

**Hello, my name is Dan, and I'm an adventurer.** I'm so adventurous, sometimes exciting and hilarious escapades just fall upon me. This one time, I was looking out of my window when a giant eagle snatched me up and flew me all the way to Peru. I bided my time as we flew 6300 miles and doing nothing turned out to be the best tactic. As we soared over the Peruvian jungle, there was a flash of light and we plummeted to the ground. I only found out weeks later that the eagle had been struck by a defensive laser-beam from Dr Retro-A-Go-Go's secret disco robot lair. My neck snapped on impact, and I died instantly. But I wasn't defeated.

See, one of an adventurer's top assets is his sidekick, and mine is the best. I live in London with my best pal, Ben, and I've got out of many a tight situation thanks to his assistance. On his return to the flat, he saw the open window and a feather from a Giant Peruvian Eagle. Thanks to the detective skills I had taught him, he worked out what had happened, and what he needed to do. He rescued and reanimated me, after some basic object-manipulation involving a Whizzo-Bang firework, twine, superglue, pants, rollerskates and some grubby item he picked up off the jungle floor. I didn't teach him that, the filthy monkey!

I know what you're thinking: I didn't do any of the adventuring, Ben did all the hard work. And you're right, but if I hadn't got stolen by a giant bird, there wouldn't have been an adventure in the first place, now would there? And anyway, another adventure was just round the corner, and it stretched my Indiana Jonesing skills to their very limits.

After the two-week trip home, I just wanted to relax in front of an episode of fellow adventurer Magnum PI. Unfortunately, Ben had broken the aerial whilst rescuing me from the noisy, noisy jungle. A clumsy mistake, but I couldn't be angry at Ben after all his good efforts, bless him. I was still feeling groggy after my reanimation, so I let Ben find a new aerial. He found what he needed in my wardrobe. After uncovering the window, all he needed was a cable to connect the aerial to the television. He searched his room and the toilet, and found both a wire and the means to remove it. The only obstacle was fear itself, as Ben came up against some dangerous electricity. Thankfully, I had been monitoring his progress, and stepped in to help. With a steady hand and nerves of steel, I flipped a lightswitch.

Flush with success, Ben connected the aerial and stuck it out of the window, without even a basic risk assessment. Sure enough, we were teleported aboard an alien spaceship. Not wanting the guilt to eat away at him, I allowed Ben to clear up this little mess and get us home. After all, we only had to find a yin-yang by searching through a few alternate dimensions, and I'd be there to help him with any higher-level puzzling...

Ben already had the two objects necessary to create a bunny head and unlock the first door. We entered the zombie dimension, and after picking up yet another grotty object off the ground, Ben led us to the church. A blood trail pointed us in the right direction.

Ben noticed some carvings on the church pillars which seemed to correspond with two candlebras. After a bit of research, he realised that the Bible references in the carvings were clues about how to use the six candles to further our progress.

We met a bible-bashing old priest and Ben gave him a taste of his own medicine. A tad violent for my tastes, but he will refine his adventuring skills in time, and we did end up with a crucifix, one of the keys we needed.

Another key was in the next room, guarded by the priest's bitey son. In an uncharacteristically civilised moment, Ben decided he was Unwilling to cave a child's skull in. Instead, he searched his hanky-sack and found what he needed to seal Gilbert's snapping jaw.

The crucifix led us to the space dimension, where we spotted a Yin - half of what we needed to get home. But Ben had a bit more adventuring ahead of him yet. He left no stone unturned or door unopened, and picked up a couple more useful items. Like all good adventurers, he examined the items after collecting them.

Gilbert's action-figure led us to the America dimension. After a chat with the man in the pink castle, I realised that the most striking difference in this dimension was that these alternate Americans didn't have the same good sense of humour to appreciate some gentle pokes at their culture as the Americans you and I know. Our conversation was completely pointless, albeit hilarious and expository. We headed straight for somewhere familiar, where we knew where the exits were. We went to the pub.

Ben scoured the room for pickupable items, and had a chat with the locals. Having tricked them into downing their pints via a drinking game, Ben used the opportunity to have a nose behind the bar. We then went to the lavvy. Both the condom machine and the urinals yielded more useful objects. Ben got a bit pissy, pun intended, about personal hygiene while collecting from wee-soaked urinals, and had to wrap one lot of objects up in something before getting them.

Having thoroughly exhausted conversation with the barman and drunks upstairs, Ben came up with quite a clever plan. In the freshly unlocked cellar, he figured out a way to get the louts drinking stronger stuff, knowing this would probably knock them out and thereby push the barman into quitting. By the time we got back upstairs, the trio of English stereotypes had already topped up their pints. It took one more round of the drinking game to procure our next doorkey.

Ben didn't seem interested in the Fish N Fries shop just yet, for some reason. Knowing that to question his whims is to suffer days of sulking, I simply smiled and followed him directly to the next dimension.

In a satisfying change of pace, we found ourselves in a small, broken elevator. Ben bashed open the control panel in that brutish, caveman approach to adventuring of his, fiddled around with some wires, and got us moving.

Next up was the Dinomension. Ben picked up a couple of things, one of which required some simple box-opening which he breezed through. He soon ran into trouble again, though. He realised he needed to distract Carl and use his Death Star to capture the X-Wing, our next key. With subtle interrogation, Ben learned that defeating Chuckie Egg would be the perfect solution, but after about 50 plays he was still stuck on the first level. Once again, I stepped in and saved the day. With unerring precision and flair, I played a video game.

Gratitude and admiration shining in his eyes, Ben hoovered up my adventuring crumbs. With the X-Wing in hand, we strode on.

On our return to the alien spaceship, something was different. A new door had appeared, leading to a secret surveillance room. It was full of intrigue, and even after picking up the single useful item, we stayed to examine everything in great detail.

It was time, apparently, to return to the Fish N Fries shop. I kind of zoned out here, to be honest, but Ben got a loose plank off the door using some tool or other, and got some moonshine off the three drunken geniuses by giving them three items. I don't think he really worked that one out properly, to be honest; he probably just saw three and three and gave it a try.

Yadda yadda yadda X-Wing led to lava dimension, yib yib yib, used item in hanky-sack to make bridge and get spanner, yibbidy yibbidy yibbidy.

The ice dimension awaited. After levering off an eye-catching purple panel, we spotted our next doorkey. But even I can't perform professional turnstyle maintenance... To dethaw the guard, we needed a very hot substance, and something to keep it very hot in. To motivate him, we needed something to warm his cockles. In this dimension it was quite possible that alcohol would help blood flow rather than slow it, so we gave it a try. And it worked! After a little further nudging, he removed the cog. As I always tell Ben, you always need a long piece of rope in adventures like this, so we took one before leaving. It was a little too frozen to be useful, so we took it somewhere hot to dethaw it before we went on to the final door.

We were lucky enough to enter the superhero dimension just in time to have its differences and relevant history explained to us by a passerby. My luck took a downturn when Ben decided the best course of action would be to head into a boring old museum. We had to get a ticket off some guy made of water, and we only had one item that could soak up that much liquid.

Handing the ticket over to the empowered positive female role-model at the door, we headed in. Ben picked up a handy item from one of the tableau displays quite easily. Getting the other item he needed from a pressure-sensitive plinth was a little more involved. Having seen me use the 'swap one item for another very similar item' technique during previous adventures, Ben executed it adequately, and collected the item.

In the next room was the Yang, guarded by a telepath and a security camera. Ben managed to cover the camera lens so we wouldn't be seen, and started trying to distract the guard. Dialogue wasn't working, so he tried a different strategy. The old 'switcheroo' manoeuvre served Ben well again, as he made the guard's sugarcubes slightly more distracty.

Finally on the vinegar strokes of our quest, we raced back to the space dimension to claim our Yin. Ben made a walkway of the lamp-post using a metal-cutting object, and engaged in the most complicated item-combination in his career to date. He had a hand to grab the Yin with, but needed an object to lower it with, and an object to make it sticky enough to attach to the Yin. He did admirably, and our final key was complete. I held back a paternal tear as we headed to our front door - my young companion had become a man.

And so I had completed another incredible adventure. As two near-equals, Ben and I strode into our flat to meet with destiny. Epic, thrilling, sidesplitting destiny.

by Ben Ward