


THE EYE SHIELD



Issue 15

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MESSAGE FROM ME

Welcome to issue fifteen of The Eye Shield as I, Jake Collins of Harpenden, share with you some more of my thoughts and observations about Nightmare. Two Eye Shield favourites come to an end this issue. *My Nightmare Story* will finally bring you up to the present day, and I'm sure it will keep you guessing to the very end. Also, Laurie Marks's *The Path Opens* draws to a close. It was the first ever reader contribution I received for TES and I will always be grateful for that. Thanks again, Laurie. Fear not, though, for The Eye Shield has not dried up its reservoir of stories just yet. Carl Bateson's *A Last Resort* continues - relentlessly, some might say - and there's a lot more mileage in it yet! The other exciting article this issue is my interview with the original editor of TES, Paul McIntosh, where you can get the official analysis of the internet version of the fanzine. Elsewhere, all your regular favourites await you, so get reading!

CORRESPONDENCE

If you have any views, questions, observations or comments about Nightmare or TES, please do send them to me. I realise that the discussion forum on the website fields most of these nowadays, but if you send them to Eye Shield Towers as well or instead, you might be pleasantly surprised by the response. I am also keen to read any articles or features you readers may have written. Even if you can find no other forum for your work, TES will almost certainly include it. Please, e-mail any contributions to the brand-new Eye Shield hotmail address below. Come on; get creative this summer with TES!

REMEMBER THIS?

Series 1/2/3. Level 1/2.

CHAMBER MINED!

The bomb rooms set a very clear challenge for teams in the first three series: get out before the fuse burns down or your dungeoneer gets blown

up. Theoretically, this should have presented no problem, but it was not so in practice. There were two bomb rooms; a large grey stone one and a smaller reddish brick one. Each had a gigantic bomb hanging from the ceiling. Sometimes the fuse would already be lit when the dungeoneer entered the room, other times it would light up just after they came in. Whatever, the advisors had to guide them out before the fuse ran down and the bomb exploded, meaning that the room - and anyone foolish enough to still be in it - would be destroyed.

There were two doors in each room. Sometimes both of these were available as exits, other times the challenge would involve walking from one of the doors to the other. In theory, there was plenty of time to escape, as the distance to the exit and the speed of the fuse were aligned so that escape should be fairly easy. In practice, however, dithering advisors or additional challenges could complicate matters significantly. I refer you to the first ever episode, when David's team of guinea pigs blundered into a bomb room after dealing with Olgarth. They were slow to react as they quite clearly found it hard to comprehend that there was no more to this challenge than simply walking quickly across a room. Once Treguard had urged them enough, they took the hint and directed David out, straight into another bomb room!

This time, however, they were having none of it, and quickly took David straight across to the exit. In series 2, Akash was forced to spend ages dancing around in front of the bomb while his dim-witted advisors tried to pluck up the courage to guide him out. In series 3, Scott entered a bomb room where the fuse was not lit. Having lined him up nicely with the exit, his team seemed to find it impossible to guide him out once the fuse began to fizzle. As for additional challenges, imagine the dilemma if there is an item of food in the room; is there time to get it before the bomb explodes? The answer would be a resounding *yes* if the team did not dither in indecision, as Neil's did.

Jamie's, however, kept their heads, allowing him to casually pick up a food item as he strolled past the burning bomb. Another additional challenge involved putting on a gauntlet to freeze the fuse. Unfortunately, the two teams who were presented with this challenge - Martin I from series 2 and Douglas from series 3 - fared dismally in the level one clue room and did not take the gauntlet, meaning that they were killed off in a bomb explosion. This appeared to be none too pleasant either, as Treguard surmised when Douglas was blown up. (*"Ooh, what a terrible mess!" - Treguard.*)

While we're on the subject of deaths, the bomb rooms can claim a third victim: Daniel I from series 1. Having taken the wrong door at the end of level two, Danny was placed in a bomb room and immediately blown up. It is worth noting, however, that these three deaths all resulted from an earlier error rather than a failure to tackle the challenge itself. However, three victims is still an impressive total.

Difficulty: 6 Appeared to be quite tricky, particularly with a time limit.

Killer Instinct: 8 One victim in each of the three series.

Gore Factor: 9 They were blown to smithereens.

Fairness: 8 There was plenty of time for escape as long as everyone kept their cool.

ADVENTURE TIME.

—
The score stands at Dungeon 5, Humans 1. Can no one else match Tom and team and beat the challenge? Let's see.

The next dungeoneer to take the challenge is called Beth. She is first presented with the challenge of the spectral scorpion.

"Warning team" says Treguard. "Although this guardian was created by magic and does not quite exist in your terms, its sting is still deadly."

Beth's advisors line her up with the floor tiles just in front of the scorpion's tail. As they are about to tell her to move, the clanking and whirring of the Automatum fills the room.

"Hurry, team" Treguard urges them. "Or yet another peril will overtake you before you have dealt with this one."

As he speaks, the Automatum enters the room and makes straight for Beth. Without panicking, one of the advisors calmly directs her across the scorpion's path while its sting is out of the way. As the Automatum clanks on, Beth is directed out of the chamber. She emerges into a level one clue room, with one door on the far wall. Beth is directed round the back of the table, on which are a bunch of dried plants labelled *herbs*, a small red key and a horn.

"Don't touch yet, team" warns Treguard. "For first you must earn your looting."

The far wall changes into the face of the wall monster, Phelheim. The doorway forms his mouth.

"I am Phelheim" he declares. "You may not have passage, dungeoneer, until you have faced my questions. Please me and you will learn your quest. Fail my challenge and I feed on you. Here, then, is my f..."

Phelheim is interrupted by the Automatum clanking into the room. His mechanical brain spots Beth and starts to take him towards her.

"What is this interruption!" explodes Phelheim, clearly not impressed. "How dare you disturb my trial, you bucket of nuts and bolts!"

The Automatum wavers slightly, but then continues his advance.

"Invidious robot!" Phelheim thunders. "You will pay for this."

A huge stone slab drops from the ceiling and crushes the Automatum with a colossal crunch.

"Much better" says Phelheim more calmly. "I fancy he will not trouble you again, dungeoneer. What is your name?"

"I'm Beth" she answers, slightly stunned by this turn of events.

"It does not seem fair to me, Beth, that your trial should have been interrupted thus" proclaims the wall monster. "Therefore, know this piece of bonus information as the truth. The password for this level is *metamorphic*. Now, will you still hear my questions?"

"I will" replies Beth.

"Very well" smiles Phelheim. "Then here is my first. What substance is produced by the cork oak and the live oak?"

"Cork?" Beth guesses at once.

"Truth accepted" Phelheim rumbles. "Here is my second. With this invention I can carry more than I could ever carry. Without it, roads may just as well be footpaths."

After a few moments, the advisors offer Beth an answer.

"The wheel" she says.

"Truth accepted" says Phelheim again. "Here is my third. Who was it who was so vain that he fell in love with his own reflection?"

"Narcissus" Beth replies instantly.

"Truth accepted" Phelheim says. "Three is the score. Your quest is for the Cup, but you may not drink from it. To proceed, you will need to unlock magic. The first step is *crouch*."

"With a perfect score you may command him, Beth" Treguard reminds her.

"I command you," says Beth.

"Very well" Phelheim says. "The hunt is on, but you are not the hunter. Now I return to my slumber."

Phelheim disappears.

"A hunter carries a horn" points out an advisor. "So we should leave the horn behind."

Beth picks up the herbs and the key and is directed out. She emerges into a small room containing only a large wooden chest. The advisors tell Beth to go over to it and see if it opens. When she discovers that it is locked, Beth uses the key and the chest opens. Inside is a scroll.

"This is spell scroll, team" Treguard tells them. "Take note of what is written inside, for you will need it."

"It says *cage*" Beth tells the advisors, who write the spell down. The next room is Fireball Alley. Four holes shoot fireballs across the room.

"Caution, team, for here is challenge that requires precision guidance" says Treguard. "There is a safe place between the fireballs' paths, but you'll have to be quick."

Beth's advisors direct her carefully to the middle when the far fireballs are being shot. After they have finished, Beth is able to cross safely to the door. The next room has two grand arches on the left and right walls. It is also guarded, as Beth senses the lumbering form of Fatilla approaching her.

"Another dungeoneer" slurps the barbarian. "Well, little dungeoneer, this time there is no hope for you. I have my orders, and I have a licence to kill!"

"I don't suppose you want these herbs, do you?" Beth asks doubtfully.

"Do they taste nice?" Fatilla asks uncertainly. "I have a very sensitive pallet, you know."

"Um, I think so" says Beth. "Here, try some."

She rips off a leaf and hands it to the guard. He bites into it and chews thoughtfully for a moment before spitting it out onto the floor.

"Yuck!" Fatilla exclaims. "It's 'orrible! That will not serve you as a bribe, young lady. And as you have nothing else to give me, I'd say my way is clear."

As Fatilla raises his club, Beth's spellcaster suddenly cries out.

"Spellcasting:" she says. "C-A-G-E."

A large metal cage falls from the ceiling and traps Fatilla.

"Hey, that's not fair!" he protests. "I'm supposed to blip and blop you."

"Sorry" Beth calls as she is directed round the cage and towards the right-hand archway. "You missed your chance."

The next chamber is that of the blocker. The wall grates forwards and forms a large and frightening face in front of Beth.

"Password!" it demands.

"Metamorphic" Beth replies.

After a few seconds, the blocker shoots off backwards, leaving the exit clear. Beth steps through it into Mildread's chamber. The old witch is stirring her cauldron with a wooden ladle.

"Have a care here, Beth" Treguard warns. "Mildread is notoriously difficult to deal with."

"Oh, hello there, deary" Mildread rasps when she sees the dungeoneer. "It's so nice to see a another visitor, and a fellow female at that; most of the dungeoneers of late have been male. Come here, my dear, and introduce yourself."

"My name is Beth" says Beth as she goes towards Mildread. "I'm looking for the Cup."

"And how may I assist your quest?" Mildread asks snidely.

"By helping me to level two?" Beth suggests.

"Such an unpleasant place." Mildread shakes her head disapprovingly. "Still, I suppose you have to go through it to get to level three. Well, unless you use the Short Cut, but I don't suppose you really want to do that, do you?"

"No I don't!" says Beth emphatically.

"Very well" Mildread grins toothily. "The way to level two is hidden in this very chamber, if you can find it. All I will tell you is that the only door leads to a heavily mined chamber, and that is not the way. Yet it is here, somewhere. Oh yes, and one more thing. The second step is *bend*." Cackling to herself, Mildread shambles off. The advisors seem at a loss, but Beth prompts them.

"Take me to the cauldron so I can put the herbs in it" she tells them.

Once this is done, the cauldron transforms into a stone wellway. Beth climbs the steps and goes down, into level two. The first challenge is the Block and Tackle.

"Nothing here is stable" says Treguard urgently. "Proceed with care but don't delay!"

Fortunately for Beth, her advisors are calm and collected enough to handle this challenge. They direct her quickly but carefully to the right-hand door. On the other side is a sorcerer's study, featuring books, scrolls and chests of all sorts. It does not take the team long to learn whose study it is.

"Confound it!" thunders Hordriss the Confuser as he blusters into the room. "I can't find the accursed thing anywhere!"

He slumps down in his chair and starts to sulk. When he sees Beth, he hastily scrambles to his feet and musters his dignity.

"Ah, a dungeoneer" he says in the haughtiest tone he can manage. "What is your name, young person?"

"Beth" she replies. "Have you, um, lost something?"

"It's more a matter of not having it in the first place" Hordriss admits. "I have to make this potion, you see, but I can't find the final ingredient. A dear friend of mine is ill, and if I do not help him he will die."

"What is this ingredient?" Beth asks.

"If I tell you" Hordriss says cautiously. "Will you keep an eye out for it in your quest?"

"Yes, I will" Beth agrees.

"Oh, that is good news!" smiles Hordriss. "The ingredient I seek is an *arken* spell; it will help to bind my friend's illness and render it harmless. You may have seen one of these spells before. It's Celtic magic, and takes the form of a round green shield. If you can find it, and then touch it, you may call me. My calling name is Malefact. Call three times and I will appear. If you do this successfully, I will help you escape the level. Well, Beth, do we have a bargain?"

"We do" Beth replies.

"Excellent" says Hordriss. "Hopefully I will be able to cure my friend and he'll pay me that gold he promised me." Hordriss covers his mouth in alarm at what he has just said. "Er, that is, he will be well once again. Just one last thing, Beth. As you have agreed to help me, I will share knowledge with you. The third step is *stretch*. Now, be on your way."

Beth is directed out. She finds herself in Merlin's chamber. The advisors line her up in front of the pit.

"Here we are in Merlin's room again" Treguard notes. "Beth, you must take action to invoke the appropriate steps."

Beth starts by crouching down, causing the first slab to appear. She next bends double, touching her toes with her fingertips, heralding the arrival of the second slab. Finally she stretches high up in the air, completing the path. As she steps onto the fourth slab, Merlin appears on his throne.

"Welcome, Beth" smiles the wizard benignly. "Congratulations on reaching my abode. Now, you are in need of magic if you want to reach level three. Are you ready for my conundrums?"

"Yes" Beth tells him.

"Very well" Merlin continues. "Then here is my first. Who is the maiden whose voice one may hear again and again and again?"

It takes a few seconds, but the team manage to work out the answer.

"Echo" Beth says.

"Truth accepted" Merlin says approvingly. "But I'm not finished yet."

Destiny in the fate of this quest will wait on the next question and answer. Will Beth please Merlin? Can she find Hordriss's final ingredient? Find out in the next Adventure Time.

PUZZLE PAGE ONE

Here I have provided you with one series and twelve associated words. The rest is up to you.

G	O	L	G	A	R	A	C	H	K	B	K	B	A	K	K	B	B	X	Y	B
R	K	B	K	B	F	K	H	O	A	L	A	L	D	A	A	L	L	B	H	L
I	A	L	A	L	G	A	B	R	K	H	K	H	K	K	K	H	H	L	O	H
M	K	H	K	H	B	K	N	D	E	O	E	O	A	E	E	O	O	H	B	O
W	E	O	E	O	O	O	Q	R	U	C	U	C	K	U	U	C	C	O	G	C
O	U	C	U	C	K	F	K	I	T	L	T	L	E	T	T	L	L	C	O	L
L	T	L	T	L	A	M	A	S	H	O	H	O	U	H	H	O	O	L	B	O
D	H	O	H	O	K	Z	K	S	D	E	D	E	T	B	D	E	E	O	L	E
B	D	E	D	E	M	E	L	L	I	S	A	N	D	R	E	B	B	E	I	B
L	F	B	F	B	O	K	B	V	B	N	M	Z	X	A	K	M	M	B	N	M
H	V	M	V	M	R	A	L	O	O	Q	C	M	W	N	A	R	R	M	K	R
O	U	R	U	R	G	K	H	K	R	E	W	W	Q	G	K	M	M	R	A	M
C	R	M	R	M	H	E	O	A	T	Y	U	I	O	W	E	G	G	M	K	G
L	H	G	H	G	A	U	C	K	O	R	A	C	L	E	U	O	O	M	E	O
O	G	O	G	O	N	T	L	E	W	A	K	P	K	N	T	M	M	C	U	M
E	U	M	U	M	N	H	O	U	E	S	A	D	A	F	H	B	B	G	T	B
B	V	E	L	D	A	D	E	T	N	G	K	G	K	F	D	B	B	R	H	B
M	O	O	Q	C	M	W	B	O	O	Q	C	M	W	U	E	N	B	E	D	N
R	N	M	L	K	J	H	M	O	O	Q	C	M	W	U	E	M	L	W	F	M
O	O	Q	C	M	W	M	O	T	L	E	Y	O	O	Q	C	M	H	O	O	M

BRANGWEN
GOLGARACH
GRIMWOLD
HOBGOBLIN
HORDRISS
MCGREW

MELLISANDRE
MORGHANNA
MOTLEY
ORACLE
OWEN
VELDA

THE PATH OPENS

It's time for the final part of Laurie Marks's story. As we join it, Pickle is about to explain Lord Fear's plans to Treguard.

Treguard's hunch was confirmed. "How can this be?" he said, more to himself than to Pickle, who replied anyway:

"I don't know, but Elita told me she's certain."

"Elita? How did she find out?"

"She saw a black elf on the way to Marblehead. He-"

"A black elf? I thought they were all dead?"

"So did I, master."

"And...going to Marblehead?" Treguard was getting worried. "To Lord Fear?"

"Yes. Elita heard a noise and ran over to see what it was. Another cavern elf had spotted the black one and attacked him, but he was losing the fight - the evil thing had cast a *speed* spell or something, and he'd put his dagger through the assailant's heart in seconds. Elita was shocked. She followed the black elf and he went all the way to Marblehead. A few minutes later he came out again - with Lord Fear and two goblins."

Treguard was, by now, well past the *getting* worried stage. He spoke slowly: "A black elf warrior-mage and Lord Fear...together...this is bad news indeed."

"There is more, master. Elita followed them for some way. Lord Fear called the elf 'Kalarae', and he seemed to have taken him on as a new seneschal. They were going to reclaim the Opposition's old home on Mount Fear. Elita followed them all the way there. When they got there, they walked to the red dragon's corpse, which seemed to have decayed unnaturally quickly. Then they each cast a spell and it began to rot even

faster - you could see the flesh crumbling away. She ran off to try to get to Nightmare Castle, met me on the way and ordered me, in her usual impolite manner, to go there and tell you what was happening."

Treguard considered what Pickle had told him, and decided what had to be done. "Right," he said, "get the Book of Quests out. We'll need it soon. And find me my staff, and the Eye Shield, the knapsack, the Reach wand and the Helmet of Justice - the old one, now that Majida's not here to bother me."

"Yes, master - but I want decent food this time!"

Ah yes, thought Treguard, *that* was why Pickle had left before.

"Skarkill?" The former goblin master looked even worse than when Lord Fear had known him before.

"Yes, your fearship, er, lordship."

"You've been living in this cave all the time?"

"Yes, I finally managed to crawl out from under the dragon and I found this cave. I had nowhere to go - you'd given Grippa and Rhark to Raptor."

"Well, I'm putting them back in your care now. There will soon be more dungeoneers for you to put your irons on - if you can manage it!"

Skarkill looked mildly hurt. "I did it before."

"Oh yes," said Fear, beside himself with sarcasm. "Look in the Dungeon and see that room full of Skarkill's victims, all one of them!"

"Well, there *will* be more your fearship, er, lordship, ha ha, lovely! Anyway, who's your friend?"

Lord Fear beckoned his new henchman forward. "This," he said, "is Kalaræ, my seneschal, and your master when I'm not available. You take care to respect him."

"Oh yes, I will. How do you do, master Kalaræ?" said Skarkill, holding out his hand and thus getting off to a bad start.

"Never mind all that," said Fear, "I've got a job for you, Skarkill: find Sylvester Hands and bring him here."

Treguard and Pickle made the final preparations for the start of the season - polishing the Helmet of Justice, getting the fire going properly and making sure they looked comfortably respectable for the watchers, when they arrived. Treguard had dug out the magic mirror, as he was sure Pickle would not approve of a pool like Lord Fear's. Suddenly a familiar face appeared in the mirror. Treguard had wondered how long it would take him.

"Greetings, Dungeon Master," the face said.

"Hello Hordriss," replied Treguard. "I'm glad to see you taking an interest already."

"Oh, I always watch the quests attentively. You never know when a dungeoneer may need my help."

Treguard thought this a little pompous, as Hordriss and his daughter had often needed rescuing from the Opposition in the past. Still, he was sometimes useful. "Quite. Be ready to conjure plenty of trophies this season."

"Oh, I hope so, Treguard. Well, it's almost time to begin, but I would give you one piece of information - Elita is in some trouble in Level 2."

Surprise, surprise. "Thank you, Hordriss. Farewell."

"I'll bet you anything it's that horrible black elf, master."

"Very possibly, Pickle, but that's something for our first team to worry about. I think it's time we welcomed them, don't you? I can feel the watchers' presence."

Treguard raised the staff aloft.

"Enter, stranger!"

So that's it, readers. Or is it? Laurie tells me that any of you who feel able are welcome to write a continuation to his ninth season of Nightmare. Perhaps he himself will one day write a sequel. Who can tell? For now, thanks once again to Laurie for sending me his work.

REMEMBER HER?

-

Series 6/7/8. Level 1/2.

SIDRISS THE CONFUSED.

-

Sidriss introduced herself as Hordriss's daughter in the second episode of series 6. Iona Kennedy presented Sidriss as a kind, inoffensive yet completely daffy and dizzy young sorceress. The trouble was that Sidriss was unsuccessful in all areas of magic, and therefore not a very successful magician. Her first appearance - with Motley and dungeoneer

Matt - saw her trying to conjure up a brownie, but ending up with a pooka instead. Later in series 6, Sidriss tried to make herself more beautiful than she was already by using cosmetic magic, but ended up incredibly ugly.

Sidriss's poor skills in magic seemed to frustrate her a lot because she desperately wanted to live up to her father's high expectations. Speaking of Hordriss, Lord Fear realised quite quickly that Sidriss was his main weakness. Many of Fear's plots to overpower Hordriss included capturing Sidriss in some way, or creating a murderous Sidriss replica out of a skeleton. Where this played a part in quests, the dungeoneer would have to prevent Fear's plan from going ahead. January, for example, released Sidriss from Fear's entrapment spell by using a pouch of *defrost* powder.

Typical reactions included warm yet measured praise from Hordriss, and tears from Sidriss. Sidriss was also encountered in quests not involving her father, usually bungling some magic spell or other. She was friendly, naively cheerful and always keen to help dungeoneers with spells, causeway codes, objects, passwords or even boat rides. Sidriss spent a bit of time with Motley in series 6 and 8, and Fidjit in series 7. Fidjit didn't seem to like her much because of her erratic ways with magic, but Motley - in his typical way - claimed to be in love with her. When he confessed this to her, she shrunk him to the size of a mouse, from which point he was much more wary of her.

Indeed, despite Sidriss's good intentions she made a terrible friend, as Marta found out when she was accidentally turned into a cat during an argument. When dungeoneer Nicola II returned Sidriss's wand to her she tried to turn Marta back into her old self, but she ended up as a large black Labrador instead!

Fear Factor: 0 Far from it.

Humour Rating: 7 Dizziness contributed to her sense of humour.

Killer Instinct: 0 There was no malice within her.

Oscar Standard: 8 Fairly convincing, I suppose.

PAUL MCINTOSH INTERVIEW

Hot on the heels of Knightmare stalwarts David Learner, Hugo Myatt, Tim Child, Jason Karl and Nicholas comes an interview with the original editor of TES, Newcastle's Paul McIntosh. My thanks go to Paul for abandoning his duties as a statistician for long enough to answer these questions, and in such detail.

EYE SHIELD: When did you first start watching Knightmare?

PAUL MCINTOSH: I became hooked towards the end of series 2 in 1988. My first full series was Series 3, at which point I became seriously addicted. I never missed an episode from that year onwards.

Do you have a favourite series?

It has to be Series 3. I don't know if it's just the sentimental reasons as described above, or the fact that I honestly feel I enjoyed it more than any other. Possibly it's because I was just old enough to fully understand what was going on, but still young enough to be genuinely scared at some points. I liked the atmosphere of the series and the slightly sinister undertone to so many aspects. Hordriss, for example, was a far more devious character back then. The goblins and the occasional hobgoblin added a lot to it, too. I don't think any of the subsequent series managed to recapture that atmosphere. If I'm allowed to nominate a least favourite series, that would have to be series 4, simply for killing the atmosphere of the previous year, the introduction of the dreaded Eye Shield and the sudden lack of variety from one quest to another.

Do you have a favourite team?

I'm not sure if it's a favourite team or a favourite quest, but my best memories are of Martin's team (from York) towards the end of series 3. They were extremely unlucky not to win in my opinion, and played the game very well. Level three was a near impossibility that year. Even though they messed up Owen's question I still felt convinced they were going to make it. I was gutted when poor old Martin was snuffed out by Morghanna. If I can nominate a least favourite again, I'd have to go for Duncan's team. I can't remember what year it was - one of the later series, certainly. (*Series 5 - Jake.*) They were shockingly bad; very much a one-man band and deserved to perish as swiftly as they did!

Do you have a favourite character?

Even though I'm still not sure whether Treguard ever really needed an assistant, I have a certain fondness for Pickle. I've always liked him. He

seemed to add a bit of excitement and urgency when a quest needed it. Sometimes you would get the most docile, unresponsive teams - Pickle's reactions always helped to make up for the frequent lack of response from some of them. Mogdred was another favourite; always totally sinister, totally evil and very rarely defeated. Lord Fear was never quite the same - he was too much of a "comic bad guy" with a range of witty lines and put-downs. Mogdred was nothing but pure, sinister evil personified.

We all know that you auditioned to appear in Knightmare series 4, but did you ever do it again?

I most certainly did. I think it was for series 5 or 6, with my brother Richard and our friends Mark and Andrew. We had to trudge all the way to Manchester from Newcastle. I felt I put in a much better individual performance than my first disastrous effort and I really thought we had a chance! It wasn't to be, unfortunately. I was destined for a life on the sidelines - probably one of my biggest ever regrets.

When did you first find out that Knightmare was no longer being made? I can't remember exactly. It seemed inevitable really, as the last series had been shortened and the spark just seemed to have disappeared. I don't think there was a specific point when someone told me it was definitely all over - I just remember pestering the Broadsword offices frequently to find out if a new series had been commissioned. Eventually it became obvious that Knightmare was going to pause for a year at least. From then onwards it was always very unlikely that it was ever going to reappear. It was a sad process of gradual acceptance. I still miss it...

How did you feel?

I was frustrated and very disappointed, but not totally surprised. As I said above, when the last series was reduced to ten episodes there was a general feeling that it was just a matter of time. Nevertheless, I felt - and still do feel - very disappointed that CITV had simply discarded a show that was undoubtedly amongst their most original and popular.

How did The Eye Shield fanzine first come about?

When it was confirmed that Knightmare was indeed not to be commissioned for another series, there was obviously no longer a need for an official fan club. As much as I enjoyed the club I always felt that I could do something a little more in-depth and with a bit more of a fan's perspective. Eventually I decided to produce The Eye Shield. Broadsword

were very supportive and agreed to publish my contact info in the final issue of *The Quest*. Unfortunately, a slight cock-up meant that I missed out on a lot of potential readers. However, there was still plenty of interest - enough for me to decide it was worth persevering with. The repeats on the Sci-Fi Channel brought with them a whole new batch of viewers (the channel kindly offered to promote TES after a few of the repeats), which meant there was a growing interest. I thoroughly enjoyed putting each issue together and also enjoyed receiving a regular supply of weird and wonderful contributions from the loyal band of readers! Sadly, as the demands of work and studying began to grow I found that I was struggling more and more to find the time to put thirty-two pages together. I'm still proud of my years as TES editor, though! I think there was a definite place for it and I hope that the readers enjoyed it at the time. *(We certainly did! - Jake.)*

When did you first find out about www.knightmare.clara.net?

I'd had some contact with Nicholas before he started his website. He'd found out about TES after I'd stopped making it (one of the TQ readers I missed out on, no doubt!) and was keen to catch up. I followed the progress of his site as it developed and supplied him with the original files for each issue of TES *(except issue 9, which came from me - Jake)* so they could be added to the site. I've been a regular visitor ever since - it's a very good site indeed. No more than Knightmare deserves, of course!

What do you think of the new TES?

I'm very impressed, and very glad that the fire burns once more. I'm particularly pleased that it's being continued by one of the most avid readers of the original issues! From a purely personal point of view, I think it might have been hard to take if it had been subjected to a radical shake-up, so I'm also quite chuffed that some of the old regular features are still making an appearance! *(Almost all of them, in fact - Jake.)* Keep up the good work, Jake! *(Well, one does one's best. - Jake.)*

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 5.

Quest: The Crown in Glory.
Dungeoneer: Chris Newham. (Chris III.)
Advisors: Paul, Keith and Kieran.
Home town: London.
Team score: 4 out of 10.

This quest is a classic because of the nature of its bungled end. Just read on and you'll see what I mean.

Level One: The quest begins with a ride in the Descender, which leads Chris to The Crazy Heifer. Here, Motley sits him down at a table and gives him a scroll. For some reason, Chris finds it impossible to read, so his advisors read it out to him when it unrolls on the screen. After this, Motley leads Chris out of the inn and into a clue room. The jester shows the dungeoneer how to use the spyglass that is on the table. Through it the team see Lord Fear talking to Sylvester Hands in his crystal ball. Through their conversation, the team learn the causeway code - *fire, earth and water* - and that the name of the "elf maid" is Elita.

After the sequence ends, Motley scurries off back to the Crazy Heifer, leaving the team to choose from a bone, a jar of honey and a red gem. After much deliberation, they take the gem and the honey. Chris next finds himself in a room containing a large chest. When he opens it, Elita pops out and starts being rude to him. She refuses to give her name, as she hates people knowing it, but the team are quick to tell her that they know it already. In return for a promise not to ever call her, Elita tells Chris the password - *black rock*.

Further challenges see Chris being accosted by Skarkill, who takes both the gem and the honey as a bribe. A swarm of bees appears when he opens the honey, forcing him to beat a hasty retreat. The team are able to use the code they learned earlier to cross the causeway, and pass the blocker by giving the password. The final challenge of the level is a set of three questions about the Crusades, set by Brother Mace as a toll to ride Smirkenorff. The team answer all three correctly, so the monk is happy to escort Chris up Smirkenorff's back and into the saddle. A quick flight follows, and Chris has landed in level two.

Level Two: Elita meets Chris on Smirkenorff's back and tells him that he has to get back to her and Smirkenorff if he wants to get to level three, but that the price will be a firestone. She says that Aesandre has frozen

one in a block of ice somewhere on the level, and Chris will have to find some magic to free it. In the clue room, Chris looks through another spyglass to see Lord Fear asking Aesandre whether she has set the trap for Chris as they had previously agreed. Aesandre reminds Fear that she is not one of "his creatures" and does not take orders, but affirms that she has set the trap. Fear tells her the causeway code - *red, blue, green and grey*.

From the clue table, the team choose a feather and a bag of silver, leaving behind a green gem and a folderol. A meeting with Julius Scaramonger follows. Chris persuades him to part with some magic, though he is very reluctant. Julius offers a choice between the spells CHANGE and SWITCH in return for the silver. The team decide to opt for CHANGE. The next chamber contains the frozen firestone that Elita spoke of. Hoping to change the ice into water, the team cast their spell, which does a rather surprising thing. It turns Chris into a goblin, much to the distress of the advisors. Treguard explains that they have walked into a trap, and suggests that they might like to try dispelling. Chris, however, does not like this idea; he wants to remain a goblin *"in case we need it la-er on."* They are forced to abandon the firestone and move on.

Brother Mace is in the next room, and immediately fetches a large staff with which to kill Chris, whom he assumes to be a real goblin. An attempt to dispel CHANGE does not work, so Chris has to convince Mace that he is really a dungeoneer with a spell on him. Eventually the monk recognises Chris, and thinks about how to help him. He explains that, because the matter is so serious, Chris's only hope is to find someone who takes nothing seriously. Mace tells Chris that he knows a spell that could help them find Motley, which requires something of the jester's to cast it. Alas, the team did not take the folderol! Mace is forced to bid a regrettable farewell to Chris. The next room contains a blocker, which demands the password. The only thing the team can do is instruct Chris to recite the causeway code, which - unsurprisingly - does no good. The blocker shoots forwards and swallows Chris, bringing an end to this bungled quest. Treguard explains that Motley would have given them the password, if only they could have found him.

Summary: They weren't particularly good or particularly bad, but particularly unlucky to turn their dungeoneer into a goblin!

CREATURE FEATURE

Series 1/2/3/4/5/6. Level 1/2/3

GIANT ARACHNIDS

The first giant arachnid seen in Knightmare was the spectral scorpion, which first appeared on level one to menace Helen I in the sixth episode of series one. In a chamber with only one usable exit, Helen was faced with crossing the path of the scorpion's swinging tail. Treguard explained that the blurred white monster did not quite exist in the true sense, but would certainly damage Helen's life force if she made contact with its sting. The scorpion returned for series two, presenting the same challenge.

Some teams simply ran across the sting's path when the tail was retracted, as Helen had done, but a couple - such as Tony's and Stuart's - realised that there was enough room to the right of the monster to cross the room without coming into contact with it at all. Consequently, part of the floor had been removed when this challenge returned for series three, making it impossible to exit with crossing the path of the sting. Cliff, Leo and Julie I all did this successfully, but dim Douglas was too slow and got hit by the tail, causing the loss of one life force grade. The scorpion did not return after series three.

By far the most famous giant arachnid from Knightmare is surely Ariadne, the giant tarantula. Described by Treguard as the Queen of Arachnids and Great-grandmother of Arachne on occasions, wherever she was disturbed in the Dungeon she would be very keen to eat dungeoneers. Those who encountered her in her large stone web-spanned room in series two - when she first appeared - would have to exit speedily or all the exits would be blocked by Ariadne's sticky thread. Jamie was Ariadne's first victim when she trapped him in her lair.

The team had been too slow earlier to pick up a spell they needed to escape, while being chased by the Automatum. A smaller giant spider - possibly Ariadne herself - appeared in level one in this series, menacing dungeoneers as they crossed a stone ledge. This challenge returned once in series three for Kelly I. Ariadne returned, full sized, in series four as

the final challenge of level two, when dungeoneers had to get out of her lair to escape Dunkley Wood and reach the Dunswater, the way to level three. Most often a spell would be needed to escape from Ariadne, usually acquired from Merlin. When Nicola I failed to earn a HIBERNATION spell from the wizard to use against the spider, she became Ariadne's second and last victim.

Successful attempts to escape involved a FREEZE spell from Helen II, a RUN spell from Alistair, and a joker card from Giles. This magic playing card summoned Motley, who ridiculed Ariadne so much that she was forced to retreat. The spider had one appearance in each of the following two series. Richard II had to make a mad dash out of her level two lair in series five, as Ariadne interrupted the team as they were choosing clue objects. Such was the rush to escape that Richard was hastily directed into choosing an incorrect object - a horn rather than a bar of gold - which led to his eventual demise at the hands of Skarkill.

Ariadne's last appearance came late in series six, when Captain Nemanor charged winning dungeoneer Ben II with stealing an astrolabe from the spider's lair, now in level three. He did this successfully, but Ariadne appeared one last time to chase Ben out. Ariadne is undoubtedly one of Knightmare's most infamous threats, as everyone who saw her was absolutely terrified - and who can blame them? She is a giant tarantula, after all! It is not only dungeoneers and advisors whom Ariadne scared, but also several characters. Cedric and Gundrada - two seemingly brave and powerful characters - turned tail as soon as they saw her, Gretel got caught in a web, and Pickle was terrified and panicky whenever the spider appeared in series four, five and six. Personally, I enjoy watching Ariadne as her scenes remind me of some of the moments when I was most excited and even scared by Knightmare when I was younger.

Fear Factor: 8 Both arachnids were large and threatening.

Killer Instinct: 6 Two fatalities for Ariadne, and one hit for the scorpion.

Humanity: 1 Large invertebrates are very distant human relatives.

Gore Factor: 7 Partly why they were so scary.

I THINK I READ SOMEWHERE

KNIGHTMARE: The Dragon's Lair

Published by Yearling in 1993.

Written by Dave Morris.

Plot: Thirteen-year-old William is worried because his mother is in hospital, about to give birth. Not that he is concerned for her health, mind you. He is worried that his parents will neglect him in favour of the baby. Taking a walk around the snowy countryside to try and dispel these thoughts, William sees one of his neighbours, Mr. Treguard, whose vase he once broke. Hoping to avoid an encounter, he changes direction and finds himself at *Wish Water*, a local pond. Beneath the water's icy surface he is astonished to see a girl whom he recognises from school: Fay, Mr. Treguard's niece. Fearing that she is drowning, he tries to pull her out. Instead, it is he who is pulled in. He finds that he has been taken back in time to the reign of King Athelred.

Fay explains that she was supposed to come back to this time to help her uncle, Treguard, by ensuring the safe hatching of a dragon that he needs as an ally in the future. By trying to pull her out of the pond, William has ended up in her place. And so the bemused and confused William must undertake the quest meant for Fay, with her acting as his guide, as only he can see and hear her. The quest involves entering the king's court as a bard and persuading Athelred, through seemingly prophetic verse, that he should send a group of warriors to protect his old ally Talionis the dragon. Her unhatched egg has been cited as a source of great power by the malignant wizard, Caedmon, who is also an old acquaintance of the king. And so the party, headed by Prince Osric and containing William and Fay, sets off for Talionis's lair, there to stop Caedmon from destroying the egg of the unhatched dragon. Deep in the caves, can William aid the warriors and the dragon to stop the determined Caedmon from reaching the egg?

Quest section: This quest is to recover the future king of England. As a helpless child, he is in a castle in the middle of the Lake of Wisps. In this adventure, the Helmet of Justice counts as a possession, so you can lose it during the adventure. This also applies to the other two objects that Treguard gives you before you begin: the Lance of Truth and the Shield of Honour. Take care of these because they will protect you from the perils that await you at the castle where the baby is being held.

If you hold all three of these objects when you get there, you will lose no life force. If you hold two of them, you will lose one life force grade. If you hold only one of them, you will lose two life force grades. If you have neither the Helmet of Justice, the Lance of Truth nor the Shield of Honour, you will lose three life force grades, which means that you will certainly die. Before this, though, you must reach the Lake of Wisps. This involves travelling through a wood, where you can help some small faerie knights to cure their ailing queen and raid a troll's cottage, if you are clever enough. There are many useful items and spells to be had here.

Next you enter a town, where you can buy a horse, talk to some characters in a tavern, and have your horse shod at the blacksmith's. If you want to do all three, you must do them in that order. If you do not buy a horse and have it shod, you will not have a lucky horseshoe and may regret it later. As for the tavern, Gwendoline will offer some useful advice and Hordriss will give you a spell if you work out his puzzle. If you also agree to find a lost relic for Brother Mace, you will eventually be well protected when you reach the castle.

After the town, you come to a stone cross where you must decide whether to go left or right. Only one is correct, and if you do choose the wrong one then you may well die at the hands of a large army or a pesky leprechaun. If you survive this, you will be sent back to the cross and told to go the other way. Once on the right track, you pass a pond and a wood before reaching the Lake of Wisps. The phantom gypsies live in the woods, and they have Mace's relic. However, they won't just give it to you! At the lake, you must either pay the ferryman to punt you across or use a FREEZE spell to skate across the moat. Watch out if you don't have this spell by the time you leave the pond, because all your money might get stolen by sprites in the wood if you're unlucky.

Once across the moat, you must enter the castle. You must either know or guess the password to get past the Gatemaster, but you only have one chance to venture the right word. You can get a clue from a disgruntled sentry by either bribing him or charming him with magic. Once inside the castle, if you pass the archers and the supernaturally-animated wolf skin, you should reach the sleeping baby who will one day become King Arthur of Britain.

Characters from the main story

William: He's astonished and indignant when Fay tells him what he's stumbled into. He's also very jealous of his unborn sibling, but his adventures soon make him realise how important all offspring are to their parents as he sees Talionis welcome her child into the world.

Treguard: He has engineered the plan to help the unborn dragon, and has created gateways in and out of Athelred's time for Fay. He is grateful to William for adopting the quest after he stumbles upon them.

Fay: She is apparently Treguard's niece, although I don't know how as we know that all his family were killed by Vestan in the first book. In her ghost-like state, she guides William through his somewhat daunting task.

King Athelred: He sends his best ten warriors to protect his old ally Talionis from his other old ally and new foe Caedmon. So concerned is he by this, he tasks his own son with leading the expedition.

Prince Osric: A fair and likeable leader, Osric thinks William is gifted with a second sight and frequently asks his advice on the quest. Later, he is given the honour of naming the baby dragon.

Caedmon: He uses the dust from unhatched dragons' eggs for his spells, and has come to steal Talionis's. He casts an anti-fire spell to protect himself from her fiery breath.

Talionis: The great dragon is glad to see William, Osric and the others arrive to help her. She is a friendly dragon who loves her son dearly, and thinks highly of Athelred and Osric.

Alcuin: This warrior is the real hero of the piece. He knocks the dust that powers Caedmon's anti-fire spell from his hand, allowing Talionis to fry the evil wizard. Unfortunately, Alcuin also gets caught in the blast.

Smirkenorff: The baby dragon, named by Osric, who is destined to help Treguard in the future.

William's father: Having been at the hospital, he tells William that he now has a baby brother. And William finds that, despite his earlier fears, he is immensely pleased.

MY KNIGHTMARE STORY

—
Knightmare may have finished, but what do Paul McIntosh and TES have in store for me in 1996? Read this final chapter to find out.

1996: TES issue 2 arrived in March, and it contained my letter, much to my delight. I finally plucked up the courage to ask Paul about getting series 1 - 3. He told me that his neighbour's attempts to record them had not been a total success, but that he did have around 7 or 8 episodes from each of the first three series. He agreed to send them to me for copying. We had just bought a scart cable, and thought that we had two VCRs to use it with, but it transpired that the newer one had no scart socket. My mum and I bought another VCR from Argos in Harpenden and, on the weekend of March 23rd and 24th 1996, I was able to make copies of series 1 episodes 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7, series 2 episodes 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 12 and half of 16, and series 3 episodes 1, 2, 7, 8, 11 and 12, as well as series 4 episode 2, which, you may remember, I was missing. This made me very happy. 1996 continued, and I bought TES issue 3 in June and issue 4 in September. On September 27th, we moved house to the tiny village of Kimpton. I received December's TES - issue 5 - there.

1997: March brought TES issue 6. In April, Paul wrote and told me that he had sent away some tapes to TES reader and artist Tim Morris of Stoke, who had promised to send him all of series 1 - 3. This excited me. TES 7 and 8 came as expected in June and September. By this time I was a top contributor. For this reason, Paul shared his plans with me to make December's issue the last, due to a seeming lack of reader interest. I was upset, but not surprised. So it was that TES issue 9 arrived, and was the last one from Paul McIntosh.

1998: Both Paul and I spent most of this year waiting for Tim Morris to return the video tapes, but it never happened. We discussed the possibility of resurrecting TES a few times, but nothing came of it.

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1999: The waiting continued until my mum, Rosey and I moved back to Harpenden in April. Shortly after sending Paul my new address, he wrote

back with some interesting news. He had been in touch with someone called Nicholas, who was setting up a Nightmare website. In exchange for back issues of TES, Nicholas was going to provide Paul with all of series 3 and half of series 2. In a frenzy of excitement, I took the first opportunity I could get to check out the website www.knightmare.clara.net. Even in its early stages it was very impressive. I enjoyed reading the series 2 and 3 sections - the only ones there were at the time - and noted that Nicholas did indeed have the second half of series 2 and all of series 3, which he was supposedly sending to Paul. After a few months had passed - and I had done my GCSEs - I received three videotapes from Paul, containing series 2 episodes 7 - 16, and series 3 episodes 1 - 8. I idly wondered where the second half of series 3 had got to, but was really too excited by what I did have to care.

Over the summer, I continued to visit the website, and watched Nicholas's collection of Nightmare episodes from series 1 - 3 grow to a full set. I waited for Paul to write with news about getting hold of them. In October, through life's inconveniences, I found myself back living in Kimpton. It was here that it occurred to me that I should get in touch with Nicholas myself, and offer a tape trade. After a few weeks of e-mail correspondence, the deal was agreed: Nicholas was to send me my missing series 1 - 3 episodes in exchange for some episodes he was missing from series 4 - 6, and a copy of TES issue 9, which Paul had apparently run out of. The deal ran smoothly and, by Christmas, both Nicholas and I had what we wanted. At last I had a full collection of one hundred and twelve episodes of Nightmare.

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2000: In March I moved back to Harpenden again, thankfully for good this time. When I was settled, my thoughts began to turn to TES; Paul was obviously finished with it, but was there some other way to bring it back?

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2001: After I had done my A levels in June, my mind was made up; I wanted to relaunch TES on the internet. I suggested the idea to Nicholas, who thought it was a good one. After seeking and acquiring Paul's approval, I set to work on TES issue 10. I decided to keep most of the original features as they had been previously, as I am a great traditionalist. I also added two of my own: *Creature Feature*, which had once been an extension of *Art Desk* and I thought deserved further development, and *I Think I Read Somewhere*, which was to be a series of reviews about the Nightmare books. I decided to submit a new issue

every two months. July's issue of TES appeared late on in the month, and September's was two months late, although it was nothing to do with me (!) However, from November 2001 TES has become a fanzine you can count on. Hasn't it, now?

2002: The Eye Shield continues to appear every two months on Nicholas's website, and long may it continue.

And the rest, as they say, is history! I hope you enjoyed mine.

PUZZLE PAGE TWO

Here I have provided you with one series and twelve associated words. The rest is up to you.

Q	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P	L	K	J	H	G	F	D	S	A	Z	X
C	V	D	B	N	M	M	Q	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P	P	A	S	D
F	G	U	H	O	A	K	L	E	Y	J	B	K	L	G	O	B	L	I	N
R	Y	N	K	J	L	G	G	H	K	L	R	Z	Y	Q	X	V	B	M	N
J	J	K	L	J	I	A	K	E	I	S	O	A	S	B	E	U	X	G	Y
H	G	L	E	R	C	L	Y	I	S	C	T	K	L	M	L	Y	L	B	A
G	O	E	O	G	E	O	D	D	A	M	H	N	E	E	D	F	C	F	O
F	C	Y	K	H	S	O	U	W	C	M	E	K	O	E	R	A	R	O	F
D	R	W	S	E	V	I	L	D	O	O	R	M	O	N	S	T	E	R	L
S	E	O	F	O	U	G	C	X	K	E	M	S	E	Y	S	I	L	E	L
A	D	O	Q	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	A	P	A	S	D	L	F	S	G
P	H	D	J	K	L	Z	X	G	C	V	C	B	N	M	Q	L	E	T	R
O	T	Y	U	I	O	P	A	U	S	D	E	F	G	H	J	A	K	O	L
I	L	K	J	H	G	F	D	N	S	A	Z	X	C	V	P	B	N	F	M
U	C	Q	F	G	B	N	O	D	G	H	N	M	Y	O	I	E	R	D	M
Y	R	E	D	H	V	M	I	R	F	J	B	N	T	P	C	E	E	U	O
T	O	R	S	J	C	Q	U	A	D	K	V	B	R	M	K	H	K	N	G
R	W	T	A	K	X	E	Y	D	S	L	C	O	E	D	L	S	A	N	D
E	N	Y	P	D	U	N	G	A	R	T	H	R	Q	J	E	A	H	L	R
Q	I	U	O	L	Z	R	T	P	A	Z	X	X	Y	A	K	E	S	K	E

BROTHER MACE
CROWN
DOOR MONSTER
DUNGARTH
DUNKLEY WOOD
FATILLA

FOREST OF DUNN
GOBLIN
GUNDRADA
MALICE
OAKLEY
PICKLE

A LAST RESORT

—
Welcome to the fifth chapter of the mammoth story penned by Newark's Carl Bateson. Matt, James and John have just arrived at the Rocks of Bruin with Sidriss.

James was running his fingers across one of the rocks. Matt was sitting on a high ledge, watching Sidriss walk backwards and forwards. John had other ideas. He was quenching his first from a nearby freshwater stream that ran through the roots of the trees and a large fissure in one of the rocks. Sidriss approached James.

"You know, I'm really sorry for all this. I mean, the portal should have taken us back to where it originated, but it didn't."

"Doesn't matter" James said, preoccupied with his studies.

"It's better than being slain by those freaks back there!" Matt told her, swinging his legs.

"Yes - but - I mean - of all the places..." she said, panicking slightly.

"It doesn't matter" James repeated.

"Yes, and I'm sorry but... pardon?"

With this, Sidriss neatly placed her hands on her hips.

"He said it doesn't matter" Matt repeated for him.

"Oh. Why not?" she asked him

"I'm looking for a hermit who lives amongst these rocks. You've actually done me a favour. Do you know who the hermit is?"

Suddenly, to their surprise, a deep voice sounding awfully familiar came from behind a rock.

"I am he."

The four stopped in their tracks to look in the direction of the sound. Slowly, an old man emerged from a near rock, covered by a dirty grey rag. James approached him as he spoke again.

"You may call me Harris, the humble rock hermit. How may one be of service?"

Sidriss stepped forward.

"I didn't realise anybody lived here..." she began.

"Sidriss!" Harris broke in with a younger voice.

He suddenly returned his voice to the usual mumble as if he was hiding something.

"You know me?" she asked him.

"Yes, one knows many things. You're the daughter of that great mage Hordriss, aren't you? A great fellow, him. A fine mathematician - it'd be an honour to know him more."

Sidriss was confused that such a man would deliberately speak so well of her father, unless he was afraid of her - which was extremely unlikely!

"I have been told that you know many things" James broke in. "Treguard referred me to you. He said you know and will be able to explain what is happening to the Dungeon."

"One does indeed. Lord Fear had a fight a while back with the Brollachan's home world. The Brollachan has been recaptured, and a spell has been cast, not only Lord Fear but the whole of the third level" the beggar explained.

By this time, John had noticed a bright red robe underneath the rags he was wearing, but couldn't make anything of it.

"And what is this spell which threatens the whole Dungeon?" James asked.

"A powerful spell, obviously cast by several very powerful people, or I would have been able to counter it."

The beggar suddenly paused as if he had spilled the beans on something.

"That is, if one was a mage. The spell is in fact a much more powerful version of the *decay* spell occasionally used by wizards and those of the supreme higher ranking of mage. The difference is that it is a *decay* spell affects the object through time, meaning that every particle of level three that decays has, in effect, been wiped out of existence. I'm afraid one can't find a better way of explaining it."

James stared at his feet.

"So, for every bit of level three that decays, no matter how small, it would affect the timeline - it probably already has."

"Correct" Harris continued. "If we let this happen, Lord Fear, and level three as we know it, will be wiped out of existence, and be replaced with whatever would have existed without the interference of Lord Fear."

"Well," James began again. "My first instinct would be to let the spell run its course and send it my blessings."

"One does not understand. You can't wipe a whole chunk out of the Dungeon just because it suits you. What about all the innocent people?"

"Okay, you win" James told Harris. "What do I need to do?"

"The only thing that can affect the spell is a legendary object known as the Idol of Gysmutu. It is Elvish in origin. The Idol will, when touched, be activated by whatever desire the holder has in mind, as long as it is of a good nature. This would dispel the curse."

"And where may we find such an object?" James asked.

"One does not know its exact location, but it is deep within level three. I see that you possess the spell *warmth*. This spell will become necessary due to bad weather conditions in level three. I'll give you a spell to aid you. It's called *protect*. Use it to protect yourself from the effects of the *decay* spell."

With this, Harris began to shuffle off.

"Use them wisely, and good luck!"

He turned slightly so that he could view Sidriss.

"Sidriss follow me!" he called to her in a strange, younger, but terribly familiar voice.

Sidriss, slightly confused, had no choice but to follow him.

The company continued north. An hour later, the Rocks of Bruin were just small dots on a hill. They had travelled over much terrain, fighting through the tall undergrowth. Over a length of a couple of metres, the undergrowth disappeared. They had arrived at some sort of building. A portal lay up ahead, against the wall. Suddenly the boys were aquatinted with a crackle coming from a woman riding a broomstick. She swept down and laughed as she climbed to the height of three metres and fired several bolts of lightning at them. James jumped aside as two lightning bolts collided with the ground next to him. Dust and clumps of infertile earth were projected onto the sides of the building. Both John and Matt pulled their jumpers over their faces as they charged through a thick layer of airborne dust to get to the portal. Several bolts exploded behind them, sending stones and various other shrapnel across the clearing, as the woman dived at James, who was leaning against a tree clutching his

left arm. A total of five explosions sent mud up James's back as he watched the witch performing a steep climb to prepare the next attack. He had noticed the absence of the other two and only just could make out the portal ten metres ahead of him. Painfully, James rose. The witch had reached her target height and was turning to face him. He sprinted towards the portal, but a whole combo of shots made a large crater just in front of him. He leapt desperately forwards.

John watched as James fell through the portal. They were standing in a fine hall that was expensively decorated. Standing in the centre were John and Matt, engaged in an ugly conversation with Sylvester Hands.

"Ooh!" Hands cooed. "Its another young person!"

He ran at James.

"I've been busy, and I *am* busy. This is *my* chest, and *my* stuff inside it" Hands proclaimed.

The three weren't quite sure what he was on about until he nodded in the direction of an open chest with several rags littered around it.

"Now, unless you want to be tied up with me magic rope, then I should leave me alone!"

With this, Hands went back to the task of emptying the chest, leaving only a horrid stench behind.

What secrets is Hands hiding in his chest? Read the next instalment of *A Last Resort* to find out.

POETRY CORNER

Here is an ode to the clumsiest dungeoneer of all time. Don't hold that against him, though; this team did very well, and were flawed by a new and particularly hazardous puzzle.

**Suffolk's challenge now rings out,
Here's Ali for the second bout.
Riddles answered without stress,
They met a sinister sorceress.
A gem, she said, would be revealed
As Ali put on the Eye Shield.**

A monkish chum they found, and he
Introduced them to Oakley.
Fatilla soon was filled with pride,
A dark assassin then did hide.
Level two was very much harder,
They met the sword maiden, Gundrada.
Gold they found, and for that loot
Merlin gave them a magic boot.
They used it to escape the spider,
The lake they found couldn't be much wider!
Once across and filled with bliss,
They gave the green gem to Malice.
But then the blades came shooting by,
And Alistair was too small-fry!

NEXT ISSUE DETAILS

That's it for now, but please come back and join me for The Eye Shield issue sixteen in July 2002. Carl Bateson continues *A Last Resort*. Find out just how far Beth can get in *Adventure Time*. Our first successful candidates are reviewed in *Classic Quest*. Get ready for some riddling in *I Think I Read Somewhere* as we enter *Lord Fear's Domain*. I share with you my gut reaction to the end of series 8 in *Poetry Corner*. Take a walk on the wild side in one of Knightmare Castle's most dangerous corridors as I ask if you can *Remember This?* You'll have a "lovely!" time reading *Remember Him?* Look out for some ghostly goings-on in *Creature Feature*. And there should be a brand new article to enjoy from Eye Shield reader Robin Barlow that will have you rolling in the aisles. It's all coming in July, so keep your eyes peeled for it then, but be sure to bring your friends for this is no place to visit alone.