are so many things out there that want to eat us, and you guys are taking all the weapons. What do we do if something comes here?

Blarg- Umm... We'll leave Old Man Ergenerg to protect you!

Group looks at the sleeping, decrepit old man. Blarg walks over to him.

Blarg- You'll be perfectly safe!

Blarg smacks Old Man Ergenerg on the back. The Old Man startles awake for a brief moment...

Old Man- Fuckin' triceratops...

... and dozes almost immediately back to sleep.

Blarg- Bye ladies!

The guys rush off happily hooting, talking about the things they're going to kill, songs they will sing, etc. The girls rearrange so they're sitting closer together. First Iqa, who is angrily weaving while keeping her child from wandering off. Then Mawa, who is having difficulty tending to the fire, as she is, in fact, super pregnant. Next Ona, who is working very hard to grind corn into meal. It is difficult, as all she has is a rock and another rock with a hole carved into it. Finally Beka, who is half-heartedly carving an arrowhead while looking in all directions, obviously scared. Time passes.

Mawa- This sucks.

Before any of the other ladies have a chance to agree, a saber-tooth tiger lunges out from the wing and tears off Beka's arm, running away with it. Much screaming and chaos commence. Iqa loses her grip on her kid, and he runs off, preferably through the audience before disappearing.

Iqa- Gods damn it!!

In the midst of this, the men return triumphant with the carcass of a small animal.

Ugg- Hello, womenfolk! Your men return triumphant!

Iqa- Blarg, you need to know what happened to us today—

Blarg- I know, I know. I'm sure you had a horribly dull time, compared to our day of danger and daring-do! *(kisses Iqa on the forehead)*

Iqa- I lost the kid.

Blarg- We'll make another. Look at what we've brought you!

Men display the small animal carcass.

Derk- We killed a rabbit for you! *(holds out arms)* We are ready to be adored.

Ona- How many of us is that supposed to feed?

Blarg- It only has enough meat for about four of us.

Ugg- And we think it should go to us.

The Women- WHAT?

Beka- I lost a FUCKING ARM today.

Ugg- And we spent today hunting, to put food on the table for us. That was hard work. We had to look around all day until we found a sleeping animal. It took literally all day.

Karl- Except when we stopped to swim!

Ugg- That was fun. So we need to keep our energy up. By eating this rabbit that we caught.

Iqa- You have no idea what we went through—

Blarg- Hon, come on. I mean. You had one job. And he ran away.

Iqa responds with rage, perhaps miming her readiness to stab Blarg.

Mawa- *(gripping Derk)* I. Am. Super. Pregnant. Give me something to eat.

Derk- Fine. You can have a bit of my share of the rabbit.

Blarg- You're such a good mate, Derk.

Derk- Thanks, Blarg. You, too.

They share a moment.

Karl- You sure we can't—

Blarg- No, Karl. No. Okay, everyone go try and procreate, and tomorrow the men will hunt again, and return even more victorious.

People start to leave.

Iqa- No, wait, everybody! Winter is going to be here in like, three days. We need to make a decision about where we're going to go next.

Derk- We already talked about it.

Iqa- What?

Ugg- Yeah, we talked about it while we were hunting today.

Ona- We were all going to decide on the next place together.

Ugg- We did! While we were hunting!

Ona- ALL OF US.

Iqa- And where, in your infinite wisdom, did you decide we should all go?

Ugg- North.

Iqa- What?

Blarg- Yes. We'll go north. Follow the mammoths.

Iqa- The mammoths have a ton of fat and fur to keep them warm in the cold northern winters. We barely have hair on our body-

Old Man Ergenerg- Speak for yourself!

Iqa- And all the fur we have is ONE GODDAMN RABBIT SKIN.

Blarg- Clothes are really kind of your job...

Iqa- WHAT?

Blarg- I'm just saying. Not really our department. Anyway, we decided. Tomorrow we start north.

The men cheer and run off, talking of all the children they are going to procreate and the songs they will sing. The women hang back.

Mawa- They think they're in charge.

Ona- We can't let them think they're in charge, right?

Beka- None of them even NOTICED my arm was missing.

Ona- They're so rude. They didn't even ASK how our day was.

Mawa- If Derk thinks he is getting ANY procreation tonight, he is MISTAKEN, let me tell you—

Iqa- Ladies, ladies. We all agree they shouldn't be in charge. But what do we do? They took all the weapons. All we have is mashed-up corn and my weaving.

Ona- We could mate with someone else.

Mawa- That'll show them.

Iqa- Who?

Mawa- Your neanderthal cousins are pretty hot.

Iqa- Gross.

Mawa- I'm just saying. I like my men slightly hunched over with prominent brows. I'm not ashamed of my natural urges.

Iqa- Wait, wait, wait wait wait wait... That's it!

Ona- What?

Iqa- Natural urges!

Ona- (*thinking she gets it*) Yes! We should mate with everyone! Regardless of if it's a man or a woman! Just have a good time!

Iqa- No, no. No. I'm thinking the opposite.

Ona- Oh no.

Iqa- Yes, let's act like we don't enjoy mating as much as they do! Then we can control things that way.

Mawa- Kind of a dirty trick.

Iqa- Hey, I'm hungry. And if Blarg wants any procreation tomorrow night, he's going to bring me a Megaladon. Or a giant sloth. I bet giant sloth taste great.

Mawa- That's brilliant. I want a herd of antelope. I'll tell him it's for the kid (*points at belly*).

Ona- Oh, I'm going to make Ugg bring me a special type of fur! So I can feel fancy.

Beka- (*getting all of their attention*) What if, instead of us having to rely on men for our wellbeing, we just told them this system didn't work for us, and we need an equal system of labor and decision making? One where everyone is free to work how they want and mate with who they want? Maybe we should start with equality and freedom of choice, on this, the eve of the birth of human race?

She waits for them to fully understand the import of her statements.

Iqa- What the fuck are you talking about, Beka?

Mawa- What the fuck is a human? We're called "homo sapiens". We voted.

Ona- I want fancy fur.

Derk pops out from backstage.

Derk- Uh, Mawa? Come on. I can't procreate by myself. I've tried. I don't like it. (*pause. Looks at ladies, they look at him*) I cry afterward. (*briefest of pauses*) Are you coming?

Mawa- Umm, Derk, I don't really feel like it tonight.

Derk- Haha. Ha. What?

Mawa- I'm just really hungry, so I don't feel like procreating.

Derk nods. Returns with all the weaponry he can carry.

Derk- I will catch you every animal on the plains.

Runs offstage with a warrior hoot.

Mawa- It worked!!

Mawa follows him offstage.

Ona- Ohhhhhh Ugg? Uggie-dear? I think procreation would be so much nicer if I had some furs...

Ona walks offstage, immediately Ugg jumps onstage with weapons.

Ugg- I will bring you the softest, most furriest of furs, even though it be on the most dangerous of animals: the prehistoric koala.

Ugg runs off hooting.

Beka- I'm worried about what this means for our descendants.

Iqa- Whatever. That'll be their problem. *(calling offstage)* Hey, Blarg!

Comes onstage.

Blarg- Yes, my mate?

Iqa- You know that really shiny rock at the top of the volcanic mountain?

Blarg- Yes?

Iqa- I want that.

Blarg- *(laughs)* I'd probably die from the volcanic sulphur emissions—

Iqa- It's that or no procreation.

Blarg pauses a moment. Walks offstage. Walks back on in full mountain climbing gear.

Blarg- I'll be back.

Leaves.

Beka- This seems wrong.

Iqa- We don't get a vote, they don't get to mate. No procreation without representation. Don't worry, Beka. Our descendants will sort it out later, but right now, the system is working.

Iqa leaves. Beka looks offstage.

Beka- Karl?

Karl wanders sleepily onstage. Yawns, stretches.

Karl- What is it, Beka?

Beka- Karl, I want you to catch me some food. Or I won't procreate with you.

Karl- That's... That's fine.

Beka- What?

Karl- Yeah, I'm okay without the whole procreating thing... with you... Good night!

Karl leaves.

Beka- Could you at least help me bandage my arm?

Karl- *(offstage)* Nope! Don't care.

Beka- Right. *(pause)* My arm hurts.

Saber-tooth tiger comes onstage, rips Beka's other arm off, leaves.

Beka- *(sighs, calls offstage toward tiger)* Do you need a mate?

BLACKOUT