

PETER AND LISA: CHAPTER 94

STRETCH

In the magic warehouse, Peter sets an empty plastic bottle on a plain wooden table and walks ten paces to where Lisa's standing. "So, for this, all you have to do is get the bottle without taking a step towards it."

"Oh, is that all?"

"Yup. Like this." he holds out his hand and the bottle leaps from the table to slap into his palm. He walks back to replace it. "Now you try."

"Sure." she holds her hand up. The bottle wobbles and topples over.

"Well, that's something."

"Don't patronise me, Magic Boy."

Peter rights the bottle. Lisa holds her hand out, her arm trembling. The bottle shudders, silently mocking her efforts.

Frustrating minutes later, "Arrrrrgh! I thought I had it that time!" The bottle remains unimpressed. She puts her hand up again, "Ok. Easy. All I need to do is reach out and..." her arm explodes out like it's launched from a cannon, stretching across the ten paces and knocking the bottle off the table, sending it spinning.

"Ok. I admit. That wasn't what I was expecting."

"Laugh it up, Magic Boy." her extended arm swivels around to give him a two-finger salute. "I haven't finished yet." Her arm slithers along the table, dragging her rubbery length behind it. Following the bottle, it drops to the floor, closing its fingers around the neck. "Aha!"

"Great. Now bring it back."

"Slavedriver." Her arm stubbornly remains a floppy 10 paces long and change, draped over the edge of the table. "Come onnnnn!" It twitches unhelpfully. Lisa takes hold of her arm in annoyance, determined to drag it back if necessary. As soon as she pulls, her arm snaps back like elastic when the tension is released. Her hand slaps into her shoulder where it remains, dropping the bottle as her arm vanishes inside her. Lisa glares at her offending and truncated limb, grabs hold of her fingers and yanks her arm out. It unfurls like a cartoon concertina back to its normal proportions.

"Do you want to try again? Or try to get your Plastic Man arms working?"

"Plastic Woman, thank you very much."

"Well, actually..."

"I do not want to hear deep comic character lore right now, Peter."

"No problem, Miss Parr."

"What did I just say?"

"Technically, the Incredibles isn't..."

"Don't. Care."

"Fine. Are we doing telekinesis or stretching practice?"

"Stretching. I know I can do that. Just don't bring out one of those whatever they're called."

"Uhm?"

"You know, those things they have on cartoons to stretch and pull..."

"Oh, a Taffy pull."

"Right. One of those."

"I think my dad might have..."

"Peter, what about me suggests, in any way, that I want to be stretched and pulled like I'm some helpless piece of...no, you shut up!!"

"I didn't say anything!"

"Well, you were thinking it really loudly!"

"Ok. Shall we start with how far you can go? Or work on the retraction?"

"I think I need to be able to get my hand back before we see quite how far it can go shooting off."

"Doesn't have to be your hand."

"Not helping."

"Do you want me to put the bottle back?"

"Maybe save that for now."

A somewhat more productive time later, Lisa's hand shoots out, her arm stretching thirty feet down the alleyway between the illusion boxes before it lands. She raises her hand up, lifting her arm off the floor, a tremor rippling along its length. She subconsciously makes pulling motions with her other hand and her arm smoothly pulls back. "Ok. I think I've got this down."

"Go for distance?"

"Why not?" she raises her hand and flings her arm forward like it's a javelin. Her hand arcs down the alleyway.

"What was that?"

"Getting extra distance on it, what else?"

"That's not how..."

"It got further, didn't it? Last one only made it to the mislaid, this time it got as far as your six-way spinning thing."

"That makes no..."

"It does to me. And that's what counts. Right?"

"Ok, ok." he walks along the length of her arm, placing her hand in his.

"That's sweet, Magic Boy! What are you up to?"

"Do you feel like being pushed?" he calls back.

"Pushed how?"

"I don't use magic and take a step back. When you step forward, you lose."

"Seems unfair. At some point, I lose. How about a maximum of ten paces?"

"Why ten?"

"It's traditional, isn't it? Walk ten paces, turn and fire."

"Ok. Ten paces."

"And one at a time! No taking three to try and yank me off balance."

"Ok. Ready?"

"Bring it!"

He takes a step back. Lisa feels the tug along her arm but she just lets it play out, like her arm is on a spool inside her with much more to come. She raises her thumb, then raises it again on the hand Peter's holding to make sure he's got the message.

Another pace. No pain, no strain, just her boyfriend holding her hand from nearly forty feet away.

Another pace. Then another. There's a slight tremor running through her arm, a twinge like she's been exercising that muscle too hard.

Another pace. The twinge getting more pronounced. Probably a sign to quit.

Another pace and her arm collapses, yanking out of Peter's hand and recoiling all the way down the alleyway, stinging like a giant rubber band strike as it hits her shoulder.

"You okay?!"

She pulls her aching arm out of her shoulder. "Yeah, yeah, I'm fine. Might have overdone it with the last one. We should probably pause for a bit."

"Ok. Come over here and, wait, come over here in five steps or less and I'll give you a reward."

"Five...? You're fifty feet away!"

"And just a second ago, we could have shaken hands. Come on. This should be easy."

"Oh, sure. Easy. Just five ten foot long steps. How hard can it be?"

"We won't know if you don't quit stalling."

"Stalling? Stalling?! I'm gonna come over there..."

"In five steps or less."

"Just watch me, Magic Boy." She takes her first step, her legs starting to stretch, but her stride is 'only' six feet.

"Almost there. Just a few more baby steps."

“Baby...I'm trying, you asshole!” her second stride hits nine feet, the third twelve and the fourth fifteen.

“Nearly there.”

Lisa's final 'step' lifts her over his head, stretching over eighteen feet to land ten feet past him.

“Baby steps.” she mutters, “Hey, Magic Boy! If you can make it to me in one step, maybe I'll give you a reward, too.”

Peter blinks out of sight, reappearing behind her, his arms wrapping around her. “Like this?”

“That's cheating! You didn't even take any steps.”

“Oh, well, I suppose I'll just have to give you your reward.” he leans in, kissing her neck.

“Oooooohhhhh. 'Training time' is over already?”

“We've been doing it for an hour.”

“And is my reward for alllllll that hard work just a kiss?”

“Of course not.”

Lisa shivers as she feels her clothes sliding off her. “Need to learn that one.”

“Maybe next time.” he replies, his kisses trailing down her body.