

W.W.J.D.
by
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FADE IN ON:

INT. CHRONO-BIOGENESIS HALLWAY - DAY

Steel doors CLANG closed. Heavy bolts SNAP into place.

JUDAH BENJAMIN (50s) strolls down a narrow corridor. A gold cross hangs from his neck. Metal-grey hair slicked back against his head.

His lab coat matches the pristine walls.

YOHANNAN WASSOF (30s - Syrian) struggles to keep pace at Judah's side. A borrowed lab coat bunches over a sweater that screams "Academic". Glasses on his nervous face.

They pass GUARDS with rifles. The sentinels stare straight ahead - don't meet the men's eyes.

Judah and Yohannan reach another door. Larger and thicker than before.

Judah flicks his badge against an optical sensor. The door slides open with a HISS.

Yohannan steps across the threshold. An alarm WAILS. Judah stares impatiently.

JUDAH

Use the pass.

YOHANNAN

What?

Judah nods towards Yohannan's pocket.

JUDAH

The one we gave you. In there.

YOHANNAN

Oh.

Yohannan fumbles - nearly drops his "Guest Pass" on the floor. He waves the ID.

The sirens stop instantly. Yohannan SIGHS. A wan smile from Judah.

JUDAH

Good thing you didn't drop it. Our inner defenses are on a timer. Three minute intervals.

YOHANNAN

What would have happened?

JUDAH

Just as well you don't find out.

Yohannan glances at the guards. They stand like marble statues at their posts.

He and Judah step through the door. It seals like a vault behind them.

INT. CHRONO-BIOGENESIS VESTIBULE

A small room. Exits on either side.

A pedestal is the sole furnishing. Lasers aimed at it above and below - guarding something in a case.

Yohannan steps toward it.

JUDAH

Careful. Don't trigger the alarms. Again.

The Syrian peers at what's inside.

Dirty fabric in a box. With blood stains. Yohannan blinks, surprised.

YOHANNAN

Is that - ?

JUDAH

The Shroud of Turin. In the flesh.

YOHANNAN

That's... that's amazing! I've seen pictures. But I thought it was housed at the Cathedral of St. John?

JUDAH

We called in a few favors.

YOHANNAN

What for?

JUDAH

Specimens.

Judah walks past the shroud unconcerned. He keys the door on the other side and waves to Yohannan to do the same.

The little man looks flustered.

YOHANNAN

I've followed you this far. I deserve some answers. And less riddles.

JUDAH

You're a language expert. I would think you'd enjoy a puzzle or two...

The door slides open. Yohannan pokes his head inside.

INT. CHRONO-BIOGENESIS CHAMBER

A plexi-glass booth forms a cage that fills most of the room: a sheet-covered gurney inside.

More optical beams flicker above it - weaving a complex pattern. Looks like a Pink Floyd Laser Light Show.

Judah and Yohannan step inside.

The door closes. The HUM OF MAINFRAMES is deafening.

Yohannan squints at the gurney.

There's a body on it. A skeleton with scraps of flesh.

Hyperactive busy-bee lasers swivel back and forth, suspended from the ceiling by hooks. Build muscle and organs with each pass.

Yohannan GASPS. He touches a hand to the glass.

JUDAH

Bulletproof. And air tight.

YOHANNAN

I'm a language professor. Of what use am I to you? I know nothing of biology. Or cloning.

(beat)

Whatever this is.

JUDAH

(chuckles)

Cloning? Hardly. It's more like a teleporter, if you want to use layman's terms. You know, like Star Trek. We've found we can bring people back in layers. Bodies and memories: all intact. The information's top secret. Hence, the non-disclosure contract you signed.

The sheet on the table rises. The body beneath solidifies.

JUDAH

But communicating with our subjects. That's more difficult. Which is why we need specialists such as yourself.

Baby-smooth skin gells across the body in the chamber. It begins to sprout coarse, dark hair.

It's a man in his thirties. Middle Eastern features. Naked and vulnerable under the sheet.

Judah watches the specimen's progress. Eyes intense.

JUDAH

Terminator was right about one thing. We can only transport flesh. But once we isolate the unique DNA, the rest is a matter of...

(chuckles)

...time.

YOHANNAN

The Shroud of Turin. You don't mean?

Judah nods towards the body, now fully formed.

JUDAH

I understand you're agnostic?

YOHANNAN

I... I am.

JUDAH

Good. We wouldn't want your opinion tainted by cultural bias. We have enough conflicts of interest as it is. As you may know, the Chrono Biogenesis Project is funded by religious organizations. Ones who would like to see their beliefs proved. Preferably within their lifetimes.

Judah pulls a bluetooth speaker out of his pocket, and suction-fits it to the plexiglass.

JUDAH

Science proving the Bible's teachings. Ironic, isn't it? But funding by deep pockets makes it worthwhile.

Lasers WHIR. Shut down. A bulb SNAPS on overhead.

The man on the table sits up. He stares through the glass, bewildered.

Judah TAPS the speaker, then turns to Yohannan.

JUDAH

You speak ancient Aramaic, I believe?

Yohannan stares at him. Speechless. The scientist's lips curl into a thin smile.

JUDAH

Step forward. Don't be shy. Be the first modern man to talk to God.

LATER

The test subject presses his hands against the glass, the sheet cinched around his waist.

He CHATTERS to Yohannan through the speaker (Aramaic with subtitles.)

TEST SUBJECT

Where am I? Why am I in a cage? I do not understand.

Yohannan chooses his words carefully.

YOHANNAN

You are Jesus? Born of Joseph of Nazareth?

The test subject nods.

YOHANNAN

You taught in Magdala? Detained by Pontius for blasphemy?

Another nod. Yohannan turns to Judah - disbelief mixed with rapture on his face.

YOHANNAN

(English)

This can't be real. But somehow, you've really done it! You've brought back Jesus...

(Slips into Aramaic)

The Messiah!

The test subject stops. Shakes his head. He MUMBLES to Yohannan again.

The academic's face twists. Confused.

YOHANNAN

(Aramaic with subtitles)

But... You are Jesus? Then you are the
Son of God.

The test subject speaks rapidly through the speaker.
Yohannan strains to hear. His face crumples.

YOHANNAN

(to Judah)

There's been - a misunderstanding.

JUDAH

(sharply)

What? Translate. What did he say?

YOHANNAN

He says that he taught that *all* men were
sons of God. Not him personally. It was a
- figurative expression.

The test subject smiles at Judah through the glass.
Yohannan continues.

YOHANNAN

He says he blesses you for saving him.
They were about to have him crucified.

Judah pulls a cell phone from his pocket.

JUDAH

We were wrong. Initiate disinfectant
phase.

Thick white smoke pours from ceiling vents into the
plexiglass case.

The test subject COUGHS. Pounds on a pane desperately.

YOHANNAN

What are you doing?!?

JUDAH

Correcting an unfortunate - and costly -
mistake.

YOHANNAN

No!

Yohannan launches himself at the glass, claws the seams.

The test subject slides to the floor, life draining
visibly away.

The chamber's entrance slides open. THREE GUARDS rush inside, and pry Yohannan from the case.

YOHANNAN

How can you do this? Kill a man. Kill -
Jesus?

JUDAH

A Messiah who denies his divinity? Our patrons have strong views of what the world should be. This would never fit their needs. Were anyone to learn of what we've heard here... Chaos would reign. The truth would rip the world's collective soul in two.

YOHANNAN

But - you're a man of science!

JUDAH

I'm being paid.

Two guards drag Yohannan to the door. The last lingers by Judah's side.

JUDAH

I'm sorry. We can't risk witnesses.
(to the guards)
Dispose of him. Burn all records.

Yohannan SCREAMS. The steel door slides shut in his face.

The test subject SHUDDERS.

Judah keeps vigil until the man stops breathing - then turns to the remaining guard.

JUDAH

Schedule the usual clean-up. Cancel the Mohammed project as well. One mistake's enough for this weekend.

Smoke fills the plexiglass chamber. Obfuscating a multitude of sins.

FINAL FADE OUT: