

ESCAPISTS
PILOT EPISODE: A FUN GUY.

EXT. BRIGHT FANTASY LAND. DAY.

Camera sweeps around ERROL (awkward nerd) posing nobly, proudly, in knight's attire with sword and shield. V/O (melodramatic, storytelling).

V/O
Once upon a time in the ethereal
land of Swansea, there lived a
hero, brave and true.

A trumpet fanfare which ends in a computerised beep from Errol's desktop.

INT. ERROL'S HOME OFFICE.DAY.

Errol emerges suddenly from his reverie in his cramped home office. He has two monitors, one a zoom meeting with a desperate, panicking LINE MANAGER, one with a paused game. He has his baby on his knee.

LINE MANAGER
...look the whole system is down,
Errol, and we're losing money here.
Can you fix it? You'd be saving our
lives.

ERROL
(nonchalantly)
Well, it looks like your standard
DDoS attack from some bad actors.
I'll have to add a filter rule to
the firewall, which should work but
if it goes into defence mode I'll
have to add that manually and white-
list the users, so...

LINE MANAGER
And you can do it by end of play
Friday? You're a hero, Errol.

Errol leaves call.

ERROL
Damn right I am, mortals.

Baby vomits on him.

EXT. BRIGHT FANTASY LAND. DAY.

V/O
And an outlaw with heart of gold
and morals of brass.

CERI (chaotic hippy, always carries a patchwork bag full of random objects) in fantasy medieval thief clothes, long knife in one hand, bouncing a pouch of gold in the other. She winks at the camera, roguishly.

INT. CHAIN COFFEESHOP. DAY.

Ceri wakes from her reverie buying a latte. As the till is open, Ceri leans over, grabs cash with one hand, coffee with the other, runs.

CERI
Pay your taxes, corporate monsters!

BARISTA
(exasperated)
Fucksake, Ceri!

She put the £3.59 into charity bucket she passes on the way.

EXT. BRIGHT FANTASY LAND. DAY.

NICKY (sensible but ferocious, protective) wears barbarian furs, carries a mace, FLUKE (joker, happy-go-lucky) wears wizard regalia. They pose dramatically.

V/O
Together with their loyal friends
They quest through wonderous lands
conjured in their minds. All risk-
free, until one fateful day...

INT. NICKY AND FLUKE'S LOUNGE. EVE.

Errol, Ceri, Fluke and Nicky play a tabletop roleplaying game. Piles of rule books, tatty paper with notes, 20-sided dice surround them.

FLUKE
(dramatically)
As you enter the dank cave you see
a massive green troll-like monster.
It snarls in your face. Orc-ward!

CERI
I cast Aura Of Slime so he explodes
into a cloud of leeches!

Fluke rolls some dice.

FLUKE
The spell rebounds on you and...
(consults rule book)
...your right arm is now a cloud
of leeches.

NICKY
I have a magical bandage, and three
wound-healing potions. Will that
work?

FLUKE
Her arm is a cloud of leeches,
dear.

NICKY

Then I punch the green bastard in the face!

ERROL

So the thing is, right, this guy is probably from the Ninth Realm so if Ceri can use the amulet she acquired in the hanging city to imbue my Sword of Pure Virtue with the Enchantment of Artifice, that should stop it killing us all. Ceri?

Ceri smirks, looks mischievous.

ERROL

Ceri, just use the amulet. You can basically save us all with one move.

CERI

(to Fluke)

I'm going to use my not-leeches arm to pickpocket the orc.

ALL

CERI!

CERI

(shrugs)

I can't help it, it's the chaos in my mystical fae blood.

The others respond, groaning, rolling eyes. They've heard this before.

INT. NICKY AND FLUKE'S KITCHEN. LATER.

An overfocussed, twitchy Errol types manically on his laptop. Ceri sits on the counter embroidering badly, Fluke fills the kettle.

FLUKE

Good game. Brew?

CERI

Two sugars. Probably just another Monster for him, he's over-promised on a deadline again.

Fluke puts a can next to Errol who doesn't notice. Fluke reads Ceri's embroidery, translating (reads 'Ty Losin Ty').

FLUKE

'House, sweets, house'?

CERI

Bloody Google Translate!

Nicky walks in reading her phone, furious.

NICKY

Bastards! Absolute pile of useless, selfish pricks. That escape room cancelled the school fundraising day, won't even refund the deposit. This is going to be the only fundraising event that loses money. Bastards!

FLUKE

Told you they were dodgy. Place is clearly a money laundering thing.

ERROL

(talking too fast, not looking up)
Could have told you that, remember that time we went and there was that puzzle and the answer was Jupiter because it had more moons, but *Saturn* has more moons, I was right, I knew the answer to that and I was right I looked it up later and I was right and they said we ran out of time and...

Concerned Nicky swaps Errol's Monster with a glass of water.

CERI

And they let that Tory knitting club have their event there. Immoral is what it is, reckon we could start a protest, get maybe 25 people with up there, 3 o'clock tomorrow. Oh actually maybe 2 - there's a march in Castle Gardens at 4 and everyone goes to the pub after.

ERROL

(mumbling, distracted)
Or we could hack their crappy security and just trash the place.

NICKY

Sure. Well perhaps I'll just send them an angry email. We don't need to start a war. Coming back through?

CERI

Yeah, let me just finish this.

Nicky and Fluke walk out with their tea. Ceri looks mischievous, switches Errol's water for the Monster.

CERI

So you reckon could hack their cameras?

ERROL

Yeah, easy, they're sitting ducks.
Asking for it with that system
really.

(suddenly paying
attention)

Wait. You mean it? No we can't, I'm
just...

CERI

Too scared? Can't really do it?

ERROL

Yeah, of course I can, but...

CERI

Just think about how smug they were
about that moons thing.

ERROL

Let's get 'em.

EXT. OUTSIDE ESCAPE ROOM. NIGHT.

A barely renovated building in an industrial estate. A big
dramatic sign says 'Dungeon Escape'. Ceri is eager, Errol has
regrets and a laptop. The Monster is wearing off.

ERROL

OK, the cameras and alarms are
disabled. Are you sure this is a
good idea?

CERI

Of course, they deserve it, get the
paint cans and let's go.

They run to the building. Errol makes a tiny graffiti tag of
his own name. Ceri fiddles with a padlock on the door.

CERI

Don't sign your work, you chump!

Ceri shoves the door open.

ERROL

What are you doing? I thought we
were just messing up the outside?

CERI

Yeah, we are, but we're also going
a little bit inside.

ERROL

Ceri!

INT. ESCAPE ROOM. NIGHT.

A reception, café, waiting room decorated with low quality fantasy, fairy tale props. A few items (toys, etc.) on the counter. Ceri sprays graffiti, breaks things. Errol is initially reluctant, but then let's loose, punches the head off a cardboard cut-out wizard. They communicate in whispers.

ERROL
Justice for Saturn!

Ceri slips a couple of things into her bag surreptitiously. She lights a firework, Errol looks alarmed.

CERI
Don't worry, they're silent ones.
Don't want to scare any dogs.

Ceri throws a couple of fireworks leaving charred marks on the walls and ceiling.

CERI
That'll learn 'em!

One of the chairs starts to burn, they don't notice.

ERROL
Are you happy now? We should get going.

CERI
Wait, I just want to have a rummage in their office. You know make it look like a break in.

ERROL
This *is* a break in.

Ceri opens a door, freezes. BARRY (chunky thug in a suit) and JEZ (scrawny thug in a tracksuit) are counting a suspiciously large pile of cash, surrounded by expensive looking paintings.

BARRY
Nerds! Get 'em!

Jez hurls himself towards them, Ceri hides behind the door. Errol runs, Jez chases. Errol defends himself with a plastic sword and shield. Jez is briefly fooled, enough for Errol to get away. He turns on the smoke machine, accidentally knocks over some 'potion' bottles, hides in the smoke. Jez, slips on the potions, Errol scurries to another hiding place.

Meanwhile, Ceri lights a firework and throws it into the office. Barry reflexively uses a painting to hide behind. The painting burns.

BARRY
(growls menacingly)
Do you know how much that was worth?

CERI
Oh God, sorry, sorry, I'll um, pay
you back. I'm an artist myself,
I...

Barry gets a gun from a drawer. Ceri runs into the smoke machine, finds Errol, drags him out of the door.

EXT. OUTSIDE ESCAPE ROOM, NIGHT.

CERI
Think we messed up, there, I burned
that guy's painting.

ERROL
We did more than that.

The escape room building is on fire.

CERI
Well that's not on us. They should
have had a proper sprinkler system.

Barry and Jez come out of the door, looking for them with murderous intent. They run.

EXT. SWANSEA NOTBRIDGE. EVE.

Ceri drags Errol up some steps on the beach where a bridge used to be. The steps remain, the bridge does not.

ERROL
(out of breath)
What are you...they're...just...

He indicates the pursuers. Ceri kneels, roots in her bag, pulls out a glittery charm.

CERI
I've got a plan. I've not been
there for a while but it's a place
we can hide AND make us some gold.

ERROL
Gold? You know we're not in a game,
right?

CERI
Do you have any salt on you?

ERROL
What? No, Ceri! We don't have time
for your bullshit. This is real
life!

Ceri finds a few packets of popping candy in her bag, shrugs, chugs one, then empties the rest out to form a circle.

CERI
Sure? Trust me, I know what I'm
doing. Done this a million times.
(quietly)
Twenty years ago.

Ceri starts to chant. The popping candy rises up around them, fizzing and popping dramatically. A portal appears.

CERI
Here we go.

Ceri steps forward, she ought to fall but disappears. Errol is stunned, Ceri reaches back, pulls him in by his jumper.

EXT. ANNWN PORTAL. DAY.

The other side is bright daylight. Ceri emerges confidently, Errol tumbles in. They are near a well-used dirt road in woodland. Ceri walks in, Errol stumbles after.

CERI
See, told you it would be fine.
Anything broken?

ERROL
(looking around, stunned)
Just the laws of physics.

CERI
What can I say, I'm an anarchist.
Welcome to Annwn.

ERROL
But, how?

CERI
Pretty sure I mentioned it. Mam was
a Fae, remember? That's where I get
my powerful aura, my otherworldly
powers, you know?

ERROL
But that was just you and your
woowoo nonsense.

CERI
Was it? Well you go back and face
the big guys with guns. I'm off to
the pub.

EXT. ANNWN TOWN SQUARE. DAY.

The town square bustles with humans, other strange creatures. Errol is enthralled. Magic and impossible things are evident; a street preacher has their mouth removed by a passing mage, a baby in a carriage turns out to be a creepy changeling. Errol bumps into a giant's toe.

ERROL

Sorry!

GIANT

Look where you're going!

Giant steps on a big chicken. It squawks. A mule in a hat is tied outside a shop. Errol goes to pat the mule.

ERROL

Cute donkey.

MULE

Patronising git! I'm a mule, you racist.

ERROL

(shocked)

Sorry, I didn't...mule...donkey, er, no, er.

MULE

Oh hey Ceri! Long time, no see! What are you doing back here?

CERI

Just a bit of trouble in the real world. You know how it is.

MULE

No. Anyway this *is* the real world, look.

Kicks Errol in the shins.

ERROL

Ow! Yeah, that's real!

INT. TAVERN. DAY

A crowded bustle of people and people-creatures. The look is roughly medieval but there are anachronistic items; crocs, a Levellers t-shirt, a loom band. A pair of coblyns (Welsh goblins) play Buckaroo. Ceri greets various people as they push through the crowd. Errol is starstruck.

ERROL

This place is amazing, it's like The Prancing Pony!
(impersonating Pippin from Lord Of The Rings)
"It comes in pints?!"

Ceri gives him a disparaging look.

ERROL

The Prancing Pony, Fellowship of the Rings?

CERI

Yeah, I know. Just, like, play it a bit cooler, yeah? You're embarrassing me.

Ceri takes two beers from BARKEEP (50s, human, wears a Tamagotchi as a choker), pays with a wind-up toy wolf stolen from the escape room.

BARKEEP

Embarrassing you! I remember that time you got wasted on Solian Stout and puked so hard you blocked the bog hole! And THEN you tried to get off with a massive hairy pig!

Errol raises his eyebrows at her. She turns red.

CERI

I used to come here when I was a teenager, alright? Licensing laws don't extend to Annwn. Don't tell me you didn't do the same on Mad Dog 2020.

ERROL

So we're in magical land now. What next? We can't hide here forever.

CERI

Well would it that bad?

Errol looks horrified.

CERI

Fine. Thing is here they use *real* gold for stuff. We could earn a whole bunch, then pay off the angry men. That painting did look expensive.

ERROL

And the building, don't forget that. They had *guns*, Ceri, I don't see them accepting compensation from us!

CERI

Everyone loves a big pile of gold! Anyway, you got a better idea?
(to barkeep)
Who's the main broker for adventure gigs these days? We're in a spot and we're gonna need a bit of gold.

BARKEEP

(indicates a corner table)
Gwyllion over there. Eyes and ears everywhere that one.