Tensions rise between humans, mythical creatures in new Carnival Row trailer

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Orlando Bloom and Cara Delevingne star in Amazon Prime's neo-Victorian noir-fantasy series *Carnival Row*.
Mythical creatures fleeing their war-torn homeland live uneasily alongside humans in *Carnival Row*, the new "neo-Victorian noir" fantasy series from Amazon Prime, starring Orlando Bloom and Cara Delevingne and directed by Jon Amiel. Amazon must be excited about the series, because it has already ordered a second season. The studio just dropped the latest trailer, and visually, at least, it's gorgeous and chock-full of sumptuous detail at a level rarely seen on streaming television.

Carnival Row is based on a feature film script by Travis Beacham when he was still in film school, some 17 years ago, and it made the infamous Hollywood Black List in 2005. Legendary Entertainment bought the script in 2015 and reimagined it as a series for Amazon Prime. Oscar-winning Director Guillermo del Toro was originally tapped to direct the series—the neo-Victorian setting and fantastical creatures would have been very well-suited to his idiosyncratic style. But del Toro left the project before production officially

began to focus on his feature-film commitments. He was replaced by Paul McGuigan, who was in turn replaced by Amiel.

Judging from Beacham's comments at San Diego Comic-Con last month, the budget for the series is significant. Some of that budget no doubt went toward the numerous reshoots—often a sign of trouble for a project—although Bloom called the reshoots "a gift" during the Comic-Con panel. Beacham agreed, per Deadline Hollywood:

> *The advantage of when you have a true series order like this is that you shoot all eight episodes, then you can go back and look at the whole and watch as well as we can watch. Are we setting up the things that pay off as well as we can set them up? It's a function of the size of it and the scope of what we've been allowed to do. There's stigma when it comes to reshoots, but increasingly in this world of peak TV, where shows are getting bigger and bigger, it becomes necessary.*

Here's the official synopsis: "Feared by humans, [these mythical creatures] are forbidden to live, love, or fly with freedom. But even in darkness, hope lives, as a human detective and a faerie rekindle a dangerous affair. The city's uneasy peace collapses when a string of murders reveals a monster no one could imagine." Or, as Comic Years put it, "Think *Game of Thrones* but with better technology and set in Narnia." (The supporting class includes Indira Varma, who played Ellaria Sand in *Game of Thrones*, as well as Tamzin Merchant, who was the original Daenerys Targaryen in the failed pilot, before she was replaced by Emilia Clarke.)

- An army of faeries overhead.
  YouTube/Amazon Prime
- Orlando Bloom plays Rycroft "Philo" Philostrate, a human who falls in love with a faerie.
- Cara Delevingne plays Vignette Stonemoss, who falls hard for Philo.

YouTube/Amazon Prime

- I know it’s prurient, but what does she do with her wings?
  YouTube/Amazon Prime
- An invading army ruins everything.
  YouTube/Amazon Prime
- Grief-stricken because she believes Philo is dead.
  YouTube/Amazon Prime
- The governing officials of the Burgue aren’t happy about the influx of refugee creatures.
  YouTube/Amazon Prime
- Indira Varma plays Piety Breakspear.
  YouTube/Amazon Prime
- A thug takes out his resentment on the street.
  YouTube/Amazon Prime
- “They will never accept us.”
  YouTube/Amazon Prime
- Philo is now a police detective.
  YouTube/Amazon Prime
- There have been a string of brutal attacks on magical creatures.
  YouTube/Amazon Prime
- Philo and his men make an ugly discovery.
  YouTube/Amazon Prime
- Those attacks escalate to murder.
  YouTube/Amazon Prime
- “Something neither human nor fae.”
  YouTube/Amazon Prime

The first trailer dropped last month, featuring a sonorous voiceover by Bloom’s Philo that mostly lays out more details of this fantastical brave new world. This is probably a wise move, given the complexity of the world-building here, particularly since *Carnival Row* is not tied to an existing franchise or an adaptation of a bestselling novel, which will make finding its audience more of a challenge. Philo explains that he is an orphan of the Burgue, where humans and other

fantastic creatures (faeries, fauns, etc) used to live peacefully together, “until war changed everything.”

It was during his military service that he met and fell in love with the faerie Vignette (Cara Delevingne). The new regime didn’t take kindly to inter-species romance, and the lovers were forced to flee separately. Now, all the species have retreated to the Burgue, stoking what can only be described as anti-immigrant sentiment among the humans. Creatures are treated as subhuman, and Philo has vowed “to protect those that couldn’t protect themselves, whatever it took. For her.” Oh, and apparently some kind of darkness is coming.

This new trailer reinforces those elements of the story and fleshes out a few more details. We see Philo and Vignette meet for the first time, as well as their inevitable coupling and being torn apart. She believes Philo is dead and finds herself a refugee in the Burgue, working (it seems) as a ladies’ maid. She’s peeved when she learns he’s still alive and confronts him in his bed one night with a knife to his throat, demanding to know why he left her “in the ashes of my homeland.” She looks like she forgives him, though, and they start to rekindle the old flame.

Philo has a lot of other things on his mind, of course. He is now a police detective working to solve a string of heinous murders, and anti-immigrant sentiment among humans in the Burgue is on the rise. “Our streets are safe no more!” one pompous politician declares. And it looks like the culprit behind the murders might be something (or someone) completely different: “She was taken by something unnatural. Neither man nor fae.”

Carnival Row debuts on Amazon Prime August 30, 2019. We’ll soon see if Amazon’s investment in the series paid off.

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