

'A Hero Of Old'

Logline: A satyr working in an ordinary pizzeria longs to become a legendary hero, but can he step up when adventure crashes through the window?

EXT. OPEN FIELDS - NIGHT

A knight on horseback rides across a muddy plain. Rain lashes down and bounces off his helmet. He holds a flaming sword in his hand, the flames reflecting off his silver armour.

Behind him, a pack of orc riders ride in pursuit, kicking up dirt and firing flaming arrows which fly past the knight's head.

The knight passes a small inn-like building, outside of which a swinging sign reads: "PEGASUS PIZZA PARLOUR". An orc arrow hits it square, setting it alight, and the knight rides off into the distance.

A beat of silence.

The front door creaks open and out steps ZEPH (early 30s, satyr, scrawny) holding a fire extinguisher.

He looks up at the sign and sighs.

The orcs barrel through, whooping and hollering, smashing the sign into pieces as they pass, sending broken wood, flaming to the floor.

ZEPH
(Shouting after them)
Come on, guys! You're paying for the
replacement!

He douses the fire with the extinguisher leaving a pile of smoking soot and heads back inside.

INT. PEGASUS PIZZA PARLOUR - NIGHT

Zeph steps inside and wipes his hooves on the mat before putting the fire extinguisher to one side.

The parlour is a classic medieval tavern, now turned fast-food, with wooden tables, mismatched chairs and an open fireplace, but with added mustard-dispensers and family-meal promotions.

Zeph shuffles past a CUSTOMER (3-foot tall, suit of armour, helmet covering face), who is holding a takeaway pizza box, and he stands at the till.

ZEPH
Apologies for that sir, that's 4 gold
and a silver.

CUSTOMER

This pizza's cold. I'm not paying more than two gold for this.

ZEPH

With the greatest of respect sir, it wasn't cold when I gave it to you. I just had to deal with-

CUSTOMER

One gold.

ZEPH

(Relucant)

Fine.

The customer slides a gold piece over the counter and heads for the door.

Zeph opens the till and drops the gold piece in before closing it again.

He looks up at the rafters of the building, along which bunting is hanging. On each flag is a drawing of a different mythical hero, some holding swords aloft, some carrying severed heads, and under each is a name: "THALRIC THE BOLD", "SERAPHIS THE ETERNAL", "ALISTAIR IRONHEART" etc.

The customer, approaching the door, is met by GARRICK (30s, muscular, blonde, classic hero) who removes his own helmet, letting down his flowing locks. He holds the door open for the customer.

GARRICK

After you my friend.

The customer doesn't acknowledge him as he leaves.

GARRICK (cont'd)

(Sarcastically)

You are very welcome.

He sees Zeph and beams.

GARRICK (cont'd)

Zephiron, please for the sake of all the Wailing Mountains, I need a 'Kings Ransom Meal', extra dragon-fire sauce, no cheesy bones.

He slams a bag of coins on the counter and sits on a stool with a pained groan.

ZEPH

No dragon-fire delivery until tomorrow morning, Garrick. Delivery cart tipped over on the East road.

GARRICK

As if today couldn't get any worse! You know how many maidens I have saved today, Zeph? Do you? Nine? And each one less appealing than the last. I get offered land and riches everywhere I turn, but the treasure I desire the most, the maiden who claims my heart, has yet to appear.

Zeph starts preparing the food

ZEPH

(Sigh, sarcastically)
Sounds terrible.

GARRICK

See? I knew you'd get it. You've got the simple life, the dream. No threats of death or evading swords and arrows, just serving pizza and being great at it.

ZEPH

Thanks Garrick. I don't know, I just think this lacks a bit of excitement, that's all.

GARRICK

Come on mate, not this again.

Zeph places a tray in front of Garrick who begins to eat as he speaks.

GARRICK (cont'd)

Some people, like me for example, are built for adventure and life-threatening battles. Some people, like you, just...aren't. And it's not a bad thing, you're great at what you do, and what you do is...

(he gestures around,
waving a slice of
pizza)

This.

ZEPH

Yeah.

GARRICK

Look, I'd love nothing more than to have you at my side, back to back, fighting to the death, swords in hand, but satyrs just aren't built for that sort of thing, you know that. It's not who you are.

ZEPH

Garrick, look up there.
(He points at the
flags above)
Who do you see?

Garrick, with his mouth full of food, wipes his face and gives a quick upward glance.

GARRICK

(Shrugs)
The Heroes of Old.

ZEPH

And what did The Heroes of Old have in common?

GARRICK

Dunno. Good teeth?

ZEPH

They were nobodys. They didn't live in a world like this where people are born heroes and everyone goes on adventures after their morning cereal. They had to *earn* it. They were just regular people who proved themselves and fought for what they believed in.

GARRICK

And none of them were satyrs. Look, I respect the dream little man, I really do, but some things just aren't meant to be.

CRASH

The door bursts open and in a gust of wind and rain stands CELESTE (late 20s, confident, fierce, bloodied).

SLOW-MOTION: She walks in, her hair waving in the wind. She wields a long sword in one hand and a large, sharp tooth in the other.

She throws the tooth down and sheathes her sword.

She stops with a powerful stance and stares around the room, analysing her surroundings.

BACK TO REAL-TIME: Zeph and Garrick are both staring in a mix of awe and wonder, mouths open.

ZEPH

No way. I know her.

GARRICK

What? One of you ex's is she? You sly dog.

ZEPH

I wish. That's Celeste Bloodfang, who wielded the Skullbreaker to claim the treasure of Sir Bramble Briarwood. She's like...she's...she's amazing.

Garrick stands up and slicks back his hair.

GARRICK

Well, you should've said.

He approaches Celeste with a clear arrogance and a raised eyebrow.

GARRICK (cont'd)

Well hel-

Celeste pushes past him, almost knocking him to the floor and walks straight to Zeph.

ZEPH

(Staring)

You're Celeste Bloodfang.

CELESTE

Yes.

ZEPH

I have, like, all of your merch, and your limited edition trading card. I have three. If you ever need anyone to join you on an adventure, even just a small one, I would. I will. Anything.

CELESTE

Well, you know what...erm...?

ZEPH

Zephiron, or Zeph.

CELESTE
(Leans in, almost
whispering)
You know what Zephiron, I actually do
need your help.

Zeph's eyes widen even more than they had before. More than
you would think possible.

ZEPH
(Leans in as well)
Yes. Anything.

CELESTE
I need three Hero's Feasts, two
Phoenix Wings and an Arcane Platter
as soon as you can.

Zeph stands up, figuring out what's happened, and laughs
awkwardly whilst noting it down.

ZEPH
Yes, of course, silly me. Apologies
Miss Celeste. It sounds like quite
the party. What's the occasion?

CELESTE
What occasion?

ZEPH
(Panicked)
All the food...sorry I just assumed-

CELESTE
It's all for me.

ZEPH
(Trying to recover)
Yeah. No, yeah fine.

CELESTE
Is that a problem?

ZEPH
No, no problem at all. No problem,
why would there be a problem? No
problem-o.

Zeph stares at Celeste for a moment, wanting to dig a hole
and hide as soon as possible.

CELESTE
I'm in a bit of a rush so...

ZEPH
Yes, of course, I'm very sorry. I'll
be two moments.

Zeph disappears into a back room.

Garrick, finding his confidence again, sits back on his stool and leans forward, smirking.

GARRICK
I don't see you round here often. Are
you local?

Celeste doesn't respond.

GARRICK (cont'd)
I'm in here all the time. Sort of my
hang out spot. Do you like to hang
out?

Suddenly there's a screeching roar from outside and the sounds of screams.

Celeste's head immediately spins to the door with a face of pure dread.

CELESTE
He's here.

GARRICK
(Still calm and suave)
Oh, you've got a bloke have you?
Lucky man. I'd love to shake his hand
and tell him what a girl he's got.

CELESTE
That's not a man.

GARRICK
Right, my fault. Shake his paw, or
claw or whatever he's got. I don't
judge.

Celeste pulls out her sword and sprints towards the door, kicking it open.

As it closes, the room is left silent.

GARRICK (cont'd)
Well that was rude.

Zeph walks in with two trays of food.

ZEPH
Where did she go?

GARRICK
Who?

ZEPH
Celeste Bloodfang, who was just here!

GARRICK
Oh her. Yeah, she left.

ZEPH
Why? What did you do?

GARRICK
I didn't do anything. I was just being nice and friendly and asking her if she'd been here before.

ZEPH
She hasn't been here before. I'd remember. She-...she's...she's incredible. And now thanks to you she'll never be back.

CRASH!

Celeste flies in through a window hitting the ground and rolling over the broken glass.

On top of her is a griffin, three times her size with wings almost filling the room. Its eagle-like beak is inches from her face and screeching loud enough to shake the floor.

Garrick turns around slowly and casually.

GARRICK
Need a hand?

CELESTE
(Gasping and
struggling)
...no!

GARRICK
Fine. Your loss.

He turns around and continues eating as candles fall to the ground and tables collapse around him.

ZEPH
Garrick help her!

Garrick rolls his eyes and puts down his food. He picks up his helmet from the counter and slowly places it on his head as he stands and turns to face the griffin.

He pulls his sword.

GARRICK
Okay creature, you have met your
match! Prepare to-

The griffin swipes its tail, throwing up rocks and stones, one of which hits Garrick in the side of the head, knocking him clear out with a CLANG.

As he hits the floor, his helmet comes loose and rolls along the floor, settling at Zeph's feet.

Zeph bends down and picks the helmet up in his hands.

Looking down at his reflection, he sees his scared, trembling face.

He looks up at the flags and at his heroes, their faces looking back at him with their feats of bravery on display.

The reflection no longer shows the scared young man, but a man similar to Garrick, with a chiseled jaw and a confident smirk.

He knows what he has to do.

He looks up at the griffin, and in a moment of true bravery, throws the helmet in its general direction.

It misses, and hits the wall behind with an underwhelming THUD.

The griffins head snaps to Zeph. It still has a struggling Celeste under its claws but its gaze is firmly fixed on him.

CELESTE
(Gasping for air)
I...said...I didn't need...help!

ZEPH
(To Celeste)
Sorry!
(To the griffin)
I'm sorry!

There is a moment of pause.

Celeste attempts to shout something but she can barely breathe.

ZEPH (cont'd)

What?

She tries again.

ZEPH (cont'd)

I can't hear you.

She summons all the strength she has.

CELESTE

Run!

Zeph looks at the griffin, realises what he has done and sprints across the room.

The griffin immediately chases after, leaving Celeste on the ground.

INT. PEGASUS PIZZA PARLOUR KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Zeph ducks and dives over counters and ovens, throwing whatever he can find behind him. The griffin is crashing through, hitting walls and tripping, clearly too big for its current enclosure.

He hurls whatever is in reach - pizza dough, rolling pins, jars of olives, but the griffin smashes through everything.

As he falls to the ground with his back against the wall, it seems like there is nothing to do but accept the inevitable.

But wait...

Out of the corner of his eye he sees the pizza oven, and it may well be just about griffin-sized.

He grabs a pizza tray and holds it in front of his face, and as the griffin brings down its giant claw, it scratches the metal. The perfect make-shift shield.

ZEPH

I...am...a hero.

The griffin rears on its huge back legs for its final attack, but Zeph sees an opening and slides between them.

He grabs a rolled out pizza dough and climbs on to the griffins back, holding onto its fur for dear life, before throwing the dough across its face, blinding it.

The more the griffin claws at it, the more it spreads and dents, making it harder to remove, and the griffin stumbles around, face-planting the walls in its desperation.

Zeph, losing his grip, drops to the floor, sprints over to the pizza oven and swings its door open.

He then takes a step back and leans forward, his eyes fixed.

ZEPH (cont'd)
For Celeste.

He sprints forward at full speed and launches off the ground, kicking into the side of the griffin with his powerful hooves and throwing it off-balance, stumbling into the oven.

Zeph slams the door shut.

A muffled screech from inside and the oven glows red-hot, shaking violently. Then slowly but surely...

Silence.

Zeph stumbles back, scratched and exhausted.

He sits for a moment.

INT. PEGASUS PIZZA PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

Zeph stumbles over to Celeste who is still on the floor recovering her breath. She is holding onto her side where she has clearly been heavily scratched.

ZEPH
Are you okay? Are you hurt?

CELESTE
(Panicked)
Where is it?

ZEPH
It's gone. It's gone.

Celeste breathes a sigh of relief and settles back down to the ground.

CELESTE
You...how did you...?

ZEPH
I don't know. It just sort of all happened.

Celeste chuckles, which causes a sharp pain.

ZEPH (cont'd)
Are you gonna be okay?

CELESTE
Yeah, I've had worse.
(Smirks)
I wish my all of my fights just 'sort
of happen'. Not bad for a-

ZEPH
Satyr?

CELESTE
For a pizza boy.

She smiles at Zeph who smiles back.

Garrick sits up slowly and looks around.

GARRICK
What happened? Did I do it?

INT. PEGASUS PIZZA PARLOUR - MORNING

The restaurant isn't open yet. The tables that are still in one piece are empty and sunlight is just creeping through the broken windows.

Zeph stands surrounded by rubble and splintered wood with his apron on and broom in hand, clearing up the mess.

We pan up to the flags in the rafters. One by one we see warriors fighting, wizards casting spells and in the centre, on a napkin just folded over the string, is a pencil sketch of Zeph holding a pizza, one which sits a griffin's head.

FADE OUT