

"OUT OF HER SHELL"

Written by

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A COVID-19 Precaution Friendly Script

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INT. RECORDING ROOM - DAY

A well lit chair is set up to face a camera. A painting of an octopus adorns the wall.

In the chair is LANA PATEL(66) - logical and down to business in her glasses and unglamorous ponytail.

INTERVIEWER(23, peppy demeanor) is offscreen behind the camera. A stoic director is behind him.

INTERVIEWER

Okay, last question for one of the world's leading experts on mollusks. This one was sent in by a young viewer at home! How do you safely pick up a snail?

Lana lights up at the question.

LANA

(unabashedly passionate)

You have to pinch them on the sides of the shell, gently! And then pull SLOWLY-

(pantomiming)

because you don't want to damage their soft little bodies! Pulling hard can damage their tissue!

Lana makes a SQUELCH sound for effect.

An uncomfortable pause hangs in the room.

INTERVIEWER

(grossed out)

Alright! Thank you then, Lana Patel!

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

That's a wrap!

Lana appears confused that the room doesn't share her enthusiasm for snails.

INT. LANA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Most of the furniture is ugly, but she's a function-over-form kind of woman.

A Nautilus shell is mounted over the fireplace.

Two big SEA SNAILS scoot around in a little AQUARIUM on a small table next to her reclining chair.

Lana eases herself down into the chair and turns on her tabletop radio.

RADIO ADD 1

Valentines Day is here! And for a one time offer-

Lana aggressively changes the channel.

RADIO ADD 2

Buy her a necklace she'll never forget from-

LANA

No.

NEWS

Love is in the air as couples all around the world-

LANA

No, no, no!

She changes until she gets to-

RADIO ANOUNCER

You're listening to Science Today.

Lana breathes a sigh of relief. She waits patiently, cocking her ear for the voice she wants to hear.

Then, we hear BECKET BLUM (70) charming and thoughtful with a beautiful radio voice.

BECKET BLUM
Good evening listeners.

Lana melts lovingly at the sound.

She grabs some FISH FOOD and heads toward the snail aquarium.

BECKET BLUM (CONT'D)
Before the break, we were joined by economist Jane Farlow to analyze how companies profit off of the holiday of romance.

LANA
You got THAT right.

BECKET BLUM
Now we are joined by sociologist Dave Sloan to discuss the growing phenomena of online dating.

Lana carefully spoons fish food into the aquarium while she listens. The food sinks slowly to the bottom.

DAVE SLOAN
That's right Becket.

LANA
(smitten)
Becket.

BECKET BLUM
I always thought online dating was a hoax,

Lana nods cynically.

BECKET BLUM (CONT'D)

But you're telling me the studies are showing that young people can actually form meaningful relationships this way?

Lana's confused and skeptical.

DAVE SLOAN

That's right! And it's not just for young people, although they are the largest demographic who use it. Research has shown these sites can help anyone find a special someone.

Lana shoots a tempted glance towards the desktop computer across the room. Then she shakes her head.

DAVE SLOAN (CONT'D)

Would you ever try it?

Lana is amazed by what she hears.

BECKET BLUM

Well, uh... I'm not so sure. Uh, love was never really in the cards for me it seems. I'm not sure if a computer could change that.

Becket laughs.

BECKET BLUM (CONT'D)

They say my face is best for radio.

INT. LANA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY.

In Pajamas, she sets the mail down on the table, then pauses.

She glances at her desktop. She looks quickly away as if avoiding eye contact with a crush.

INT. LANA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

No longer in PJs, Lana sits on her couch.

She's having an intense staring contest with her computer across the room.

She doesn't move.

INT. LANA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

She settles in front of the little aquarium table, fish food in hand. She focuses her attention on the glass to see-

The two snails sleep in their shells, facing towards each other as if kissing.

Lana lets out a long sigh and sits still for a minute.

The house is silent and painfully empty.

The clock ticks in the kitchen.

The bed is empty.

Only her pairs of shoes clutter the doorway.

Lana finally goes to the desktop computer. There's an intensity to her face.

She pulls up a web browser and types in "online dating."

Her fingers fly across the keys.

LANA

Hair color.

(type)

Eye color.

(type, type)

Hobbies?

(type, type, type)

What am I looking for?

She pauses at this last question.

LANA (CONT'D)
(typing and smiling)
Someone with a nice voice.

She presses enter enthusiastically.

The next screen says: PLEASE UPLOAD PHOTO

Her confident smile waivers.

INT. LANA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lana heaves an old BOX of photos onto the table.

She leafs through them.

Most of them are images of her in dirty field gear, holding a snail shell in her palm and beaming at the camera.

Lana smiles. Fond memories.

She picks a recent one and heads toward her computer.

INT. LANA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLICK!

Her profile is published! Lana beams.

LANA
Alright, *Becket Blum*.

She starts to type his name, but notices the profiles of other women below hers.

Curious, she scrolls down.

Profile pictures of other women look poised and polished. One holds up a wineglass wearing a pearl necklace in a lamplit plaza. Another walks in a flowing white dress on a boat.

Lana goes to her profile and looks at her own photo. Dirt and snail slime.

Shoulders slumping, eyes draining of excitement, she powers down the computer.

INT. LANA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Lana looks at herself in the mirror. She turns her face side to side, examining it seriously.

She gives a perky smile and strikes an elegant pose, then lets that drop. That didn't look authentic at all.

She's completely lost.

INT. LANA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Depressed, she feeds the snails slowly.

RADIO ANOUNCER

You're listening to Science Today.

Not even Becket's radio show seems to cheer her up.

BECKET BLUM

Back from the break, we're joined
by children's book writer Anne
Watanabe. Welcome back Anne.

Lana catches a glimpse of her reflection in the glass of the snail tank. Even more gloomy than the mirror. She looks away.

ANNE WATANABE

Thanks!

Lana moves to turn the radio off. She's done.

BECKET BLUM

Now, you write about talking
animals in a child's garden. I just
have one question,

(chuckling)

You have any snails?

Lana's hand freezes just above the off button.

ANNE WATANABE

(laughing)

Snails?

BECKET BLUM

Yeah! Snails! They were my favorite
garden bugs as a kid. Oh, not
bugs... uh terminology.

LANA

Mollusks.

BECKET BLUM

Anyway, I saw a great TV program
last week about how to pick up a
snail.

She can't believe her ears.

BECKET BLUM (CONT'D)

Maybe I've just got snails on the
brain. Great segment by the way,
you should watch it if you get the
chance. On morning news. But what
were we talking about again?

Lana stares herself down in the tank reflection with a real
smile. She lifts her chin. She looks authentic and confident.
Beautiful.

ANNE WATANABE

Well, not everyone is a fan of
snails Becket.

Anne and Becket Chuckle.

Lana turns off the radio and rushes to her desktop. She boots it on.

She searches up Becket's profile. It's there! She takes a deep breath. Then clicks "interested."

A message pops up: "Congratulations! You have a match!"

Lana's eyes look like they're about to pop out of her skull.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Lana's dressed like a classy Jane Goodall. She's anxious.

She sits at a table for two in a corner.

Is he not coming?

Her eyes scan back and forth. Back and-

BECKET BLUM (O.S.)
Lana Patel?

His voice is even nicer in person.

Lana whirls around, wearing a confident smile.