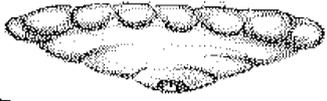


THE EYE SHIELD



Issue 24

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MESSAGE FROM ME

Welcome to issue twenty-four of The Eye Shield. I am very happy this month because there are plenty of e-mails to read on this page, as well as two brand new articles from TES readers. Pam Glennie, as you may recall from the last issue, is a devoted fan of Pickle, and her article - *Pickle Got Pickled Here* - is a tribute to everyone's favourite half-wit elf. I have also received a piece entitled *Knightmare in 2004* from Rowan DT, which assesses Nightmare's place in today's modern world. I find the content of this article tallies exactly with my own personal and hereto unexpressed beliefs about Nightmare's possible resurrection, so I hope that it strikes a chord with some of you as well. Elsewhere, there are the usual fascinating articles and devious puzzles to entertain you, so get reading!

Challenge question: Which dungeoneer used a spell given by Lord Fear to escape level one?

CORRESPONDENCE

Here are some of Liam Callaghan's memories of the programme.

Dear Eye Shield.

When Nightmare first started, I was about five. I remember watching it, but not fully understanding what it was all about. It wasn't until the third series that I fully got the hang of what was going on. It's definitely series 3 that holds the most memories for me. I agree that the eye shield sequences did get a little bit boring after the novelty wore off (I was a bit phased when, in an eye shield sequence, an exit would suddenly swing into view that wasn't there before). They managed a lot without any extras like the eye shield or the reach wand. Originally, I thought that the wand was an interesting addition, but looking back, it didn't really do much. Plus, I definitely prefer the original Helmet of Justice. It was identifiable, and, more to the point, it didn't look like any "real" medieval helmet - it was unique. Equally, I tolerated Majida, but Pickle was a better assistant, although whether Treguard really needed an assistant is questionable.

Liam, you are a man completely after my own heart. I agree with everything that you say there, and my experiences with the early series were exactly the same as yours. The only difference is that I was four when it began, but I guess that doesn't make very much difference. Thanks for writing.

Steven Webberley shares with us his views about the Short Cut and Dunston's controversial series 8 victory.

Dear Eye Shield.

I agree with your views on the Short Cut, and that Nathan's team was more exciting than Dunston's. Dunston's team was slightly erratic at the beginning, although they

got better as the game progressed. Nathan's advisors, though, were consistent all the way through until they made the mistake that led to their doom. I assume the spell they needed would have enabled them to *see*. Still, Nathan's team was one of the best non-winning teams. I was thinking of a possible feature for the future comparing all the Nightmare victories, including the pros and cons of each winning team's performance.

That is a very good idea, Steven. I have often thought that Nightmare's eight winning teams did not necessarily give the eight best performances, so perhaps it's time to dole out some credit where it's really due. I think fans of such memorable dungeoneers as Leo, Martin, Daniel and Nathan might enjoy such an article, don't you?

Now here is something from an original TES reader. I was very interested to hear from him, particularly as he is the younger brother of The Eye Shield's founder, Paul McIntosh. The following comes from Richard McIntosh, originally from Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Dear Eye Shield.

I'm just writing to congratulate you on The Eye Shield. I watched Nightmare when it was originally on (let's face it, in my household it was inevitable) and did enjoy it, but I was probably a bit young to fully appreciate it. I've been searching the internet for Nightmare info, and I found your editions of the Eye Shield. I just thought I'd write to say how much I enjoyed it and how impressed I am that its production has continued despite Nightmare finishing nearly a decade ago. It's great to know that a healthy Nightmare obsession is something that stretches beyond the boundaries of the McIntosh household. Keep up the good work – it's good to know that Nightmare's not forgotten!

Thanks once again for your comments and enthusiasm, Richard. It really is good to know that you are enjoying the new issues of your brother's brainchild. Despite the fact that you played down your involvement with the original TES in your e-mail to me, I remember that you are credited with puzzles in TES issues 1 and 9, and now you have a letter (well, an e-mail) in issue 24! As for whether my obsession with Nightmare is healthy, I think opinion is divided on the subject. Thanks again for writing.

REMEMBER THIS?

Series 1/2/3. Level 2.

THE HALL OF SPEARS

The first version of this challenge consisted of a corridor that contained five doors; one at the far end and two on each side. Giant silver spears shot in and out of the side doors, across the path of the dungeoneer, and it was the advisors' task to get them past the gleaming spearpoints to the door. The first teams to attempt this challenge were the three to reach level two in series 1 - Simon, Danny and Richard. The challenge looked menacing enough and certainly unnerved these three teams, but the truth was that they were in little danger of dying. As soon as the dungeoneer walked into the path of the spears, they either stopped moving or disappeared completely - not much of a challenge, really. As Danny also proved, there was plenty of room to duck underneath the spear on the far right, although it was something of an unnecessary inconvenience for the poor little chap.

Because of the oddity and awkward workability of this challenge, it was redesigned for series 2. This time the spears were smaller and faster, and made nasty grating noises as they met across the path of the corridor. They did not disappear once the dungeoneer had run into their path, which meant that careful instruction was needed for the dungeoneer to both start and stop in the right place. The added hazard of holes in the floor was a nice way to give the challenge more of an edge and, when the Hall of Spears returned for series 3, skull ghosts were sometimes added to further fluster the teams. Despite being the setting for several tense and exciting guidance scenes, however, the Hall of Spears never claimed itself a victim, which is hardly surprising really. Despite the fact that the challenge was more difficult in series 2 and 3 than in series 1,

I'm certain that some dungeoneers were let off being brushed by the moving spears. If you don't believe me, look carefully at the two revered heroes of series 3 - Leo and Martin II - and see if you can spot them standing over the spearpoints' path for a few seconds as they attempt this challenge. No victims, then, but a memorable Knightmare puzzle.

Difficulty: 5 Not as tricky as it looked.

Killer Instinct: 1 Even near scrapes weren't penalised.

Gore Factor: 4 Could have been nasty...

Fairness: 7 A good challenge for level two.

ADVENTURE TIME

The score is Dungeon 9, Humans 3, and a fresh quest begins.

The next dungeoneer is called Ben.

"Ben is truly the name of a winning dungeoneer" Treguard booms encouragingly. "Go forth, and live up to your name."

The quest begins in the level one clue room. The advisors direct Ben to the table and ask him to identify the objects.

"There's a golden chalice, a red stone and a large bone, definitely from some sort of limb" reports Ben.

"Much here to catch the eye, team" Treguard notes. "But the choice comes only after your trial."

The far wall shimmers and forms the face of Phelheim. The only exit has transformed into his gaping maw.

"You're in for a testing time, young dungeoneer" the wall monster chuckles. "I seek three truths from you, and here is my first. All England's gentry seek to blight the clergy's legal sacred right, to castle own and passage book; who's 'tween a Bishop and his Rook?"

Ben is not a chess player, but fortunately one of his advisors is.

"Knight" comes the reply.

"Truth accepted" booms Phelheim. "Here is my second. Though faerie not, but very grand, a queen of England's fair great land is dubbed by some the faerie queen, but tell me which queen do they mean?"

"I dunno, Queen Victoria?" guesses Ben hastily.

"Falsehood!" proclaims Phelheim triumphantly. "Elizabeth the first was the faerie queen. Here is my third and last. Made like me the mountain stands; the tallest object in our land. Give name to him."

"Oh, what's the tallest mountain in Britain?" muses an advisor.

Although he has not really understood Phelheim's words, this prompts Ben to venture an answer.

"Ben Nevis" he says.

"Truth accepted" Phelheim is forced to reply. "Two is the score. Your quest is for the Sword, but you may not wield it. You must rattle her bones, or she'll rattle yours. The first step is the *shuffle*."

Phelheim's face melts back into the wall. The advisors tell Ben at once to take the bone, and decide that the chalice might be needed because it is unusual. Then Ben is directed out. Next comes the spectral scorpion.

"Watch out for that sting, team, but don't hang around" Treguard urges.

The advisors duly direct Ben past the menacing sting and through the waiting doorway. The room on the other side is filled with billowing smoke. A hunched shape can be seen in amongst the clouds, stooping over a cauldron.

"Oh dear, team" Treguard grins. "Mildread has never been that successful with magic, but now it appears she really is in over her head!"

"That's right, oh great Dungeon Master, laugh at the misfortunes of a poor old woman" rasps Mildread's reedy voice from the smoke. "Heaven frowns on those who spurn charity. Yet I'm sure you don't, young dungeoneer. Oh yes, although she cannot see, Mildread knows you're there. Mildread also knows that you are carrying the ingredient she needs to end this spell she has been attempting, which, as you can see, has gone somewhat awry. You're not going to keep it from me, are you?"

A knobby hand suddenly protrudes from the inscrutable smokescreen.

"Well, team, will you trust Mildread to be telling the truth, or try to navigate your own way through?" asks Treguard. "That is, of course, if you have worked out what the witch needs."

"Give her the bone" agree the advisors.

"Ah, thank you" Mildread breathes as she receives the implement. "Now, *shiver me timbers, rattle me bones, take us back to clearer tones.*"

The smoke immediately clears, and the advisors see Mildread leaning on her staff and grinning inanely.

"My thanks to you, young warrior" Mildread seethes. "What is your name?"

"Ben" comes the reply.

"Well, Ben, you got me out of a jam, so I'll do the same for you" Mildread returns graciously. "The password for this level is *sorcery*, but it will not save you from the warrior of wheels and springs. Only those who are pure of heart may touch the Cup of Christ. The second step is the *trip.*"

The witch then cackles madly and disappears in a blinding flash. The advisors direct Ben out, and into the *Great Corridor of the Catacombs*.

"Don't tarry here, team, for it can prove deadly" Treguard warns.

Sure enough, the room is filled with the sound of the Automatum approaching. Of the two near doors, the one on the right is blocked up, so Ben is directed to the left. But it is from here that the clattering Automatum appears! The team panic in dismay.

"Quickly, team, you must seek another exit!" Treguard urges them.

Ben is hurriedly directed further up the passage before the brainless Automatum can realise what is happening. Through the right-hand door lies the blocker's chamber. The large grey wall grates forwards and forms a menacing countenance.

"Password!" it demands.

"Sorcery" cries Ben.

The wall shoots off and Ben is directed out. He emerges into the wellway room, where Fatilla is sitting on the stone steps that lead up to the portal to the next level.

"Ooh, a dungerperson" the Barbarian slurps. "Welcome to the end of level one, Helmet Head. Of course, it may also be the end of your quest, unless I decide to let you pass."

"Well, if Ben has anything valuable this is where he loses it" Treguard says.

"I'll give you this beautiful golden chalice" Ben offers enthusiastically.

"Oh, it is beautiful!" exclaims Fatilla gleefully. "I must have it!"

Ben obligingly hands the chalice to the guard. Immediately there is a loud hissing, then Ben can smell burning flesh.

"Aaah, it burns!" screams Fatilla in agony, desperately trying to shake off the sacred relic that is clinging to his flesh. "Get it off! Get it off!"

The Barbarian runs screaming from the room, waving his steaming arm helplessly.

"Well, Ben, while you are obviously pure of heart, Barbarian flesh is subject to different treatment from the Grail" Treguard chuckles.

"Hurry now, for the wellway is clear, and level two beckons."

Ben is taken down the well and into level two. He lands in a large blue cave that contains a set of stocks. The team are very surprised to see Elita imprisoned in them.

"Oi, face-ache!" Elita calls sharply. "Get yourself over 'ere, sharpish!"

The advisors direct Ben to the trapped elf maiden.

"I'm Ben, a dungeoneer" Ben introduces himself. "Can I help you at all?"

"Oh no, I'm just fine, thanks!" spits Elita sarcastically. "Of course I want help, jelly-brain. That stupid jester Motley has put me in this damned contraption and I can't get out. He must have somehow managed to put a spell on it, because I just can't escape!"

"Well, it looks as though the tables have turned for Elita, team" chuckles Treguard. "And she richly deserves it! Still, don't abandon her just yet; I'm sure she'll pay well for her release."

"Oh yes, I promise I will" Elita pleads piteously. "Just find Motley and persuade him to release me and I'll help you into level three, you have my word."

"Alright" agrees Ben. "I'll help you."

"Oh thank you!" breathes Elita. "I promise I'll come and find you as soon as I get out of here. You'd best be off now, and please hurry! Oh yes, if

you're going to find Motley then I suppose I'd better tell you the third step. Listen up, then. It's *slip*. Now, beat it!"

Ben is directed out, into the level two clue room. There is a *mirror* potion, a bar of gold and Motley's folderol on the table.

"Well, here's a clue if ever I saw one" Treguard says. "But don't spend too long reflecting on it, team."

The team instantly tell Ben to take the folderol and the potion, and direct him out. He emerges into Merlin's chamber.

"Come now, team, you surely know what is required here" Treguard booms. "Take the right steps for further progress."

Ben shuffles forwards, causing the first slab to appear. Although it is quite dangerous pretending to trip and slip over a bottomless pit, Ben successfully completes the path and calls Merlin to his throne.

"Ah, congratulations young Ben" the wizard smiles warmly. "You have reached this most important of points in level two. But if you wish to progress you will need my magic, and for that you must first show knowledge. I refer now to the time of the Crusades, those Christian wars fought for supremacy against the Moorish hordes. Tell me, what were the name and number of the king called the Lionheart?"

"Richard..." Ben falters.

"The first" puts in an advisor.

"Truth accepted" Merlin says. "And one Crusade captured the city of Istanbul, but what was that city called at the time?"

"Constantinople" Ben replies, remembering a song he once heard.

"Truth accepted!" Merlin beams. "Excellent! You have answered well, so now a little magic shall be yours. The name of the magic is *charm*. Do not be fooled by its name; it is certainly a spell, not a charm, but its effects are still very charming indeed. Now, be on your way, and the best of luck to you."

Merlin disappears in a blinding flash, and Ben is directed out of the room. He finds himself in Medusa's cave. The Gorgan's stone stare gazes down on him, snakes writhing in place of hair.

"Extreme warning, team, there's no way past the Medusa without being turned to stone" Treguard says urgently.

"Swallow the potion" instructs an advisor.

Ben does so, and a large reflective shield of power appears before him. Medusa screams and is silenced as her own stare turns her to stone. The advisors are then able to direct Ben calmly to the exit.

Things seem to be going well for Ben, but will his luck hold? Find out in the next Adventure Time.

KNIGHTMARE IN 2004

By RowanDT

"I think it ended at exactly the right time. Everything has its season. The good die young. I think in this case the good had eight series and was brilliant, and will stay alive in everybody's memory because it went out in a blaze of glory." - **David Learner**.

We're a selfish bunch, really, we Knightmare fans. If we're not hankering for more Knightmare on *Challenge*, we're badgering The Powers that Be to make a whole new series for our insatiable viewing appetite. Instead of looking back and saying *Yes, Knightmare was one of the best shows on television and we can still appreciate that even now that it's gone*, it's as if we're saying, *Well, it was cancelled in 1994... now what?*

It's a bit like complaining that last year there weren't enough new Spice Girls albums, or no new games for the Amiga (younger readers may like to know that the Amiga was a home computer which was popular from the late eighties to the mid-nineties). Their time has passed. Okay, so maybe the Spice Girls might get back together, and perhaps someone has made a game for the Amiga. Maybe someone could do a Spice Girls game for the Amiga, I don't know. In the same vein, surely the Knightmare team could reunite and create a ninth series of the legendary show, couldn't they?

But (and here's the bit where you just turn away and vomit in disgust) do we really want them to?

Of course we do! clamour the heaving crowds. Bring back Knightmare at once, and stop dodging around the issue with purposefully controversial and ill-phrased witticisms!

Okay. I'm not saying it wouldn't be *nice* to have a new series of Knightmare. A bold move like that would strike a major blow against the current (hopeless) television, and prove that the old days were better, thus meaning people actually take note and make better programmes.

Tim Child has hinted that a new Nightmare would basically be a virtual-reality type show, with the players controlling computer representations of themselves. He also suggested that it might not be a children's show, what with rising demographics and so forth. Now, this sounds to me like a show where we have a CGI dungeoneer walking around under the instruction of the advisors, dodging monsters, picking things up, talking to people and all manner of Knightmarish things. But is it not the case that we, the viewers, would be watching someone else play a computer game?

Now, I like computer games, but what I don't like is watching other people play them. When you're sitting in the same room as the player, fine, when you can shout *Aim for the eyepiece!* or *Can I have a go now?* But is there really much fun in watching a recording of someone you don't know playing a game you're never going to play?

Ah, you're saying. Can't that be applied to any game? The Weakest Link, Match of the Day... and the original Nightmare?

None of those games are computer games; they all feature real people being tested physically and mentally. You get to see the facial expressions as the players interact with other human beings because they're actual human beings who undergo an emotional reaction to a certain scenario. That's why people like it when Anne Robinson insults someone on *The Weakest Link*. When someone's in a dangerous situation in *Nightmare*, you're terrified because they're an *actual* person who appears to be standing on the edge of a cliff chased by an *actual* man-dressed-up-as-a-goblin. If it were a computer representation, would you care as much? We see computer game characters die all the time (if you're as rubbish as me).

The fact that *Nightmare* featured real people was a step *forward* from the computer games it was based on. Why step back?

Generally, we don't watch *Nightmare* for the technical flair. We watch it because it's fun, nostalgic and scary. As the show progressed and the technology improved, there was more opportunity for different locations and traps and yes, monsters like the Brollachan (which would have been impossible to do in the earlier series) looked brilliant. But the best enemies were the *real* ones. The giant troll, the goblins, that snake that rose out of the pit in series three and the spider in the tree. None of them were CGI.

And, of course, there is one more glaring, terrifying thing about a new series of Nightmare...

"It'd be like re-marrying an ex-wife. I've had Pickle, I've had the best of Pickle. I couldn't repeat Pickle. Blooming heck, I hope nobody else repeats Pickle as well!" -**David Learner**.

"I think it's extremely unlikely (that I would play Treguard again). I would be regarded as being too old and too fat. It would have to be Son of Treguard, or something." - **Hugo Myatt**.

Would anybody in their right mind say that they would gladly watch a new series of Nightmare that *didn't* have Treguard in it; that they could appreciate someone other than Hugo Myatt in the role? If so, that person is a liar and mustn't be trusted. Nightmare has its place in 2004 as a nostalgic landmark- a reminder of how it was to get home from school on a Friday at a time when you didn't have to pay for your own biscuits. We want Nightmare back *as it was then*. New Nightmare might not be what we want at all.

Doctor Who (I've heard recently) will be coming back in about 2005. He'll have been off the air for sixteen years when he returns (unless you count that TV film). When he does come back, it'll have to be something very special indeed, given such an absence. And if Nightmare were to return, ten odd years after its disappearance, *without* Hugo Myatt and *without* those monsters and magical beings, we might reconsider what we like so much about Nightmare, and whether anything other than the old series is what we really want to see.

"Whilst the new show will be retro, and hopefully recapture the atmosphere of its predecessor, these proposed virtual production techniques are so radical that people will not really understand what to expect until they see the show." -**Tim Child**.

Now, I could be wrong (I hope I am). Tim Child could have something completely amazing up his sleeve that keeps close to the spirit of the original game, but with a new and impressive visual style and format that will blow away all my misguided preconceptions and assumptions. But if he doesn't, we might have to accept the fact that the Nightmare we know and love has gone away and it ain't coming back. Dead, but not forgotten.

Amen to that! Thank you, Rowan, and I hope the readers take note of what you have said. In part two: the best thing for Knightmare in 2004 and DVD potential.

PUZZLE PAGE ONE

Famous Last Words IV

You know the drill by now, readers - name the characters whose last words these are, together with the appropriate series, episode and dungeoneer. There are some tough ones here because I'm running out of characters - sorry.

1. "The first step is the archer. The archer."
2. "Are you ready? Okay, then awa' we go."
3. "This niff is terrible; it's worse than me."
4. "I'd keep to the right!"
5. "The landing command is *Abashkrav*. Now go."
6. "Leave box lid open. _____ flies in box."
7. "Well, you have a go anyway. Bye-bye then, Oliver. Bye."
8. "The second step is the lion. Farewell."
9. "Put not your trust in weapons. Rock I was and rock I now become."
10. "The first step is the tree. The tree."
11. "Well, you might as well, yes."

12. "The order of opening for the rune puzzle on this level is three, six, one, five, four, two. Good luck with your quest."

REMEMBER HER?

Series 7/8

MAJIDA

Treguard's genial second assistant was played by American actress Jackie Sawiris. At the start of series 7, Treguard accidentally released Majida from a bottle. She had apparently been in there for six and a half days, waiting for Treguard to arrive so that she could deliver a message from Pickle - his resignation, of course - and take up her post as his new assistant. On first appearances Majida appeared to be cheeky, strident and very obnoxious, and Treguard had serious misgivings about having her as his assistant. I think his doubts were entirely founded because, although Majida was unarguably a direct replacement for Pickle, she was obviously intended to be a very strong character in her own right rather than just a substitute.

Whereas Pickle had always been ready to humbly serve Treguard as he saw fit, Majida was obstinate and disobedient. She constantly objected to the tasks that Treguard gave her, and always talked back to him. Doubtless this banter was supposed to be funny, but I personally found it rather annoying. Majida could have been a very interesting character, as she was Knightmare's only genie, a creature from Eastern mythology. The trouble is that she was always intended to be something of a joke, as her principal role was to banter with Treguard. If you want evidence of this, just look at her full name:

Daughter of the Setting Moon, Whose Eyes are like Daggers in the Hearts of Men who guard the Great Caravan of the Sultan.

If that's not made up purely to make us laugh, what is? Don't get me wrong, though - I know that some people like Majida - better than Pickle, even - and I think that she was an interesting and fresh addition to the programme. However, her doubtful comedy value and her constant

insubordination to Treguard deny Majida of her place on my personal list of favourite characters. Despite her objections, Majida did eventually do as she was told, and sometimes contributed information to the quest. As an assistant, Majida performed her role to a reasonable standard, although often grudgingly.

Fear Factor: 3 She was very assertive!

Killer Instinct: 0 Such was her role.

Humour Rating: 5 Sometimes laughed at her own inane chatter.

Oscar Standard: 6 Well, I couldn't tell she was really American. Could you?

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 2.

Quest: The Chalice.

Dungeoneer: Chris I.

Advisors: Paul, Kenneth and Chris.

Home town: St. Helens.

Team score: 7½ out of 10.

This was the second quest ever to reach level three, and its members were the overall Nightmare champions for a while. Watch this quest if you're game for a laugh - there are several to choose from.

Level One: The first task for Chris is to ring a bell in a room that has a large hole in the floor. Once he has done so, the hole is covered by an iron grate, creating a path to the doors. The next task is to walk speedily past the coiled-up boa constrictor, and then Chris reaches the clue room, where Granitas is on guard. With a great deal of help from Treguard, the team manage to answer two out three riddles correctly, and Granitas directs them into taking an egg timer and a sprig of the herb gravewort.

The next challenge is the fire-breathing statue, where Chris receives a burn to his bottom. There follows the first appearance on Nightmare of Olaf, who is in the maggots' cave. Olaf accepts the egg timer as a bribe ("*Now Olaf can time his eggs to perfection!*" - **Olaf**) and allows Chris to

pass on to Mildread's chamber. The old witch has disguised herself as Treguard, and tries to persuade Chris to climb into her cauldron that is disguised as a well. Once Treguard has forced Mildread to return to her true form, the witch accepts the gravewort from Chris and uses it to turn her cauldron into the real wellway. With a prod from Mildread's stick, Chris climbs down the well and into level two.

Level Two: Folly is waiting for Chris at the foot of the well. He poses an easy riddle that Chris eventually answers correctly. Folly awards the spell WEB. This is used almost straightaway, as Cedric appears and blocks Chris's path. Uttering his usual string of insults, the mad monk demands the password. The WEB spell traps Cedric in a spider's web and Chris makes good his escape. One of the highlights of the quest occurs as Chris reaches the Mills of Doom, where the advisors take ages to direct him over the spinning cogs - their frustration as Chris goes the wrong way is very funny.

A quick trot over the Vale of Worms leads to the level two clue room, where Mogdred makes his very first Nightmare appearance. When he has finished taunting and sneering at Chris, the team decide to take a key and a spade from the clue table. The next room is the mine, where Bumptious the dwarf is busy looking for gold. He confiscates the spade from Chris on the grounds that he is not an official member of the Honorary Guild of Gold-miners, but he does agree to take Chris on as a temporary apprentice. After some tedious official proceedings, Bumptious allows Chris to use some dynamite to blow an exit hole in the wall.

On the other side of this, Mogdred appears once more to chastise the team, but his threats prove to be idle. There is a locked door to be unlocked with the key before Chris reaches the wellway room. While he picks up a piece of the Chalice, Mogdred's hand comes crawling into the chamber - in true Lord Fear style - to try and grab the dungeoneer. However, Chris finds no problem in reaching the well and descends to the third level, the second person on Nightmare to do so.

Level Three: Treguard gives the low-down on the various dangers of level three before a hungry cavernwight arrives. Chris escapes into the level three clue room, where he picks up a horn and a jewel, leaving behind a certain important shield. There are more cavernwights to pass as well as a very depressed gargoyle that is continuously saying "DOOM!" like in the first Nightmare book. In his large level three chamber, Merlin appears

to offer the team his congratulations on their progress and to give them the spell UNITAS. Unfortunately for the team, the next chamber contains Medusa and her stone stare. Without the magic shield to defend himself, Chris is turned into stone, as are his three advisors. Before they leave, Treguard congratulates them on becoming the current Nightmare champions, a title that is wrested from them by the very next team - Mark Wickson and chums, Nightmare's first winners.

Summary: They were fairly clever and often amusing to watch, but rather too slow and never really likely to be, as Treguard might say, the stuff of legend.

PICKLE GOT PICKLED HERE

By Pam Glennie

Knightmare left our screens 9 years ago now, since then life has been that little less interesting. 11 years ago Pickle the elf left our screens, and since then children's TV programme talent has been somewhat lacking. It is interesting how certain children's television programmes seem to stand the test of time remarkably well - when a programme can be recounted with a fondness and nostalgia, spoken only of in the highest respect and remain popular with old and new audiences alike. Of course Nightmare has proven itself time and again on this front, and the focus of this article will be on one of Nightmare's most popular characters; love him or hate him, 11 years later David Learner's portrayal of Pickle the elf, Treguard's first assistant, remains a notable and popular topic for discussion, reminiscence and worship!

Undoubtedly, *Challenge?* showing seasons 3 and 4 of Nightmare has helped to rekindle Nightmare fandom, and has helped many to remember scenarios and characters they had previously forgotten. *Challenge?* forums have recently become home to many Nightmare related topics, but also Pickle related topics, leading to the *Picklefans* yahoo group being established. So what is the attraction for female and male fans alike? Why does a Children's ITV show character from the early '90s still intrigue people?

As we know, it was David Learner who approached Tim Child about playing Treguard's assistant. Tim Child was apparently hesitant about letting David audition, but of course the rest is history. David's first TV appearance was as Marvin the Paranoid Android - in the suit, not the voice. For the lucky owners of *The Making of the Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy*, three minutes of that hour-long video is dedicated to David, and includes him delivering Marvin's lines, albeit somewhat muffled through the robot suit. (Other Nightmare actors in *The Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy* include Michael "Brother Mace" Cule and Rayner "Skarkill" Bourton - **Jake**.)

David had previously played Marvin on the stage. Whether this led to David's selection for the Sky game show inspirationally titled *The Satellite Game* is not entirely known. In this show David played a sort of depressed robot. Coincidence? I have to admit I have not seen this show, but it brought about the meeting of Tim Child and David Learner. Despite Tim's reservations, can you imagine anyone else playing Pickle quite like David did? The same goes for the vast majority of the Nightmare characters: irreplaceable.

Pickle appeared for the first time in the first episode of the fourth Nightmare season. Treguard introduces him as being "not exactly one of them, but not exactly one of us either" as Pickle gives us the first of many deep female Pickle fans' favourite looks. Treguard tells the dungeoneers and the viewers that Pickle is there "on sufferance" but he's started to see who's going to be doing the suffering! Pickle was used as a sort of an exposition relay to the teams and home viewers, because he was a woodland elf and had knowledge of the Forest of Dunn, Dunkley Wood, and characters that Treguard had not yet met. He also provided the ultimate rhyme to drive everyone mad, stopping at every door monster to say: "True and false, false and true, open up and let us through." Some teams still got it mixed up. The foil to Treguard's character was Pickle's insistence on helping the teams, his bubbling enthusiasm and impetuosity. At one point Pickle even ran into the Dungeon to help the current team against Fatilla - excellent viewing!

In season five, Pickle was a lot more vocal and the banter between himself and Treguard was often very amusing. These little scenes were generally improvised, as filming was a sort of a semi-live venture. Of course you had the privilege of edit, but the game play was as live as could be, therefore the Pickle-Treguard conversation was often spur of

the moment. Perhaps the most famous of this improvisation would be the end of one of the early season five episodes where Hugo decided to pass the chalice to David and let him say the final thoughts of the episode, thus leading to one of David's personal most memorable moments, where Pickle tells the audience: "I say, you lot - bog off!" What more can one say? Pure genius! (*I'm not so sure that wasn't scripted, you know - Jake.*)

In season six, Pickle still got to ad-lib many lines. One of the funniest moments in my opinion is the time when Pickle starts his "if you ask me..." and turns to Treguard, whose eyeballs are almost bulging out his head in rage, then quickly turns back and says, "you didn't ask me".

The second part of Pam's article awaits us next issue, so get ready for more praise for the elf! Thanks, Pam.

CREATURE FEATURE

Series 5/6. Level 3.
FRIGHTKNIGHTS

These mechanised knights guarded Lord Fear in series 5 and 6. They could be seen and heard floating around in the backgrounds of spyglass sequences at Mount Fear, and appeared to be sentient creatures made from helmets and chainmail that Lord Fear had created for his own protection. In reality, of course, they were created by one of Nightmare's famous cutting-edge computer programmes. I suppose they looked quite impressive all that time ago, but a major criticism of frightknights is that none of them ever appeared in the Dungeon during the quest, presumably because the technology was not advanced enough to superimpose them into a chamber with a dungeoneer.

As the frightknights were effectively confined to spyglass sequences, their only role in the quest was to act as a reminder (or symbol) of Lord Fear's power. This role was continued in the Dungeon settings, with frightknight flags sometimes painted into the background to make certain routes look menacing. The main place to see frightknight symbols was over some of the doors in the Descender, a confusing signpost that made

many teams - particularly in series 5 - pause for thought. However, exiting under a frightknight was not actually dangerous at all, and was sometimes even necessary: *"I'm afraid all the doors to level three have frightknights, Pickle."* - **Treguard**.

I must confess that I was perplexed by that symbol in the Descender for over ten years - I just could not see how it was a frightknight. One day quite recently I saw it - it's not a whole frightknight; just the helmet. I'm rather embarrassed about that. Anyway, the role of the frightknight as the symbol of Lord Fear's power was further developed by the trophies for winning in series 5-8 which were, of course, shaped like frightknights. Even though Lord Fear dispensed with his metallic guards after series 6, they still were used to symbolise his power until Nightmare ended.

I think it's fair to say that the frightknights' primary role in Nightmare was as a symbol rather than a Dungeon monster - even when Treguard and Pickle started worrying that frightknights were going to turn up in series 5, they never did. They were clearly supposed to be frightening and intimidating - *"Absolutely nothing is like frightknights!"* - **Treguard** - and were only intended to represent and assert Lord Fear's growing power in the Dungeon.

If you judge frightknights by this criterion, they were memorable creatures that were appropriate in their role of representing Lord Fear's prowess in technomagic because they were created and animated by then cutting-edge computer technology. If you judge frightknights along the same lines as other Nightmare creatures and monsters, however, you might conclude that they were ineffective members of the Opposition and a somewhat pointless addition to the programme. Personally, I have no strong feelings either way towards frightknights, although I think that their lack of versatility makes them more forgettable than other Nightmare creatures and monsters. But you'll have to judge that for yourselves, won't you?

Fear Factor: 8 They were very unnerving and menacing.

Killer Instinct: 0 They never appeared in the Dungeon, so...

Gore Factor: 2 You have to wonder about how they're made, I suppose.

Humanity: 4 They looked human, but their true nature was undoubtedly altogether more sinister.

PUZZLE PAGE TWO

First Words IV

You know the drill - which characters uttered the following immortal words as their introductory sentences in Knightmare? Again, I'm sorry about the impossible ones but I'm running out of characters.

1. "Ah, interfering, interfering dratted devious Dungeon Master! All mouth and broadsword. Yes master, very well master, as you will master, aaaah!"

2. "Ah, turn intruder. Turn and face me, for I am the _____ she and none passes here without pleasing me."

3. "Ooh, hello deary. You come to visit old ____ then, have you?"

4. "Oi, you! Where do you think you're going with that spade, then? Who said you could come in here, eh?"

5. "Intruder alert! Who dares disturb the sleep of _____? Answer now, who dares?"

6. "Ooh, hello. Are you going to talk to me then? Yes! It's not often that I get the opportunity to talk to a human."

7. "Eh, eh, eh, come 'ere. Come 'ere. Now 'appen normally you'd get out for nowt, give us the keys, come on."

8. "I am the _____. I stand at the gate of time, serving neither the Powers that Be nor the Opposition. All you've achieved so far leads to me."

9. "Well, aren't you going to thank me, then? Typical flaming human beings!"

10. "Hey, you. Yes you, wait there. Good greetings, young sir."

11. "Greetings, stranger. I wish you no harm. For what do you search?"

12. "Stop. You can go no further. First, you must choose: loot, pillage or worms? We got plenty worms, see?"

THE BIG ISSUE

Where would a self-respecting medieval saga be without a few monks along the way? Certainly Nightmare had no shortage of them, but there are few similarities between the characters or the functions in the Dungeon of Cedric, Brother Mace and Brother Strange. Let's discover more, shall we?

CEDRIC: A very loud and very rude friar from series 1 and 2, played by Lawrence Werber. He was one of the level two guards, along with Gumboil and Olaf.

Advantages: There was more to Cedric than the ill-mannered guard we first knew in episode three of Nightmare. Despite his notorious bad temper, Cedric could prove to be a useful ally. On the rare occasions when dungeoneers managed to win him over, he was a loyal champion on their behalf. There are occasions when Cedric has been known to be quite an amusing character - the person who enjoyed his bad-tempered antics most, I think, was the advisor in the middle seat during Steven's quest at the end of series 2.

Disadvantages: I'm sure Cedric would have been excommunicated immediately if any other members of the Church had seen his deeds in the Dungeon. I'm thinking here particularly of his ruthless killing of Neil in series 2. Despite the fact that Cedric used to be a Hospitaller Knight and so was used to combat, it was surely against his religious code to deal with Neil in this way. Like many early characters, Cedric could also be criticised for lacking some depth. It was revealed that he was arachnophobic at one point, but apart from that his only function was to shout at and insult dungeoneers and other characters as much as he could.

BROTHER MACE: A Friar Tuck type character from series 4 and 5, played by Michael Cule. Mace was a self-professed tavern monk, which meant that he spent a lot of time in a drunken stupor talking very bad Latin.

Advantages: Mace was helpful, friendly and amiable. His rich voice and approachable manner always made it clear that he was an ally to the quest, and his help was often very valuable. Brother Mace not only gave out snippets of information, but also useful spells. Despite his tendency towards alcoholism, Mace was clearly a devoted man of the Church and he took his duties very seriously. He was always keen to put a stop to evildoers wherever he saw them, particularly assassins and goblins.

Disadvantages: Brother Mace was certainly something of a caricature - his loud and large appearance, his misuse of Latin and the various states of drunkenness in which he appeared all served to set him out as something of a visual and aural joke. Many of his appearances on the programme were somewhat incidental, and often included only to try and get a laugh. Think of Nicky, who joined Brother Mace and a strange friend of his, Brother Silence, for a very peculiar luncheon date. Here we were treated to a comedy sketch involving a joint of meat that would not have looked out of place on Monty Python. If you want more evidence, what about Dickon and his Fifty-year-old Etruskan Brandy? Turning Brother Mace into a giant lizard on-screen was a very visual gag, but was included purely to make us laugh.

BROTHER STRANGE: The mysterious wandering friar from series 7 and 8, played by Clifford Barry. He dealt in chiefly in proverbs and spyglasses, and was usually to be found lurking in dwarf tunnels.

Advantages: Nightmare certainly seemed to be missing something without a monk, and I was very pleased at the arrival of Brother Strange. He was very aptly named and held a great air of mystery and authority, which made him an interesting and original character. Despite this air of mystery, Strange made no secret of the fact that he was a force for good in the Dungeon, and his spells and advice were always helpful. Brother Strange made a particularly important contribution to the end of the series when he told Barry to use a troll hammer to save the Dungeon. In short, he was an interesting and important character who made a welcome addition to the final two series.

Disadvantages: There was a certain joke element to this monk as well, particularly in series 8, when his vast collection of proverbs was made fun of on more than one occasion. If you judge him purely as a monk in comparison particularly to Brother Mace, it could easily be argued that Strange's monkish attributes were practically non-existence. He wore a friar's habit and carried a cross, but there was nothing else very monkish about him at all. As his character was so powerful and darkly mysterious, perhaps Brother Strange would have been better suited to the role of a neutral sorcerer like Hordriss.

My favourite is Brother Mace, and I also think that he is the most convincing monk of the three. However, despite the fact that Cedric and Brother Strange were perhaps not completely suited to the Cloth, perhaps you prefer one of them as a character? Feel free to let me know, won't you?

POETRY CORNER

Here are a couple of failures from series 3 in my first ever Poetry Corner double feature!

From Glasgow's streets four lads did come,
And proved that they were far from dumb,
As Gavin's men dodged reptile's bile,
And then Golgarach's testing trial.
With Velda charmed by silver tongue,
Gavin's praise must soon be sung.
But no, alas, by their own hand,
Gavin sank into quicksand.
Later on came Douglas' verse,
But this team were even worse!
A painful sting, a nasty fright,
At least they answered Mellie right.
With Brangwen then disaster fell,
What to take? They could not tell.
Motley's bath was under threat,

Should Doug have told him? Oh, you bet.
Witless, clueless, without means,
Doug was blown to smithereens.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Challenge question: Rebecca Hughes (series 8).

Famous Last Words IV.

1. Brangwen. Series 3, episode 16. Chris II.
2. McGrew. 3, 8. Ross.
3. Fatilla. 4, 15. Giles.
4. Fidjit. 7, 14. Barry.
5. Gatemaster. 5, 16. Kelly II.
6. Pixel. 5, 10. Jenna.
7. Sidriss. 8, 10. Oliver.
8. Velda. 3, 14. Martin II.
9. Igneous. 2, 14. Steven.
10. Golgarach. 3, 13. Martin II.
11. Brother Mace. 5, 14. Chris III.
12. Brother Strange. 8, 7. Rebecca.

First Words IV.

1. Mildread. 2, 1. Martin I.
2. Brangwen. 3, 2. Cliff.
3. Mrs. Grimwold. 3, 2. Cliff.
4. Dwarf. 2, 3. Chris I.
5. Golgarach. 3, 1. Gavin.
6. Owen. 3, 15. Martin II.
7. Fidjit. 7, 1. Simon IV.
8. Gatemaster. 5, 6. Sarah.
9. Pixel. 5, 2. Catherine.
10. Honesty Bartram. 8, 3. Daniel II.
11. Brother Strange. 7, 6. Alex II.
12. Olaf. 2, 2. Chris I.