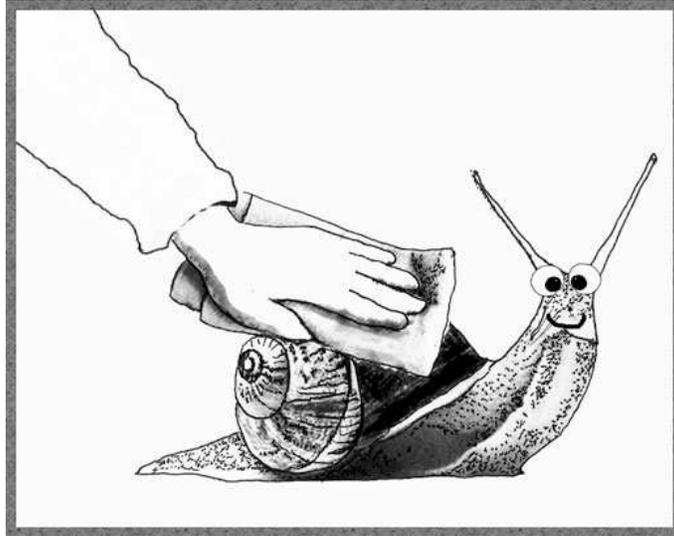


The Snail's Tale

By Lynn Blake John



SHELDON THE SNAIL was very proud. He had been chosen to be the ambassador of the “Slow Movement,” the crusade to hit the brakes on life’s hectic pace. This morning he had been taken in a stretch limo for a photo shoot because, obviously, he couldn’t slither there fast enough.

“Sheldon, darling, we’re delighted to see you.”

“On behalf of my entire gastropod family, I’d like to say that I’m honoured to be here.”

“Would you like some plant stems or some decayed leaves before we start?”

“Lovely.”

After a quick munch, Sheldon got ready for photographs. Philippa, the photographer’s assistant, shined up his shell. She said to Sheldon, “Sheldon, you’re so lucky to own your own home. The cost of housing in this country is ridiculous and I don’t know when I’ll ever be able to afford a house.”

“Yes, I am lucky, Phillipa, but my house does need some updating. I don’t have central heating so in the winter I have to hibernate and in the summer, if there is a drought, I have to estivate--take a long sleep. Nothing’s perfect.”

Next Philippa de-slimes Sheldon. Sheldon was a little shocked by the treatment. It *was* rather personal.

“Sheldon, the slime will look too shiny in the photographs. It was best to remove it. You can always excrete some more later for easier gliding down the red carpet.”

Lastly, Philippa led Sheldon to the fake tan room.

“Philippa, I just want a low-level tan because if the UV rays dry me out I’ll have to withdraw into my shell.”

Sheldon was now ready for the first photograph. Grandpa Teddy, the ninety-six-year-old fashion model, would be featured in this photograph. A fake shot was lined up with Grandpa using his walker and winning a race against Sheldon the snail.

Sheldon didn’t want to say anything but it was rather insulting to assume that an elderly man, direct from physical therapy, could beat him in a race.

“That’s the story of my life,” thought Sheldon. “I admit that I am one of the slowest creatures on the planet but just, occasionally, I’d like to save face.”

After that, Philippa set up a shot where in the foreground Sheldon was lying on a hammock and in the background eight muscle-bound athletes were posing as if they were running an Olympic 100 meters sprint. The caption of the photograph was to be: “A snail’s pace for the human race.”

Sheldon thought privately that very few humans could slow themselves down, particularly when they feel compelled to answer their smart phones and

post pictures of themselves on Facebook every ten seconds.

Philippa, interrupting Sheldon's musings, said, "Sheldon, we've decided that instead of a still photograph we're going to do a live segment of Celebrity MasterChef. World-renowned Chef Dwayne Brian Smythe is going to make a slow food dish called, "Escargots." That's French for "snails."

Sheldon beamed. He was delighted that Chef Smythe would produce a delicacy made from his own people.

" . . . So I've now cooked a lovely dish of escargots in parsley butter and garlic. The snails are still in their shells. Just keep the shells stable with your tongs and dig them out with your seafood fork."

"That's a wrap everybody. Great job."

Sheldon sat down after the last segment for a break from the fast-moving show. He was more used to moving 0.00758 miles per hour.

One of the television producers glanced over towards Sheldon.

"I think we forgot to put that little fellow in the pot."

Despite a Herculean attempt to creep away, Sheldon found himself lifted bodily towards the stove and unceremoniously dropped into the broth.

"Ooooooh," he exclaimed. "I've escaped birds, shrews, mice, worms, hedgehogs, ducks, frogs, toads and snakes to find myself killed by cooking. That's the last time I volunteer for anything. And by the way, I'm not a fan of the slow movement. If I just could have moved a little faster I'd still be alive today."

"I'm a celebrity . . . Get me out of here."

The Snail's Tale is one of ten stories in ***THE ANIMAL CHRONICLES***
by Lynn Blake John. You can buy the book on Amazon or Amazon U.K.