


THE EYE SHIELD



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CONTENTS

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[Message From Me:](#) Featuring Knightmare QI.

[Remember This?:](#) The Final Guillotine Chamber.

[Top Six Most and Least Deserved Deaths:](#) By Rosey Collins.

[Adventure Time:](#) Can Gemma and friends beat the challenge?

[Puzzle Page 1:](#) Famous Last Words V.

[The Strangeness of the Walls:](#) Chapter Four.

[Classic Quest:](#) Maeve, Christina, David and Lee.

[Creature Feature:](#) Bats.

[Rosey Collins Improview:](#) A revealing insight.

[Remember Him?:](#) Fatilla.

[Knightmare Locations:](#) In Norwich.

[The Big Issue:](#) Olaf vs. Fatilla.

[Kids' TV Shows I Grew Up With:](#) By Rosey Collins.

[Puzzle Page 2:](#) First Words V.

[Scandinavian Knightmares:](#) Chapter Three.

[Poetry Corner:](#) Duncan.

[Puzzle Answers.](#)

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MESSAGE FROM ME

Welcome to issue 54 of The Eye Shield. This issue, I am very pleased to welcome The Eye Shield's first ever guest writer, long-time Knightmare fan and TES reader Rosey Collins. As well as some more of her '90s kids' TV memories in *Kids' TV Shows I Grew Up With*, Rosey has two tantalising treats in store for you. Her *Top Six Most and Least Deserved Deaths* may just make you re-evaluate some of your long-standing opinions about certain teams, while her attempts to prevent *The Big Issue* from completely fading out of existence continue as she presents the low-down on Olaf and Fatilla. Additionally, an insight into the mind of the author of these pieces can be gleaned by reading our *Rosey Collins Improview*. Yes, this should indeed be a rewarding issue for Rosey-watchers. Thanks once more for all your input, Rosey.

Also in this issue, Ian Down's *The Strangeness of the Walls* continues after a short break, and Jón Þórsteinn Petússon's *Scandinavian Knightmares* continues after no break whatsoever. Thanks again for these, guys - they're both full of adventure and hilarity, and I for one have been enjoying reading them. In addition to these offerings, there are also some of my own humble efforts to enjoy as ever. *Knightmare Locations* is in Norwich, Duncan gets slated in *Poetry Corner*, there are some poisonous critters on the loose in *Creature Feature*, and if you read *Remember This?* then you might just be for the chop!

First and foremost, here is just some of what Ross Thompson had to say about issue 53. Fans of Raven, don't forget to pencil in a monthly visit to www.freewebs.com/ravenseyemag to join Ross as he looks once more through The Raven's Eye.

Issue 53 was a great read as always. I agree that the Simple Starters were a good way of starting a quest, except if it takes about five minutes to get out of the room! I enjoyed reading the audio play interviews. The quest always comes back to my head when I read Classic Quest! I agree that oracles were a nice little addition to Knightmare, however not completely memorable. I quite enjoyed Bumptious's scenes; the one where he got blown up was good to watch. Overall, another great jam-packed issue!

Thanks a lot for your unending support and enthusiasm as usual, Ross. Looking at that first Simple Starter with David (and indeed at the rest of the first two episodes) I think even the most hardened Knightmare fan would admit that the show got off to a bit of a sluggish start, but soon all those little creases were ironed out and that winning Knightmare formula was established. Whether this formula remained in place after series 3 is something that's caused a lot of discussion between Knightmare

fans, but whether or not you prefer the earlier style of adventuring, it should be obvious to anyone with even an iota of Nightmare nous that those early floor puzzles provided a great deal of inspiration for the later series, with puzzles such as the causeways, the Trial by Spikes, the moving floors and the falling fireballs, all of which required the same precision footwork as those simple starters, and the same precision brainwork to go with it.

Here are some musings from current (though not for much longer) Nightmare QI Champion Gehr "Lex" Luthor about the decline of children's television.

By the time Nightmare Series 8 came around, I had all but abandoned children's afternoon television, primarily because the programmes had gone significantly downhill. Yes, there were still a couple of decent shows (Tiny Toon Adventures and Animaniacs come to mind) but I did not go out of my way to watch them. Indeed, once series 8 was done, the only time I ever bothered with CITV again was to check out Virtually Impossible – don't get me started on that show!

I think you are right that Nightmare would not fit into the modern scheduling of children's television. Even by series 8, there were some programmes that were being shown daily (like Tots TV) mainly because the age of the target audience had significantly dropped.

Welcome to my Bitter Children of the Eighties TV Haters' Club, Gehr. I, too, found myself watching less and less children's television each year (and to those of you who are thinking that this is probably because I was getting older each year as well, I assure you that you are quite wrong) although I didn't think Virtually Impossible was all that bad, personally. Of course, it could never have stood up as a worthy successor to Nightmare, but then there is no such thing!

The falling age of the average CITV viewer is, indeed, one of the various factors that has been blamed in the past for Nightmare's demise, but I think this is a very flimsy excuse, as I'm sure older viewers would have continued to watch CITV if the shows they actually wanted to see were still on the air! The BBC has recently used the same excuse to justify the cancellation of Grange Hill, but if the show had not been dumbed down and become a sad parody of its former self, secondary school kids would undoubtedly still watch it, just as they have for the past thirty years!

I could go on for hours in the same vein, as indeed I have several times in the past, but I'll get off my soapbox now and get on with the magazine!

After reading Rosey's memories about Earthworm Jim in the last issue, Jim Waterman felt moved to write the following words.

By the time Earthworm Jim came to the screen, I was a sixth former. School continued on Saturdays, as it had done for the past six years. Earthworm Jim first thing on a Saturday morning before Maths at nine didn't half ease the pain, in a similar way to your Nightmare Fridays as detailed in *Those Nightmare Nights*. My brother had the SNES game before Earthworm Jim ever aired, so I knew all about the characters beforehand. Yes, the game is as bonkers as the TV series – probably even more so. The way Jim's head turns into a helicopter is particularly amusing, as is the use of ancient toilets as teleporters. Earthworm Jim should stand as a shining example

(pun intended, as the game was made by Shiny Entertainment) of how a TV series can be based on a video game.

Groovy, Jim.

It's that time again, readers - Nightmare QI is nigh! Here are the answers to Liam Callaghan's latest brainteasers, followed by the scores of those of you who were brave enough to enter the competition.

1. What does this sequence signify? RD6, KN13, CS12, GS8, KY9, CS7, BY7, OR7.

Correct answer: In chronological order, these are the first and last letters of the first names of the final dungeoneer in each series, followed by their team number in the series – RicharD (series 1, team 6), KareN (series 2, team 13), ChriS (series 3, team 12), GileS (series 4, team 8), KellyY (series 5, team 9), ChriS (series 6, team 7), BarrY (series 7, team 7) and OliveR (series 8, team 7).

Cliché: Anything to do with postcodes or actors' names.

2. What do all these characters have in common? HORDRISS, MALICE, LORD FEAR, MRS GRIMWOLD, SYLVESTER HANDS.

Correct answer: They have all actively both helped and hindered quests.

Cliché: No particular cliché.

Explanation: What follows is an example of one dungeoneer each character has **actively helped**, followed by one they have **actively hindered**: HORDRISS (**Helen II, Leo**), MALICE (**Alistair, Dickon**), LORD FEAR (**Rebecca, Ben II**), MRS GRIMWOLD (**Cliff, Kelly I**), SYLVESTER HANDS (**Sarah, January**). It's surprising to see Lord Fear in this list, I know, but he gave Rebecca a FLOAT spell, which she needed in order to get to level two, so, for whatever reason, he actively helped her quest to progress.

3. What do all these characters have in common? BROTHER MACE, MOTLEY, SIDRISS, THE FERRYMAN, RIDOLFO, GRIMALDINE, GREYSTAGG, SYLVESTER HANDS.

Correct answer: They all travelled in a rowing boat with a dungeoneer.

Cliché: They all rowed a rowing boat with a dungeoneer in it.

Explanation: It's true, we have the full list of rowers here – the Ferryman (series 4/5), Brother Mace (series 5), Sidriss (series 6/8), Ridolfo (series 6), Grimaldine (series 7), Greystagg (series 7) and Sylvester Hands (series 8). However, we also have Motley, who never actually rowed the boat himself, but he did travel in a rowing boat with Sidriss and January. Of course, he was in no fit state to row at the time, being only a few inches high and lying in a box!

4. What have all these characters done during Nightmare's run? LORD FEAR, LISSARD, MILDREAD, HORDRISS, SYLVESTER HANDS, MERLIN, MOGDRED.

Correct answer: Disguised themselves as someone else, either by means of magic or a simple costume change.

Cliché: Disguised themselves as other Nightmare characters – Hordriss, Hands and Merlin have not done that, although the others have.

Explanation: Here are the disguises that these characters have adopted: LORD FEAR (Hordriss as Harris; Brother Strange), LISSARD (Marta), MILDREAD (a

couple of advisors; Treguard; Gretel), HORDRISS (Harris; a witch; a tortoise; a cat), SYLVESTER HANDS (a dungeoneer; Conan the Vegetarian; a troubadour), MERLIN (a beggar in sackcloth robes), MOGDRED (Cedric; a nondescript monk).

5. Which is the odd character out? LORD FEAR, SKARKILL, SYLVESTER HANDS, JULIUS SCARAMONGER, AESANDRE, GREYSTAGG, CAPTAIN NEMANOR, HORDRISS, DREADNORT, HEGGATTY, LISSARD, RAPTOR, GRIMALDINE, BROLLACHAN, SNAPPER-JACK, HONESTY BARTRAM, BHAL-SHEBAH, MALDAME.

Correct answer: Snapper-Jack.

Clichés: Hordriss, Captain Nemanor, Heggaty, Greystagg, Grimaldine and Maldame.

Explanation: Take away Snapper-Jack and you'll have a list of all the characters to have appeared in spyglass sequences – Snapper-Jack, of course, is the only one who didn't. To say that Hordriss, Captain Nemanor, Heggaty, Greystagg, Grimaldine or Maldame is the odd one out for not being a member of the Opposition is somewhat inaccurate, as there are six of them who aren't members of the Opposition!

6. Who is the odd one out? MERLIN, MOGDRED, GRETTEL, MR & MRS GRIMWOLD, FOLLY.

Correct answer: Gretel.

Cliché: Anything aesthetic, such as numbers of series.

Explanation: Gretel is the only one not to have been mentioned during a series in which she did not physically appear – Merlin (series 1-4) was mentioned in series 5, 6 and 7; Mogdred (series 2-4) was mentioned in series 1; Mr and Mrs Grimwold (series 3) were mentioned (as the Grimwold family) in series 6; and Folly (series 1-2) was mentioned in series 3.

7. What does this sequence signify? 10, 16, 37, 43, 53, 61, 62, 68.

Correct answer: These are the overall team numbers of the winning quests.

Cliché: Anything to do with people's ages or lottery numbers.

8. Which of these fatal traps and puzzles is the odd one out? MEDUSA'S STARE, THE DUNGEON VALLEY (QUICKSAND), THE BLOCK AND TACKLE, THE CORRIDOR OF BLADES, CAUSEWAYS, PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT.

Correct answer: The Block and Tackle, because the others all killed the first dungeoneer to attempt them.

Clichés: Any aesthetic reasons, such as numbers of series.

9. What does this sequence represent? 1360, 1234, 1240, 0316, 5134, 0135, 0216, 1426.

Correct answer: Each four-digit number represents one series – this time, the first digit is the number of the first team to die in level one, the second digit is the number of the first team to die in level two, the third is level three, and the fourth is the number of the first team to win. For example, 1234 is series 2, because team 1 was the first to die in level one, team 2 was the first to die in level two, team 3 was the first to die in level three, and team 4 was the first to win.

Clichés: Anything to do with times on clocks or years.

10. Finally, what does the following sequence represent? You'll have to be "sharp" to get this one. TOP RIGHT, BOTTOM LEFT, TOP RIGHT, BOTTOM LEFT, TOP RIGHT, BOTTOM LEFT, BOTTOM LEFT, BOTTOM RIGHT, BOTTOM RIGHT.

Correct answer: The positions of the blades in the Corridor of Blades, following their usual sequence.

Clichés: Anything to do with the life force clock.

Rank	Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
1	Drassil	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	39
2	Gehn L	3	1	2	2	0	2	4	3	4	3	24
3	Joe G-J	3	0	2	1	1	1	3	2	4	2	19
4	Pooka	1	2	0	3	1	4	0	2	1	0	14

Congratulations, Drassil - the title of Knightmare QI Champion is yours once more, and you've smashed the record for the highest ever score with an incredible 39 out of 40! For the next round, here are some more of my own QI questions. Don't forget to watch out for the clichés (all but two of these questions have them) and remember that you can earn up to four points for each question - one for a correct answer, one for identifying the cliché, and two for slipping in some Quite Interesting supplementary information. E-mail your answers to me by Saturday December 13th 2008 and you could be the next Knightmare QI Champion!

1. When Elita loses her voice, which character reveals to us (the Watchers) what has actually happened to her?
2. By whom is Mrs Grimwold accompanied during all but one of her series 3 appearances?
3. Which is the first losing team not to be dismissed by the spell DISMISS?
4. What is the significance of these spells? LANTERN, FREEZER, SLEEP, DARK, DANCE, SWORD, GRIP, ENERGY, TWIST, CURE, RUN.
5. What is the maximum number of consecutive Scottish dungeoneers featured on Knightmare?
6. Who was the first dungeoneer to ride Smirkenorff from level one to level two?
7. Which dungeoneer made use of a talking book?
8. Which is the final character to be seen locked in a set of stocks?
9. What is unique about the spyglass sequence in the final episode of series 6?
10. In series 8, how many teams managed to answer three of Snapper-Jack's riddles correctly?

REMEMBER THIS?

Series 2/3. Level 3.

THE FINAL GUILLOTINE CHAMBER

The closing stages of a winning quest always demanded tension and excitement and, although I'm absolutely certain that no dungeoneer would ever have been killed off here, the Guillotine Chamber provided a nice little prelude to the impending victory for both winning teams in series 2. The room looked like it was suspended in space, and the only exit was being guarded by a guillotine that was chopping up and down at quite a pace. Leaving through this exit would mean that victory was but a heartbeat away - very exciting stuff, I'm sure you'll agree.

Upon arrival in this room, the two winning dungeoneers from series 2 each had to step very carefully up to the brink of the starlit void in order to collect a vital item that was suspended in space (an energy tree for Julian and the final letter of the spell FREE for Mark) before walking over to the guillotine and leaping through the exit when the deadly blade had risen to the top of the doorframe, which sported a rather nice demonic face. Neither team found any trouble in completing this feat, but it did add a nice bit of tension to the scene, and underline the significance of the final room, deep in level three, at the very point of victory.

Now, you may wonder why I have included series 3 in my headline for this article, as well as series 2. As we are all painfully aware, series 3 had no winners, and so no one got far enough to reach the Guillotine Chamber. However, if they had got far enough, I'm sure it would have been there waiting for them, not least because the room was featured in the closing credits of episode seven of the series. The series 3 quests took the same basic structure as those in series 2, in that three separate pieces of the quest object were picked up in levels two and three, before being reunited at the very end. As in series 2, I'm sure the floating arrow that followed the Guillotine Chamber would have been the place to do this in series 3. Of course, I could be wrong...

Difficulty: 5 Well, reaching out into space was a tricky maneuver.

Killer Instinct: 1 Unlikely to finish off a quest so close to victory, I feel.

Gore Factor: 9 Could have been very nasty!

Fairness: 8 Well, level three should be tough!

MY TOP SIX MOST AND LEAST DESERVED DEATHS

By Rosey Collins

In issue 46, our esteemed editor Jake Collins gave us a rundown of his top five most and least deserved dungeoneer deaths. Now, quite suddenly, I have decided to do the same - except that I couldn't narrow my shortlists down to just five. Like Jake's article all those issues ago, and the singles countdown on *Top of the Pops* (another sadly dead classic TV show), the following lists appear in ascending order from number six - least unfair or least moronic - to one. Before that, however, each list contains a little mention of a death whose absence I feel I have to explain.

Most Deserved:

As we all know, there have been times (rather a lot of them, in fact) when a team has brought about their own demise by doing something jaw-droppingly idiotic.

Not included: Simon, Andrew, Richard and Andrew.

Series 4, episodes 7, 8 and 9.

These boys - or, more specifically, one of the Andrews - topped Jake's list in issue 46 by directing Simon to sidestep to his left on the Block and Tackle, and straight into a hole. Whilst I can't deny that this was an extremely careless thing to do, it hasn't made this particular list because I think that confusing left and right - something that probably *most* advisors do (though usually at less critical times) - is not nearly as bad as making a conscious decision to do something stupid, as happens with the following teams.

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6. Maeve, Christina, David and Lee.

Series 1, episodes 1 and 2.

All right, so this was only the second team ever and they were guinea pigs, but they knew they could take two objects. After answering all of their riddles correctly in the clue room, Granitas gives them a clue that obviously means to take the soap, and then on being commanded he says, "She who lies in wait values her appearance more than base metal." With the remaining choice of a comb and a bar of gold, it's pretty obvious what to take, but for some reason the team think that the wall monster has bothered to give them two clues for the same object, and decide to take

just the one. Consequently Maeve plummets to her doom when she cannot offer Lillith a comb to brush her hair, so this means that Lillith isn't wearing her crown when she bags her first victim - now *there's* a bit of trivia.

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5. James, Philip, Puerk and Jamie.

Series 3, episodes 6 and 7.

Having watched this attempt to negotiate the broken path in the room with the laser-shooting lion's head, I can only conclude that the advisors did not realise there was nothing for their dungeoneer to stand on to the left of the first section of pathway. James is told to take fairly big sidesteps, with the final instruction "and another" causing him to step off the path. Some might say the advisor wanted him to take a little sidestep (in which case he should have been clearer), but I don't agree; James has a bit of a Wile E. Coyote moment as, suspended in midair for a second or two before he falls, his advisor starts telling him quite happily to walk forward.

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4. Richard, Rebecca, Angela and Rowena.

Series 8, episode 1.

I can't articulate this any better than Jake did in issue 46. With the scroll clue "Green for a girl; black for a boy", the team is clearly supposed to take a green knife and a black bottle from the selection of clue objects. Rowena begins by wanting to take the other two objects - a bar of gold and a key - and when the other two advisors remind her of the scroll clue, they decide to take the black bottle and leave the green knife because "it says black for a boy". Their naïve belief that the outcome of the quest depends on the gender of their dungeoneer means that they can't return Stiletta's knife to her, and she can't give them the rune lock combination to open the trapdoor. Dismal - but at least Richard being roasted alive by Bhal-Shebah was a great moment for us at home to witness.

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3. Mike, Ben, Ben and Hayden.

Series 8, episodes 6 and 7.

These boys decided not to take the trapdoor to level three because they didn't have a Float spell, or anything of the like, which they had needed to descend to level two. With all the importance placed upon their previous Float spell, I concede that their confusion is understandable, but I don't think it qualifies as an excuse. It's possible - unlikely, perhaps, but possible - that someone would have come in and helped them at the last

moment, as Brother Strange did for Daniel earlier in the series. The team couldn't have known that, even if it *was* the case, but they must have known that their quest couldn't go on unless they descended to level three. What did they think would happen? Obviously they didn't think that Mike would be smacked with a fireball whilst heading for the door - but, deservedly, he was.

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2. Neil, Jason, Craig and Mark.

Series 2, episodes 7, 8 and 9.

This is a strange one. The Dwarf gives this team the spell Shovel to incapacitate Cedric, in the absence of the password, so that they can descend to level three. So what do they do? Well, not only do they seem unsure who their spellcaster is, but they also decide to cast Spade. As they didn't even go on to cast Shovel when Spade didn't work (though goodness knows why they thought it would), I always thought they must have forgotten to write the spell down at the time it was given to them, and remembered it wrongly. But no - all three advisors are earnestly scribbling away when the Dwarf gives them the spell. Lawrence Werber must have been marvelling at their stupidity as much as we were, but he managed to hide it and stay in character when he delivered the fatal blow.

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1. Simon, Steven, Jonathan and Simon.

Series 1, episodes 2, 3 and 4.

This is the third team ever, and the first to be gifted any spells, meaning that they - and we - have to sit through a long explanation from Treguard about how to spellcast and dispel. Merlin generously gives them Lantern and Anvil, and when they find their dungeoneer in a darkened room at the end of level two, the team cast Lantern so they can see what they are doing. Sensible! Unfortunately they wake Gibbet, who has been having such a nice sleep that he wants to kill Simon for disturbing it. It was early days, so the team may be forgiven for thinking they might need Anvil in the next level (though, as we know, spells are always gifted and used on the same level), but clearly it was needed then. After nearly casting the right spell, the team agree that it would be better to dispel Lantern. I condemned Mike's team for lack of forethought, and do so again. Did this team really think Gibbet would just go back to sleep? And how did they think they were going to get Simon to the well in all that darkness? Well, obviously, they didn't get that far.

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Least Deserved:

As we also know, sometimes dungeoneers are killed off in ways and for reasons that make us watchers stare indignantly at the screen, wondering how Treguard can sound so reasonable when he's summing up. For this list I have not only taken into account the death itself, but also each team's performance throughout the quest.

Not included: Helen, James, Rachel and Craig.

Series 4, episodes 1, 2 and 3.

For a long time I was indignant about the way Helen was killed. As Jake tells us in issue 46, the spell she is supposed to use to defeat Mogdred is the one Hordriss describes as "humble", but - quite understandably - the team choose the "powerful" but longer spell. They could have done with a prompt from Treguard or Pickle... and maybe they would have got one, if they hadn't performed so badly in level two. I only noticed recently, but Helen's reluctance to let Merlin out of the stocks and the way she threateningly demands "advice" once she has done so is quite undeserving of the speech he gives her about compassion, and then Ariadne has to wait quite a long time for Rachel to cast the Freeze spell on her. Like I say, they could have done with a bit of help with Mogdred, but actually I don't think they deserved it.

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6. Daniel, Ben, Gideon and Justin.

Series 8, episodes 1, 2, 3 and 4.

To put old panic merchant Gideon's dungeoneer in the Corridor of Blades was just cruel. Treguard reckoned they could have done it with a Sight potion, but previously Honesty Bartram had been adamant that the potion was the price of the Shade spell the team needed. Besides not panicking in the Corridor, it's hard to see what they could have done better, but I think I may have spotted it. I can only think that they were supposed to realise that they'd need the potion and persuade Honesty Bartram to take his other object (as Nathan later has to do with Bartram, and January once had to do with Julius Scaramonger), which is a key. Bartram does say, "Keys are of some interest", so he probably could have been persuaded. The other two objects on the clue table were a glove and a giant needle, neither of which would have been of any value to him. It may have been possible, but it was tough. He *really* seemed to want that Sight potion!

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5. Ben, John, Tim and Ben.

Series 7, episodes 8, 9 and 10.

These guys are picking up letters on their way through level two to get a

spell that they need to reach level three. On the clue table, they pick up a jar of Darkness powder. They find letters in the next couple of rooms, and then they come to a chamber with no spell part. Majida gives them what is clearly supposed to be a prompt, but it's not very helpful: "*There is no spell part in this room. Why not in this room?*" - **Majida**. They start trying to find a letter by directing Ben to sit on the two stools in the room, which I happen to think is more logical than using the Darkness powder - there's just no connection, and the best prompt Treguard can give is to point out the very obvious troll footsteps that are following them: "*It comes! It comes!*" - **Treguard**. Not very helpful! The team abandons the search, meaning that they are missing a vital spell part and are doomed. It was probably hoped that Ben would get a spike up the bottom on the Trial by Spikes, but Tim directs him through the puzzle very well indeed, so they obscure his view with the troll that has been chasing Ben through the level. In my opinion, Tim even directs Ben safely to the exit square just behind the troll's leg. But how can I prove it? The Trial by Spikes claimed its second victim in this most unfair way.

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4. Simon, Deborah, Mark and Claire.

Series 3, episodes 3 and 4.

This is another one that I can't describe any better than Jake did in issue 46. Simon picks up an amulet that makes him invisible, and to his advisors he looks like a little shimmering star. It's clear from the start that the advisors are going to have trouble guiding him when they forget that he is facing the table and instruct him to walk forwards into it. They *do* get the hang of it, but it's just such a hard task for those little kids! The star doesn't look any smaller in the distance, and actually, it doesn't *really* represent where Simon is that accurately. The advisors have no way of knowing that he has reached the end of the cave and jumped off a cliff. If they were going to have such a hard task, there shouldn't have *been* a cliff - they could have put a wall or a giant toad or *some* kind of marker back there.

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3. Cliff, James, Matthew and Richard.

Series 3, episodes 1, 2 and 3.

Speaking of Cliffs - ha! Yeah... well, in level two, Cliff earns the spell Dance from Merlin by answering both his riddles correctly, and then shortly afterwards he encounters McGrew, who wants to kill him. The team cast Dance; McGrew drops his sword and starts dancing about comically, and Cliff is guided out of the room. They are supposed to release McGrew in return for some help, but they don't, and I sympathise

completely. Yes, McGrew is shouting "I'll do anything for thee!", but anyone would be distressed and start shouting in that position. It is not at all unusual for a team to have to incapacitate a homicidal guard in order to escape, and the guard always protests while the dungeoneer walks away. They could have done with an extra prompt from Treguard - even just "Listen, team" would have done.

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2. Sofia, Claire, Kim and Emma.

Series 6, episodes 11, 12 and 13.

I contemplated making this number one, but I didn't, because the thing is that they *did* make a mistake (which my number one team doesn't, in my opinion). The team can't answer the riddle they need to get right in order to earn the combination for the Great Causeway, which is down to their own lack of general knowledge, but in my opinion they shouldn't have been in that position. I get angry about it because this team immediately follows Ben, whose victory was clearly decided before the quest even started. It is not the team's fault that they were given a very easy, linear quest they could hardly have lost - but the thing is, they *could* have lost! They were constantly cocking up. They misinterpret the scroll clue in level one and don't take the silver for Smirkenorff, meaning they get a free ride, and in level two James starts spellcasting Backfire in response to Peggaty's fireballs. Treguard stops him, and then soon after Greystagg reveals that the spell would have destroyed Ben. As though that wasn't enough, James even walks Ben off the level one causeway - but with their victory already decided, this lot are let off their mistakes and walk through the rest of their quest. They dither on the Great Causeway because they assume they don't know the combination, rather than trying to work it out from what they *do* know, and everything else is easy for them. But isn't this supposed to be about Sofia? Well, the reason that she didn't deserve to die is that she and her team performed so much better than Ben's team. Then after all that competent advising and dungeoneering, whereas Ben just picked up his clue for the Great Causeway in a room he happened to be in anyway, Sofia had to answer two out of two questions correctly (there were three, but she wasn't given the opportunity to answer the second - damn apprentice magician lady!) in order to earn hers. It's too harsh, and a much more forgivable mistake than - oh, say - taking the wrong item in level one or walking your dungeoneer off a causeway. I get very cross about it, as you might have noticed. Pah! Perhaps I had better move on now, having filled nearly a whole page with this - but I will say that for me Sofia, and not Ben, is the series six champion.

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1. **Jamie**, Paul, Saranjit and Joseph.

Series 2, episodes 10 and 11.

This was another of Jake's, I believe, though it wasn't top of his list. It is top of mine, though. There are *so many* things wrong with this, and at the time when Jamie's quest becomes doomed, he's been doing perfectly well and not made any clear mistakes. Here's what happens: Jamie is being chased by the Automatum over a plank in level two. He then enters the room with four doors that turns up a lot in the earlier series, and there are three sections of a gold disc on the floor. If Jamie walks on these, he can pick them up and gain the Medal spell. It's hard to articulate this without a picture of the room, but I shall try. Jamie is on the left of the room, and heads for the spell section nearest him. He stands on it, and it doesn't disappear until he moves about a bit. Then the Automatum shows up. It has been following Jamie, which means it should appear behind him. If it had done that, Jamie could have walked away from it and picked up the second spell part on his way to the door. But the Automatum has somehow ended up on the right, not behind Jamie at all, and is blocking his path to the second spell piece. The third piece is by the door, so it should be easy to pick up, but it doesn't disappear when Jamie treads on it. But so what? Without the second piece that had the Automatum all over it, it's useless. Jamie uses the spell Free to release Gretel from one of Ariadne's webs, and all the help he gets is: "*You'll be okay! Use the Medal spell!*" - **Gretel**. The chance would be a fine thing! There was no way he could have picked that spell up, unless the Automatum was where it was supposed to be.

So there it is, my top six most and least deserved deaths. Now, on the subject of the least deserved, a question for us all to chew on: what would the Medal spell have done to get Jamie away from Ariadne? When I first heard Gretel say it, I thought it must be Meddle - as in, meddle with the webs so they're not there anymore, kind of thing - but it's definitely a picture of a Medal Jamie's supposed to stand on. Weird!

ADVENTURE TIME

-

As the never-ending journey continues, the Dungeon leads 15-6. Gemma has just arrived in level three - is she up to the ultimate challenge?

Gemma enters a large green clue room via a door on the back wall. She walks down a set of steps and goes over to the table, where a horn, a bar of gold, a bottle labelled *Shrink* and a bar of silver are on display. There is also a scroll, which Gemma reads out.

"It says STARLIGHT," Gemma relates. "It must be a spell, but it doesn't tell us anything about which objects we should take."

"Consider your choice carefully, girls," Treguard advises, "for the decisions you make now may prove critical as to your survival."

"I think we're past the point where gold or silver can help us," says the spellcaster. "Let's take the potion and the horn."

The other members of the team agree, so Gemma picks up these two objects and is directed out of the chamber.

She emerges into the rocky domain of Owen, the enormous earth dragon. When the gargantuan reptile spots Gemma, his lips crease into a smile.

"Well, hello," the dragon rumbles softly. "How nice it is to have another visitor. What's your name, dungeoneer, and what do you seek?"

"My name's Gemma," she replies. "I'm looking for the Sword."

"Well, you'll never find it before Morghanna snuffs you out like a candle," Owen predicts with a chuckle. "Unless, of course, you and your friends have the wits to earn some dragon magic. Tell me, what is born like a reptile, breathes like a fish, and grows into something else altogether?"

The advisors chatter together for a while, making sure that they are all happy with their answer. When a decision has been reached, they tell Gemma what to say in reply to the dragon's question.

"A tadpole," Gemma replies with confidence.

"Truth accepted," Owen smiles approvingly. "Well done, Gemma. As a reward, I gift you with the spell FREEZE. Doesn't sound much like dragon magic, does it? But it is, and mighty powerful it is too. Now, be on your way."

Gemma thanks the dragon for his aid, and is directed out of the chamber.

She finds herself in a rocky cave with an exit straight in front of her, but guarding this is a huge hobgoblin with an enormous sword. When the colossal creature sees Gemma, it begins to advance with its weapon raised.

"Extreme warning, team, there's a hobgoblin in the level!" Treguard exclaims urgently, as if he is the only one who is aware of this all too obvious fact. "Defeat it as you may, or your quest ends here!"

"Uncork the potion!" squeaks an advisor.

Gemma does so; the hobgoblin continues to advance.

"Throw it in front of you!" orders the spellcaster.

Gemma follows this instruction, and the liquid splashes all over the hobgoblin. The startled creature gives a disgruntled squeak of surprise, before shrinking rapidly in size, first to the height of a normal goblin, and then to about one third of that height. Not wishing to fight Gemma in its current state, the hobgoblin scuttles away as quickly as it can.

"Well, that's certainly cut one enemy down to size," Treguard chuckles. "But another lies in wait for you, and you must face her if you are to succeed. Hurry on now!"

Gemma is directed out of the rocky cave.

She emerges into the Stained Glass Window Chamber, where a choice of four paths awaits.

"Which path shall we choose?" asks an advisor.

"Let's cast the spell," suggests a second. "The one from the scroll, I mean."

"Spellcasting:" the spellcaster obliges. "S-T-A-R-L-I-G-H-T."

At once, a silvery glow envelops the path that is furthest to the left, as hundreds of tiny stars rain down on it from somewhere high above. The spell does not last long, but the advisors waste no time in directing Gemma over to the correct path. Before she can progress very far down it, however, there is a flash of lightning, and a black-clad sorceress appears just in front of her.

"This is the end of the line for you, Gemma!" Morghanna sneers nastily. "I have enjoyed watching your progress through my chambers, but I'm afraid I just can't allow you to pass beyond this point. Spellcasting: D-E..."

"Hurry, team, take action!" Treguard exclaims urgently.

"Spellcasting:" gabbles the spellcaster, incredibly quickly. "F-R-E-E-Z-E!" Before Morghanna can complete her spell, a bolt of blue energy jumps straight from Gemma and hits her in the chest, freezing the evil sorceress in a large block of ice. This teeters on the edge for a bit and then drops into the dark chasm below, allowing Gemma to continue down the path.

"Well done, team," Treguard beams. "You certainly dealt with Morghanna most efficiently, although I doubt that that fall will do her any

permanent harm, more's the pity. Still, you need not worry about her anymore, so charge ahead now or all could be lost!"

Gemma emerges into a large grey chamber that is spanned by a high wall. On the wall, the inscription *Jericho 6* can be clearly discerned.

"Team, this is Merlin's room," Treguard remarks. "Though I don't think Gemma will get to meet him with that wall in the way."

The advisors are not about to be stumped by such a challenge now. They tell Gemma to blow the horn, which she does with enthusiasm, and she continues to do so until the bricks of the wall have all disappeared. In the vast chamber beyond, there is no sign of the usual table, but there is a shining sword stuck into a large rock instead. Gemma is directed over to the rock; she pulls the Sword of Freedom from it and raises the trophy above her head. As she does so, lightning flashes and Merlin appears in the room.

"Congratulations!" the wizard booms. "You have found the Sword of Freedom, Gemma, and in doing so, you have completed your quest in the Dungeon! We shall now return to the Great Hall of Nightmare together. Spellcasting: U-N-I-T-E."

Lightning flashes once again, and Merlin and Gemma both appear in the antechamber. Treguard beams as he takes the Sword of Freedom from Gemma, and Merlin passes on warm congratulations as he hands the team their mementoes.

"Gemma, Nicola, Jenny and Dawn," Merlin addresses the team. "You have proven equal to the Nightmare challenge, and truly earned your spurs. Spellcasting: H-O-M-E!"

The winning team disappears in a magical flash. His job done, Merlin returns to the Dungeon, while Treguard turns to the portal, ready to welcome another dungeoneer for the start of a fresh quest.

So, Gemma and her friends have reduced the Dungeon's lead to 15-7, but will the next team fare so well? Read the next Adventure Time to find out.

I'm sure you remember this one - which characters spoke the following quotes as their final words on Nightmare? Name the episode and dungeoneer if you can.

1.) "The blood stone will only lead to bloodshed. Rock I was, and rock I now become."

2.) "Mind how you go, and be careful where you fall next time. Right, come on, Gretel."

3.) "Thank you, Bumptious."

4.) "Locked doors await you; beware the warrior of wheels and springs. Rock I was, and rock I now become."

5.) "Password accepted. Pass, stranger. But don't linger! I may have let you go, but I don't have to like you!"

6.) "The only way to beat Lord Fear is to move faster than he can think. So move it! There's a portal over there."

7.) "Ooh, no more, you're killing me! Ah-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!"

8.) "Are you ready? Right, here we go!"

9.) "Not a bad travelling companion, as dragons go. But my path lies in a different direction so, farewell."

10.) "Off you go then. And if you see any dwarfs, you tell them they's not welcome."

THE STRANGENESS OF THE WALLS

By Ian Down

Kevin has made it to level three and is fairly well equipped, with PHOBIA and MIRROR spells, along with a tiara.

The team were taken aback at the room they found themselves in; it was yet another clue room. There were several powerful looking objects on the clue table, including a sceptre, a bar of gold and a scroll, amongst other things. The inevitable wall monster appeared - this time it was Brangwen, who seemed to be in a foul mood.

"I am the Brangwen She. You dare to enter my domain, small one?" she demanded.

"We are on a quest," Kevin explained tentatively.

"So, you will wish to progress beyond this room, no doubt. You will furnish me with wisdom or I will consume you without mercy, do you understand?" Brangwen was taking no prisoners.

"Shall we use a spell?" Alice suggested.

"No, we should answer the questions to get the clue objects." John provided the voice of reason.

"Answer me this, my first!" the wall monster demanded. "I have no flesh nor feathers, and no scales nor bone, yet fingers have I, and thumbs of my own. What am I?"

The advisors looked at each other blankly, seemingly with no idea. At that moment, Brother Mace strode into the room.

"Ah, young Kevin, we meet again!" the monk boomed. "I've come down to this level as I have been tipped off that there's some very strong ale down here somewhere."

Then he spotted Brangwen and recoiled in horror: "Oh dear, I don't like the look of her!"

The monk agreed to help if he could, and Kevin relayed the riddle.

"Ah, that's an easy one, it's a pair of gloves," said Brother Mace with a beaming smile, and Kevin gave the answer.

Again Brangwen spoke in harsh tones: "That is correct. Here is my second. He who makes me doesn't want me, he who buys me doesn't need me, and he who uses me doesn't care. What am I?"

Once more the team could not come up with an answer. Brother Mace whispered something to Kevin.

"Is it a coffin?" Kevin relayed the answer, unconvinced of its accuracy.

"That is correct. Fortune favours you, small one. However, you will not get my third, for young ones have insufficient wisdom. Without hope, I am nothing. What am I?" Brangwen sneered.

Alice thought for a moment. "Life?"

She sounded unconvinced but her friends bought it. Kevin gave their hopeful answer and it was accepted, but Brangwen remained annoyed: "Three is the score, you may know more..."

The team, along with Mace, looked very pleased with themselves. However, before Brangwen could continue, and perhaps give help or guidance, a familiar voice rang out, as Lord Fear appeared as an apparition, clearly flustered and angry.

"STOP! STOP! Stop this nonsense!" Fear demanded, in desperate and disdainful vitriol. "If you think this embodiment of questing putrefaction and that fat soaker are going to get any more help with me running the show, you are very much mistaken! Touch one item and I will get that hideous creature to finish this here and now." He paused and pacified, thinking that the whole Dungeon was at his mercy. "Well, as I'm in a pleasant mood, I'll let you take the food. There's no fun in letting you starve to death - much too easy! And you!" He pointed down at Mace. "Clear off back to the tavern whence you came, or else get a thunderbolt up that enormous backside of yours!"

Mace scuttled off as fast as he could, and the floating image of Lord Fear faded away to nothing. The team got Kevin to grab the food and guided him through the side doorway.

"Where am I?" enquired Kevin, but before the advisors had time to

answer, a small and shabby figure sidled up to the adventurer.

"Ooh, what we got 'ere then, eh?" It was Sylvester Hands. "Ooh, lovely clothes you got, in't ya? Must be that dungeoneer, ain't ya? 'Is Lordship's promised me a week's 'oliday if I gets yer for 'im!"

Hands began unfurling a tatty rope, with which he began to constrain the dungeoneer. Treguard looked puzzled and interjected.

"What is that creature doing in level three?" he frowned deeply. "Only the mightiest of foes should inhabit this level. Still, you had better do something, team!"

A very brief consultation followed.

"Spellcasting: P-H-O-B-I-A!" said Alice loudly, almost shouting.

Instantaneously, an old-fashioned metal bathtub appeared, attended by an old, withered, wart-ridden hag, who was clenching a scrubbing brush and an oversized bar of soap.

"Come 'ere, Sly!" screeched the hag. "Let yer old granny give you a nice wash!"

Hands became apoplectic with fear. Panicking, he dropped the rope and screamed something undecipherable as he threw up his arms and ran for it. Granny chased after him, all the while brandishing the scrubbing brush. The team tried to compose themselves after a fit of the giggles. They guided Kevin through an opening to the right, still grinning inanely.

Those grins were soon wiped off their faces as they saw that Kevin was in a room with one door and a wooden floor, in the malevolent and intimidating presence of Maldame.

"Ah, I've been expecting you," she said. "You have kept me waiting; perhaps I should waste no further time and get rid of you here and now. However, I suspect you were held up by that revolting little peasant, Hands, in which case I shall give you one last chance, and *one only*, to please me."

She was surprisingly calm and this unsettled the team. Another quick

huddle ensued before Alice told Kevin to hand over the tiara, which they had lugged around half the Dungeon.

"We have brought this for you, madam," Kevin mumbled weakly, as he bowed his head and reached out with the jewellery.

"Hmm..." Maldame seemed underwhelmed by the gift at first. "I suppose it's not a bad piece... as trinkets of this sort go."

She carefully placed the object on her head and posed regally.

"Well don't just stand there, you fool, fetch me my mirror!" Maldame demanded, as she gestured towards a small hand mirror that was perched on a shelf at the side of the room.

Once the team had guided Kevin to the shelf and he had retrieved the mirror, Maldame admired herself and began to smile: "I didn't think it possible, but I look even more gorgeous than before!"

Maldame was clearly blessed with an appalling, superior brand of narcissism. She wasn't what you would call traditionally pretty, but she did have a sort of cold, strong beauty, akin to a big, predatory cat about to stalk, kill and devour its prey.

"I suppose I shall allow you to continue," said Maldame, in a casual yet chilling tone, still admiring her reflection, "for the time being. But rest assured, we will meet again."

With that, the team guided Kevin through the door as quickly as they could.

Deep in the third level, can Kevin possibly hope to defeat Lord Fear? Stay tuned for the fifth chapter of this adventure to find out.

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 1

Quest: To survive the Dungeon.

Dungeoneer: Maeve McEvoy.

Advisors: Christina, David and Lee.

Home towns: Rawtenstall and Edenfield, Lancashire.

Team score: 2 out of 10.

This was the second team ever to attempt the quest, so I suppose it's a bit unfair to judge them too harshly. However, I think few people would disagree that they fared rather badly, and the reason for this was that they failed to take into account one important rule of taking part in a Nightmare quest - when you get to a clue room, take two objects, not just one!

Level One: Maeve's quest begins in the traditional four-door starting chamber, where she has to walk on some letters on the floor to spell out the word SESAME, which causes one of the locked doors to open. She progresses into a room where a large snake appears from behind a broken doorway; a swift exit is required here. A quick jaunt through a bomb room leads on to the level one clue room, where Granitas is on guard.

Poor old Granitas has a hard time getting Maeve to shut up while he asks his riddles, but eventually he manages to get them all out, and the team score an impressive three out of three. Granitas is forced to part with maximum information, clearly indicating that Maeve should take a bar of soap and a comb from the table. However, the advisors do not consider Granitas's words carefully enough, and end up taking just the soap by itself - oh dear!

The next chamber is Lillith's cavern, and the grumpy sorceress is in a foul mood because her hair is in a tangled mess. She demands that Maeve present her with a gift, and all she has to offer is the soap. *"A block of soap? Kindly explain how I am to comb my hair with that!"* - **Lillith**. Yes, they needed the comb, and without it, they can do nothing to stop Lillith taking the ground from under Maeve's feet: *"I have no time for those who bumble, so boulders crack and that ledge crumble!"* - **Lillith**.

Summary: They didn't really know what they were doing, and it showed. A very poor attempt, but they were going in blind, so I suppose I'll have to forgive them.

CREATURE FEATURE

Series 3. Level 1/2/3.

BATS

We all know how much the Nightmare production team liked to play around with their computers to create digital creatures, and in preparation for series 3, they created bats. As they flew at the camera from the darkest recesses of caves or dwarf tunnels, the bats created a fleeting impression of large black wings and long pointed teeth, which is all there was to them really, but I'm sure they were pretty scary to some young Nightmare fans at the time, myself included.

By far the most common place to see bats was in dwarf tunnels, when they would often fly over the dungeoneer's head, snapping their teeth at the camera. The same effect was used a couple of times in the first cave of the Cavern Range; the one with the two stalactites hanging from the ceiling. Of course, this was only to be expected - what self-respecting Dungeon wouldn't have a few bats lurking in its dank, dark tunnels and caverns? A few bats flapping past could do plenty to unnerve a group of jumpy advisors, although they couldn't really cause any harm whatsoever to the dungeoneer, being entirely computer-generated.

Of course, the bats were designed to be something of a threat, as McGrew made clear during his lengthy level two jaunt with dungeoneer Ross: *"This is nae a safe place to be; these bats are poisonous!"* - **McGrew**. However, although the CG effects were, as ever, very nice, I think we all knew that Ross wasn't really in any danger. Still, despite not being a real threat, the bats added a nice bit of atmosphere to the show, and I tend to regard them as a positive aspect of Nightmare, personally.

However, there is a small fly in the ointment. In addition to the CG bats, there were also a couple of occasions (in the Stained Glass Window Chamber and the Mills of Doom) when we saw a couple of bats flying through that were obviously made out of black paper and kitchen roll tubes. These really did look a bit naff, I'm afraid. As Treguard would say, ooh nasty!

Fear Factor: 6 This was their main function, without doubt.
Killer Instinct: 0 Never even the slightest chance of bagging a victim.
Gore Factor: 7 Sharp teeth, flapping wings, poisonous fangs... nasty!
Humanity: 2 A distant mammalian connection.

ROSEY COLLINS IMPROVIEW

THE EYE SHIELD: Well, Rosey, do you like Nightmare?
ROSEY COLLINS: Yes.

Do you like it as much now as you did when it was first on?
No, I don't think so.

What are your memories of watching Nightmare as a small child?
A small child... How small?

Um, when you were... 2, 3 and 4.

I can't remember that very well at all. I remember tiny little bits of series 3, like the bit where Mrs Grimwold's hiding behind that sort of pillar, and that's all I can remember from when I was very small. Ooh, and I remembered Mr Grimwold, and I think I remembered Hordriss was in it and you didn't, actually.

Yes, that's right. Do you have a favourite series?

Well... I think that series 2 is probably my favourite, but I also like series 6, and the reason I think those two series are particularly good is they're the first ones after they're just trying the new thing, because we have this conversation sometimes about how the quest format changes in series 5, and with series 6 they're just getting into the new quest format, but in series 7 they're bored with it and they try to make it a bit different and it's not as good anymore, and the same is true of series 2.

Yes, series 2 is series 1 with all the sort of bumps ironed out...
That's right.

...and that's why it's so good.
Yes.

And do you have a favourite character, is it still Folly?

I don't know... yes, I suppose it is. I don't like him as much as I used to, but I suppose my favourite character is still Folly... although I do like Hordriss very much indeed.

Do you?

Yes, I do.

Which series do you think he's best in?

Well... ooh, no, that's an interesting question.

Yes, because he has quite different roles in the different series.

He's a bit crap by the time we get to series... sort of 7/8, isn't he?

Yes, because all he does is get sort of tricked and trapped by Lord Fear in the last two series.

In series 5 and 6 he gets to do slightly more interesting things than in previous series. I think up until about series 7 he's consistently good in different ways.

Mmm. So your favourite series for Hordriss is not series 7 and 8?

Yes.

Yes, I agree, because all he does is get tricked and trapped by Lord Fear, as I say, especially with the inclusion of Sidriss, who very much lends him to that.

That's right.

And what about a favourite team?

I like Julie's team in series 7.

Yes, they're my favourite too.

Yes, they're good because they have a laugh and because they're very clever and good at doing the quest as well, and because they're the only all-girl team to win.

Yes, even though the show itself was going downhill by then, I think they're probably the best team, in terms of their intelligence, and their enthusiasm too.

And they're the only ones who win the Sword.

Yes. Yes, it's annoying nobody wins the Cup, isn't it?

Yes, they should've made Dunstan go for the Cup because they knew he was going to win.

That's right.

Perhaps they didn't have a Cup prop.

And if they hadn't messed up the order of the quest objects, Dunstan was actually in line for the Cup, taking into account where they started at the beginning of series 7, but there we go, what can you do? What do you think about Dunstan's victory?

I think it's completely stupid.

(Laughs.)

The team is very annoying and they've all got stupid voices, but they're not that bad...

No, they're not *bad*...

...but they're not that good either.

Yes, they're a very sort of average team.

They are, and they get the Short Cut, which... I don't know, I think they probably could've given them a short level two.

I always say, if there's time to get Oliver into level three with a short level one...

Exactly.

...there'd be time for a short level two with Dunstan.

And if Dunstan completely cocked up, they could've just filmed it again and not told anybody.

Yeah.

But the problem with Dunstan's quest is that it was all very disorganised by the writers and everybody as well, with all *Maldame* and her *call me if you need my help* sort of thing and then he doesn't need her help!

Like much of series 8, really.

Yes.

When I first watched series 8, I really didn't realise how... bad, or not as good as the others, it actually is.

Well I didn't really notice until we watched it recently and you pointed all the things out that they'd done wrong.

As you watch it more and more you get to realise that it's not as good as the others because it's all sort of jumbled. [See Nightmare Series Hate, Issue 50.] Turning to another subject, do you think I'm obsessed with Nightmare?

Yes. I don't think that's a problem...

No, I don't think so either. You've got to enjoy yourself, haven't you? Well, exactly.

I was quite surprised by how many more people are obsessed with Nightmare, actually, on the internet, there's an awful lot of them!

Yes, there are an awful lot of people obsessed with all sorts of obscure things on the internet.

I suppose that's what the internet's done, isn't it? It's brought all these people together who're obsessed with Nightmare or Ghostbusters or Star Trek or whatever, and they've all joined together and now they think it's, er... it's a good thing to be obsessed with these programmes.

Yes, it's quite reassuring to know there are people out there like you who are completely obsessed with some stupid television programme.

That's right, because these programmes can have a profound effect on our lives, particularly when we're young.

That's right.

And that's the trouble with modern children's television, isn't it?

The trouble with modern children's television is that it's on all day and it's on a continuous loop, so if you miss your episode of, um... Fairly Oddparents one day then you can probably watch it in about two days' time.

It's less likely to, er... earn a special place in your heart, isn't it, because there's so much of it?

And you don't go to school and you think, *Ah, I'm looking forward to going home so I can watch The Raggy Dolls every Friday or whatever because it's on all the time.*

It's also been dumbed down, it has to be said.

Yes, it has... it's all about farting now.

(Laughs.) Yes, that's what I was trying to say in a sort of more roundabout way. Well, anyway, there we are, I think that's fairly comprehensive, so thank you very much.

That's all right.

REMEMBER HIM?

Series 4. Level 1/2.

FATILLA THE HUN

Fatilla was a Dungeon guard, following in the footsteps of such characters as Gumboil, Cedric and Olaf. As his title suggests, he was a Barbarian, which meant that he slurped a lot as he spoke, which he did in a rather rough, primitive manner. The actor responsible for Fatilla was Michael Cule, almost unrecognisable in his Hun getup, which was a far cry from his Brother Mace costume. Fatilla's main job was to guard the wellway to level two, which is why he was usually found hanging around Dungarth and the Castle of Doom.

The most common method of getting past Fatilla (despite his claim that "nobody gets by when Fatilla the Hun is on guard") was to bribe him, usually with a bar of gold. Fatilla met all eight of the dungeoneers in series 4 during the closing stages of level one, and each appearance followed this basic structure. However, there were slight variations in some of the appearances, such as Jeremy's use of a JOKE spell, and Vicky's bogus claim that her name was on Fatilla's list of people who were authorised to go down the well. Fatilla also had longer appearances in both Simon's and Dickon's quests, being scared off by Oakley on both occasions. Simon's quest includes Fatilla's famous battle of wits with Pickle (which the Barbarian lost, of course, somewhat spectacularly),

marking the one and only occasion that one of Treguard's assistants makes a personal appearance in the quest.

During Alistair's quest, Fatilla had to be flattered into letting Alistair pass by at the Castle of Doom, which was quite a nice scene, before popping up again in level two, where he became involved in a "comical" scene with Gundrada, which involved the appearance of a self-activating ADORE spell, leading to Fatilla declaring his undying love for the sword mistress. As funny as this exchange was trying to be, it just wasn't happening, if you ask me, and this scene is certainly guilty of slowing down the gameplay for no particular reason, which is one of the quibbles many fans have with series 4. This is one reason, I think, why I don't remember Fatilla with any fondness.

Even ignoring the rather crude pun in the name, I've never really liked Fatilla as a character, as I think he was a bit too comical, what with his ridiculous speech and all too obvious total lack of mental agility. Under the right circumstances, he could easily have bagged himself a victim, as could any guard who was lucky enough to meet a dungeoneer that had not taken the correct object with which to bribe them. However, Fatilla didn't really seem to be a major threat, because he was too ridiculous for words! Despite the presence of his large club, and his constant threats to "blip and blop" dungeoneers, Fatilla's appearances are all very comical, even though he is presenting an obvious threat whenever he appears on the scene.

So, in very broad terms, Fatilla was a Dungeon guard, who could be bribed to let the dungeoneer pass. However, I don't think he was a good addition to the Nightmare cast, as he was far too comical to be frightening, and he sometimes did little more than hold up the quest. But Fatilla must have some fans out there! If you like him, why not write in and tell me why?

Fear Factor: 5 Obviously a threat, but too comical to be really scary.

Killer Instinct: 2 Could well have bagged a victim, but didn't.

Humour Rating: 8 Certainly played for comedy, at least.

Oscar Standard: 7 Michael Cule is always great to watch, but this is definitely by far his least glorious character.

KNIGHTMARE LOCATIONS

In Norwich

These photographs were taken by me, Jake Collins, and scanned by Rosey Collins, in May 2007.

Our bold dungeoneer has now arrived in Norwich, where the experience of his life awaits him!

The front of Norwich Station:



Below we can see Magdalen Street Studios, where Knightmare was filmed. As you can see, it was being refurbished when I visited. Look out for the telltale canteen railings on the roof!

Underneath Magdalen Street Studios is Anglia House in Prince of Wales Road, which is the HQ of Anglia Television. It was to this building that all applications to appear on Knightmare, and to join the Knightmare Adventurers' Club, were delivered.



Magdalen Street Studios



Anglia House, Prince of Wales Road

Next Issue: Back to the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum.

THE BIG ISSUE

By Rosey Collins

I know there have been plenty of Dungeon guards similar to these two; Cedric and Gumboil, for example. But Olaf and Fatilla have always struck me as being *particularly* similar. Here's why: they both carry a club; they're both totally thick; and - the main one, really - they don't accept passwords. They like bribes, and if you don't have one, you have to get past them with a spell.

Olaf: A Viking guarding levels one and two in series two and three.

Played by: Tom Karol

Advantages: I am told that not a great many people like Olaf, but I personally find him very amusing. I guess I'm just a sucker for a funny accent. He was an obstacle, but arguably not much of one - I think his greatest gift to the adventure was comedy.

Disadvantages: Olaf was never really dangerous enough to be considered a threat, and not just (though partly) because he was so comic. Whilst he did threaten with his club... a bit, he made it clear from the outset that he was prepared to let the dungeoneer pass if he or she had a nice present for him - and he'd take anything! His very first bribe was an egg timer - "*Now Olaf can time his eggs to perfection*" - **Olaf** - and another time he accepted a candle. It would have been more interesting if it had taken some persuading for him to take a bribe and not kill the dungeoneer - like Gumboil, for example. I also concede that for some people, his fake Scandinavian accent could get very annoying - but like I say, I found it rather amusing.

Fatilla the Hun: A barbarian guarding level one in series four.

Played by: Michael Cule

Advantages: Whilst a stupid, ugly, club-wielding barbarian may not seem like such a great idea on paper, Michael Cule really brought something special to the role. This is an actor with a great talent for ad lib, and - like Cule's other character in this series, Brother Mace - Fatilla indulged in some truly funny conversations with the dungeoneers. He was also convincing as a barbarian, in the fat-ugly-unpleasant-person sense of the

word - because in fact barbarian is the Roman word for anyone not Roman (when they talk it sounds like "bar, bar, bar" - quick history lesson there) - thanks to Cule's superb acting. When he did want to clobber a dungeoneer, he swung his club in a manner that I would call pretty menacing - he certainly had Jeremy's advisors panicking when he was getting ready to kill their dungeoneer in spite of his bribe. Fortunately, after a little prompting from Treguard and Pickle, Alexander remembered that they had the spell "Joke".

Disadvantages: Like Olaf, Fatilla was much too funny to be considered a real threat - although, as I said, there was at least one instance when he really seemed to want to whack the dungeoneer with his club. He could be bribed with pretty much anything, and Vicky was allowed to get away with taking the wrong object partly because of this (but mainly because she used his bribe to get rid of an ogre) - *maybe* Olaf wouldn't have let anyone do that. Also, Fatilla didn't have a great deal to do, other than taking bribes - an affliction which was also true of Olaf - and unfortunately the attempts to give him something a bit different tended to be slightly rubbish. He was scared off by Oakley roaring at him twice; one time he had a little chat with Pickle in the greenwood, leaving the team with nothing to do; and poor Alistair became very confused by a little scene involving Gundrada, Fatilla and a couple of self-activating spells. That one was pretty bad, actually. But in spite of all that, I can't praise Michael Cule enough, and I think he did very well with the material he was given.

Conclusion: Whilst I like Olaf, going by everything I've just said, I'm going to have to pick Fatilla as my favourite. He was more threatening than Olaf, and yet at the same time significantly funnier.

KIDS' TV SHOWS I GREW UP WITH

Kids' TV of the 1990s IV

By Rosey Collins

The Novels of E. Nesbitt (1991, 1993 and 1997)

Legendary children's author Edith Nesbitt is perhaps most famous for her classic *The Railway Children*, which itself has had a few screen

adaptations. But I'm not going to tell you about those. During the '90s, the BBC made three series based on the adventures of Nesbitt's Cyril, Anthea, Robert and Jane, and their baby brother who was nicknamed the Lamb.

Five Children and It was shown on CBBC in 1991, and my memories of it were sketchy at best, until all three of these series were repeated on the CBBC Channel fairly recently. I had read the novel not many years before that, and remembered it well. The BBC gave us a very faithful adaptation, which was well written and well cast - unlike that recent monstrosity of a film adaptation, but the least said about that the better. The story basically goes like this: five city children on holiday in the countryside (I used to think they were war evacuees, but Nesbitt was actually a little early for that) find a Psammead - a creature that lives in the sandpit - who grants them wishes that last until sunset. Water is fatal to a Psammead, and this one has once had a slightly wet whisker-tip, meaning that he has only the power to grant one wish a day. You can probably imagine.

The Return of the Psammead in 1993 was not based directly on one of Nesbitt's novels, but rather showed Francis Wright resurrecting his role as the Psammead - in which he was sublime - and meeting four new children (no baby this time). I can only remember two names off the top of my head, and these are Philip and Lucy. There was also another boy and another girl, but apparently they made absolutely no impression on me - and there was Anna Massey giving an excellent performance in the role of the children's Aunt Marchmont. Unlike Nesbitt's novels, this particular story had two ongoing plot strands: one, the winning over of the outwardly cruel and hard Aunt Marchmont, and the other something to do with befriending a little poor girl. The series could have been terrible as a sequel, but I enjoyed it. The writers came up with some great new wishes for the children, including one of them turning invisible, a trip to their future (our present day), and Aunt Marchmont "remembering what it was like to be a child". Very funny!

The Phoenix and the Carpet in 1997 was another faithful adaptation of a Nesbitt novel, this one starring new actors as Cyril, Anthea, Robert and Jane, alongside the Phoenix and his magic carpet. This carpet could manage three trips a day, some with the children, or if they wanted to stay home it could follow instructions from a note pinned to it face-down and bring them stuff. The Psammead appeared in some episodes of this

series (and indeed in one chapter of the book), renewing his acquaintance with the children when the carpet was done for the day and had trapped them at the bottom of a tall, hollow tower. Fortunately the Phoenix was able to fly, and reach the Psammead. The show had many memorable scenes, including the Phoenix setting fire to a London theatre, all from the imagination of E. Nesbitt and adapted beautifully by the BBC. Nesbitt also wrote another novel in this series, *The Story of the Amulet*, in which the Psammead returns for a longer stint, but it was never adapted for television.

Rupert (1991-1997)

My focus in this article happens to be on literary adaptations, and *Rupert* is the only one whose book(s) I haven't actually read. I really don't know what they were like, but I *do* know that Rupert was originally a brown bear, whereas in this cartoon series shown on CITV he was white - so a polar bear, presumably. As such, that is how I think of Rupert. I used to watch his adventures after school, and get a great deal of enjoyment out of them. The show was charming, imaginative, loads of fun and in many ways captured the very essence of childhood.

Rupert was a likeable boy with a great many friends, some human and some different kinds of animal, though they all behaved in very much the same way. The most famous are probably Bill the Badger and a pig called Podgie (such cruel parents!), but I can remember many others, and often Rupert would make a new friend of a guest star. They were all bright, enthusiastic, full of beans and so polite to their own and each other's parents. Rupert got caught up in many exploits over the years; I seem to remember a flying sofa, a giant chess game, a hedge cut into the shape of hedgehog that came to life and ran riot, an island with dragons on it...

As a child, I found this show a delight to watch, especially as the children in it were so clearly enjoying their adventures even when they were in mortal peril. Rupert's voice actor changed from a young boy to a grown woman after the first series, but to be honest, I never even noticed. Both actors captured Rupert's enthusiasm, by which I mean he shouted a bit and over-enunciated a few words, but it worked well enough to draw me in. Often, the friend of that particular episode was less enthusiastic than he was, which made for a fun dynamic. There was something wonderful about the way Rupert would go out and have a great time, find a wacky adventure and continue having a great time. He reacted similarly to everyday situations and not so everyday situations, always giving the

impression that there *might* be an adventure round the corner... but if not, it's just as much fun to hang out with your friends and play in the usual way.

Harry's Mad (1993-1996)

This CITV show had a fair few series, and the first was undoubtedly the best, as it was the only one based directly on the novel by Dick King-Smith. But with that said, I actually don't remember it too well! I remember that Harry was a young boy, slightly rubbish at acting, and the only supporting cast he and Madison needed were Harry's mum and dad. Madison was, of course, Harry's talking parrot. I don't know how well this was explained in the show, but I remember from the book that Harry inherited Madison from an American uncle. He was named after the fourth president of the United States, because he was the uncle's fourth parrot. This uncle trained Madison to speak fluent English, and what a character he created! Some idiot on a message board, when reviewing the show, wondered why Madison didn't speak with either an English accent, as the show was English, or Australian, as that was likely to be his native country. Well, *obviously* he spoke with an American accent because an American taught him to speak!

In the novel, Madison was an African grey - the type of parrot most receptive to lessons in human speech and behaviour. On the TV, they made him a more visually stimulating macaw, which worked fine. Most of the time, he was a very detailed animatronics puppet. When they needed him to hop around or fly, he was a very beautiful and well-behaved real live macaw. Madison was witty, intelligent and had an uncanny ability to imitate voices. He was an engaging character, great to listen to and a perfectly satisfactory realisation of King-Smith's writing of him. When Harry was a child, his dynamic with Madison was great. It got a bit flat as he grew, but the introduction of Harry's cousins Hattie and Jools (of *course*) meant that Madison could get back that old parrot/child relationship.

As I say, the first series was the best. It never exactly had a *bad* series, but they did get to the point where they had to do the old thing of opening a hotel in order to keep the stories going, and the plots they came up with weren't always brilliant. I remember a very strange scene where an almost adult Harry was giving Madison a massage while they discussed whatever their problem was, and Madison was saying things like, "Oooh, oooh, there," in between doing his usual thing of coming up with a

brilliant plan. That was just weird, to be honest - and shortly afterwards, Harry left. I don't know where he went, even though they did say University, maybe? The show was already past its best by then, and didn't really lose any more by losing Harry. But it *was* always good, and whatever else the writers did wrong, they kept Madison as brilliant as he ever was, and a pleasure to watch.

The Worst Witch (1998-2001)

Based on the novels by Jill Murphy, this CITV show did a good job of working with her material, and a slightly rubbish job of carrying on after all the novels had been used up. The stories followed the adventures of slightly rubbish student witch Mildred Hubble, along with her friends Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger - er - I mean Maude Moonshine and, later, Enid Nightshade. Mildred was a lot less capable and a lot less impetuous than our friend Harry Potter, but apart from that, I think J.K. Rowling nicked a lot of ideas. She did great things with them, of course, but that's not what this is about - I just think it was worth pointing out. Mildred attends Cackle's Academy, a girls' school for trainee witches, and she could compare notes with Harry Potter on having a difficult relationship with a hook-nosed, dark-haired potions teacher (Miss Hardbroom); a much better relationship with a benevolent headteacher (Miss Cackle herself), and a haughty, sallow-faced arch-rival (Ethel Hallow).

The CITV adaptation cast all these parts very well indeed. There was also Miss Bat, the chanting teacher, and Miss Drill, the P.E. teacher and only non-magical staff member. Both were good, watchable cast members, and as far as I remember, were more involved in the television programme than they ever got to be in the novels. Miss Bat was played by the legendary Una Stubbs, and she was very funny - especially when Ethel's younger sister was introduced, and she happened to be called Sybil. Stubbs has a very funny way of pronouncing that name, as can be seen in "The Anniversary" - an episode of *Fawlty Towers* in which she makes a guest appearance.

But anyway, *Fawlty Towers* aside - Una Stubbs' leaving and being replaced (I've almost totally forgotten her), as I recall, pretty much coincided with the material from the novels running out and the writers making up their own stupid stories. But, like I said, it was *always* enjoyable as long as Mildred and her friends - that's Enid, Maude and two (it has to be said) non-white new characters for the show, Jadu Wali and Ruby Cherrytree -

were getting up to their various antics at Cackle's Academy. There came a point where they were bringing in boys from some wizards' school, and sending them off on school trips and things, but that was all fine. Not as good as Murphy's material, but still good.

The abomination that came of this very good show was *Weirdsister College*, in which Mildred goes off to college a year early because she can make drawings come to life or something, along with Ethel Hallow, who got there by being reasonably talented and rich. They had a load of new teachers, new friends (although Enid did make a guest appearance - she got wasted in a nightclub or something), boys causing them problems and it was just... blah. The only thing I can say in its favour is that I found the new dynamic between Mildred and Ethel believable. They still didn't like each other much, but were mature enough to get along, without sniping at each other like they used to at school.

But why make it? Did they think children would rather see something cool about college kids than a nice little children's book adaptation? Well, evidently, they were wrong. *Weirdsister College* had one series, and was then replaced by a new series of *The Worst Witch*. I know that it had a new actress playing Miss Hardbroom, and centred around the adventures of Mildred's cousin Henrietta Hubble and her friends, but that's all I know. I didn't see it - but if it was anything like the first couple of series, I'm sure it was at worst watchable and at best very good.

PUZZLE PAGE TWO

First Words V

I'm sure you remember this one - which characters spoke the following quotes as their first words on Knightmare? Name the episode and dungeoneer if you can.

1.) "Alarum, your Lordness - they are coming! Make ready the frightknights; wake the goblins!"

2.) "Go away, humans. Humans is nuisance; humans is worse than monsters! At least monsters is monstrous, and you can tread on 'em."

3.) "This one is most definitely not called Olgarth! I am _____ of Legend!"

4.) "Intruder, beware! I am _____ of Legend. I seek truth or feed on you!"

5.) "Who turned that light on? Who disturbs the sleep of _____?"

6.) "Halt, intruder! I, _____ the 'Orrid, command you! The password, at once, or you perish!"

7.) "Oi, you! I suppose you've got the money to come in here? Well come in, then; sit down."

8.) "Tarum-tarah, hello-hello, it's bold _____ to rescue you!"

9.) "Snipper-snap, look here's _____. Ah, and what have we here? Come forward, come forward, and let me see you. No need to fear, no need to hide; I'll snap you anyway if I decide."

10.) "Grippa! Rhark! Leave her - leave her I say! Else I'll clobber ya!"

SCANDINAVIAN NIGHTMARES

Jón Þórsteinn Petúrssón, February 2008

DISCLAIMER: Despite the apparent timelessness of this not-so-short story, it is part of an existing series, which has so far contained graphic depictions of extreme alcoholism, drug use, violence, theft, martial arts, animal torture, institutionalisation, church arson, abduction, sodomy, bizarre fetishes, underage sex, fascism, murder, cannibalism... and Cradle of Filth. Please be assured that any references to any of these slightly controversial subjects do not reflect the opinions or beliefs of the author of this piece or the editor of The Eye Shield fanzine, but are used for purely literary purposes to reflect the purely fictional opinions and/or beliefs of the purely (well, mostly purely) fictional characters. **YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!**

***** LEVEL TWO *****

To everyone's surprise, not least that of the production team, the well was not just a prop. It actually led to another room below and of all the bad luck in this phase of the

Dungeon, Gunnar had to have the worst landing possible. Right on top of Cedric.

"Oi!" bawled the mad monk, picking himself up off the floor. "You ignorant pig! What do you think you're doing dropping in on me like that, dogsbottom?"

"Caution, team, this is Cedric, the foul-mouthed monk of the Dungeon depths," Treguard warned them. "He was thrown out of his last monastery for using the Bishop of Dunshelm for some impromptu quarterstaff practice during evensong, and he's never found a suitable place that would contain his anger, which has been allowed to fester here ever since. I'd try and get him on your side if I were you..."

Cedric was having none of it. "Come on then, pig's bladder!" he howled at Gunnar. "You'd better apologise or it's clobberin' time!"

"Apologise?" spat Xander with the venom of a hungover cobra. "This is a monk! A servant of the vile and cretinous Christian religion! We must crush him like a slug under a heavy boot!"

Håkon vaulted out of his seat into his heroic pose. "Mighty Odin!" he roared to the sky. "We hail your magnificent presence! May you instil wit and wisdom in our dungeoneer in his need to subdue this perpetrator of the hateful religion of lies!"

The One-Eyed Man Upstairs, in the company of several of the Einherjer, was in the middle of an enormous meal of spit-roasted pork washed down with several gallons of mead, but heard the call, and answered, before jamming a huge and very hairy piece of crackling into his mouth. Gunnar felt a sudden brainwave strike him.

"Who are you calling pig's bladder?" Gunnar retorted. "No, it is *you* that is the pig's bladder, and in ancient times these were used as footballs! Now come here and I will kick your head to the nearest village, and dump it in a puddle!"

"So, you want a fight, do you?" growled Cedric, waving his quarterstaff menacingly. "Now you'll get it, bacon-features!"

Gunnar laughed in his face. "Bacon-features? Is that the best you can do? All those endless days spent praying in a monastery will not help you now... you should have used that time to come up with some more original and cutting insults, shouldn't you, spawn of the putrid disgorgement of the bowels of a freakishly deformed genetic experiment gone horrifically wrong!"

Cedric twitched, and for once was lost for words. It was long enough for Øyvind to relay some ideas to Gunnar through the helmet. He parroted them at Cedric before he had a chance to reply.

"That's right, you heard me," Gunnar continued. "Got no comeback to that, have you? Do you still have a tongue in that yawning vacuum you call your head? Or has it been forcibly removed by the tiresome dirge you have dedicated your life to? See, that's what we do to your kind in Norway. From monks, to bishops, to the common church-going vermin... every last one of them we will butcher to prevent the spread of the cancerous Christian plague to our glorious pagan land!"

Cedric quivered, and attempted to wave his quarterstaff around, but fumbled and dropped it. It landed at Gunnar's feet, and he grabbed it.

"Who is the master now?" he continued, also relaying any comments Øyvind cared to throw his way, of which there were plenty. "You will witness the awesome power of the ancient lands! Remember this for all time: my god wields a hammer, and yours died nailed to a cross! Do you have any further questions?"

"No more!" howled Cedric, by now cowering on the floor. "My whole life... it's been a sham! What have I done..."

"Never mind what you've done before, what will you do for us now?" demanded Gunnar. "You will aid us or else I will turn your own weapon on you."

"All right, I'll do it..." Cedric whimpered, by now in total submission. "I'll give you a

spell, one I learnt from my time as an exorcist... it's called GHOSTBUSTERS. Now please, leave me..."

"You what?" grunted Øyvind. "All that effort for one measly spell? Get him to give us another one."

"Oi, dogsbottom," Gunnar continued, turning even Cedric's own insults on him. "We want another spell. Give it to us or I will taunt you a second time!"

"MOTOR, will that do you?" Cedric snivelled. "It's all I've got left... never did know what to do with it... now leave me alone..."

The advisors decided enough was enough, and led Gunnar out of the door on the far wall.

"Where am I?"

"Right, Gunnar, unless I am very much mistaken, this is the level two clue room. Can you see the stairs?"

"Yes..."

"Right, come down the stairs, then keep going forwards... can you see the table?"

"Yes..."

"What's on it?"

Gunnar examined the objects. There was a large spanner, a bottle, a key and a block of cheese wrapped in a muslin bag. He wasted no time in shoving the cheese into the knapsack.

"It's not *proper* cheese, you know," grunted Xander.

"What's that bottle, there?" asked Håkon. It was filled with a completely clear liquid. Gunnar picked it up and examined it.

"It says: 'Wzszladowychsky Polski Wodka'," Gunnar declared.

"And the key?"

Gunnar picked up the key.

"Hey! Put me down!" squeaked the key. "Don't go putting yer grubby hands all over me! I'm Casper. Casper the key, that's me. I can unlock anything..."

"What an incredibly annoying voice," seethed Xander. "Grab the vodka and the spanner and go!"

In a flash, Gunnar was guided out through the door, probably even quicker than with the aid of an eye shield sequence.

"Where am I?"

"You're not going to believe this," groaned Håkon, "but it looks like we're back in the room we started in! And there's a skull in each doorway..."

The skull ghosts – and that's the proper skull ghosts from series three making the proper wailing noises, as opposed to the clattering rounded ones from later days – all started to home in on Gunnar at once. But they only started. They did not finish.

"Extreme danger to life force, team, you must use magic!" howled Treguard hysterically. The skulls hovered just far enough away from Gunnar to allow time for a lengthy spell to be cast without ever looking like they might attack. "Come on, team, these are dangerous hauntings, who you gonna call?"

Håkon rose from his seat again, and raised his hand in a manner that suggested he could shoot lightning bolts out of his fingers.

"Oi, you always cast the spells," Xander grunted. "Let me do it this time."

"Are you serious?" Håkon replied, as the skulls continued to not attack Gunnar. "This joke is so corny that neither of the two of you with your cataclysmic absence of a sense of humour could pull this off. This is my job. Spellcasting, G-H-O-S-T-B-U-S-T-E-R-S!"

The jangly spell noise was quickly replaced with an electronic theme tune that sounded like an awful parody of Ray Parker Jr's original theme tune, but with just enough differences to be called a different composition. After all, the producers had narrowly avoided being sued for ripping off the music from *Jaws* and they were in no mood for a repeat performance. Four bright streaks, that looked suspiciously like recycled effects from the AVAUNT spell of series two, shot out from behind Gunnar and zapped the skulls. A sword appeared over the far right door.

"That was an easy room, wasn't it?" commented Øyvind, in the direction of the camera, as Håkon guided Gunnar to the correct exit.

Backstage, the production team were starting to get annoyed. "Easy room?" muttered the director to his deputy. "Who do this team think they are, Dave?"

"Don't know, boss..." Dave replied.

"Still, I think they've just made a fatal mistake. But I'm not hedging my bets. I want to make sure we get rid of them as soon as possible. I'm going to send them into the Mills of Doom – we haven't had a death in there yet, I spent ages dreaming up a death sequence for that room and I'm itching to use it. I say we tip the balance a little in our favour. But just in case they get through it, go and get the disc with that extra-difficult room stored on it, will you?"

"Right, boss..." replied Dave, and he disappeared towards the computer room. A grin shot over the director's face.

"Game over, freaks," he muttered to himself.

"Where am I?"

"You're in a room full of machinery. There are three large cogs, and you're standing on one of them."

"Warning, team, these are the Mills of Doom," Treguard advised them. "The centre of each cog is safe, but the only way out is to run the gauntlet of the moving outer edges. Now, guide Gunnar quickly, but guide him accurately, as one false move and he will be crushed!"

"Turn forty-five degrees to your right, now walk forwards," Håkon instructed. "Stop. Now, when we say go, you are to take three steps forwards, quickly..."

Håkon waited for the chance to guide Gunnar through safely. Without any warning, and with Gunnar stranded at the edge of the cog, the machinery started to speed up.

"Danger, team!" bellowed Treguard. "I had not expected this to happen, treachery may be at work here..."

Gunnar started to get strangely nervous. As he waited for Håkon's call, which he had no idea was not about to come, his hands started to sweat. The spanner slid through his hands, and dropped right between the cogs... which slowed down and stopped with a mighty crunch of mangled metal.

"Gunnar... I have no idea what you did there, but the cogs have stopped. Walk forwards... stop... now turn right... walk forwards... stop... forty-five degrees to your right, walk forwards..."

Backstage, Dave returned with a chunky optical disc the size of a VHS video cassette. "I think this is it," he told his boss. "This disc was in a box marked 'TOP SECRET'... load it up and see what happens."

"This had better work," grumbled the director. "Look what they just did to the Mills of Doom..."

Dave looked on in surprise at the motionless cogs as his boss loaded the disc. They watched with anticipation as the picture flipped over to the team's next room.

"Where am I?"

"You're in a room... there appears to be a computer on a desk, and some flashing disco lights in the corner."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm serious – I'm looking at the monitor, I can see it..."

"Something is not right, team," Treguard warned them, collecting the Sybil Fawltz Prize for stating the bleedin' obvious. "Never before in my time in this castle have I seen this room... or anything even remotely like it. Whatever techno-magic may have created this place, I have no knowledge or experience of it. Tread with caution, for here you are on your own."

"Right, Gunnar, walk forwards," Håkon instructed. "Can you see the desk?"

"Yes..."

"Sidestep to your right slightly..."

Gunnar did as he was told, and the camera zoomed in so the advisors could see its contents.

"Gunnar, it's a BBC Micro," Håkon told him. "There's a blue screen, with a crudely drawn graphic of a stick man sitting in a chair... it's not doing much. Try typing an instruction."

Gunnar started to press the keys. The blue screen slowly turned pink, giving an equally crude effect of the walls closing in on the stick man. Treguard looked on in silence, bemused by the whole bizarre scenario that had befallen his Dungeon.

"What's going on?" Gunnar asked. "I can't see the screen..."

Within seconds, the pink walls had closed in and hit the stick figure. There was an electronic howling noise, and the border of the monitor in the antechamber flashed blue. The life force clock had noticeably jumped from green to amber.

"You've damaged your life force, team!" was all that Treguard could reply with. "Now you must get Gunnar out of this strange room and find food or else you will perish!"

"What's this glowing pattern I can see under the helmet?" Gunnar asked.

"It must be the reflections of those disco lights on the floor," Håkon answered. "If you think you can follow them, go towards the flashing lights."

Gunnar did as he was instructed, making his way as best he could while blindfolded under the helmet towards the epileptic-fit-inducing flashes of blue, red, green and yellow. As he approached the lights, the flip-screen appeared that indicated he had gone through a door, even though there had not been one there.

The screen in the antechamber went blank. There was an awkward pause as they waited for Gunnar to say "Where am I?", but the question never came.

"Where's Gunnar gone?" Håkon asked to nobody in particular, as if any of them

knew. The screen responded in a cheeky computerised voice.
"Heeheeheehee! I've popped him into a time tunnel."
The three advisors and Treguard all stood there in stunned silence. In the far distance outside the antechamber, they could have sworn they heard frantic voices.
"Dave? DAVE? Where have you got to...?"
"Here, boss..."
"Didn't you read the inlay in the disc box?"
"No, boss..."
"That's not *Nightmare* data, is it? Look at that title, there... look at it... *Treasures Of The Mindlord!* Nobody remembers that... apart from the bit with the flashing lights... we swiped this from TSW years ago when the security guards were off on their cider break... now everyone will know where we got half our ideas from! Just get the next room loaded, will you, and don't screw up again!"
"Yes, boss..."
"Now, how do I undo this time tunnel malarkey..."

***** END OF PART THREE *****

POETRY CORNER

We journey back to the latter stages of series 5 now, to join dreary Duncan and his somewhat inept advisors as they blunder their way through to a cutting conclusion.

Duncan and his Berkshire mates
Would suffer quite the worst of fates,
To end a quest so full of error
At quite the cruellest Dungeon terror.
Smirky flew to village green,
Where knowledge proved so hard to glean.
The key to have it at their beck
Was found round Scaramonger's neck.
The dark succumbed to candlelight,
Elita then was saved from plight.
Inside the inn, a chance to spy
Ensured that Duncan would not die
Within the blocker's rocky jaws,
And thanks to lack of falling floors,
The team arrived at level's end,
Where Hands proved quite an untrue friend.

Elven magic breached the door,
They'll get to level two for sure!
But no, the scroll clue was ignored,
Or else their counting skills were flawed.
Too far down, and out as well,
We can't be far from that death-knell!
The mood, alas, was far from staid
As Dun and Can fell from the blade.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Famous Last Words V:

- 1.) *Granitas*. Episode 216. Karen.
- 2.) *Dwarf (Bumptious)*. Episode 216. Karen.
- 3.) *Gretel*. Episode 216. Karen.
- 4.) *Olgarth*. Episode 212. Julian.
- 5.) *Gibbet*. Episode 108. Richard I.
- 6.) *Gwendoline*. Episode 516. Kelly II.
- 7.) *Raptor*. Episode 803. Daniel II.
- 8.) *Rothberry*. Episode 806. Michael.
- 9.) *Grimaldine*. Episode 713. Barry.
- 10.) *Giant*. Episode 106. Helen I.

First Words V:

- 1.) *Lissard*. Episode 701. Simon IV.
- 2.) *Giant*. Episode 102. Simon I.
- 3.) *Granitas*. Episode 102. Maeve.
- 4.) *Igneous*. Episode 201. Claire.
- 5.) *Gibbet*. Episode 104. Simon I.
- 6.) *Gumboil*. Episode 104. Daniel I (Danny).
- 7.) *Marta*. Episode 702. Simon IV.
- 8.) *Sir Hugh*. Episode 505. Sarah.
- 9.) *Snapper-Jack*. Episode 802. Daniel II.
- 10.) *Skarkill*. Episode 502. Catherine.