

The Lion And The Insta-Spray Part Two.

Synopsis: Aric is a hardworking lion who works in construction. His job means his feet ache a lot and one day he finds a shop that has a spray to relieve his aching paws. Just not in the way he expects. After the adventure his feet took him on, he accidentally spilt the spray on his favourite Converse shoes, which have now come to life.

"What the hell is this?" Aric mumbled.

His shoes were alive. The white Converse were shaking and dancing. Aric had never felt fear like this before and he watched in terror as his shoes hopped around his kitchen floor, dancing and twirling like they were being worn by someone. He kept stepping back and his eyes never left his shoes as they continued their exploration of their new freedom. Aric couldn't believe what was happening.

"This can't be real..." he whispered as his shoes did a little jig and jumped up and down, "How did that spray cause this? I thought it was meant for feet."

In an instant, the shoes stopped and turned to face Aric. It seemed like they were staring at him and suddenly they started to take clumsy steps towards him.

"No, get away!"

Aric tried to keep himself away from the shoes but they kept following him, trying to dance with his feet. He tried to avoid his shoes and kept pushing them away and made steps to the side, even going as far as jumping on his couch but his Converse seemed to mirror his feet.

"Stop it! Get away from me!" he snapped, while his shoes started to dance and twirl like they were teasing him.

"God damn it, why can't you just listen to me!"

Aric's anger bubbled over and the next time his shoes got close enough, he leaned down and grabbed them, holding them firmly in his hands. As they shook and struggled to get free, their laces whipped and cracked against Aric's knuckles but he did his best to ignore the pain.

"Nngh...if the spray wore off on my feet then it will wear off on you...I just have to wait..."

Aric worked out in his head how long he thought it would take and then he realised there was a problem.

"It...took 11 hours for the spray to fade...I can't hold you guys for that long."

The shoes kept struggling to get free of Aric's grasp but his muscular hands held firm. Years of construction work had given him a firm grip, but even now he could feel the shoes were getting stronger.

"Damn it...hey wait! I know!"

Being a builder, Aric had plenty of tools and equipment scattered throughout his apartment and in his bedroom was a new toolbox.

'Yeah, that will be perfect,' Aric thought to himself and walked into his bedroom, holding the sentient shoes firmly. The laces were still whipping and cracking against his hands, leaving deep red marks over them, but Aric thought nothing of it. He'd had worse injuries on the various building sites he'd worked on.

He got to his bedroom and saw the toolbox sitting on the corner. Aric hadn't used it yet. Like most of his things, he bought them to use but never found the time. He had become a bit of a collector over time.

"OK, let's do this."

Aric got into position and using his toe, unclipped the box and pushed it open. As fast as he could, Aric threw the shoes into the box and slammed the lid shut. Once inside the shoes thumped and banged in their desperate attempt to get out. Aric locked the box but the strength of the shoes caused it to bounce out from the corner of the room.

"Oh no you don't!" Aric growled and grabbed anything heavy that was within arm's reach. A large book, a hammer, and some metal pipes. He threw everything on top, making sure the box couldn't move again.

"There, that should do it."

Aric wiped the sweat from his brow and took a deep breath. The shoes still kept banging within, but there was no way they could get out. He sighed and climbed onto his bed and looked at the clock on the wall.

"Jesus, it's 5am!"

He was tired, hungry and just wanted to rest but the shoes kept banging in their box, causing a slight vibration which would have distracted Aric too much if he'd stayed in the bedroom. He ventured back into the lounge and laid down on his couch.

"I guess that means they should return to normal about...4pm." Aric yawned.

He could still hear them attempting to escape but he was too tired now to worry about it. Aric closed his eyes and very soon fell into a deep sleep.

As he slept, the shoes still kept thumping around inside the toolbox and even in his dreams, the noise penetrated. Aric

was having a nightmare and the thumping seemed to match the terror that was developing in his unconscious mind.

"No..please, stop..." Aric mumbled.

In his dream, the thumping noise kept coming from a large black door and every time it sounded, a part of the door would break off.

"Leave me alone..."

In a flash, the door in his dream exploded and Aric woke up in a cold sweat.

"Jesus!"

He sat panting and rubbed his head before looking around the stillness of his apartment.

"God, what a nightmare."

Aric looked at the clock on the wall and saw that it was 2pm. He could still hear the Converses trying to escape and sighed. They were relentless but Aric knew they were still stuck.

He stood up and stretched and decided to have a shower. Anything to pass the time. While he was in the shower, he

figured he could go out. He needed to do some grocery shopping anyway and by the time he'd get home, the shoes should be back to normal.

After his shower, he grabbed some food and got dressed, making sure he had enough money and then went back to his room and looked at the toolbox. The banging and thumping was loud and never-ending. Aric was a little concerned about what the neighbours would think, but most of them worked during the day so Aric figured he should get away with it.

"See you later guys." he smiled and turned back into the lounge.

Since Aric only had a limited selection of footwear, consisting of his work boots, the Converse shoes that were currently alive and some flip-flops, he had to wear his boots. It was too cold not to wear something to protect his feet. As he searched for socks to wear, his eyes were drawn to his laundry hamper which was overflowing. He'd normally use his time off work to catch up on chores, but the recent adventure with his feet and shoes meant he was restricted to what he could wear. Specifically, no socks. Aric sighed out of frustration but figured there wasn't much to be done, so he slipped on his boots barefoot.

"Oh well, no harm I guess," Aric said to himself as he walked out of his apartment and locked the door.

As Aric made his way along the high street, he couldn't help but think about the spray and the shop he bought it

from.

"Maybe I should confront the shop owner," he mumbled to himself, but then he noticed his feet were not aching anymore. Even after a short time, his feet would normally start to hurt but now they felt fine.

"Well, I guess that spray did have some benefit."

Aric walked around the shops, picking up his groceries and some essentials. He looked at his list and realised there was nothing else he needed. He sighed a little and hoped that being out would distract him, but his mind kept drifting back to shoes trapped in the toolbox. He loved those shoes. They were comfy and reliable and he felt right at home in them. Aric was worried if the spray didn't wear off, what could he do with them?

By the time he'd finished and grabbed himself a coffee, Aric decided that the shoes should be back to normal so he headed home. He put his shopping bags in the kitchen and took off his work boots, which were covered in dirt and mud.

"Damn, I need to clean these."

He then stopped to listen to his surroundings and discovered there was silence. No banging, or noise. His heart jumped a little and he smiled.

"Thank God."

Aric finished sorting out the food shopping and then went to the bedroom, where the toolbox was still and quiet. He smiled again and began to take the heavy items off the box and unclipped the lid. When he glanced in, he saw his Converse shoes were still and looked just as good as the day he bought them.

"That's better. Nice and quiet. Guess that spray wore off."

When he reached in to take them out, the laces reached out with no warning and attempted to grab Aric's hands which caused him to yelp, pull his hands away free from the laces and slammed the lid shut again.

"Dammit! Why are you still alive?!"

Aric was furious and began to bang his fist on the lid.

"You should be normal by now! Stop acting like that!"

But the Converse shoes began banging around again. Aric sighed and sat back, staring at the toolbox.

"This is ridiculous. I can't carry on like this."

Aric thought about what the next step should be and eventually decided there was only one option. He had to go back to the Emporium and speak to the shopkeeper. He

put his boots back on and tied a length of rope around the toolbox before picking it up and heading out of his apartment.

"Right guys, I'm taking you to see someone who can help."

Aric carried the heavy toolbox down the stairs and outside and walked in the direction of the Emporium. The shoes kept banging and kicking, making the toolbox shake and bang against Arics legs.

"Dammit, keep still!" he snapped but the shoes kept kicking.

After an uncomfortable walk, Aric saw the shop, traipsed inside and placed the toolbox on the counter.

"Hello? Anyone around?" Aric called out but there was no answer. He waited for a while but still, there was no reply.

"Hmmm." Aric mumbled and looked down the shop, where he saw the back entrance, "Maybe he's out back."

He picked up the box again and proceeded into the back of the shop.

"Hello?"

Aric looked around and saw shelves full of bottles, books, fabrics and paperwork. It looked like the owner was a collector and Aric placed the toolbox on a table that was near the end of the room.

"Anyone here?"

"Well, hello again young Sir. This area is out of bounds to customers."

Aric turned and saw the old lizard standing between him and the door to the shop.

"Oh, I'm sorry. But there was no answer."

The lizard moved into the light and smiled at Aric. He was wearing the same tracksuit set as before and as he walked, his hands shook a little.

"So, what can I do for you this time, young Sir?"

"I, uh, bought one of your sprays and well, something went wrong."

"Indeed? Care to explain it to me? I strive towards customer satisfaction."

Aric sighed a little and briefly recapped his story. The lizard watched and listened intently and when Aric

finished, he nodded.

"Quite the adventure you've been on my boy. So what is it you'd like me to do?"

"Well, the spray brought my feet to life. I couldn't control them. You never said that would happen."

"My dear boy, I did warn the effects vary from person to person. But do tell me, did it work? Are your feet hurting anymore?"

Aric looked down a little.

"Well, no."

"So what is the problem?"

"Well, I spilt some. It was an accident but it landed on my shoes, and well..." Aric stood to one side and gestured to the shaking toolbox, "They've come to life. But this time they won't stop. The spray hasn't faded."

The lizard stepped forward and squinted at the box. He had a look of interest on his face.

"That spray was intended for body parts. Not inanimate objects."

"I get that, but like I said. It was an accident. Can't you help?"

The lizard placed a hand on the box which banged with the shoes dancing around inside.

"May I see?"

"Oh uh, they were hard to catch. I'm not sure that's a -"

Before Aric could finish his sentence, the lizard removed the rope and unlocked the box. In a flash, the Converse shoes jumped out onto the floor with their laces lashing around in the air.

"Ah. I see what you mean."

The lizard smiled and knelt slowly, his bones creaking in the process and looked at the shoes. They danced around him and seemed to investigate the lizard's feet before poking them with their laces before stepping away and turning to Aric.

"Hmmm, fascinating. These are certainly an interesting specimen," the old lizard smiled.

In a flash, the shoes stepped over to Aric and used their laces to feel his legs and to nudge his work boots before

they suddenly jumped up and down in excitement and began to kick and step on Arics feet.

"Hey, stop that!" he said and gently kicked them away.

"Young Sir, these shoes recognise you as their owner. They want to be worn."

"Are you serious?!" yelled Aric, "I can't wear them! What if they take control of my feet?!"

"Well, that might be a possibility, but they may also be satisfied with just being worn. That is their purpose after all."

Aric looked down again and watched the shoes trying to pull his boots off with their laces.

"No, I won't! Can't you just return them to normal? Why hasn't the spray worn off?"

"As I said young man, the spray wasn't intended for inanimate objects. I'm afraid I don't have an answer."

"So what am I supposed to do? Throw them out?"

"My goodness no!" the lizard exclaimed, "They are alive now! For how long, I can't say, but they are sentient! And they belong to you."

"I'm not wearing them! They're not safe!" Aric replied, stepping back from the sentient shoes that were still trying to get to his feet.

"You might want to reconsider. It seems that they have a strong attachment to you. If you leave them, who knows where they will go? In fact, I suspect they will do everything in their power to get back to you."

Aric sighed.

"I guess I could leave them in the toolbox until the power wears off."

"IF it wears off. There a chance this is permanent." the lizard smiled.

"What?! You mean, like, they'll always be alive?"

"There's a strong possibility, yes. The effects are unpredictable and not even I can predict how they will behave."

Aric looked at the shoes yet again and saw them dancing around, using their laces to reach inside his boots to touch his feet.

"No, I can't have this. You keep them. I'm not having any part of this!" Aric snapped and turned away from his shoes.

"But young Sir, as their creator, they belong to you."

"No, I can't. I won't."

"I can't take ownership of them. They have recognised you as their owner."

The shoes kept reaching inside Aric's boots which was continuing to him get angry.

"Get away!" he snapped and kicked the Converse across the room, where they landed with a thud near the opposite wall. "They are just shoes! It's a magic spell! It's not real! I'm not keeping them! It's your fault! I just want my life back!"

"Young man, please, calm yourself. I realise you are frustrated." the lizard said, waving his arms around.

"You're damn right I'm frustrated!"

"But please, understand. They are alive. And they need an owner."

"Well, it's not me!" Aric snapped and started to walk out to the main shop

Before he could reach the door, the shoes leapt at him and wrapped their laces around his ankles, causing Aric to trip and land on his stomach, knocking the wind out of him.

"What the hell?" he coughed and grasped his stomach as he regained his breath.

When Aric looked back, he saw the shoes had tied his ankles together and were pulling him towards them.

"Hey! Let go of me!"

"I warned you, young Sir. They won't let you go."

Aric struggled hard but the magic that had brought the Converses to life had made them stronger than they should've been. Their laces also began to stretch and grow like vines. Two laces lashed out and gripped Aric's wrists, holding them tight and immobilising him.

"What the hell? No! Let go!"

The shoes dragged him back towards them, using their laces to pull his arms and legs inwards, leaving him helpless.

"Stop! Please help me!" Aric begged.

"I'm sorry, I can't." the lizard smiled and shrugged his shoulders, "I'm just an old lizard."

Aric panted and kept struggling to try and break free. He noticed that the laces were still growing and began to tug at the laces of his work boots, slowly loosening them.

"Hey, no stop! Don't!" Aric whimpered, trying desperately to stop his body from being pulled closer to the gaping openings of the Converse.

The shoes ignored his pleas and pulled and tugged at his boots more, attempting to remove them.

"Please stop. Don't do this!"

"Young Sir, it seems your shoes have no intention of letting you go," the lizard said with a bemused look on his face.

"Please, help!" Aric whimpered.

Within a few moments, the shoes had managed to pull Aric's boots off and began to drag him towards them again.

"Oh God, please help! What are they doing?!"

The lizard watched, intrigued and fascinated as the shoes placed themselves on Aric's bare feet. To the lizard, it looked like a couple snakes swallowing their prey.

"It seems they want to be worn, Sir."

"No, stop this! Please help!"

"I'm sorry. I can't. This is all your doing. You rejected them, but they are bound to you. They want your feet."

Aric kept struggling and fighting but the shoes were determined and held him tightly. Once they were fully on his feet, Aric felt them begin to lace themselves up around his feet, which made him panic more and he tried to kick them off, but the shoes were too strong.

"Please don't do this!"

The shoes finished by tying their laces in a tight knot and suddenly everything went still.

Aric looked down at the Converse shoes now tight and secure on his feet and then looked up at the shop owner. He slowly wiggled his toes and could feel the shoes flex and squeeze around them. Every movement he made with his toes was mirrored by the shoes. If it wasn't for the situation he found himself in, Aric would have said it felt pleasurable.

In a panic, Aric leaned down, pulled at the shoes and tugged at the laces as hard as he could. His muscles bulged against his clothes and sweat formed on his forehead, but the laces wouldn't budge. They were stuck tight. As Aric struggled, the old lizard watched and observed with great interest.

"I think, young Sir, you won't be able to remove them unless they wish it."

"No...please get them off..."

"I can't. You have rejected them but they haven't rejected you. They won't let you go. You belong to them as much as they belong to you."

Aric slowly stood up and kept staring at the shoes on his feet. It was a surreal moment and before he could even question it more, the shoes began to move and with it, Aric was forced to walk back and forth with them, the shoes controlling his every step.

"What the hell?! Stop this! Please stop it!"

The lizard simply watched as the lion was taken over by the shoes and he couldn't help but smile.

"How fascinating! Maybe I could market this. The shoes that exercise for you!"

Aric, still in a state of panic, was unable to hear him and his feet just kept walking. The shoes moved him across the floor and the laces were loosened and tightened in turn to compensate for every movement Aric's feet made.

"Stop...please stop this!" Aric panted.

He couldn't control himself. Aric was forced to walk back and forth, unable to stop his feet and the shoes continued their workout. The lizard simply watched on in amusement as the shoes then turned Aric and started to walk him towards the door to the rest of the shop.

"No...no wait!" Aric begged the Converses.

"It seems they want to go for a walk young man. I wouldn't fight them if I were you." the lizard giggled.

"Please, make this stop!"

"I'm sorry, I can't. Farewell young Sir. If you do get yourself free from those shoes, by all means, come visit again!"

The shoes forced Aric through the door and down the shop to the main street. As they walked, the shoes made Aric nudge displays which knocked items onto the floor. This made the lizard laugh more as Aric reached the door to the street beyond.

"Please don't do this! Please let me go!" Aric begged and tried to hold his legs but it was useless.

Aric's eyes widened as his feet led him onto the pavement and once again his body betrayed him. The shoes forced him to dance around the passers-by, much to their amusement and curiosity.

"Stop...stop this!" he hissed quietly.

The shoes continued their dance and made Aric twirl and pirouette and prance through the people, who stopped and pointed. Their hushed voices and laughter seemed to fuel the shoes and soon the shop fell into the distance as the Converse led Aric to destinations unknown.