

Captain Everything

By Pete Malicki

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Cast

A 14 year old boy. He is energetic and fast-paced.

Scene

It's hot and dark. I'm squashed in, barely able to move, my own breath the only thing I breathe in. I'm waiting. Waiting. And I leap!

I land on the lion as he races past, grabbing two fistfuls of his orange fur and squeezing my thighs into his side. He roars and I give him a hearty pat on the flanks.

We hurtle through the jungle until I grab a low-hanging vine, then I swing way up into the air and land in a tree. Adjust my loincloth as I wait. Oh, here they come – five four three-two-one BAM! I leap on the men and pull them both to the ground. “Take that, evil lion poachers.” (*as lion poacher*) “Nooooo!” (*as boy*) “Yees!”

I tussle them up and take them both back to the sheriff. “Well done, Captain Everything. But we have a bigger problem than lion poachers. The princess has been kidnapped.”

“Princess Prettyface?”

“Yes, Captain. Princess Prettyface.”

“Do you know who got her?”

“The Bad Man.”

I scowl. The Bad Man is... bad. Really bad. “Don't worry, Sheriff. I'll rescue her.”

So I change into my flying cape and climb the Big Tree of the Jungle. I get to the very top and jump. I fall for like ten minutes until I have enough speed to zoom up into the sky. “Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, fool. It's Captain Everything!” I fly for a few minutes until I catch up to a pterodactyl. “Hey man,” I say as I get into his slipstream. “Long time no see.”

He says, “AARK!” (*laughs as if at a hilarious joke*) That guy.

We fly past Mexico real quick and I land on a horse in Nevada. I buckle my boots on and sling a pistol over my shoulder as I ride into town. The Sheriff there is a drunk – naturally – and he's sleeping in the saloon while robbers run out of the bank across the road. They have big white bags with a dollar sign on them. “Where y'all going?” I ask in mah best twang. “Don't you boys know robbing a bank is a felony in these parts, and we *hang* felons 'round here!”

One of the men whips out his pistol like lightning fast and shoots at me. I unholster my own weapon and shoot them bullet right out of the air. The next bullet hits him in the buttocks (*snorts/giggles*) and the next hits the sign above the saloon and it swings down and smashes his partner in crime in the head. I go up to the one with the buttocks bullet and say, “Y'all

messed with the wrong man. Now tell me before I kill ya like the dog you are: where's Princess Prettyface?"

"I'll never tell you!"

I punch him in the face.

"I'll tell you everything! The Joker took her."

"The Joker, eh?" I punch him three more times in the face for good luck and ride Catherine – that's my horse – down to the garage where I parked the Batmobile. Twenty minutes later I'm in Gotham City making enquiries with the Chief of Police. He's all grumpy and serious. "Captain Everything, I only trust Batman with this kind of information. What if you're in cahoots with the Joker?"

I narrow my eyes. Something's not right here. The Chief of Police is slowly moving his hand towards his gun so I quickly rip off his face and he's the Riddler. "No!" he screams. "How did you know it was I, the Riddler?"

"Oh come on. You've been trying to make an appearance ever since they didn't put you in the remake."

Anyway, long story short I get the info I need and before you know it I've snuck up on the Joker in his lair and beat a confession out of the lunatic. Princess Prettyface has been taken into the sewers. That's no place for a man in a nice velvet cape so I change into my plumbing gear and stand on a big green pipe. I go into the sewers (*makes 'pipe' noise from Super Mario Brothers*).

It's dark down here. A turtle is coming towards me so I jump on it (*'boing' noise*). I kick the shell and it takes out this whole row of weird mushroom men thingies and I'm all like (*intersperses singing the 'underground' music from Super Mario Brothers with his next dialogue*). "I'm coming to get you, Princess." (*sings*) Jump on a moving platform above some lava. (*sings*) Eat a flower and shoot ice chunks out of my face. (*sings*) Duck a fireball and run towards the exit. (*sings one last time*)

When I reach the big green dinosaur I run underneath his dumb fat arse and destroy the bridge and he falls into the lava and dies. Well, sort of. Giant turd never stays dead for more than like three minutes. But Princess Prettyface isn't at the end of the bridge.

Damn it. Where is she? I need a new lead. I head up to Baker Street in London. My best friend comes in. "Ah, hello Doctor. Are there any clues to investigate?"

"Captain Mister Holmes! It's been forever. Have you been well?"

"I've been... elementary."

"You know he never actually said that?"

"Well now he did. What about those clues?"

“Nothing, Captain Mister. But you need to know that Mrs Fountainpen on level seven died of a heart attack last night.”

“A heart attack, you say? If only the body was still there for me to take a look at.”

“Oh, it is.”

“That’s convenient. And unhygienic.”

I go and investigate the body of Mrs Fountainpen. Lines on her face mean she’s forty-five years old, the wedding ring on her finger won’t budge so she’s been married at least 10 years, soles of her shoes are worn on the inside which shows she’s flat-footed. I can see from the crease pattern on her shirt that...

“Doctor! This was no heart attack. She was murdered!”

“How do you know, Captain?”

“There’s a pen sticking out of her eyeball.”

I reach down and pull it out. I’ve seen its kind before – a pen with a compass on it. This pen belongs to the Bad Man.

He’s playing with me. He’s leaving me clues because he knows I’ll follow him. Normally I’d refuse to play his games, but he has Princess Prettyface and I need to save her. I *have* to save her, damn it.

“I have to go, Doctor.”

“Where are you going?”

“To the ocean.”

So I head towards the coast. I pass through the Shire and one of those hairy-footed midgets stops me. “Mister Captain Everything! The evil wizard is trying to resurrect the dark lord from his slumber and take over the world. You’re our only hope.”

“I don’t have time right now,” I say. “Take my wand.”

“Thank you, Mister Captain. But a hobbit like me doesn’t know how to use a magic wand.”

“It’s not magic. It’s semiautomatic; pull the trigger and it’ll blow his geriatric brains out.”

I leave the Frodo behind and trot down to the ocean. Trick my way into a pirate ship and start a quick mutiny so we don’t sail off to somewhere pointless like Greece. “Captain Captain Everything,” the men call me. (*self-satisfied snort*)

Fight off a loch ness monster in the Bermuda Triangle and kill ourselves a couple of Krakens for dinner. We lose half the crew to some sirens but fortunately they were just the oarsmen who no one had the stomach to fire even though the ship’s had an engine for almost a decade.

That night, a drunken sailor leaves his cigarette lit and we catch fire. I'm the only survivor and swim to a shipwreck island. Grow a beard and catch fish with a sharpened stick for a couple of weeks. Then I stumble across an old lamp. Rub it a bit so I can see my reflection and track how the sideburns are coming along and out pops a genie.

"Master Captain Everything. You have three wishes. What will it be?"

"Um, a billion dollars... maybe a spaceship so I can bust this sand heap... and the coordinates of Princess Prettyface."

The genie does a five minute song and dance thingy then grants me my wishes. An X-Wing lands twenty minutes later and I jump into the pilot's seat. "Plot in the coordinates to Princess Prettyface. Autopilot commence."

Things go smoothly until we come out of hyperspace and get attacked by Tie Fighters. I like, roll my eyes, and I'm all like (*sings the Darth Vader theme tune while interspersed by the sounds of laser beams and spacecraft blowing up*).

We arrive in the dimension the Princess is being held captive in and I land next to the Bad Man's tower of evil. I would have landed on top of the tower of evil but I'm not sure it was structurally capable of supporting a forty tonne X-Wing. Anyway, I leap the moat, bash down the door, kill the guards, domesticate the guard dogs, run up the stairs and burst into the Bad Man's chambers.

He looks up at me in shock and horror and *fear*. "You can't hide any longer, Bad Man, and you can't outsmart Captain Everything. Let the princess go or else."

"Never! If I can't have her *no one will!*"

Then the Bad Man grabs Princess Prettyface and throws her right out the window. No! Like a flash, I cross the room and leap out the fenster...

(*sings gloriously*) And I, am Captain Everything. And I, fly through the sky again. And I will rescue Princess Prettyface. | I take her in my arms. We land near a bush. She looks me in the eyes and I'm alive!

The boy pulls his shirt open on the final word, revealing a scarred torso. His glorious gesture changes as he shields his eyes from a blinding light. From here on in, he is scared, tentative and physically hurt. The pace is slower.

The lid opens up and I'm blinded as light sears into my eyes. I smell him first: cheap wine on his breath. He grabs my arms with his rough, peeling hands. As my eyes adjust I see a short white beard, short white hair, a scowling face, hunched shoulders. The Bad Man.

He pushes me against the concrete wall. I wait as he fiddles with the latch on the other box. When it's open, he grabs her wasted arms, pulls her out and shoves her down onto the block opposite me. She is naked and shit is smeared down one leg but I only look at her pretty little face.

The Bad Man puts the hose on me then ties my wrists to my ankles. I grit my teeth as he wraps the belt around his hand and shuffles back a few steps. If she looks away, he hits her too. Her dead eyes meet mine and I mouth to her "I will save you, princess."

I *will* save her.

When it's over, he pushes me back to my box and I climb back in. It's about one metre by half a metre and I only fit by pulling my knees up and tucking my head down. Hardly a five star hotel but I'm used to it now. He drops some scraps in and swings the lid shut. The last thing I see is her face, staring at nothing.

It's hot and dark. I'm squashed in, barely able to move, my own breath the only thing I breathe in. I'm waiting. Waiting. Waiting.