

“Captain Incredible Vs. The Girlfriend”

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(A kitchen. Joe unloads a grocery bag; Linda looks on. Standing nearby is a non-descript box painted to fade into the kitchen surroundings.)

LINDA

Ugh, what an awful day. At lunch, Captain Incredible swept past our office windows and shattered all the glass on the east side of the building. I can't even begin to tell you how much insurance paperwork that little stunt caused.

JOE

Hey, he was having the fight of his life against that Bug-Eyed Invasion Force. If ordinary citizens come out of the woodwork to sue—

LINDA

Why do you sound so persnickety about it?

JOE

Well, what's a few broken panes compared to being transported to a fourth dimension ruled by horn-faced aliens? Horn-faced aliens who're hell-bent on human servitude, I remind you!

LINDA

Whatever, I just want to make dinner, snuggle with my man and forget this 24 hour period ever happened.

JOE

Actually, I thought I'd cook solo tonight.

LINDA

Oh? And what's sparking this unlikely event?

JOE

Maybe I have a little surprise for you.

LINDA

Aren't you romantic? Here's hoping it's not interrupted by mole people. Or you having to run off to the return some library books or make a phone call or check the scores.

JOE

Uh, major buzzkill. You know I can't concentrate if I've left something unfinished. The last thing you want is a half-addled, clumsy boyfriend, right?

LINDA

Preferably.

JOE

See, you're making jokes, but ... I do feel like—I dunno—there's this whole side of me you think you know and—

(Linda takes a jar of spaghetti sauce out of the bag.)

LINDA

What are we having? Ah, Italian. Play to your strengths.

JOE

You take it for granted. And you don't know all of me, you know? But I want you to—so we can keep getting closer, like— I guess what I'm trying to tell you is ... Linda?

(He stands up straight. He takes off his glasses.)

I'm Captain Incredible.

LINDA

Oh my God. No way. No WAY!

JOE

Is it really that hard to believe he's me?

LINDA

Are you fucking kidding me? Of course he's you! A pair of glasses isn't enough to fool the whole world, Mystery Man—let alone the woman who's seen you naked!

JOE

Wait.

LINDA

I mean, hello, Joe Sixpack!

JOE

So this whole time, ever since we met, you've known my secret.

LINDA

Yeah, and we're never gonna talk about it again. So, pasta sauce!

JOE

Whoa, whoa, whoa! I tell you I'm the strongest man on the planet and all you wanna do is bake lasagna?

LINDA

Yeah, Joe, I do. Because that's what normal couples do on a Thursday night.

JOE

But I'm—

LINDA

Lalalalala, not listening!

JOE

Okay, fine! Deny this!

(Joe hops on the painted box as if kicking off the ground in flight. He stretches his arms in front of him, Superman-style, to give the impression of floating. He makes hovering sounds. To Linda, he is flying, even though to the audience's eye, he's standing on a box. He strikes various flight poses as Linda talks.)

LINDA

Oh, great. Is this how you're going to win all our arguments from now on—by flying around the room? “Linda, I'm basically a demi-god, so you should bow to my will and see the eight-fifteen showing, not the seven-thirty.”

JOE

Come on! Now that you know, we can hang in the Hall of Justice whenever we want; plus, heroes get free tacos from Pablo's Mexican Fiesta! What's the down side here?

LINDA

For starters, I won't have my sweet, dopey man-friend to pal around with anymore.

(He puts both feet back on solid ground, aka, he hops off the box.)

JOE

I'm still here.

LINDA

No. If you won't lie to me, you're just Captain Incredible. And Captain Incredible doesn't have to nudge me to open a jar of sauce. Captain Incredible doesn't need me to listen to his troubles after a hard day at work like I need him to listen to mine.

JOE

I could tell you all about the battle I had with Dr. Colossus this morning!

LINDA

Captain Incredible does, however, need me to check over my shoulder every time I cross a dark alleyway—because once super-villains like Doc there figure out I know who you are, they'll make sure I'm kidnapped on a bi-weekly basis.

JOE

How could they possibly—

LINDA

Because they'll see I don't know how to treat you! In costume or out, you aren't the man I fell in love with.

JOE

But I told you the truth. Linda, I wanna marry you someday, I wanna have kids with you. I want the quiet house on a country lane, the golfing retirement down in Florida, the whole shebang. I want the stuff every normal person wants. But to start that life going, I had to tell you the truth. Doesn't that mean something to you?

LINDA

Cap, it's not the feats you accomplish that make you a stand-up guy. It's how you treat the people you care about most. I got three stitches from falling glass this afternoon. Right here on my wrist. *You* didn't even ask if I was okay. Joe would've.

JOE

I—I'm sorry. I got carried away, I was excited to tell you—

LINDA

Because he's how you really see yourself!

JOE

Look, just because I mentioned the cape and tights, that doesn't mean I'll forget how to be—

LINDA

Prove it. Prove it right this minute or I'm packing up my things after we eat.

(He stands there, helpless.)

JOE

I don't know what you want me to do. If this were a contest of strength or—

LINDA

Then forget it. Let's just make dinner.

JOE

But you're still leaving me after? Linda?

(She unloads groceries in silence. Joe looks around, sees the jar of sauce, picks it up. He pretends to struggle to open the jar. Linda watches him strain.)

JOE

Please, Super Linda, without your help, I won't be able to fill my stomach with mushroom and garlic goodness. I'll waste away to nothing! I beg of you—

LINDA

All right, all right. Hand over that jar, mister.

(He does.)

And thanks.

(She opens the jar with a pop. Lights fade on the happy couple.)