

[8.21]Semi-Decent Proposal

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Written by Lori Kirkland

Directed by Katy Garretson

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The Prom Queen Returns

Jean Smart reprises her role as Lana Lenley from the episode:
[\[7.14\]](#) Big Crane on Campus.

Jean Smart's appearance during the seventh season was supposed to be a one-time occasion, but her performance garnered popular raves, as well as an Emmy award.

N.B. The producers changed the character's name from Lorna Lenley to Lana Gardner for legal reasons.

Transcript {Mike Lee}

ACT ONE

Scene One - Electronics Store

Frasier is standing in line with Niles, who is holding a box.

Niles: You sure Daphne will like this one?

Frasier: Oh, it's perfect, Niles. Look, it even says on the box,
 "for the perfect DVD viewing experience."

Niles: *[reading]* What do you suppose "multi-angle capability" means?

Frasier: *[know-it-all]* Well, it means that the remote control will
 respond from any angle.

The woman standing ahead of them (Claire) turns around.

Claire: Not to intrude, but actually it means you can see a scene
 from different camera angles.

Niles: Oh, thank you.

Frasier: Oh, I-I was just, uh, teasing him. You see, my brother's
 technologically challenged.

Claire: If you're, uh, new to DVD, you might want to rent the
 director's cut of "*Das Boot*." It's amazing - I mean,
 if you don't mind subtitles.

Frasier: Mind them? I prefer them! In fact, I-I do speak a-a bit of
 German, so in this case they might actually be a distraction!

Claire: Really?

Frasier: Mmm.

Claire: I speak German too.

Niles: You know, if anyone's technologically challenged, it's you.

Frasier: He's a bit defensive. [adds something in German]

Claire: [responds in kind; they laugh]

Niles: You thought your CD-ROM drive was a cup holder.

Claire, not wanting to get between them, walks off.

Frasier: Thanks a lot! I was interested in her.

Niles: Well, how was I supposed to know?

Frasier: I was speaking German!

Niles: Oh yes - the language of love!

[N.B. Frasier did not speak German as of [2.21], "An Affair to Forget." Perhaps he has learned since then, or that earlier episode was simply inconsistent - since it is virtually required that any serious student of Freud should read him in the original German.]

Behind Niles, Frasier sees Lana Gardner come into the store.

Frasier: Oh dear, it's Lana, it's Lana.

Niles: [excited] Where, where?

Frasier: Oh my God, no, no, just turn around, turn around! I don't know why the woman frightens me.

Niles: Well, she should frighten you, she was prom queen!

Lana and Claire spot each other.

Lana: Hi! Sorry, it took me forever to find a parking spot.
[Claire hands Lana the shopping bag she's carrying] Thanks.
[sees Frasier] Frasier!

Frasier: Lana! Uh, look Niles, it's Lana.

Niles: [giggling like a teenager] Hi, Lana.

Lana: Hi! Oh, this is my friend, Claire French. Frasier Crane, his brother Niles - we've known each other since high school.

[N.B. Clare (no "i") French is the name of a producer's assistant on "Frasier."]

Frasier: Yes, we've already met. Uh, guten tag, Claire.

Claire: I knew I'd recognized your voice. You're on the radio.

Frasier: Yes, yes, well, I'm flattered that you've listened.

Lana: You should have seen him in high school. Do you remember when you petitioned the school to have interpretive dance added to gym class? [laughs]

Frasier: Oh, is that a CD organizer? I'll be right back! [moves off]

Claire: Oh, I need one of those myself, excuse me.

She follows him.

Lana: So Niles, how's things?

She lightly caresses the DVD box, setting off fresh giggles in him.

Niles: Things are good.

Lana: Are you married now?

Niles: No, no. I was, but, uh, I'm not now. [cocksure] But I'm goin' with someone.

Clerk: Next!

Lana: Oh yes, I need to return this. [takes a portable stereo from the bag and puts it on the counter]

Clerk: Oh, it's scratched.

Lana: Well, it was like that when I bought it.

Anyone who's seen "Big Crane on Campus" can tell where this is going.

Over to Frasier and Claire, looking at CD organizers:

Frasier: You know, I'm not much of a faux walnut grain enthusiast.

Claire: Uh, Frasier, I-I wanted to ask you something. Saturday night, are you free?

Frasier: Only with a coupon. *[they laugh]* What did you have in mind?

Claire: Well, a bunch of us are throwing a surprise party for Lana, I was wondering if you could bring her.

Frasier: Well, I'm not sure I'm the right person for this. You see, last year Lana and I dated for a brief period, and, uh, well, things just didn't work out. Don't get me wrong, it's not that she isn't a lovely person-

At the counter:

Clerk: Next.

Lana: I don't give a rat's ass about your policy! Get me the manager!

Frasier: Perhaps you could ask someone else.

Claire: Come on, just ask her out as a friend. Once you're there, you can leave... *[with unmistakable suggestiveness]* Or stay.

Lana: Are you calling me a liar?! *[to the whole store]* DON'T BUY ANYTHING HERE, THE SERVICE SUCKS!

She smiles sweetly at Niles, who is beginning to understand his brother's fear.

Frasier: Well, it is her birthday.

FADE OUT

Scene Two - Apartment

Martin, wearing his glasses, has the DVD player on his lap.

Niles stands next to him.

Martin: Red wire, red wire, where do you go? Oh, here we are.

He plugs it in - immediately, they hear feedback. He yanks it out.

Martin: Uh, maybe the red wire's extra. Niles, hand me that yellow one, will you?

Niles reaches for it, but winces and clutches his arm.

Martin: What's the matter?

Niles: Oh, Daphne punched me in her sleep last night. Honestly, she is the most aggressive sleeper I have ever known.

Martin: Wow. You being a psychiatrist, you probably think she's acting out some form of repressed hostility towards you, huh?

Niles: That was the furthest thing from my mind... until now.

Martin: Oh, don't worry about it. Sounds to me like you guys are still finding your sleeping groove.

Niles: Sleeping groove?

Martin: Yeah. First six months your mother and I were together, we were like Dempsey and Tunney! *[then]* You see, Dempsey and Tunney were-

Niles: Oh Dad, please, I know a little something about vaudeville.

Daphne comes out of the hall with a DVD.

Daphne: I've got our movie.

Niles stands and strikes a mock boxing stance.

Daphne: Oh, knock it off! [*punches his arm lightly*] I told you I was sorry.

Niles: [*rubbing his arm*] It's all right. [*sees*] "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?"

Daphne: Yeah, it's got everything - action, romance, and humor. I mean, who's funnier than Roger Rabbit?

Niles: No one?

Daphne: Exactly.

Frasier comes out in his suit.

Frasier: Well, I'm off to pick up Lana.

Niles: You're oddly chipper about it.

Frasier: Well, of course I am, Niles. The sooner I deliver her to the surprise party, the sooner I can cast my net of romance over a butterfly named Claire. You know, I've got a good feeling about this one.

Niles: Oh Frasier, you always have a good feeling. You think it's going to be perfect, and then when she turns out not to be the Kierkegaard-reading, soufflé-baking, haiku-writing cellist, you're disappointed. You have to learn to settle.

Daphne: [*looks at him*] What does that mean?

Suddenly on the spot, Niles opens his mouth, but no words come out.

Frasier: Have fun, Niles.

He opens the door, just as Roz is about to knock on it.

Roz: Oh, hi!

Frasier: Roz, hi.

Roz: Where are you going?

Frasier: Oh, just to a little party.

Roz: Have a good time.

Frasier: Bye!

He leaves.

Roz: Hey, everybody. Am I too late?

Martin: No, you're perfect. We're all hooked up and ready to go.

Roz: Great. I brought "Caddyshack"! Who's funnier than that gopher?

Daphne: Roger Rabbit, that's who-

Martin: Hey, what about my movie, "The Longest Day"? It's got D-Day and the Duke!

Niles: Whoa, that is an embarrassment of riches. Each movie more appealing than the last. Well, perhaps there's a happy compromise in "The Unbearable Lightness of Being."
[*holds it up*]

Roz: Well that would be a happy compromise, except for one thing: Boring!

Martin plugs in another wire - feedback again.

Daphne: I think we should use the manual.

Martin: I don't need a manual! I need a pair of wire strippers, a hammer, and a beer. [*goes to the kitchen*]

Niles: All right, well, while he's doing that I just have to pose the question: who's funnier than Daniel Day-Lewis?

Daphne and Roz look at him.

FADE TO:

WHAT WOMEN MAY OR
MAY NOT WANT

Scene Three - Frasier's BMW

Frasier is driving Lana.

Frasier: You look lovely tonight.

Lana: Thank you, you look nice too.

Beat.

Lana: Look, I'm gonna be real direct. We're just two good friends going out for dinner, OK?

Frasier: Of course.

Lana: I only say that because you went a little heavy on the cologne, and I don't want you to have any expectations.

Frasier: I have nothing of the sort. And by the way, it's scented soap.

Lana: I mean, I only accepted because it really sounded like you could really use a night out. I don't want some awkward scene where you try to get in my pants.

Frasier: I assure you, there will be no such scene.

Lana: Good. *[pause]* Unless of course I have too much to drink, *[slightly manic laughter]* and I change my mind!

Frasier: So, how are those kids of yours doing?

Lana: Oh, my youngest is good, he's in the ninth grade. But Kirby, if he doesn't pass U.S. history he's not going to graduate.

Frasier: Well, have you considered getting a tutor?

Lana: That's a good idea. You used to do that sort of thing in high school, didn't you?

Frasier: Well, yes, yes, I-I did. And I-I would do it for Kirby in a heartbeat. It's just that I'm asked a lot, and if I helped him I'd have to do it for everyone, and I'd hate to open those floodgates. You understand.

Lana: Yeah. I mean, my ex is the one I should be asking, but that would be a waste of time.

Frasier: He doesn't help out with the kids?

Lana: No, the only kid he has time for is Kathy, his 22-year old receptionist. It's sickening. Mind if I smoke?

Frasier: Well, actually-

Lana: I'll just crack a window.

She does, and lights up.

Lana: You know, I'm glad you asked me out tonight. Tomorrow is my birthday!

Frasier: Really? Oh, happy birthday.

Lana: Hardly. That's the day Bob and Kathy have chosen to get married - in Tahiti! Some birthday.

As she gazes mournfully out the window, Frasier picks up a small can of air freshener and sprays.

Lana: All right. That's good, tonight'll get my mind off of it. Just promise me that I won't even hear the word "birthday" for the rest of the night, OK?

Frasier: Are you sure? I mean, maybe a big celebration would be the best revenge.

Lana: [*almost crying*] What am I celebrating? The fact that I'm becoming an old trot and no one's ever going to love me again? Oh God, shut up! [*stubs out her cigarette*]

Frasier makes a decision, and turns sharply.

Lana: Aren't we going to Bella Lucia?

Frasier: Well, actually I-I know this little Thai place that I think will be better.

Lana: Well, were you even going to ask me? I hate Thai food! Typical man, "I like Thai food, so she must like Thai food."

Frasier turns sharply in the other direction.

Frasier: All right, Bella Lucia it is.

Lana: I'm sorry, I'm-I'm being snappy. It's just... I-I guess I just always thought that I'd be the one who got remarried first, you know? Now everybody's just going to feel sorry for me. Oh God, I hope I don't run into anybody I know tonight! [*Frasier is worried*] And you're not a typical man. You're very thoughtful. Forgive me?

Frasier, despite himself, is charmed.

Frasier: Yes, I'm afraid I do. Oh gosh - you know, I-I do know another little Italian place that I think you might really enjoy just as much - well, what do you say?

Lana: Great, sounds great.

Frasier: OK.

Lana: You know, it's funny, as much as I hate the thought of my birthday, I'm kind of hurt that none of my friends asked me to do anything. I mean, not like I wanted a party, but, well, something would have been nice.

Frasier, unable to take anymore of this, brakes harshly and pulls over.

Lana: OK, OK, Frasier, you know what, just because I'm vulnerable doesn't mean you're getting some!

Frasier: No! Listen: fifty of your friends are sitting in Bella Lucia right now, wearing party hats and waiting to yell, "Surprise!" Do you want to go or not?

Lana: [*happy*] My friends are throwing me a surprise party?!

Frasier: That's right.

Lana: [*Carrie*] And you tell me and ruin it?!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Scene Four - Bella Lucia

Claire and the rest of Lana's friends are waiting when Lana walks in.

All: SURPRISE!

Lana: [*feigned*] Oh my god, you didn't! [*to Claire*] You, you did this!

She hugs Claire, as Frasier follows her in. Frasier follows her in.

Lana: Frasier, you tricked me, you awful thing! [*shoves him playfully*]

Frasier: It wasn't easy, you nightmarish carp!

He gives her a not-too-gentle shove back, and heads for the bar. Claire puts a tiara with "Happy Birthday" on it on Lana's head,

and gives her a drink.

Lana: Thank you - Debbie, oh hi! Bruce, hi! I am so thrilled you all came here for this! I thought a lot of you would have flown to Tahiti for the wedding of Dumbo and Bimbo!

Claire follows Frasier.

Claire: Thanks for getting her here.

Frasier: Well...

Claire: How did you manage to keep it a secret?

Frasier: Well, as a psychiatrist, discretion happens to be the cornerstone of my profession.

Claire: Ah, of course. Mine too - I'm a family therapist.

Frasier: Really? You know, I-I sensed we have a lot in common.

Claire: You know, it's funny how things turn out. I started out as a music major, studying the cello.

Frasier: You're a cellist?

Claire: Yes, but psychology is my true calling.
"Spawning fish that leave upstream
for many seasons, yet come
home to stay."

Frasier: Was that a haiku?

Claire: Yes. It's, uh, it's a habit of mine. They just sort of spill out of me.

Frasier: Well, that's amazing! [*loosens his collar*] Uh, may I get you a drink?

Claire: Yes. Uh, a martini - two olives.

Frasier: Ah. I knew it.

He turns to the bar, but turns back just to check:

Frasier: Kierkergard?

Claire: Love him.

Frasier: Don't move.

He goes to the bar.

Lana: Claire! What are you doing staring at the moon? I want you to meet Neil, the guy I told you about.

Frasier turns back from the bar with two martinis - and sees Claire talking with Lana and a handsome man in an expensive suit.

FADE TO:

Scene Five - Apartment

Martin and the gang are still sat around the living room. Roz reads a magazine, Daphne looks through the manual for the DVD player while Martin fumbles with the cables.

Martin: All right, what's it say now?

Daphne: "Alternatively, see Appendix C: Advanced Troubleshooting Specifications and You."

Martin: That's it, I quit. [*throws cables up in the air*]

Daphne: Well, what do you want to do?

Niles comes out of the kitchen with a glass of wine.

Roz: Well, I went to a party once where we each went around the room and confessed our most shameful secret - except it had to be something that you've never told anyone before.

Niles: Oh, I don't think that's something we really want to get into.

Daphne: No, sounds like fun.

Niles: OK, I'll go first. Oh, let's see - all right, well, Daphne, you might as well make your acquaintance with my dark side. In fifth grade, there was a bully, Jack Winfield, who was bothering a lot of the girls, so one day I waited for him outside of school and gave him a sound thumping.

Martin: Wasn't that the kid with rickets?

Niles: Rickets and a smart mouth.

He hangs his head, and Daphne puts a sympathetic hand on his knee.

Roz: Daphne, you go next, and think of something juicier than that.

Daphne: Oh, well, um, mine's also a youthful indiscretion. I stole a teddy bear from the shops.

Roz: Then what?

Daphne: Well, I felt guilty, so I told my parents and we brought it back. Then as a penance, I... volunteered to work at the orphanage after school.

Roz: What the hell was that?! I'd put that story on my resume! Come on, Martin, you've got to have something! Shock me!

Martin: Oh, I don't know, it's kind of personal.

Roz: That's what we're looking for.

Martin: Well, all right, but it doesn't leave this room: every time I watch "The Sound of Music"... I cry. And I don't mean a single manly tear. I mean real blubbering, girl-style. The nuns... those kids... that lonely goatherd.

Roz: These are your deep, dark secrets? This is baby stuff! "Ooh, I dropped my ice cream and I ate it!"

Daphne: OK, let's hear yours, then.

Roz: Oh, you can't handle mine. Let's play "Clue" or something.

Everyone exclaims, "Oh, come on!"

Martin: Are you kidding? We can take anything you could dish out! I was in the war, I was a cop, I even worked Vice!

Roz: I don't think so.

Martin: Well, come on, I'll tell you what: whisper it in my ear, and if I think they can handle it I'll tell them.

Roz: OK.

She cups a hand to his ear and whispers. As she does, his smile disappears, and his face goes from shock to outright horror. She finishes. He stumbles out of his chair, not even looking at Niles and Daphne, and hurries to his room, stopping only to cast one more horror-stricken glance at Roz, who triumphantly tosses her hair back.

FADE TO:

TUESDAYS WITH FRASIER

Scene Six - Bella Lucia

Lana, half in her cups, is sitting at a table with three nervous guests (the only ones left).

Lana: [mournful] Where was Kathy while I was busting my ass putting him through dental school? Oh, oh, that's right - she wasn't BORN YET!

Guest 1: Who wants more cake?

Guest 1: Not me, but I'll go with you!

They get up and leave the table. At the bar, Claire is wedged between

Neil and Frasier. She is holding a glass of red wine, but Frasier hands her another.

Frasier: Here we are. This is one of my favorites.

Claire: That's so sweet of you, but Neil just brought me a glass.

Frasier: Oh, this one. Yes, that's a delightful little wine, yes, it's very nice. But this happens to be a Bavaresco Diam, the greatest Italian red since Roberto Rossellini! *[laughs]*

With both men watching her like hawks, she uncomfortably sips one, noises "Mmm," to the gratification of Neil, and then the other, also with an "Mmm," to Frasier's delight.

Claire: Well, they both taste wonderful. I-I don't, I can't choose between them.

Frasier: Taste mine again.

Neil: You know, if you're really interested in wine, Claire, you should let me fly you down to Napa in my plane. We could spend the day exploring vineyards.

Claire: Oh, that's very sweet, but those little planes make me nervous.

Frasier: Well, how do you feel about, uh, BMW's? You see, I-I happen to know several of the proprietors of the local vineyards here, and I'd be delighted to be your tour guide.

At the other side, all the guests have now left, and Lana is alone at her table.

Claire: That sounds tempting.

Frasier: Well, allow me to enchant you further. You see, I...

He notices Lana has begun to cry.

Frasier: Claire, I'm sorry, uh, you'll have to excuse me for just a moment.

He abandons the field to Neil, and sits next to Lana.

Frasier: Hi. How you doing?

Lana: Everybody's leaving.

Frasier: Well, it's getting late.

Lana: It's 9:30! Let's face it, I drove them all off. Even I'm sick of hearing me complain about Bob.

Frasier: No, come on, it's not all that bad. I mean, listen, you know, Bob is in the past. I mean, just look at all the friends you have. I know you've had a bit of a tough time lately, but it'll end soon. You're a vibrant, attractive woman.

Lana: Thanks, Frasier. You're being awfully sweet to me. Don't think this means you're getting any.

Neil and Claire reach the door.

Neil: We're, uh, saying our goodbyes.

Frasier: Oh, you're leaving?

Claire: Uh, I have an early appointment and Neil offered to give me a ride home.

Frasier: Well, how thoughtful of him.

Claire: Happy birthday, Lana. *[they hug]* It's nice to see you again, Frasier.

Frasier: Lovely seeing you again, Claire. Neil...

They shake hands, Neil with a small, triumphant smile. They leave and Frasier sits back down.

Lana: Threw a gutter ball, huh?

Frasier: Thanks to you, you introduced them.

Lana: Well, you played it all wrong! You were hanging on her all night!

Frasier: So was he, but he left with her.

Lana: It won't last. She's probably sick of him already.

Frasier: Lot of good that does me. I blew it.

Lana: Not necessarily. I mean, I think you guys could make a great couple. In fact, I might be able to help you out there.

Frasier: Really? Would you?

Lana: Well, I *could*, but you know I get asked that all the time, and if I did it for you, then I'd have to do it for everybody, and I just don't know if I want to open those floodgates! You know what I mean?

He does - quid pro quo.

Frasier: I think I do.

Lana: Kirby needs a passing grade in history.

Frasier: I can't guarantee that.

Lana: No passing grade, no Claire.

Frasier: All right, an hour on Tuesdays.

Lana: Two hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Frasier: Two hours on Tuesdays, no Thursdays.

Lana: Three on Tuesdays.

Frasier: Done, happy birthday.

Lana: Thank you.

They shake hands.

FADE TO:

Scene Seven - Lana's House

Frasier is sitting at Lana's kitchen table with her son Kirby - a staring teenager with a punk hairstyle and a "chicks dig scam pale guys" t-shirt. Lana is cooking at the stove.

Frasier: Well, you're a very lucky young man, Kirby. You know, I loved studying U.S. history. What could be more fascinating than the rich and unfolding epic of the very soil on which we live?

Kirby: Uh, will that question be on the test?

Frasier: Doubtful. [*opens textbook*] So, which chapter are you on?

Kirby: Whoa, is that my book?

Frasier: I see - Chapter 1. [*begins reading, then*] You may want to take some notes.

Kirby: I don't have a pen. But just tell me, I'll remember it.

Lana: Oh yeah, yeah, that's gotten you far. [*they look at her*] GET OFF YOUR ASS AND GET A PEN!!!

This sends both Kirby and Frasier jumping to their feet. Kirby scrambles out of the kitchen, and Frasier goes to follow him-

Lana: No, not you, not you, not you!

END OF ACT TWO

Credits:

Electronics Store:

Niles and Daphne are standing at the counter, on which the DVD player and its cables are sitting. Deciding to try Lana's tactics, Niles rants and yells at the clerk. Daphne seems a little shocked, which is perhaps what he was hoping for.

The clerk retreats. Niles gives Daphne a "there, you see?" smile. Then the clerk comes back with the manager - a towering, barrel-chested man with cable-sized arms, which he folds across his chest. Niles decides that discretion is the better part of valor and slips out with Daphne.

[N.B. This tag was not shown when the episode was first broadcast.]

**This episode was originally broadcast as a one hour show.
Click here for [Part Two](#)**

Guest Appearances

Special Guest Stars

PATRICIA CLARKSON as Claire
JEAN SMART as Lana

Guest Starring

J. PAUL BOEHMER as Neil
BRIAN KLUGMAN as Kirby
IRENE WHITE as Clerk
MICHAEL ROTHHAAR as Guest
LYNNNDI SCOTT as Guest

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