

Little Green Light

By

Mike Pearl

BLACK.

SOFIA

(V.O.)

Lane, I thought we were finished with this. Look, I know how much she meant to you, and I know how tough it is to forget something like that. But she didn't leave.

ECU of the computer screen. Most of it is a heavily pixilated mess. Bright and dark at a moment's notice, the little squares connotate movement. Soon we can make out:

The corner of lips, curled upwards in a smile.

SOFIA

(V.O.)

She didn't just run away. You know that. It's been years, sweetheart.

Hair, blowing in the sunshine.

SOFIA

(V.O.)

And it's not all bad. If she hadn't died we wouldn't be together.

An Eye, unblinking.

LANE

(V.O.)

Cologne. She used to wear cologne.

SOFIA

(V.O.)

What? Lane? Lane!

INT. LANE'S APARTMENT-LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

CUT TO a small web camera built in to the upper rim of a laptop. Next to the lens, a little green light flickers to life.

SOFIA

(V.O.)

Lane, I'm talking to you!

LANE (early 20s), sits up with a start. Handsome and distant but ragged in stained undershirt and sweatpants, he is seated at a chair in front of a computer desk. On top of the desk lies only a laptop at which he stares intently.

SOFIA
(O.S.)
For God's sake, Lane!

Lane snaps back into focus and glances through the window to SOFIA in the kitchen (also early 20s). She's dressed to kill, with a dish in one hand and a sponge in the other.

SOFIA
You know-

The click-clack of high heels follows her out as she exits the kitchen.

SOFIA
-with you I can never tell if I'm getting dressed up to go dancing or to a gravestone. You buy her more flowers than you do me, I know that much.

LANE
Sofia, that's not fair.

SOFIA
Yeah, well neither is this.

She gestures to her dress. Beat. Behind Lane, we can clearly see that his wallpaper is a picture of him and Sofia together, late night Downtown. Sofia sees it, and sighing, pulls up a chair. She sits.

SOFIA
Do you remember, when we started dating? You used to be so wonderful. All smiles and...

She chuckles.

SOFIA
...hands. I've never seen you this preoccupied with her before. What's wrong?

LANE
I can smell her.

SOFIA
What?

LANE
I can smell cologne.

SOFIA
Your ex...used to wear cologne?

LANE
She said she hated fruity smells.
Attracted too many flies and pigs.
Cologne was more bold. Scared off
the guys she didn't want.

SOFIA
You really found that attractive?

Lane smiles and shrugs.

SOFIA
Okay. And so you smell cologne?

LANE
Yeah.

SOFIA
Here.

LANE
Yeah.

SOFIA
Tell me about her.

LANE
You want to know about my
ex-girlfriend?

SOFIA
You've never talked about her,
before. Maybe it's time you got her
off your chest. Plus, it's not
exactly like she's competition.

LANE
Alright. I loved her a lot, or used
to. She was sweet, kind. Weird as
all hell.

SOFIA
I gathered that.

LANE
Yeah, she loved to do strange stuff
like that. Wear cologne, go to the
beach in a snowstorm...

Beat.

SOFIA
Is that it?

LANE
Well, yeah.

SOFIA
Okay. So we have kind, sweet, loves
to smell like a dude. I can do all
that.

LANE
Yeah.

SOFIA
Well, except for the last part.

She pulls in close...

...and a cellphone rings. Lane and Sofia freeze, neither
wanting to break the connection. And then:

SOFIA
I've got to-

LANE
I know. It's okay.

SOFIA
Good boy. Save your strength.

She gets off of his lap, and crosses back into-

INT. LANE'S APARTMENT-KITCHEN-NIGHT

-the kitchen. On top of the counter is her purse. She pulls
her cell out, and stops. Looks at Lane through the window.
Eyes glazed over, he's off in the distance again. Looking
down at her purse, Sofia silently pulls out a bottle of
perfume.

INT. LANE'S APARTMENT-LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

Lane, still in la-la-land:

SOFIA
(O.S.)
Back in a minute!

He smiles, shakes his head, turns back to the computer and
opens it up again. The initial glare from the screen
subsides to:

A picture of a small black bottle of cologne. Whatever label was on the bottle has been ripped off, leaving the occasional glue mark. Instead, there are four words which look like they were written in whiteout:

The Bitch In Black.

LANE

Okay...

Lane moves his cursor and clicks his mouse. He's only met with an alert sound. He tries again, and receives another alert sound. He hits a key and receives a third.

LANE

That's not right...

Soon the alert sound start playing one after another, forming a heartbeat.

LANE

Definitely not right.

The heartbeats continue until-

Sofia reenters the apartment, finishing her call as she walks.

SOFIA

(giggling)

No, thank you. Okay. Bye.

She gives Lane a once-over.

LANE

Who were you talking to?

SOFIA

Nobody. Just a friend. Am I going to have to bathe you?

LANE

Sofia, look at this.

SOFIA

Is it on the computer?

He nods.

SOFIA

Fine.

On that, he opens up the laptop to see...

A still image of his EX (20s).

LANE

I swear I didn't pull that up.
There was this weird thing with the
cologne and a sound and it was
getting faster and...

SOFIA

"The Bitch in Black". Is that a
band? Are they any good?

LANE

You can't see that?

SOFIA

That you replaced our picture? Yes,
I can.

LANE

I didn't mean to, it just kind
of...popped up there.

EX

Hey, baby.

SOFIA

Oh yeah? How?

EX

I miss you, I never get to see you
anymore. I know you just left, but
you're always gone,
always...working. Our first
apartment, and I don't even get to
see you anymore.

LANE

Our apartment.

SOFIA

Not this shithole.

Lane shushes her.

EX

I miss you! Remember the night
where it snowed and we went to the
beach? We made snowballs out of
sand. I still have the bruises. I
can't stop thinking about it. No
matter where I am, no matter what
I'm doing, I'm always back on the
beach with you...

LANE
You can't hear her?

SOFIA
Who? Your computer?

LANE
No, it's her. She's talking to me...it's an old video...

SOFIA
Oh, her? Come on, Lane, we were so close! Do you have any idea how many people are expecting us?
(Under Her Breath)
Expecting me?

EX
The bitch in the black dress needs to leave, Lane.

LANE
Bitch? Her?

SOFIA
Excuse me? No.

Sofia slams the computer shut.

SOFIA
I've been patient tonight. I got all dressed up, did all the cooking and cleaning, and now my boyfriend's computer ex-girlfriend is calling me a bitch.

LANE
But-

SOFIA
Lane, look at me. You're a man, not a boy. You don't need that toy anymore. I'm asking you, please. Walk away.

Lane looks up, and sees that the computer has returned to normal, sans the wallpaper. Sofia looks hard at him, she knows she's lost. Her cellphone rings. Lane looks back at her. Nods his head, gives a short smile.

Sofia grabs the phone, puts it on silent, then walks back to Lane.

SOFIA

You want a computer? Here, look.
You and me. In the park. In the
rain. In the ocean. What makes me
so different from her? It's all
just power, and circuitry, and
memories, but I'm here. I'm
actually here. Please.

LANE

Okay.

SOFIA

Okay?

LANE

Yeah. I'll go get ready.

SOFIA

You promise?

LANE

Watch me.

SOFIA

Can you hurry it up? We should've
left, like, an hour ago!

And with that, Lane gets out of his chair, and walks into
his room. Sofia smiles, but her smile soon drops.

SOFIA

Ugh. I deserve better than this
shit.

CUT TO:

A POV of the web cam, looking directly at Sofia.

SOFIA

What the hell does he see in this
thing?

SOFIA'S VOICE

What the hell does he see in this
thing?

Sofia glances around, looking for anyone else in the room
that could have said that.

SOFIA

Hello?

SOFIA'S VOICE
Hello?

SOFIA
Lane, is that you?

SOFIA'S VOICE
Lane, is that you?

SOFIA
This isn't funny!

SOFIA'S VOICE
This isn't funny!

SOFIA
Your computer is mocking me!

SOFIA'S VOICE
Your computer is mocking me!

She looks down at the computer, and her eyes go wide as it hits her:

SOFIA
What the fuck is wrong with this thing?

SOFIA'S VOICE
What the fuck is wrong with you?

Sofia sits upright. She leans in closer to the computer and we CUT TO:

INT. LANE'S APARTMENT-LIVING ROOM-NIGHT-EARLIER

The image of Lane and his Ex sitting on the couch, illuminated by the Television's pale glow. They're curled up together. Lane's phone rings, and he sits forward, breaking the cuddle.

EX
(in Lane's voice)
Who're you talking to?

LANE
(in Sofia's voice)
Nobody. Just a friend.

CUT TO:

INT. LANE'S APARTMENT-LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

EXIT POV SHOT: As Sofia backs away, we see that the computer has returned to normal.

Sofia slowly backs away from the computer. Lane re-enters, holding two ties of different color.

LANE
Okay, so which color works better?
The-are you alright?

SOFIA
Yeah, no, I...oh, Lane.

She pulls him towards her, away from the computer.

LANE
What's wrong?

SOFIA
Nothing. Now, here's what we're
going to do. We're staying in
tonight.

LANE
What?

SOFIA
At my place. Tomorrow, we trash
that thing-

Quickly, as if squishing a bug, she runs back to the laptop, slams it shut, and back to Lane.

SOFIA
and I take you for an upgrade.

LANE
And then?

SOFIA
Smiles and hands, baby. Upon the
condition that you don't open the
box, you don't even split the
little bit of plastic between the
flaps, for at least a week. Promise
me.

LANE
I promise.

SOFIA

Good boy. Now, I'm going to let go and when I do I want you to go back into your room and throw on the first thing you see. You can put the sweatpants back on, I don't care. But you're staying with me tonight.

She spins Lane around so his facing away from the computer. She hugs him close and peers over his shoulder at the computer...

...which is open again. But this time, there's no wallpaper. No video. It's just an image of The Ex, and she's staring directly at Sofia.

EX

GET OUT.

With a yelp, Sofia leaps off of Lane, and runs to grab her things. She accidentally forgets her cellphone.

LANE

Sofia? Sofia, what's wrong?

SOFIA

I can't stand it anymore! The whole place reeks of her!

She exits.

Dumbfounded, Lane simply stands there, towel around his waist. Sofia's purse and cellphone still rest on the table. The cellphone rings. Lane picks it up, and is about to answer it, when...

EX

Lane...

He turns to see his ex, in bed once more, looking straight at him. Slowly, he returns to his chair, and sits.

LANE

Why won't you leave me alone?

NOTE: What follows is a montage, edited together from past love notes. Starting with "I'm sorry", the scene begins to change from every word. At first, there are many videos, but the edit cuts down to fewer and fewer, until all that remains is the Ex lying in bed at "Please".

EX

Just because somebody's not around anymore doesn't mean they stop loving you. I'm sorry for the way it ended, I really am. We both did things that weren't really fair to each other. But now I'm back. And I've missed you. I know you still love me. I need you to still love me. I want to be there for you. Forever. Please don't throw me away.

Beat. Then Lane closes his eyes, takes a deep breath, and smiles.

LANE

You used to smell so good...

Shivering, Lane reaches out to the computer. With two fingers, he gingerly grabs the frame.

And next to the camera, the little green light still shines.

BLACKOUT.