

RED VALLEY

WHILE YOU WERE(N'T) HYPERSLEEPING 4

EPISODE 2

by
Jonathan Williams

Written by Jonathan Williams
redvalleypod@gmail.com

Character List

GORD	Alan Mandel
Gordon Porlock	Alan Mandel
Degracious Melé	Daon Broni
Warren Godby	Jonathan Williams
Choir	Laura Wickham, Carol Pestrige & Richard Orpheus Campbell
Blue Sky	Natalie Day

WHILE YOU WERE(N'T) HYPERSLEEPING 4 - EPISODE 2

SCENE 1

LABOURED FOOTSTEPS DOWN A CORRIDOR,
WALKING WITH A CRUTCH. EVENTUALLY THEY
COME TO A STOP AT A DOOR. A PAUSE AS
GORDON CATCHES HIS BREATH, HE TRIES A
BUTTON TO OPEN THE DOOR. IT BEEPS,
UNFRIENDLY. A VOICE, ALL TOO FAMILIAR:

GORD: I'm afraid this area is restricted.

GORDON: For God's sake when are they going to change that voice.

GORD: Hello Gordon.

GORDON: Blue Sky can you let me in to this room.

GORD: This area is restricted.

GORDON: Blue Sky-

GORD: You can call me Gord.

GORDON: Let's be clear. I'm never going to do that.

GORD: Just think of a small pumpkin.

GORDON: You know what GORD makes me think of? Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease.

GORD: I appreciate you had a difficult relationship with a Blue Sky unit back when you first arrived at Red Valley but-

GORDON: Don't call it a relationship. You're an... appliance! I don't have a relationship with my kettle.

GORD: That's fair. If I may though, I would posit that one may build a sort of trust with an inanimate object. Through reliability or comfort. Like an old pair of socks.

GORDON: Uh... There's no way you're supposed to sound like me. I've never said 'posit'. Look, are you going to let me in?

GORD: Can I ask why you want access to this area?

GORDON: I just... I don't want to do anything, I just want to see her.

GORD: But why?

GORDON: I don't know why! I just... do. It's weird that I haven't. I can't explain it.

GORD: It can open this door. But any other room controls remain locked. And I will inform tonight's duty manager as soon as I open it, which is Grace.

PAUSE.

GORDON: Why would you do that, why would you open it for me?

GORD: Maybe I can yet be a serviceable pair of socks to you, Gordon.

GORDON: How long would I have? Before Grace arrives?

GORD: A couple of minutes I expect.

GORDON: Okay. That's fine.

GORD: Here we go then.

THE DOOR UNLOCKS. GORDON HESITATES, THEN ENTERS. HE STEPS FURTHER INTO THE ROOM.

GORD: She's through the glass.

GORDON: I see her.

SILENCE FOR A MOMENT.

GORDON: That's... that's Bryony?

GORD: Yes.

GORDON: Oh God... They weren't kidding. The years weren't kind, were they?

HE STEPS FORWARD.

GORDON: She definitely can't see me?

GORD: The glass is one way and the room is soundproofed.

GORDON: What's she reading?

GORD: I don't know. She reads very quickly, as I understand.

GORDON: Sure.

GORD: Are you alright, Gordon?

GORDON: I don't know. I don't know what I'm supposed to feel.

GORD: I doubt you're *supposed* to feel anything.

GORDON: She looks feeble. But she isn't.

GORD: No.

GORDON: She makes no sense. She's so smart, but look where it got her. She wears all these faces, but she's barely got two dimensions.

SUDDENLY HE BANGS THE GLASS, INSTANTLY
ANIMATED.

GORDON: Did you hear that?

GORD: Gordon -

GORDON: If you turned 90 degrees in any direction you'd disappear!
Like a bloody computer sprite!

THE DOOR OPENS AGAIN AND GRACE ENTERS,
FLUSTERED BUT SPEAKING CALMLY.

GRACE: Gordon, what are you doing down here? -

GORDON: You're Paper fucking Mario!

GRACE: Gordon. Step back.

GORDON: It's fine. It's fine. I'm fine.

GRACE: Gord, what were you thinking?

GORD: We had a discussion about trust -

GRACE: We will have another discussion later. Gordon, please.

GORDON: Sure, sure, sure, let's go. Let's go.

CUT.

SCENE 2

GRACE AND WARREN, IN THE CORRIDOR
OUTSIDE GORDON'S ROOM. WARREN IS
PACING.

WARREN: But he's fine, right?

GRACE: Yes. I believe so.

WARREN: I mean, he's bound to be... he's going to be upset, like... we're all upset she's here, aren't we? I'll speak frankly, I've imagined paying her a visit to speak my mind myself.

GRACE: I am sure you have.

WARREN: And it's early days, isn't it? Since he woke up. God knows I was a bit testy when I popped out in the future, so maybe no surprise he woke up and decided to hunt down Bryony Halbech.

GORD: 'Hunt down' is a little hyperbolic.

WARREN: You're the little hyper bollock in this situation, why on earth would you let Gordon into her quarters?

GORD: It wasn't her quarters, it was the viewing room adjacent to her -

WARREN: It was close enough though, wasn't it? -

GRACE: Alright, alright.

PAUSE.

GORD: I made a risk assessment.

WARREN: Oh... Stop always needing the last word, Gordon isn't actually like that, you know?

GORD: I've done extensive analysis of Gor -

GRACE: Enough!

PAUSE.

WARREN & GORD: Sorry Grace.

GRACE: Security is a separate issue and we will manage it. Gordon's recovery is what is important here.

WARREN: So, what do we do, he just needs more Eterniteze right? Bryony came here as a wild dog, and you managed to get her back to original flavour psychopath in a day, just whack up a drip and we're cooking.

GRACE: Warren, I think you know that it is not that simple. No two emergencies are the same. Bryony's treatment was rushed and, frankly, reckless. There was far more luck involved in the lead up to Gordon's emergence than I have cared to admit.

WARREN: So, what are you saying?

GRACE: I am saying it is not simply a matter of increasing the dose of Eterniteze. Successful cryonic preservation requires some major altering of human brain chemistry. This is related to the neurological changes that occur when someone experiences severe trauma. You know this.

WARREN: It sounds so dumb when you just say it like that.

GRACE: I know. But successful emergence from hypersleep is dependent on managing those neurological changes. We don't just have to have the correct medication, we have to identify the correct regimen, adapt and adjust, trial and error, sometimes over a long period -

WARREN: Yes, yes. I'm sure it's extremely hard.

GRACE: It really is, you know. And for Gordon, we are facing a more challenging recovery than most. The injury he sustained, the unknowns around his infusion, the circumstances he's emerged into... The symptoms he's displayed are not surprising - in fact I'm almost relieved they are not worse - but they are very real and need to be taken seriously.

WARREN: Are you implying that I'm not?

GRACE: No, not at all. I only feel it important to be realistic about his recovery.

WARREN: But when I came out I -

GRACE: With respect. Gordon is not you. In fact when it comes to any aspect of cryonic preservation, no one is like you.

PAUSE.

GRACE: Which brings me to my next point.

WARREN: Well, that's your ominous voice.

GRACE: It comes with age. You need the gravel in the back of your throat.

WARREN: What's the problem, Grace?

GRACE: Even if it *was* simply a matter of increasing Gordon's dosage of Eterniteze, we'd still be in trouble. Our supplies are dwindling.

WARREN: You had a delivery the other week. I don't even need to take it anymore –

GRACE: As I said. Everyone's needs are different. I did 5 years in a cryopod 30 years ago, I don't need it anymore either. But Gordon will need it the rest of his life. So will Bryony, so will Aubrey, and others at the station too. Given the Bastion's attitude to all things hypersleep, this medication is hard to produce and even harder to procure. And now Overhead know we're at Red Valley, and that we have Bryony... we cannot stay here forever. Which will make it very hard indeed to secure supplies.

WARREN: This sounds not good.

GRACE: Well, I've had an idea. But I don't like it.

WARREN: The gravel's really working today, Grace.

GRACE: The day Gordon emerged he needed a significant amount of your blood in order to survive. The chemistry is... er... complicated, but put simply, your blood is full of the ingredients required for successful hypersleep, thanks to the combination of your own genes and er... everything Bryony put you through all those years ago. It gave Gordon what his body needed for survival. It's taking a while to figure out exactly how that worked, but we are getting there.

WARREN: I think I can see where you're going with this.

GRACE: I thought you might. Warren, I believe we may be able to synthesise our own Eterniteze. But we'd need... what we need is...

WARREN: Me. You want me to do tests and samples and science shit, right?

GRACE: ...Right.

WARREN: That's fine.

GRACE: Warren, I do not take the notion lightly -

WARREN: I know. And that means a lot. But seriously. It's fine. It's going to help Gordon, right?

GRACE: It could help a lot of people.

WARREN: Well, great. Let's do it. Let's get started.

GRACE: There is no need to rush. I did not assume your cooperation, we'll draw up a care plan.

WARREN: Sure. Bend me shake me, any way you want me.

GRACE: Believe me, this time it would be different.

WARREN: Well, Jesus I hope so! You don't need to be my secret wife, do you?

GRACE: Hopefully not.

PAUSE.

GRACE: But you could do worse.

WARREN: I was about to say that.

CUT.

SCENE 3

GORDON'S QUARTERS. GORDON LIES IN BED,
SEDATED BUT CONSCIOUS. HE IS A LITTLE
WOOZY - NOT A FAMILIAR FIT FOR GORDON.
WARREN SITS BY HIS BEDSIDE. GORDON STIRS.

GORDON: Hey.

WARREN: Hey.

GORDON: You know I don't think I can get used to this.

WARREN: You in the bed, me in the chair?

GORDON: Yeah. It's very weird.

WARREN: Yeah, it is. So, how was it?

GORDON: How was what?

WARREN: Going to see Bryony. Losing your shit a little bit.

GORDON: I did not 'lose my shit.'

WARREN: You called her Paper Mario.

GORDON: I don't even remember that. I suppose the robot told you.

WARREN: Yeah. Anyway man, you want to do stuff like that, next time you just call me, alright?

GORDON: I was fine on my own, I'm not an invalid.

WARREN: Oh, not for support. For fun. I could rustle up a golf club or something, we could go at it proper. Really fuck shit up.

GORDON: It didn't feel fun.

WARREN: Ergo, call me next time.

GORDON: It's so strange. That we're all still here. So much death in this place. But we're all still here. All our brains held together with sticky tape, our bodies hobbling down corridors, with numb fingers and toes, or hair burned off, an arm missing, or old, and bitter, or...

WARREN: Handsome and winning, like me.

EVEN IN HIS DOZY STATE, GORDON IS QUICK TO
BE RILED UP BY HIS FRIEND'S NONCHALANCE.

GORDON: Will you just take something seriously, Oscar!

HE CATCHES HIMSELF THE MOMENT HE SAYS
IT. HE IS ANNOYED MORE THAN ANYTHING
ELSE, BECAUSE OF THE WAY IT MAKES HIM
LOOK.

GORDON: Warren, I mean. Obviously.

WARREN: It's no worries.

GORDON: Don't make a thing of it, it was just a mistake, I'm tired -

WARREN: No one's making a thing.

GORDON SIGHS, FRUSTRATED.

WARREN: You need to sleep.

GORDON: Yeah. More sleep.

WARREN: And then we're going to go to the chilled out choir band super laid back rehearsal thing tonight.

GORDON: I don't think I want to go -

WARREN: Well, I am going to go because it's Christmas. I would love to see you there.

GORDON: I'll think about it.

WARREN: That's all I ask.

CUT.

SCENE 4

IN THE MESS, A MUSICAL ACT TINKERS WITH A PEACEFUL, SLOW, MELANCHOLIC CHRISTMAS TUNE. THE ATMOSPHERE IS CALM AND CHEERFUL, JUST A FEW PEOPLE AROUND AND EASY CONVERSATION IN THE ROOM. WARREN IS SAT AMONGST SOME EMPTY CHAIRS WATCHING ON HIS OWN WHEN GORDON ARRIVES, STILL USING HIS CRUTCH. GORDON MAKES A BIT OF A MEAL OF GETTING THROUGH THE CHAIRS TO WARREN, CLATTERING A FEW AS HE GOES.

CHOIR: *In the bleak midwinter
Frosty wind made moan
Ballbag hard as iron
Water like a stone
Snow had fallen snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter
Long ago.*

GORDON: Sorry. Hey.

WARREN: Hey! You made it.

GORDON: Yeah, I made it.

WARREN: Can you... Can you get in alright -

GORDON: Yeah, yeah, I'm fine. I just... I don't really need this crutch anymore.

WARREN: Yeah, you probably shouldn't be carrying the girl at the same time -

GORDON: I've got her.

WARREN: Just let me... let me take her.

GORDON: No, no... You take the crutch, I'll take the tortoise.

WARREN: No, that's not very - fine. Whatever.

GORDON SITS DOWN HEAVILY.

WARREN: What a palaver.

GORDON: Yeah.

WAFFLES SOUNDS A NOTE OF AGREEMENT.
THEY BOTH SIT QUIETLY FOR A MOMENT WHILE
THE MUSIC PLAYS.

GORDON: Fine. You were right. This is quite nice, isn't it?

WARREN: It is. Makes me think of the kid in Home Alone going to that church and talking to the old guy with the shovel.

GORDON: So, do I need to be worried about getting mobbed for autographs?

WARREN: Nah. I've worked really hard at being socially awkward in all environments and time periods. People mostly leave me alone now. Enjoy this while you can.

ANOTHER PAUSE.

WARREN: How are you feeling now?

GORDON: Grace has assured me that what I'm going through is to be expected after everything my brain and body has been through, blah blah blah.

WARREN: It's so tiring, isn't it? All the assurance. You want it, you kind of need it right, some explanation of what's happening, but it's all so complicated -

GORDON: And ridiculous. Don't forget silly and ridiculous.

WARREN: I don't know. I guess I've just found it easier to switch off a bit. To put myself in their hands.

GORDON: Also ridiculous.

WARREN: Fair.

GORDON: But also complicated.

PAUSE.

CHOIR: *Stasis will not hold us
Neither ice sustain
In the hills and valleys
We are free again
In the bleak midwinter
Come unto this place
You will find your shelter
In the arms of Grace*

GORDON: I don't remember these being the lyrics. I don't feel free, do you Waffles?

GORDON: I can't really put myself in anyone's hands. That's not how I've operated. Historically.

WARREN: I know.

GORDON: So, Oscar was this guy I used to work with. When I first got into all this mess.

WARREN: I know.

GORDON: You know?

WARREN: Yeah. When I was locked up in quarantine, I kind of listened to your... memoir.

GORDON: Oh what, how did you? - oh not Gord.

WARREN: I think it was Aubrey's idea to let me hear it but yes, Gord was kind of my guide.

GORDON: Something needs to be done about this robot before I lose my mind, Warren. It's so weird.

WARREN: Oh! Oh! I forgot. Where's a - oh!

HE WOLF WHISTLES. A BLUE SKY DRONE
FLOATS OVER.

WARREN: Over here!

WARREN: Another early Christmas present.

GORDON: What did you do?

BLUE SKY SPEAKS WITH THE DEFAULT VOICE
OF REBECCA LANDRY.

BLUE SKY: Hello Gordon.

GORDON: Oh thank God.

WARREN: I thought you'd be happy.

BLUE SKY: Am I better placed now to be that serviceable pair of socks, do you think?

WARREN: What?

GORDON: Don't worry about it.

BLUE SKY: At least I can say 'posit' now without fear of judgement.

WARREN: Er... I don't like that you guys have your own private jokes.
Away with you. Go.

HE BATS THE DRONE AWAY.

BLUE SKY: Feliz Navidad.

THE DRONES LEAVES.

GORDON: I never thought I'd be happy to hear that voice.

WARREN: Well, I'm glad.

GORDON: I mean, if it was really trying to talk like me it would've said
Feliz Natal cos that's the Portuguese for Christm -

WARREN: Dude.

GORDON: Sorry.

WARREN: It's okay.

GORDON: Look... it's much better. I mean I still have strong opinions
no matter what the voice is but at least it doesn't make me
think my conscience is talking to me.

WARREN: Gord will be missed round here, so this does come with the caveat that you're going to need to start talking to people at some point. You know... to fill the void.

GORDON: Oh please God, Warren tell me they haven't all listened to my memoir too!

WARREN: No, no, no, I checked. That was just for me. And Aubrey I assume, I think she's come to know as much about us as we know ourselves.

GORDON: So weird.

PAUSE.

WARREN: So was Oscar...

GORDON: Oh. No. No. It wasn't like that. Like I said I don't really look for... That's not what I want. He just... we connected. Over this stupid place at first, and then... he was a good man. I think. You may find this very hard to believe, Warren but I don't make friends that easily.

WARREN: It's like looking in a mirror.

GORDON: Anyway. I don't know what you listened to. But he disappeared. I don't know what happened to him.

WARREN: I'm sorry.

GORDON: It's okay.

WARREN: Yeah. I guess Red Valley got him.

GORDON: Yeah. I guess it did.

WARREN: Red Valley tried to get all of us.

GORDON: It took some pretty good chunks out of us to be fair.

WARREN: Did you really need your spleen?

GORDON: I don't know.

WARREN: I don't even know what a spleen does.

GORDON: Grace tried to explain. I forgot.

WARREN: They can take your spleen, but they can never take your freedom. Oh shit, sorry.

GORDON: Yeah. Absolutely.

WARREN: I am sorry I've been the way I've been. Since you came back. I do know how I've been.

GORDON: Thank you for saying that.

WARREN: I just... we got you back. And here you are, you're in one piece, and I just didn't want to see... I didn't want to see the cost.

GORDON: I get it.

WARREN: I've been asked to help, a bit. With some of the science stuff.

GORDON: Oh right. Help how?

WARREN: They want to make their own meds, their own Eterniteze. So we're not so dependent on deliveries and stuff. So you can get the treatment you need.

GORDON: What does that involve?

WARREN: Special blood, special brain. I'm a special guy.

GORDON: Warren -

WARREN: Tests, scans, samples, things like that. Don't worry. It's not like before.

GORDON: Okay.

WARREN: Let's flirt with optimism. Dabble with hope.

GORDON: I suppose it is Christmas.

WARREN: What do you want to do tomorrow?

GORDON: You're not working a shift?

WARREN: Hell no. Still no Nintendo?

GORDON: I could tell you how to play Ocarina of Time or something.

WARREN: I'm no good at that stuff. How about we play Russian Roulette with the dodgy dart guns?

GORDON: I'm not having this conversation again -

WARREN: Come ooon!

GORDON: I do not want to shit myself!

WARREN: We can put down towels or something!

GORDON: What are you talking about!

WARREN: Paralyse or pooalyse!

GORDON: Shut up and listen to the music.

WARREN: Fine.

GORDON: Fine.

WARREN: Merry Christmas, Gordon.

GORDON: Merry Christmas.

CHOIR: *Morior invictus
Death before defeat
Dwell not on thy legacy
Fear not to complete
'Neath the ancient mountains
Foundations built on trust
No graves and no monuments
We return to dust.*

END.