

Cryo Conundrum

By

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Formerly Life well lived

Written by JtF as Gnome dePlume

For the Halloween challenge (c) 2024

Feat.

The FROZEN HEAD of Walt Disney

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FADE IN:

EXT. DISNEYLAND GROUNDS IN ANAHEIM, CA - DAY

Establishing shots. We then see an underground labyrinth of rooms and chambers - within the deepest -

EXT/INT. CRYO CHAMBER ONE - CONT

The FROZEN HEAD of Walt Disney regards us with glassy eyes.

Looking in, a DOCTOR talks with ALEX BENNETT, 30's.

DOCTOR  
Hardly mythical but inert.

ALEX  
Forever?

DOCTOR  
Frozen too fast. Lessons learnt.

ALEX  
You CAN revive my daughter?

DOCTOR  
We are making great advances in cryo and DNA re-engineering. A cure for XENA lies just over the horizon.

ALEX  
I'd like one last look.

INT. CRYO LAB - DAY

A POD contains frozen XENA, 14. CLOSE ON the pod's glass faceplate and Xena's bluish, vaguely contented face within.

ALEX  
So long Xena. 'Till you're better.

He affectionately touches the pod's faceplate.

DOCTOR  
Sure. She'll look a whole lot better once we've cured her.

ALEX  
Yeah. Sleep tight.

They walk out.

ALEX (O.S.)  
Funny, she always hated the cold.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Computer Control screens FLASH a malfunction warning.

INT. CRYO LAB - CONT

Cryo gasses ESCAPE from the pod. Through this HISSING fog  
CLOSE ON ICY crystals forming inside the pod's glass.

SUPER: FIFTY YEARS LATER

EXT. ROYAL GEORGE PUB - NIGHT

Driving RAIN smears the reflections of the colored signs  
and neons of a high rise futuristic metropolis. A cacophony  
of construction encroaching on a rather bland pub beneath.

INT. ROYAL GEORGE PUB - NIGHT

DANNY 25, props up the bar. XENA 20's, arrives.

DANNY

Hey Xena! You sounded upset on  
the palmcom. You OK?

XENA

Danny, thanks for coming. I'm in  
a right state.

Danny passes her a beer. Grabs his own from the bar.

DANNY

Here's your medicine. Tell me.

Danny directs her to a nearby table.

XENA

Okay. I've kept my health issues  
hidden but it's actually  
something serious.

He pulls out her chair.

DANNY

O.M.G - I'm sorry.

They sit opposite each other.

XENA

They messed up my cryo-DNA  
treatment. I went from bad to  
terminal.

DANNY  
Those butchers -

XENA  
My Dad wouldn't relent. He  
tweaked the DNA Cryo-regeneration  
algorithms and continued my  
treatment at home.  
He saved my life.

DANNY  
Fantastic! What a great Dad!

XENA  
This came at a cost -

DANNY  
Which was . . .?

XENA  
I'm not entirely human.

There's a ROAR of laughter from a nearby table - it's  
totally coincidental. Danny LEANS in close.

DANNY  
Wow! Which parts are alien?

XENA  
None that you've ever seen -

DANNY  
It's cool. I don't mind Xena.

XENA  
That's not all -

DANNY  
Crikey! What else?

XENA  
I've stopped aging. I'm immortal.

DANNY  
That's good news, surely?

XENA  
To watch all my friends and  
family grow old and die - you're  
joking!

Xena takes a long slurp of her drink.

DANNY  
Okay, that's not good.

XENA

I knew you wouldn't like this.

DANNY

So what now Xena?

XENA

I've an idea how to reverse the process - only if you want me to.

DANNY

It can't be my call -

XENA

You're the one moaning everyday about life and death out on the street.

DANNY

Which do you choose?

XENA

Life - if you'll support me.

DANNY

That's a given. Always.

He jumps up and wraps his arms around her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT/INT. GEODOME CONTAINING RAINFOREST - NIGHT

A MIST hangs over a grove of sequoia trees reaching up high inside the dome. The milky way BLAZES above. Glow-worms GLITTER in the shadows cast by the giant trees.

Xena reaches into a pocket pulling out a small DEVICE which she places against her neck artery. She WINCES at the pain of the injection. Her face, at first a TORTURED mask then relaxes.

Xena stands but sinks into a deep meditative state. Her eyes become expressionless, her breathing stills as she spreads out her arms. Her body scintillates with colors. Xena stares at her surroundings but sees nothing.

The SOUND of her heart speeds up and then gradually slows.

Her skin, LUSTROUS with diamond dew drops slowly darkens and thickens, morphing into a tree-girl of twisted ROOTS and outstretched branches.

XENA (V.O.)

A century of life is a mere fragment for the Sequoia Tree, which lives for thousands of years. To the tree, the achievements of a human lifetime are as nothing, the merest flash. Advances in biotechnology have prolonged and renewed my life. Unfortunately, I am immortal.

INT. GEODOME CONTAINING RAINFOREST - FIRST LIGHT

The early morning SUN filters through Xena's leaves and plays across her tortured and twisted form.

XENA (V.O.)

As those I love fade around me, I have taken steps to curtail this curse of longevity. Tritanium Nano-bots now course through my body, changing it. A plant-like adaptation allows these tiny messengers to function by photosynthesis.

All manner of animals and small creatures have gathered to witness this strange metamorphosis.

XENA (V.O.)

Part human, part plant and part machine, I can forego my accidental allegiance to infinity. This renewed woman must be mortal.

Xena gradually resumes human shape then opens her eyes. Her cries of pain sound other-worldly.

She falls to the ground and clings on.

XENA

This learned forest has given me the rooted foundations for a future. A network of instinctual intelligence stretching back eons now urges me forwards. The sum of all these sentient subterranean senses is extraordinary.

The animals and small creatures move closer to sniff and crawl upon her. Unafraid she welcomes their attention.

XENA  
No longer just marking time, I  
will become their instrument of  
change. Life is for living!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT/INT. DISNEYLAND GROUNDS - DAY

In disarray the theme park has long been closed. We see an  
underground labyrinth of chambers - within the deepest -

EXT/INT. CRYO CHAMBER ONE - DAY

The FROZEN HEAD of Walt Disney regards us with glassy eyes.

Looking in, a DOCTOR 70's talks with Xena, 20's.

XENA  
I know how to fix him.

DOCTOR  
It's not possible.

XENA  
This Japanese soil fungus can  
revive his damaged cell  
structures.

DOCTOR  
A symbiosis?

Xena sprinkles the soil liberally over Walt.

XENA  
It's more powerful than that.

DOCTOR  
A life giving host?

XENA  
Everything is connected.

DOCTOR  
This will work?

XENA  
Surely. Go upstairs and turn the  
Fire Station light back on.

DOCTOR  
With pleasure. Thank you Xena.

FADE OUT.