

Season 1 | Episode 04 - The Luminous Fish Effect

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Scene 1 - Leonard and Sheldon's Apartment

(Leonard and Sheldon, dressed nicely, prepare to leave.)

Sheldon: You know I've been thinking about time travel again.

Leonard: Why, did you hit a roadblock with invisibility?

Sheldon: Put it on the back burner. Anyway, it occurs to me, if I ever did perfect a time machine, I would just go into the past and give it to myself thus eliminating the need for me to invent it in the first place.

Leonard: Interesting.

Sheldon: Yeah, it really takes the pressure off.

Leonard: Sounds like a breakthrough. Should I call the science magazines and tell them to hold the front cover?

(The pair exit the apartment.)

Sheldon: It's time travel, Leonard. I will have already done that.

Leonard: Then I guess congratulations are in order.

Sheldon: No, congratulations will have been in order. You know, I'm not going to enjoy this party.

(They begin down the stairwell.)

Leonard: I know. I'm familiar with you.

Sheldon: At the last department party, Professor Finkleday cornered me and talked about spelunking for forty-five minutes.

Leonard: Yes, I was there.

Sheldon: You know what's interesting about caves, Leonard?

Leonard: What?

Sheldon: Nothing.

Leonard: Well then we'll avoid Finkleday. We'll meet the new department head, congratulate him, shake his hand and go.

Sheldon: How's this? Pleased to meet you, Dr. Gablehauser. How fortunate for you that the University has chosen to hire you. Despite the fact that you've done no original research in 25 years, and instead have written a series of popular books that reduce the great concepts of science to a series of anecdotes. Each one dumbed down to accommodate the duration of an average bowel movement. (waves hand while giving Hawaiian salutation) Mahalo.

Leonard: Mahalo is a nice touch.

Sheldon: Do you know there are only eight consonants in the Hawaiian language.

Leonard: Interesting, you should lead with that.

Scene 2 - University Meeting Room

(Leonard, Rajesh, and Sheldon pluck food from a buffet onto their plates.)

Raj: Oh god, look at this buffet. I love America.

Leonard: You don't have buffets in India?

Raj: Of course, but it's all Indian food. You can't find a bagel in Mumbai to save your life.
(holding bagel toward Leonard) Schmear me.

Sheldon: (peering across the room) Well here's an interesting turn of events.

Leonard: What?

(Howard enters the room with a very tall, beautiful blonde woman on his arm.)

Leonard: Howard brought a date?

Sheldon: More plausible explanation is that his work in robotics has made an amazing leap forward.

Howard: (approaching the other men) Hey, what up science bitches? May I introduce my special lady friend, Summer.

(Howard wraps his arm around the woman's waist.)

Summer: I already told you. Touching is extra.

Howard: (retracting his arm) Right. Sorry.

Leonard: (to Sheldon) Here comes our new boss. Be polite.

Gablehauser: (approaching the men) Hi fellas. Eric Gablehauser.

Howard: (shaking hands) Howard Wolowitz.

Gablehauser: Howard, nice to meet you ... (turning to Sheldon) ... and you are?

Sheldon: An actual real scientist. (to Leonard) How was that?

Scene 3 - Leonard and Sheldon's Apartment Building, Stairwell

(Leonard and Sheldon climb the stairs. Sheldon holds a box filled with miscellaneous items.)

Sheldon: I can't believe he fired me.

Leonard: Well, you did call him a glorified high-school science teacher whose last successful experiment was lighting his own farts.

Sheldon: In my defense, I prefaced that by saying "with all due respect."

[Title Sequence]

Scene 4 - Leonard and Sheldon's Apartment

(Leonard enters the kitchen where Sheldon already stands, cooking something on the stove.)

Leonard: Morning

Sheldon: Morning.

Leonard: (surprised) You're ... making eggs for breakfast?

Sheldon: This isn't breakfast. It's an experiment.

Leonard: Huh ... cause it looks a lot like breakfast.

Sheldon: I finally have the time to test my hypothesis about the separation of the water molecules from the egg proteins, and its impact vis-a-vis taste.

Leonard: Sounds yummy. I look forward to your work with bacon.

Sheldon: As do I.

Leonard: You know, I'm sure if you just apologized to Gablehauser he would give you your job back.

Sheldon: I don't want my job back! I've spent the last three and a half years staring at grease boards full of equations. Before that I spent four years working on my thesis. Before that I was in college, and before that, I was in the fifth grade. (smiling broadly) This is my first day off in decades, and I'm going to savor it.

Leonard: Okay. I'll let you get back to fixing your eggs.

Sheldon: I'm not just fixing my eggs ... (waving spoon) ... I'm fixing everyone's eggs.

Leonard: (bowing) And we all thank you.

(Sheldon gathers his cooked eggs and sits on the couch. He lays out a journal next to him and takes a photograph of the journal before scribbling a note. He tastes the eggs and pauses a moment in contemplation.)

Sheldon: (scribbling a new note) Use ... new ... eggs.

Penny: (knocks on door and looks inside) Hi, hey. I'm running out to the market. Do you guys need anything?

Sheldon: Oh, well this would be one of those circumstances that people unfamiliar with the law of large numbers would call a coincidence.

Penny: I'm sorry?

Sheldon: I need eggs. Four dozen should suffice.

Penny: (uncertain) Four dozen?

Sheldon: Yes, and evenly distributed amongst brown, white, free range, large, extra large, and jumbo.

Penny: Okay, one more time?

Sheldon: Never mind, you won't get it right. I'd better come with you.

Penny: (sarcastically) Oh, yay!

Scene 5 - Penny's Car

(Penny drives with Sheldon to the store.)

Penny: How come you didn't go into work today?

Sheldon: I'm taking a sabbatical because I won't kowtow to mediocre minds.

Penny: So you got canned, huh?

Sheldon: Theoretical physicists do not get canned. But yeah.

Penny: Well, maybe it's all for the best. You know I always say, when one door closes, another one opens.

Sheldon: No it doesn't. Not unless the two doors are connected by relays or there are motion sensors involved.

Penny: No, no, I meant--

Sheldon: Or the first door closing causes a change of air pressure that acts upon the second door.

Penny: Never mind.

Sheldon: (suddenly anxious) Slow down. Slow down. Please slow down!

Penny: We're fine--

Sheldon: You're not leaving yourself enough space between cars.

Penny: Oh, sure I am.

Sheldon: No, no. Let me do the math for you. This car weighs, let's say four thousand pounds. Now add say one-forty for me, one-twenty for you.

Penny: (perturbed) One-twenty?

Sheldon: Oh, I'm sorry. Did I insult you? Is your body mass somehow tied into your self worth?

Penny: Well, yeah.

Sheldon: Interesting. Anyway, that gives us a total weight of, let's say, forty-four hundred pounds.

Penny: Let's say forty-three ninety.

Sheldon: Fine. We're travelling forward at ... (glances at speedometer) ... good Lord, 51 miles an hour. Now let's assume that your brakes are new and the calipers are aligned. Still, by the time we come to a stop, we'll be occupying the same space as that Buick in front of us. An

impossibility that nature will quickly resolve into death, mutilation and ... (peering out the side window) ... oh look! They built a new put-put course.

Scene 6 - Grocery Store

(Penny picks through fruit at a fruit stand while Sheldon pushes a shopping cart behind her.)

Sheldon: This is great. Look at me. Out in the real world of ordinary people, just living their ordinary, colorless, workaday lives.

Penny: Thank you.

Sheldon: No, thank you. (to random women nearby) And thank you, ordinary person. (catching up to Penny) Hey, you want to hear an interesting thing about tomatoes?

Penny: Uh, no, no not really. Listen, didn't you say you needed some eggs.

Sheldon: Uh, yes, but anyone who knows anything about the dynamics of bacterial growth knows to pick up their refrigerated foods on the way out of the supermarket.

Penny: Oh! Okay, well maybe you should start heading on out then.

Sheldon: No! This is fun. Oh, the thing about tomatoes, and I think you'll really enjoy this is, they're shelved with the vegetables, but they're technically a fruit.

Penny: Interesting.

Sheldon: Isn't it?

Penny: No, I mean what you find enjoyable.

(Penny walks to a nearby shelf of vitamins and supplements.)

Sheldon: Oh boy.

Penny: What now?

Sheldon: Well, there's some value to taking a multi-vitamin but the human body can only absorb so much. What you're buying here are the ingredients for very expensive urine.

Penny: (sarcastically) Well, maybe that's what I was going for.

Sheldon: (trying to be helpful) Well then you'll want some manganese.

(Penny stands in agitation, breathing heavily while Sheldon searches out manganese.)

Scene 7 - Leonard and Sheldon's Apartment Building, Stairwell

(Penny and Sheldon carry groceries up the stairs.)

Sheldon: That was fun. Maybe tomorrow we can go to one of those big warehouse stores?

Penny: (sarcastically) Oh, I don't know Sheldon. It's going to take me a while to recover from all the fun I had today.

Sheldon: Are you sure? There are a lot of advantages to buying in bulk. For example, I noticed that you purchase your tampons one month's supply at a time.

Penny: (shocked) What?

(Penny slightly opens the door to her apartment.)

Sheldon: Think about it. It's a product that doesn't spoil, and you're going to be needing them for at least the next thirty years.

Penny: You want me to buy thirty years worth of tampons?

Sheldon: Well thirty, thirty five--hey, when did your mother go into menopause?

Penny: Okay ... (grabbing bags from Sheldon and entering her apartment) ... I'm not talking about this with you.

Sheldon: Oh, Penny! This is a natural human process and we're talking about statistically significant savings. Now, if you assume 15 tampons per cycle and a 28 day cycle--are you fairly regular?

(Penny slams the door in Sheldon's face.)

Sheldon: (loudly through door) Okay, no warehouse store but we're still on for put-put golf, right?

Scene 8 - Leonard and Sheldon's Apartment

(Sheldon uses tweezers to insert fish food into several fish bowls arranged on a table in the room. Leonard enters through the front door carrying mail.)

Leonard: Hey, I just ran into Penny, she seemed upset about something.

Sheldon: I think it's her time of the month. I marked the calendar for future reference.

Leonard: What's with the fish?

Sheldon: It's an experiment.

Leonard: What happened to your scrambled egg research?

Sheldon: Oh, that was a dead end. Scrambled eggs are as good as they're ever going to be.

Leonard: So ... fish?

Sheldon: I read an article about Japanese scientists who inserted DNA from luminous jellyfish into other animals, and I thought, hey ... fish nightlights.

Leonard: Fish ... nightlights.

Sheldon: It's a billion dollar idea. Shhhhhh!

Leonard: Mum's the word. Sheldon, are you sure you don't want to just apologize to Gablehauser and get your job back?

Sheldon: Oh, no-no-no. No, I've too much to do.

Leonard: Like luminous fish.

Sheldon: Shhhhhh!

Leonard: I'm sorry ... I didn't

Sheldon: (hushed tone) That's just the beginning. I also have an idea for a bulk mail-order feminine hygiene company. (expressing eureka) Oh, glow in the dark tampons! Leonard, we're going to be rich.

Scene 9 - Leonard and Sheldon's Apartment Building, Stairwell

(Leonard and an older, unknown woman walk up the stairs together.)

Leonard: Thank you for coming on such short notice.

Mary: You did the right thing calling.

Leonard: I didn't know what else to do He's lost all focus. Every day he's got a new obsession.

(The pair enter Leonard and Sheldon's apartment. Sheldon sits at a loom wearing what appears to be a woven shawl over his head and shoulders. The pair stand and watch him for a moment, the woman shaking her head in disbelief.)

Leonard: This is a particularly disturbing one.

Sheldon: (turning) Mommy?

Mary: (moving to hug Sheldon) Hi baby.

Sheldon: (mouthed to Leonard) You called my mother?

Mary: Oh, you got yourself a loom. How nice.

Sheldon: Thank you.

Mary: Honey, why'd you get a loom?

Sheldon: I was working with luminous fish and I thought, hey ... loom! Mom, what are you doing here?

Mary: Leonard called me.

Sheldon: I know, but why?

Leonard: Because one of the great minds of the twenty-first century is raising glow in the dark fish and weaving sarapes.

Sheldon: This is not a sarape. This is a poncho. A sarape is open at the sides, a poncho is closed. This is a poncho, and neither is a reason to call someone's mother.

Leonard: Really? When was the last time you left the house?

Sheldon: (thinking) I went to the market with Penny.

Leonard: That was three weeks ago.

Sheldon: Well then buckle up. In the next four to eight days she's going to get very crabby.

Mary: Sweetheart, your little friend is concerned about you.

Sheldon: Yes, well I'm not a child! I'm a grown man capable of living my life as I see fit, and I certainly don't need someone telling on me to my mother!

(Sheldon begins to march toward his room.)

Leonard: Where are you going?

Sheldon: To my room and no-one's allowed in!

Mary: Gets his temper from his daddy.

Leonard: Ah.

Mary: He's got my eyes.

Leonard: I see.

Mary: All that science stuff, that comes from Jesus.

(Leonard looks at her quizzically.)

Scene 10 - Leonard and Sheldon's Apartment

(Howard, Leonard, Penny, and Rajesh gather around the kitchen as Mary cooks dinner.)

Leonard: (down hallway to Sheldon's room) Sheldon, your mum made dinner!

Sheldon: (distant) I'm not hungry!

Mary: Oh. Leonard, don't trouble yourself. He's stubborn! He may stay in there till the Rapture.

Penny: We so sure that's a bad thing?

Mary: I'll tell ya', I love the boy to death but he has been difficult since he fell out of me at the K-Mart.

Howard: Excuse me for being so bold but I now see where Sheldon gets his smoldering good looks.

Mary: Oh, honey that ain't going to work, but you keep trying. (leaning toward Rajesh) I made chicken. I hope that isn't one of the animals that you people think is magic. (Rajesh shakes his head) You know, we have an Indian gentleman at our church, a Dr. Patel, it's a beautiful story. The lord spoke to him and moved him to give us all 20% off on LASIK. You know, those that needed it.

Leonard: That is a lovely story. Um, are we going to do anything about Sheldon?

Mary: Oh, we will. You have to take your time with Sheldon. His father, God rest his soul, used to say to me, "Mary, you have to take your time with Sheldon."

Leonard: Sounds like a wise man.

Mary: Oh, not so wise. He once tried to fight a bobcat for some liquorish. So, everybody grab a plate, and a pretty place mat that Shelly wove.

Penny: Has Shelly ever freaked out like this before.

Mary: Oh, all the time. I remember one summer when he was thirteen, he built a small nuclear reactor in the shed and told everybody he was going to provide free electricity for the whole town. Well the only problem was he had no, whatcha' call, fissionable materials. (they all move to the living room and take seats, holding their dinner) Anyway, when he went on the Internets to get some, a man from the government came by and sat him down, real gentle, and told him it's against the law to have yellow cake uranium in a shed.

Penny: Well what happened?

Mary: Well, the poor boy had a fit. Locked himself in his room and built a sonic death ray.

Leonard: A death ray?

Mary: Well, that's what he called it ... (waving hand and chuckling) ... didn't even slow down the neighbor kids. It pissed our dog off to no end. (to Leonard and Penny) You know, you two make a cute couple.

(Leonard and Penny laugh nervously.)

Leonard: No, we're not-we're not-not a couple. Two singles, like those ... individually ... wrapped slices of cheese that ... are friends.

Mary: (to Howard) Did I pluck a nerve there?

Howard: Oh yeah.

Mary: Okay. Alright everybody, it's time to eat.

(Everybody begin but Mary begins to dig into their food.)

Mary: (interrupting) Oh Lord, we thank you for this meal. All your bounty. And we pray that you help Sheldon get back on his rocker. (pausing her prayer, turning to Raj and Howard) Now after a moment of silent meditation I'm going to end with "In Jesus' Name" but you two don't feel any obligation to join in. Unless, of course, the holy spirit moves you.

(Mary takes Howard's hand. He awkwardly grasps Rajesh's hand who uncomfortably accepts. Time advances slightly, dinner is almost over.)

Penny: Oh my God, this is the best cobbler I've ever had.

Mary: It was always Sheldon's favorite. You know what the secret ingredient is?

Penny: Love?

Mary: Lard.

(Sheldon stalks into the hallway, attempting to sneak his way into the kitchen.)

Howard: (to Sheldon) Hey, look who's come--

Mary: Sh-sh-sh! (whispering) You'll spook him. He's like a baby deer. You've got to let him come to you.

(Sheldon enters the kitchen and spoons cobbler onto a plate. He snaps his head toward the crowd in the living room who quickly pretend to not be watching him.)

Leonard: (rising from chair) This is ridiculous. Damn it, Sheldon! Snap out of it! You're a physicist, you belong at the University doing research not hiding in your room.

(Sheldon scurries away to the safety of his bedroom.)

Mary: (to Leonard) You don't hunt, do you?

Scene 11 - Sheldon's Bedroom

(Sheldon assembles a what appears to be a DNA strand. His mother knocks gently on the door and enters.)

Mary: Good morning, snicker-doodle.

Sheldon: Morning.

Mary: Oh! Well that looks awful fancy. What is that?

Sheldon: It's my idea of what DNA would look like in a silicon based life form.

Mary: But intelligently designed by a creator, right?

Sheldon: (annoyed) What do you want, mom?

Mary: You know how your daddy used to say that you can only fish for so long before you've got to throw a stick of dynamite in the water?

Sheldon: Yeah.

Mary: Well, I'm done fishing.

(She begins pilfering through his closet, taking clothes out and setting them on the bed.)

Mary: You put those on.

Sheldon: (rising) What for?

Mary: Because you're going to go down to your office. You're going to apologize to your boss and get your job back.

Sheldon: (sitting) No.

Mary: I'm sorry. Did I start that sentence with the words, "If it please your highness?"

Sheldon: I'm not going to apologize. I didn't say anything that wasn't true.

Mary: Now you listen here. I have been telling you since you were four years old, it's okay to be smarter than everybody but you can't go around pointing it out.

Sheldon: Why not?

Mary: Because people don't like it! You don't remember all the ass-kicking you got from the neighbor kids? Now let's get cracking! (forcefully) Shower, shirt, shoes, and let's shove off.

(Mary promptly exits Sheldon's room.)

Sheldon: (angrily to self) Wouldn't have been any ass-kicking if that stupid death ray had worked.

Scene 12 - Leonard and Sheldon's Apartment

(Mary enters the kitchen where Leonard leans against the table.)

Mary: Problem solved.

Leonard: (surprised) Really? That's impressive.

Mary: Leonard, the Lord never gives us more than we can handle. Thankfully he blessed me with two other children who are dumb as soup.

Scene 13 - Dr Gablehauser's Caltech Office

(Mary raps on the door and leans inside. He writes intently on a white board.)

Mary: Excuse me, Dr. Gablehauser. Are you busy?

Gablehauser: Well, actually--

Mary: Sheldon, he's just doodling! Get in here.

Sheldon: (entering the room) Dr. Gablehauser.

Gablehauser: Dr. Cooper.

Mary: Let's go, baby. (snaps fingers) We are losing daylight.

Sheldon: Um ... as you know, several weeks ago in our first encounter, we may have gotten off on the wrong foot when I called you an idiot. And I just wanted to say that I was wrong ... to point it out.

Gablehauser: (to Mary) I'm sorry, we haven't been introduced. (moves to shake hands) Dr Eric Gablehauser.

Mary: (shaking hands) Mary Cooper, Sheldon's mom.

Gablehauser: Now that's impossible. You must have had him when you were a teenager.

Mary: Oh, aren't you sweet. His father's dead.

Gablehauser: Recently?

Mary: Long enough.

Gablehauser: (offering a chair) Please.

(Mary sits and Dr. Gablehauser turns toward Sheldon.)

Gablehauser: Sheldon, shouldn't you be working?

(Sheldon looks about, uncertain. His mother glares at him.)

Sheldon: (leaving) Okay.

(Sheldon exits into the hallway where Leonard waits.)

Leonard: (hushed) Hey, how did it go?

Sheldon: I got my job back.

Leonard: Really? What happened?

Sheldon: I'm not quite sure. It involves a part of the human experience that has always eluded me.

Leonard: Well that narrows it down.

Scene 14 - Sheldon's Bedroom

(Sheldon lays in his bed as his mother tucks him.)

Mary: (quietly) I'm very proud of you honey. You showed a lot of courage today.

Sheldon: Thanks, mom. (accepting a kiss) Mom?

Mary: Mm-hmm?

Sheldon: Is Dr. Gablehauser going to be my new daddy?

Mary: (pausing) We'll see. (turning off light) Sleep tight.

(Sheldon rolls onto his side and looks to a glowing goldfish in a fish bowl on his nightstand. He smiles slightly and closes his eyes.)

[End Credits Roll]