

Wheel!

by Tim Lehnert

SETTING: A pitch meeting circa 3,500 BCE.

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

ZEK: A neolithic tech bro seeking investors.

NUK: A neolithic tech investor (colleague of LEK and VICTORIA).

LEK: A neolithic tech investor (colleague of NUK and VICTORIA).

VICTORIA: A neolithic tech investor (colleague of NUK and LEK).

AT RISE: NUK and LEK are looking at a piece of papyrus.

(ZEK enters)

Zek: Hey guys ... Hope I'm not late, not that I have a linear conception of time.

Nuk: Who does? ... We're Neoliths.

Lek: Best era . . . ever.

Zek: One hundred percent, beats the heck out of the early stone age.

Nuk: Yup.

Zek: *Pause.* Whew! It *is* a hot one. That fire-ball in the sky is something!

And they're out there saying we're in a period of global cooling. Yeah, *right*.

Lek: Those sun gods, always up to something.

Nuk: So, uh ...

Zek: Zek.

Nuk: Zek, right, you're here because ...?

Zek: An exciting opportunity I wanted to share. Naturally, we thought of your group first, you guys are kinda legends in tech investment so--.

Nuk: Appreciate it, but we don our bark cloaks same way as everyone else. (*A little impatiently*) Anyway ...

Zek: I'll make it quick, I know we've all got primitive tools to fashion and grain to thresh, which is why *wheel* is such a gamechanger.

Wheel is nothing short of an epoch-defining, quantum-leap in transportation technology.

Lek: That's a bold claim.

Zek: It's *more* than a tool, it's a revolutionary innovation that will up-end society's mobility paradigm.

Nuk: So ... it goes in the air?

Zek: Nope, the ground.

Lek: We *have* legs and feet, what do we need--

Zek: With wheel, you'll be able to move faster and carry more with less effort.

We see it as the ultimate disrupter: this era's agriculture. Now technically, it's a "transportation wheel with axle," but I won't lay too many heavy specs on you about harnessing force and all that; our CTO will shoot the figures over later.

Nuk: So ... how does it work?

Zek: It rotates. You can have one wheel, but you gain greater functionality with two, or even four, working together. And then you attach them to--

Lek: Whoa, whoa ... *four* wheels now. That's a lot to bite off. And *then* you have to connect them to ... what?

Zek: Maybe we're cart before horsing it, and the cart thing will make sense in due time, but we see *wheel* as forming the hub of an integrated technology and lifestyle brand, maybe tying-in with the Bronze Age, something like that.

Lek: How?

Zek: You ask tough questions; I like that, I *want* you to hold my feet to the fire, that's how we get better.

Here's where the rubber meets the road—and *roads* are just *one* of multiple synergies and knock-on effects which will spring from wheel's adoption. Short answer: this novel technology is infinitely adaptable and customizable to fit user needs.

Lek: (*Unconvinced*) Uh-huh.

Zek: You've had a look at the papyrus deck we sent over?

Nuk: That papyrus stuff is amazing.

Zek: I know, right? Every year it gets bigger. This generation, they love to draw symbols -- little birds, crazy squiggles, funny-looking people, anything and everything. But they don't do it on a wall or piece of rock; that's yesterday.

Lek: No more messing with heavy stones.

Zek: Totally, and those cumbersome chisels, forget about it. With papyrus you just roll it up and put it away, then unfurl it *whenever* and *wherever* you want, or keep it to yourself. It's all about crafting and sharing *your* narrative on *your* terms.

Listen to me drone on, you'd think I work for the papyrus people, but hey, credit where credit is due. Anyway, back to--

Nuk: Wheel.

Look, Zek, we're value investors, which means a viable product and real-world results, not inflated numbers on papyrus.

Zek: Exactly, we believe wheel is part of the same ecosystem as papyrus that is driving creativity and connection across the Neolithic world.

Lek: Hmmm.

Nuk: Zek, you mind if we bring another team member in?

Zek: By all means.

Nuk: It's our CAO.

Zek: C...?

Lek: Chief agricultural officer. She was in a meeting with our threshing group, but should be free now. Let me ping her.

(LEK moves to side of stage and shouts off-stage)

Victoria?!

(VICTORIA enters from opposite side of stage)

(Turning as VICTORIA enters) Speak of the pre-Christian devil, *there* she is.

Victoria: Sorry, we ran a little late, troubleshooting an issue with the stone-sickle supply-chain. ... Quartz bottleneck. The hell.

Nuk: *(Sympathetically)* Always something, right? . . . Victoria, this is Zek.

Victoria: Nice to meet you.

Zek: Victoria, interesting name, four syllables, and I wasn't expecting a *lady* Neolith.

Victoria: Well, here I am, and just Neolith will do, *thank-you*.

Zek: So Vicky—

Victoria: Victoria.

Zek: Of course, my bad. To bring you up to speed, I was just telling your colleagues that *wheel* has the power to be truly transformative, but to level up we need to unlock greater funding. That's why I'm here.

We're inviting *you* on our *wheel* journey; you'll be our ally and partner as we scale and build a robust go-to-market strategy.

Victoria: I hear you, Zek, but what's at the core of *wheel*? What *story* does it tell?

Zek: A simple but profound one: motion and discovery.

Try this on: *Wheel* - it moves you, or *Wheel* – *now* you're rolling.

Victoria: Can we see a prototype?

Zek: Wish I could do that. But picture this *(holds his hands out in from on him, palms facing each other, and mimics them turning)*. Right? And there's a heavy stick going across joining them, that's the axel, the less sexy part of

the concept, but absolutely crucial. Then connected to that you can have an open box or even a seat.

Victoria: I get it, but it would be nice to actually see--

Zek: I know you guys are straight arrows, but we had a problem a few moons ago with an outfit that reverse engineered one of our products. There's no patent protection, so we were left holding the bag. And that was the invention, the *bag*!

Nuk: That's not how we do business.

Zek: Understood, I'm not saying that you ... it's just that I'm not authorized at this stage to demo wheel given that--

Lek: We're going to have to sleep on it.

Zek: I understand, due diligence is vital, but if you want in at the Series A stage, you'll need to let the arrow fly pretty quick. No pressure, but we've had inquiries from some big players in Phoenicia ... we wanted to give you first crack.

Nuk: Zek, would you mind if Lek, Victoria and I had a little tête-a-tête?

Zek: Tête away. I'll go hang by that brackish body of water.

Victoria: Appreciate it.

(ZEK exits or moves to side of stage)

Lek: So? It *sounds* cool, but I don't know if it's got legs, might just be a fad or niche thing.

Nuk: We're barely nomadic anymore, so what's all this stuff about discovery and motion? We're living in the Fertile Crescent; this place is awesome, no reason to go anywhere.

Lek: Truth.

Victoria: Yeah, but with wheel, or wheels, it'd be easier to move crops, stones, hides, whatever, around the settlement. Plus, it'd be *way* faster to get to the other side of the Delta.

Nuk: Yeah, in theory, but would we ever end up going? My brother and his wife got a time-share on the Euphrates, but they're too busy to get out there.

Victoria: I think we need to get in. Remember when we had a chance to partner with that outfit making the “vessel for drinking.”

Lek: The cup! Don’t remind me!

Nuk: What a gold mine ... *those* guys don’t thatch their own huts anymore, that’s for sure.

Victoria: Then they followed that up with the ladle, right?

Lek: We just got one ourselves, you hold the handle and dip it in the water, so cool.

Victoria: Exactly. At first, we were like, *ladle*, what the heck’s that? I don’t need one of those! Now, it’s where’s the ladle? Get me the ladle. ... Can’t live without it.

Nuk: I guess you regret what you *didn’t* do more than what you did, right?

Lek: Yeah ... but FOMO is not an investment strategy, it’s gotta make sense on its merits.

Victoria: Absolutely, but I think could be deployed to leverage crop yields.

Nuk: And if you wrap in our nascent program of animal domestication, its adoption could represent a genuine inflection point.

Victoria: Zek and his group are pretty green and undercapitalized, they need us. We get in now, we could grab a major stake in the business and a couple of seats on the board. We could take this wheel thing over the finish line.

Lek: OK, let’s do it, we’ll give him a provisional go-ahead and work out the details later.

(*Addressing Victoria*) You want to take the lead?

(*Victoria nods*)

Nuk: (*Loudly*) Zek, can you come back?

(*ZEK ENTERS or moves from side of stage*)

Zek: That’s pretty cool, putting a fence around goats (*gestures offstage*). We’re always chasing animals about, it’s a nightmare.

Nuk: Our D-Team, animal domestication, they came up with that.

Zek: Wow, cool, that's why you guys are number one, always on the cutting-edge.

Lek: We try.

Zek: Anyway, whatever you decide, I appreciate you taking this meeting. I know a Neolith's time is precious; we're not a bunch of Neanderthals, right?

Victoria: *Excuse me?*

Zek: Oh, sorry, sorry, let me walk that back. Wonderful people, Neanderthals, we even had a couple interning with us back in . . . well, it was a while ago.

Actually, I'm part Neanderthal myself and the female at home, she's . . . never mind . . . I just want to say, it's an honor. So, uh . . .

Victoria: Zek, we discussed it, and there's lots to iron-out regarding our equity stake, benchmarks we expect you to meet, and our role in the business going forward, but we *do* want to partner with you in this exciting venture.

Zek: Amazing, the synergies between our teams will be incredible.

I'll circle back when the fireball has gone and returned three times and we'll put it all on papyrus, but for now ... (*Zek bumps heads with Victoria, Nuk and Lek as a gesture of celebration*).

Nuk: We're thrilled to see where *wheel* takes us.

Victoria: I've got some preliminary thoughts on agriculture and how wheel could—

Zek: Awesome, we'll get to all of that, but I want to start rolling on this project, pun totally intended, so I brought a little something with me.

I've got it hidden behind those reeds ... Hold on ...

(*ZECK EXITS and returns with a cart*)

Victoria Oh *my God!*

Lek: Let me see that!

(*LEK rolls cart*).

Nuk: Whoa, let me try!

(Nuk rolls cart)

Zek: *(taking cart)* Somebody want a ride? Victoria?

Victoria: Sure ... Why not?

*(VICTORIA gets in cart and ZEK wheels her around and offstage
as NUK and LEK follow)*

Nuk: I wanna ride!

Lek: Me too, let me try!

END

