

When You're Making Plans

By Cindy Rae



***For the Ron Perlman 70th Birthday Celebration, on
Treasure Chambers.***



You look forward. You look back. That's what birthdays are for. Well, that, and cake. And maybe a good excuse to crack open a good bottle of tequila.

They say "Life is what happens when you're making plans."

Well, I didn't plan on being 70.

Not that I'm AGAINST it, mind you, but I didn't "plan it." (Who the Hell plans being 70?)

See, being 70 isn't a "plan." It's just the thing you end up being after you're 69. Another thing I didn't plan on being. It just happened. You pile up enough years, and you get there. If you're lucky. It's that simple.

Which ain't to say I think we never "plan" our ages, at all. We do. I did. I think everybody does, to some extent or the other. I just didn't plan 70.

16? Oh, baby, you plan on being 16. Hell, you plan 16 a year in advance! You plan on driving, on getting your license, on tearing up a road and lying about it. ("I swear, Officer, I had no idea I was going that fast.") When you're 16, you got a plan. It's to get those keys, man, and take off. Get a girl in the passenger seat, if you're lucky. Make out with her at a drive-in, if you're really lucky.

Drive-ins. Drive in movie theaters. Big screens and bad sound, from a speaker hanging on the window. A window you cranked down, not push button. Remember that? If you do, you're probably close to 70. I hope you had a good time. I know I did. I hope you had a plan, when you were 16. You probably did.

18? 21? Sure, and sure. You got a plan for those. Get out of high school. Go to college. Get good at something. (For me, that was acting.) Be old enough to buy a beer, get a job, and make a buck. Everybody's got a plan at 18 and 21. Hell, the *plans* have plans, back then. You go through your 20s with one plan after another. Some of 'em work out. Some of 'em don't. Get a full time gig. Find a decent apartment. Get serious with a beautiful woman. Get married, maybe. You got a plan, in your 20's. You just do.

30 stares you down like a bullet, and you're always thinking about that one, trying to "make it" in the business, before you get too old. Remember when thinking 30 was old? I gotta laugh. Especially from 70. 30 ain't old. But you couldn't tell me that, at 29, at 30. Nobody could. Those years were full of plans.

Then 30 comes and you realize you're not dead from old age yet, (no matter which plans worked out, and which ones didn't) and you still gotta make a living. And if you're lucky, if you're me, something wonderful, truly wonderful, happens for you, in your 30's.

You get work. Real work. Good work. Movies, TV, plays... My 30's were amazing, man. I gotta tell ya. Time of your life. Jean-Jacques Annaud and *Beauty and the Beast* and the Golden Globes, and hours in a makeup chair, and that was crazy. Rick Baker was (and still is) a genius. He'll be 70 in December. So he's 70, too. Ish. (I wonder if he had a plan?)

But anyway, my 30's. *Beauty and the Beast*, and Linda Hamilton and Roy Dotrice, and hours spent playing Vincent, one of the best roles I ever had. And then Broadway, and babies. I don't think you 'plan' your ages much, after that. You're just plain too busy living them.

"Living" feels better than "planning." It just does. But it speeds the time up. Planning is slow. Living is fast. That's just the way it is. And that's true whether your plans work out, or don't. Mine went both ways. I bet yours did, too.

Dry spells come, (and the time slows down. In a hard, hard way.) and dry spells go. That happens a lot in this business, and I gotta tell ya, it ages you. 40 turns to 50 in the blink of an eye.

I truly don't know where the time goes. I think I spent a lot of those years with Guillermo Del Toro. And *Hell Boy*? Thanks,

man, and I mean that. But that wasn't *my* plan. That was Guy's. (Sometimes, you're part of somebody else's plan. That's okay.)

Hell Boy and a sequel. Big budgets and big box office. Not bad, if you ask me. I know Guillermo ain't complaining. And voice work? Easiest money you'll ever make, in your 50's. And 'cause it's your 50's, those kids you had in your 30's grow up on you. They do. No matter what. And because they're in their 20's now, like you were, you get to watch your *kids* making plans. Ain't that a kick?

60 ain't bad. I gotta say that. I did good work, in my late 50's and 60's. The "Career Renaissance of Ron Perlman." Hah. *Sons of Anarchy* and back to steady work. My own production company. *Wing and a Prayer*? You better believe it. I loved it. I still love it. It did one thing really well. It lost money. But damn. I made some good pictures, anyway. Time of your life, huh kid?

Kid...

So, 70. Yeah. The Big Seven-Oh. And here it is, and I got no plan, no plan at all. There's a couple movies in post production. Some things are in motion. Some things are at rest. Some things are at rest I *wish* would be in motion, but you know. Given the times.

Still working, still making calls, and still hustling for the next gig, even with the shut-down. Still putting myself out there, every way I can. Some things don't change. I guess they never will.

But did I *plan* it, at all? Did I plan any of it?

Sometimes, in a moment of great conceit, I like to think I did. You don't just "stumble into" this business, or at least I didn't. It's too much work. But you do stumble around in it, some. But yeah. Sometimes, in a moment of great conceit, I like to think I planned it. At least some of it.

And then other times, I look back at it all, I run the list of what I've done on IMBD, and I think "Not even a madman would have planned this out. Not like this." (And if you've ever read Easy Street you know I think that there were times when I was one of those, just a little bit of a madman, or close to it.) Sometimes, this business can make you crazy. Or rich. Or broke. Or famous. Or humble. Or everything in between.

Easy Street. The Hard Way.

Don't write your autobiography too early. Don't make that mistake. Don't do that crap. Because then, you go out and you live some more, and then you realize you set down your memoirs too soon. Maybe way too soon, if you're lucky. You realize there are more chapters. And they've got some good stuff in them.

I think that's been true for me. I hope it's true for everybody.

So, here comes 70. And I think I've got this life thing figured out. Maybe. Possibly. Well, sometimes.

But do I have a *plan* for it?

Only in the most loose way you can possibly imagine would you maybe call it that.

But "loose" is okay, and I guess it qualifies. In that sense, you *could* say I finally have a plan.

Or maybe just that a plan has me. Whatever.

I plan to keep hitting Twitter, and Facebook, calling out whoever's in charge, from the president on down. It needs doing. It really does.

Is that a plan?

I plan to keep working, keep putting myself out there, keep standing in front of a camera, and sometimes, behind one. It's what I do. It's what I've always done.

Is that a plan?

I plan on reading poetry to friends on their birthday, sometimes in my best Vincent voice, which I still have. I plan on loving my kids so much it hurts. I plan on speaking truth to power. I plan on playing a little golf, drinking a little tequila, hunting for good scripts, and just plain being me. (Who else I'm gonna be? Especially at this age?)

But is that a plan?

I don't think it qualifies. Not exactly. But it's what I'm gonna do.

So, "Life is what happens when you're making plans." Okay.

If that's the case, then I think that's all the time I'm gonna spend planning out my 70's. A couple minutes is all you get. I'll let other people make the plans.

But me?

I'll just live my life. See what happens. It's the thing you do, when everybody tells you you should have a plan. So, if life is what happens when you're making plans, well, I think life is also what happens when you're making... **life**.

That's fair enough. And it's probably the only deal any of us are gonna get.

Look back from 70, one day. Tell me what you see. I can tell you what I see. If you read my book, you'll see I already did. I did look back. You can, too.

And then... look forward. It's the only direction you can travel in, when you think about it.

Time of your life, kid. You better believe it.

Thanks for living it all with me, even from a distance, all of you. And thanks for what's yet to come, some day. Thanks for that. Really. Because something *is* coming, is going to happen. You know that. It always does.

Make a plan, if you want to. Nobody says you can't. But I don't think I will, not really. And that's okay, too.

Time of your life, kid. Time of your life.



*No matter where you are in your own fairy tale, I wish you life, ~
Cindy*