

SHELLEY'S WORLD

By Jenny St. Angelo

A children's television host has some wise words for a broken  
hearted woman who can't move on.

INT. NYC STUDIO APARTMENT.

FRANCINE, 32, is passed out in her bed, which is in her living room, which is a disaster. Empty pizza boxes and wine bottles are stacked by the door. Francine's cell phone rings on the table next to her bed. "DO NOT ANSWER!!!!" pops up on the screen. Finally, it stops, and a voicemail notification pops up. Francine's hand emerges from the blankets and presses play.

PAUL (V.O.)

Hey Francine, it's me. Paul. It's Paul. Uh, so, I'm gonna come pick up the rest of my stuff today. I still have my key so I'll just, uh, come get it later. Ok. This is Paul. Ok.

The bedding begins to shiver and shake, erupting in a volcanic explosion of sheets. Francine lies on a now empty bed, fully dressed in last night's outfit, with last night's makeup smeared across her face. She sighs, rolls out of bed, grabs the TV remote, and turns it on. It's a live action children's show, and they are singing.

TV KIDS (V.O.)

*And that's why we'll be  
Best Friends forever.*

Francine grimaces, grabs a half-drunk Blue Gatorade and the remote.

SHELLEY (V.O.)

Hi kids! Welcome back to Shelley's World. I'm so happy to see you again! Get it? Sea you?

On the TV is SHELLEY, 30's, sitting on a bench in front of an obviously painted backdrop of the ocean. She is wearing khaki shorts, a polo shirt, goggles, and scuba fins. She looks ridiculous.

FRANCINE

(to the television)  
Shelley, girl, you look ridiculous.

SHELLEY

That's pretty bold coming from you!

Startled, Francine looks around, and sits down on the bed.

SHELLEY (CONT'D)  
 We're going to explore life in the  
 ocean. So today's job is...Marine  
 Biologist!

As she says "Marine Biologist" the words fill the screen,  
 blinking over and over again.

SHELLEY (CONT'D)  
 Now, I know what you're thinking.

FRANCINE  
 That you don't wear fins and shorts  
 at the same time?

SHELLEY  
 Considering you still look and  
 smell like a night of bad  
 decisions, you're not in any place  
 to judge.

Francine is now mostly certain the TV is talking to her.

FRANCINE  
 I...fell asleep before I could  
 shower.

SHELLEY  
 A marine biologist is a scientist  
 of the sea. *Shelley studies sea  
 shells by the sea shore!* Try saying  
 that ten times fast!

Shelley erupts in peals of manic laughter. Francine sighs. Of  
 course the TV isn't talking to her. She grabs the remote.

FRANCINE  
 Please God let there be a Fixer  
 Upper marathon on.

SHELLEY  
 C'mon Francine, don't say *Fixer  
 Upper*, you're making it too easy.

FRANCINE  
 Okay what the fuck Shelley?! Are  
 you talking to me or not?

SHELLEY  
 Fine, yes, I'm talking to you.

FRANCINE  
 Why?

SHELLEY

Because I have many important ocean facts to share with you.

The words "OCEAN FACTS" pop up on the screen, blinking over and over again.

FRANCINE

What?

SHELLEY

Did you know manatees get sad? Did you know whales have a complex communication system that changes depending on their pod? Did you know dolphins have sex for pleasure?

As she says these facts, the words "SADNESS IS NATURAL" "COMMUNICATION" and "PLEASURABLE SEX" pop up on the screen, blinking over and over.

FRANCINE

...yes.

SHELLEY

Oh. Really?

FRANCINE

Yeah. Everyone knows those things.

SHELLEY

Well, I'm a kid's show host. My audience isn't generally 32 year old women dwelling on their break up.

FRANCINE

I'm not dwelling.

SHELLEY

You're dwelling more than a hermit crab in a big new shell. [?]

FRANCINE

Why are you talking to me Shelley?

SHELLEY

Take a walk with me.

Shelley gets up from her bench and waddles over to a tiki bar. A very handsome man, HECTOR, is serving drinks. He hands Shelley a cocktail in a coconut and winks.

SHELLEY (CONT'D)  
Thanks Hector!

She tips him. The words "TIP YOUR BARTENDER!" appear on the screen.

FRANCINE  
I could go for one of those.

SHELLEY  
No, you couldn't!

FRANCINE  
Because I've been drinking too much?

SHELLEY  
Because you're in New York and we shoot in LA! And, yes, because you've been drinking too much.

FRANCINE  
I'm sad Shelley.

SHELLEY  
Breakups are icky. They make your insides feel bad.

She holds up a smiling emoji on a stick. She flips it over and it's Edvard Munch's "The Scream".

SHELLEY (CONT'D)  
Did you know some turtles can live to be over 150 years old?

FRANCINE  
Yes.

SHELLEY  
Jesus, you know your marine facts. Well, you don't have 150 years! Most humans only live to their 80's.

"LIFE IS FLEETING AND YOU ARE BUT A SPECK OF DUST ON A ROCK FLYING THROUGH SPACE" pops up on the screen.

FRANCINE  
But, I was completely blindsided. I thought he was the one. I thought he was my penguin Shelley.

SHELLEY

I know you did. But if you're honest with yourself, it was over months, maybe even years ago, and you and Paul just clung to each other, numbing yourselves to the complete disfunction of your relationship so you wouldn't have to face the terrifying reality of being single in your 30's until it got so bad that something, *anything* was better than holding on to the lie for one more single fucking day.

FRANCINE

Oh. Wow.

SHELLEY

Come on Francine. You are a smart, interesting, good person. You will be happy again.

The words "YOU WILL BE HAPPY AGAIN" pop up on the screen.

FRANCINE

Do you really think so?

SHELLEY

I wouldn't lie to you. Plus I can't; this is an educational program.

FRANCINE

What do I do?

SHELLEY

Go jump in the ocean. Go get lost for a while. Call your mom and tell her how sad you are. Throw away the pizza boxes. Recycle the wine bottles.

The word "RECYCLE" pops up on the screen.

SHELLEY (CONT'D)

Or just start with taking a shower. Besides, there are plenty of fish.....in the sea.

FRANCINE

Oh Jesus. Ok.

Francine walks to the bathroom, Shelley watches her go.

INT. SHOWER. DAY.

Francine lets the water run down her face, soaking in it. In the background we hear:

SHELLEY (V.O.)

Kids, the ocean is home to a lot of very different animals. From the giant blue whale down to the teeny tiny microorganisms that are so small you can't even see. Every critter in that biosphere depends on their neighbor, but each critter is unique in it's own way. It's a whole exciting world down there. Let's take a look!

Francine reaches for a loofa, takes a deep breath, and begins to scrub.

BLACK OUT