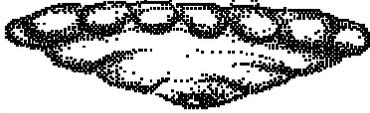


THE EYE SHIELD



Issue 63

May 2010

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MESSAGE FROM ME

Greetings, fellow lovers of Nightmare, and welcome to the sixty-third issue of The Eye Shield. As usual, the fanzine is overflowing with Nightmare goodness for you to ingest and enjoy, and a good chunk of it has been written by Nightmare enthusiasts other than myself, which is a phenomenon that always puts a smile on my face. Stalwart contributor Ricky Temple not only presents (with the able assistance of Andy Marshall) the second episode of the new season of *Adventure Time*, but also introduces us to the first five desperados in his countdown of the *Top 35 Kids' TV Villains*, as well as bringing us the first chapter of *The Wickedest Show in the Realm*, which picks up where *For Dungeon and Dungeon Master* left off, and places gallant Dungeon Rangers Rio Bolt and Zyssa Silverdale in an intriguing and potentially dangerous situation that promises to stretch their personal and professional bonds to their limits. Keep spinning those yarns, Ricky!

Elsewhere, it's time for another stroll down Memory Lane with Gehn "Lex" Luthor in the penultimate instalment of *When We Were Very Young*, which is something I always enjoy immensely, while new contributor Greg Ford invites you to dip into the annals of *Jake's Quest*, in which I and three friends attempt to conquer the Nightmare Dungeon... with limited success. Finally, Chris Lunn presents the long-awaited third chapter of his story *The Forbidden Fear*, which kicked off back in issue 52 and continued in issue 53. Now at last (over the next four issues) you'll be able to discover whether Pickle will be able to release Treguard from the Forbidden Level, and what trials and tests await him en route. This just goes to prove, of course, that it's never too late to submit the conclusion of an unfinished story to me here at Eye Shield Towers, so if you're reading this, Ian Down, send me the rest of *The Strangeness of the Walls* and it will be published!

Make sure you check out the cool new website of The Dunshelm Players, where all the fantastic episode commentaries and audio plays are waiting for you to enjoy them. Visit <http://dunshelplayers.wordpress.com> for all your Nightmare audio needs!

KNIGHTMARE QI

To anyone who's dying to discover the identity of the latest Knightmare QI champion, read on and you shall find enlightenment.

1. After how many Knightmare episodes is Mark Knight credited as a character other than Lord Fear?

Answer: 3 – episode 5 of series 5 (Sir Hugh de Wittless), episode 11 of series 5 (Sir Hugh de Wittless), episode 7 of series 7 (Rothberry).

Explanation: Lord Fear appears in 53 of the 56 episodes in series 5-8, and is the character as whom Mark Knight is credited after 51 of those 53 episodes, the only exceptions being the two series 5 episodes mentioned above. The three episodes in which Lord Fear does not appear are the series 7 episode mentioned above, and episodes 6 and 9 of series 5, in which Mark Knight does not appear at all. Lord Fear is therefore credited after 12 out of 16 episodes in series 5, 15 out of 15 episodes in series 6, 14 out of 15 episodes in series 7, and 10 out of 10 episodes in series 8.

2. During the course of series 7, how many people successfully complete the Trial by Spikes onscreen?

Answer: 5 – Nicola II, Romahna, Alex II, Julie II, Barry.

Cliché: 4 – Nicola II, Alex II, Julie II, Barry.

3. Which spell is missing from the following list? SIGHT, LOOK, VISOR...

Answer: INSIGHT.

Explanation: These are the four seeing-eye spells used during series 7.

4. Who is missing from the fourth episode of series 8, appearing in all other series 7 and 8 episodes?

Answer: Clifford Barry.

Explanation: One, two or all three of Cliff's characters (Lissard, Raptor and Brother Strange) appear in every series 7 and 8 episode apart from this one!

5. What do these four characters have in common? CASPER, PIXEL, MOTLEY, SIDRISS.

Answer: They have all been carried as clue objects.

Explanation: Casper was carried by Simon (Team 3 of Series 1), Danny (Team 4 of Series 1), Richard (Team 6 of Series 1), Steven (Team 12 of Series 2) and Karen (Team 13 of Series 2); Pixel was carried (in a box or bottle) by Catherine (Team 1 of Series 5), Richard (Team 2 of Series 5) and Jenna (Team 5 of Series 5); Motley was carried (in a box) by January (Team 4 of Series 6); Sidriss was carried (in a bottle) by Simon (Team 1 of Series 7).

6. Which magical entity have these people all been in control of, or at least used against their enemies before losing control of? HORDRISS, MOGDRED, MORGHANNA, LEO'S TEAM (TEAM 4 OF SERIES 3)...

Answer: The sword haunting.

7. What is the name of the town visited by dungeoneer Julie II (Team 6 of Series 7) as part of her level one experiences?

Answer: Warlock.

Cliché: Grimdale – this is the area of level one in which Warlock is located.

8. After how many Nightmare episodes is John Woodnutt credited as Mogdred?

Answer: 25 – all episodes in series 1 and 2, plus the sixth episode of series 3.

Alternative answer: If you want to interpret the question in its most literal sense, the answer is one episode – the sixth episode of series 3. This is the only time John Woodnutt is credited as “Mogdred” – he is credited as “Merlin/Mogdred” after every episode in series 1 and 2.

9. Taking into account both visual and audio, what is the one difference between the opening title sequence for series 4, and the opening title sequence for series 5?

Answer: The thunderclap that accompanies the lightning strike in the series 4 sequence is not heard in the series 5 sequence.

10. Who is the first dungeonsneer to have the same Christian name as a previous dungeonsneer?

Answer: Simon II (Team 3 of Series 3).

Alternative answer: Anthony (Team 11 of Series 2) uses a longer form of the same name as Tony (Team 5 of Series 2).

Rank	Name	Raw Score	Points Lost	Sub-total	Time Bonus	TOTAL SCORE
1.	Gehn "Lex" Luthor	36	0	36	12	48
2.	Ross Thompson	30	0	30	0	30
3.	Joe Grocott-James	27	0	27	2	29
4.	Liam Callaghan	20	0	20	4	24
5.	Jim Waterman	31	10	21	0	21
6.	Martin "HStorm" Odoni	20	10	10	0	10
=7.	Ben "Pooka" Maydon	0	50	-50	0	-50
=7.	Drassil	0	50	-50	0	-50

Entered after the deadline:

-	Ben "Pooka" Maydon	10	10	0	0	0
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Congratulations to Gehn "Lex" Luthor, who not only wins this round but now also holds the record for the highest ever Nightmare QI score! I believe you now have a hat-trick of wins on the trot, Mr Luthor, which is something you should be very proud of! But can you make it four in a row? I am going to run one more (possibly final) round of Nightmare QI, the questions for which will be revealed in issue 64.

I am going to assume that **the seven people who sent in answers** for this round **do** want to enter again, but if you **don't**, just drop me a line to let me know, and I'll immediately cross you off the list with no hard feelings. By the same token, if anyone who **didn't send in answers this time** (including you,

Drassil) **would like to sign up for another round**, just let me know with an e-mail or a PM and you'll be added to the list right away!

These are the rules. Please **read them carefully** before you sign up!

- There is a maximum score of **four points** for each question - one point for providing a correct answer and up to three bonus points for any Quite Interesting supplementary information you may be able to think of.
- Any question written in **red** will have a **cliché** - give this cliché as your answer and you will lose ten points. The full quota of three QI bonus points will only be available for cliché questions when the cliché is identified as part of the QI information.
- **Time bonus points** will be awarded to the first three entries I receive. The first entry will earn one time bonus point for every five points scored, i.e. a score of 25 would be increased by five points to 30. The second entry will earn one time bonus point for every eight points scored, i.e. a score of 24 would be increased by three points to 27. The third entry will earn one time bonus point for every ten points scored, i.e. a score of 30 would be increased by three points to 33.
- There is a time limit of **four weeks** to get your answers in. Any questions that remain unanswered after four weeks will incur a penalty of five points each, therefore if you do not submit any answers at all you will score -50.

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REMEMBER THIS?

Series 4. Level 2/3.

THE BLOCK AND TACKLE

It takes a tricky and ruthless challenge to kill off exactly half the teams to attempt it during the course of one series. Play Your Cards Right achieved this feat in series 7, as did the Block and Tackle in series 4. Six of

the eight teams in this series were given this challenge, and three - for various reasons - died here. Why wasn't this challenge presented to Alistair or Dickon? Well, I guess we'll never know for sure...

Helen's team made pretty heavy weather of the Block and Tackle, although Helen eventually made it through unscathed. There is a distinctly iffy moment when the advisors are yelling at their dungeoneer to walk in front of a block that turns out to be on the verge of moving, and she doesn't walk forward until it has trundled across her path - was someone upstairs whispering a few tips into Helen's ear, perhaps? This was the first of three successful attempts at the challenge, but it was a bit of a dodgy one.

Somewhat surprisingly, Nicky's otherwise shaky team coped with the Block and Tackle superbly. This was the picture perfect way to complete the challenge - calm, clear yet quick instructions, allowing Nicky to walk safely across the room in plenty of time to avoid the collapsing floor and sliding blocks. Well done, team!

Simon's encounter with the Block and Tackle is probably the most famous Nightmare death ever, and the fact that he sidestepped into a hole as soon as it appeared is due entirely to advisor error. As Treguard pointed out, that Andrew in the red jumper didn't really know left from right, and clearly this challenge caused him to panic sufficiently to lose any grip on the situation which he might have possessed in his more lucid moments. A classic and well remembered scene, this one, and rightly so!

Despite Treguard's attempts to convince us otherwise, it was always obvious to me (even back when I was seven) that Vicky was killed off early at the Block and Tackle because the team had failed to earn Merlin's magic, and were therefore doomed to die at the hands (or between the jaws) of Ariadne. The production team found it all too easy to kill Vicky off here, I think - they just waited until she was in line with a block and then squashed her with it! The advisors seemed to be panicking badly, so perhaps the quest would have ended here anyway, but the fact is that we were never going to get the chance to find out!

The Block and Tackle's final victim was Jeremy, and the skeptically minded might be of the opinion that his death here was very unfair. Encountering the obstacle unusually early in level two, Jeremy entered the room at an incredibly inconvenient angle, facing the collapsing side! Treguard urged the team to get him moving, and they did, right onto the collapsing floor! Despite their bags of pluck, Jeremy and the three "A"s stood very little chance of emerging from this challenge intact, I feel.

The Block and Tackle's final appearance in the latter stages of level three was somewhat unexpected, but I am convinced that it was stuck in here purely to kill off Giles just before the end of the season. Like Jeremy, Giles entered the room at a horrible angle, but thanks to Brett's skilful (if chaotic) guidance, Giles foiled the production team and emerged from the challenge unscathed, meaning that the team earned the hollow consolation of ending up undefeated rather than dead. Giles at the Block and Tackle is one of my favourite Nightmare scenes ever - it's hilarious!

ADVENTURE TIME

By Andy Marshall & Ricky Temple

Smirkenorff landed on the edge of what Treguard identified as the Greenwood, a lengthy stretch of forest bordering the town of Wolfenden.

"My gratitude for an uneventful journey," rumbled the Great Wyrm. "My last rider had an inability to keep his mouth shut, and I was forced to drop him off somewhere over the English Channel. Be so good as to see yourself off, boy, we can't have the likes of you scuttling over my back all day."

"Thank you," Reese said to Smirkenorff, slightly unnerved at the thought he could be halfway to France by now, and the advisors directed him off the dragon's back. A few words of encouragement from Treguard saw him enter the forest, and after following a narrow path that headed west for a number of minutes, he found himself in a wooded clearing.

The centre of the clearing was dominated by a huge tree stump, upon which was the now recognisable arrangement of clue items. Reese identified the shapes of a scroll, a spyglass, a book, a gold amulet, a crossbow and a pearl necklace. There was also a leg of mutton, which Reese quickly dropped into his knapsack.

"Take a look through the spyglass," Reese was advised. Reese picked up the device and held it in front of the eye shield once more...

*

"Let us understand each other, Skarkill. By which I mean, I explain how things are, and you blindly agree with me, making that gurning smirk of yours where appropriate."

"If I could just say one thing, yer Fearshi-"

"SILENCE!!!" bellowed Lord Fear, making the image of the Cycloptic individual he was addressing visibly leap back in shock. "I took a risk welcoming you back into our fold, Skarkill. A lesser Lord of the Opposition would have laughed you back to the Knackers Yard for Washed Up Minions, or wherever it is you've been languishing for God knows how long. A working pair of legs, magically fixed up as they may be, does NOT a half decent Goblin Master make. And I want better than decent. I want a Goblin Master who will stop any dungeoneer in his tracks and make the rest of their very short life full of Painful Incident. And no amount of jiggery-pokery from that talented sister of yours will undo the crippling I will administer to you should you fail to do so. Do I make myself clear?"

"Implic-implici- wot you just said, Fearship," said Skarkill, to whom the many miles of distance between the two of them was suddenly not distant enough.

"Marvellous," said the Leader of the Opposition. "Now, as is my understanding, the little wretch has just arrived in Level Two. Lissard has already arrived in Wolfenden, and is in the middle of arranging a decidedly final end at the hands of that fatheaded huntsman that's been doing the rounds recently. I want you stationed at the end of the Level, as insurance should the dungeoneer manage to give him the slip. I shall leave the precise method of his demise to your overly fertile imagination. I'm sure the years of absence from my service have given you MANY ideas in this respect."

"Oh yes, Lordship," cackled Skarkill. "Sum propa luvly little tricks I've picked up, oh yes. I've got this thingy, see, what goes in through the wotsit, and -"

"You are still here, Skarkill."

The Goblin Master blinked, looking perplexed, until his brain finally managed to properly convey that some kind of action was required on his part, and it would be in the accompanying body's interest to carry out said action with much haste.

"Right you are, Fearship. Don't you worry, I'll string 'im up good an' proper. Oh yes, string him up something luvly, says I..."

With that, the visual connection between them broke, and Lord Fear was alone once again in his antechamber.

"So, children," he said, still focusing on the empty void where his communications mirror was floating, "what did you make of all that?"

He turned sharply to face Reese, the grin on his face flickering between "psychotic" and "tickled pink".

"I hope your internal organs aren't TOO comfortable, Reese. I have a feeling they will be leaving you very soon..."

*

Reese didn't need telling to drop the spyglass. It fell to the ground, landing in a clump of thick grass by his feet.

"A worrying development to be sure, team," intoned Treguard. "It would appear that Lord Fear's previous henchman is now back on his feet. I can't imagine how, but then again, I was unaware that he possessed a living relative, least of all a magical one. Most disturbing. Anyway, choose your objects to take with you, and make haste! Wall monsters are not the only danger a clue room may present..."

Reese automatically reached for the scroll, being unable to ascertain any obvious indications of what to take from the dialogue he had just witnessed. Opening it up, he read:

"ARM YOURSELF WITH KNOWLEDGE; SEEK THE HIDDEN TREASURE."

"Hidden treasure," thought one advisor out loud. "Well, treasure would be the gold amulet-"

"But hidden," said another. "Pearls? You get them from clams, don't you?"

"Thought you got them from oysters."

"Same thing."

"No they ain't. Completely different!"

"How?"

"They're... spelt differently."

"Oh, come ON-"

"So the pearls then," said Reese, getting somewhat impatient.

"Yeah, take them. What about the book? What's it say?"

Reese brought the book towards him and peered at the cover. The words "Sir Richard Littlejohn's Bestiary for the Discerning Huntsman" were emblazoned in fine gold lettering on red velvet. It was a classy looking number, the kind you would display prominently on a shelf in a drawing room: rarely if ever read, but vital for the appearance of the thing.

"Arm yourself with knowledge..." Didn't Lord Fear mention something about Lissard talking to someone? A huntsman, was it? So that would be the book of beasts. But wait. It couldn't be THAT easy. Was there something about the amulet that was more obvious of something hidden? Maybe it could open? Wouldn't THAT be a treasure that could hide something?

Before he could reach out to examine the amulet further, a cracking sound behind him startled Reese, and without thinking he grabbed both the pearls and the book.

"I would advise you to guide your dungeoneer away from here," said Treguard, "for it sounds like something else has entered the forest - and I would not count on it being pleased to meet you!"

Reese was guided away from the clearing, leaving behind the amulet and the crossbow. He hoped that he had interpreted the clues correctly, because it

was now too late to change his mind. If only he had checked the amulet in greater detail...

*

The path snaked round past a lake with gentle lapping waters and two dozing swans. The forest sang with birdsong and the gentle rustle of the trees, and although Reese couldn't see any of this, his surroundings put him at ease - for the first time since stepping into the Dungeon, he felt he was in no obvious danger.

"Pick up the pace, team!" said Treguard. "This is no nature ramble you are on! Life force is fading by the second, and while you remain in the Greenwood, there is no telling who or what you may encounter!"

Reese pressed on, a little quicker than previously. Presently he came to a fork in the road, with a wooden signpost in the middle. Unfortunately, both of the carved arrows indicating a destination had been sliced off, leaving an unhelpful stump.

"Useful," grumbled Reese. "I'm going to go right, unless anyone has any objections-"

"Aha!" bellowed a voice from behind him. "The rare Lesser Spotted Misanthrope of the Yorkshire Dales, if I'm not mistaken! PULL!"

There was a bang, and something small and metallic ricocheted off the Helmet of Justice. Reese stumbled to the side, somehow managing to stay standing. The sound reverberated around inside his skull and momentarily stunned him, but otherwise he was not harmed.

"An armoured carapace, eh? What a cunningly designed beastie you are. Well, we'll soon fix THAT!"

Out of the nearby shrubbery and onto the path stepped a person for whom the term "nicely covered" was invented. Clad in traditional getup that screamed "member of the distinguished gentry", complete with padded vest and well supported breeches, the stranger gripped in his hands an antiquated

blunderbuss of the walnut stock and lengthy barrelled variety, into which he was already pouring a healthy quantity of gunpowder. If one was to slice the figure in two, the words "big game hunter" would surely be found protruding from his torso.

Reese blinked. Then, slowly, he mumbled one word.

"... what?"

"Exactly as he appears, young Reese!" said Treguard. "The rather well built gentleman you see before you goes by the name of Sir Winchester Holmyard. The family name carries rather large stock in the English hunting world, and the latest in the line seems to be just as trigger happy as his predecessors. I advise choosing your words with care, team, lest young Reese becomes something of an endangered species himself."

"Erm," said Reese. "Excuse me-"

"Bear with me a moment, noble beast, and I shall be entirely at your service. By that, of course, I mean finding room on my wall to hang your funny looking fizzog-"

"I'm NOT a beast. I'm a dungeoneer, as it happens," said Reese, slightly disturbed that the fact he could talk had little to no effect on the hunter's thinking processes.

"Eh? What? You can't be one of those!" said the huntsman. "They're native to the outskirts of darkest Birmingham! Plus they're seven foot tall with thirteen legs, and a nose that LOOKS like a parsnip but I would swear blind resembles a-"

"No, really!" insisted Reese, his curiosity over the rotund gentleman's next word mercifully overcome by his need to settle the outstanding question of his exact species. "I'm a dungeoneer. On a quest for the Shield," he added helpfully.

"A shield, you say?" At this, Sir Winchester frowned. "That CAN'T be right. You match the description..."

"Description?"

"Yes, description! Back in the town I had a chinwag with a funny fishlike chappy. Green, scaly, winced every time I mentioned tartar sauce, that species of kidney. And he said that the aforementioned Misanthrope - a highly sought after beastie, earns a lot of clout back at the Lodge doncherknow - was sighted in the surrounding area! Unfortunately I was lacking my Bestiary, so I couldn't refresh the noggin as to what you lot look like - mind like a sieve I tell you, forget me own head and all that toot - but he was MORE than happy to oblige! And you know something?"

"What?" said Reese, his immediate future looking suddenly quite unpleasant.

"It matches you to a tee! What a lark, eh? Now, that's enough banter, let's be a good sport about this, m'kay?"

Reese began to panic as the gun was once again pointed in his direction.

"Now, hang ON. If you'd just let me explain-"

"Oh no, no, no, can't be having with all that nonsense. Always kill your prey before it tries to make friends with you, as my Aunt Bulstrode used to say. Now, if you'd just hold still-"

"WAIT!" yelled Reese, and he held up the Bestiary in front of his face. "Look at this!"

Sir Winchester blinked, and realisation suddenly dawned.

"I say, is that - why, that looks for all the world like a copy of Sir Littlejohn's masterwork! Wonderful fellow, Richard. Good taste in carpets. May I?"

Plucking the book from Reese's fingers, he proceeded to flick through the pages with practised ease.

"Let me see now... Daemons, Dobermans, Dragons, the Dunwich Horror - Ah, here we go, Dungeoneer!" His gaze flicked from the book, to Reese, then back again, finally settling uncertainly on Reese.

"... a dungeoneer." Reese nodded emphatically. "NOT the Lesser Spotted Misanthrope of the Yorkshire Dales." Further emphatic shakings of the head, this time of a negative intent.

"Then it seems that I have done you a disservice, dear fellow," said Sir Winchester gravely. "I don't quite know what to say. If the Lodge were to find out-"

"Think nothing of it," said Reese with a casual wave of his hand, as if to imply that mistaking a human for a fictitious mythological beast and trying to pick it off with a blunderbuss was something everyone had done at one point or another. "I won't tell anyone if you won't."

"Ask him for directions," prompted one of his advisors.

"I don't suppose you know the way to Level Three?" questioned Reese.

"Ah, your quest thingy!" bellowed Sir Winchester, on firmer ground at last. "A noble endeavour, to be sure! As it so happens, that aforementioned fish fellow showed me how to zip from Wolfenden to here in the space of a second. Gimme half a tick..."

The huntsman began tearing away at the thicket he had originally emerged from, finally revealing the unmistakable shape of an elf portal.

"That should drop you slap bang in the middle of the town. I wish you luck, old thing. For now, though, I have a Misanthrope to bag. Rally Ho!" And with that, the huntsman strode with conviction of purpose off into the forest once again.

"What an eccentric performance," muttered Reese as he was guided into the portal.

*

The pleasant smell of the forest was instantly replaced with the considerably fouler aromas of a 15th Century town, and it took all of Reese's self control to stop himself from gagging.

Treguard nodded in satisfaction.

"I see that Reese has finally found his way into civilisation! This is the township of Wolfenden, team, one of the larger of the settlements that have sprung up since the boundaries of the Dungeon began reaching out beyond my castle. It was once of a size that made the keeping of the now legendary low profile an easy task to accomplish, but now Wolfenden boasts the hallmarks of a small city, with a population that numbers untold thousands. It would be in your interests to keep Reese on the move, for there is no knowing who might step from the crowds and decide to bring your quest to a quick end..."

Crowds surrounded Reese to the north, east and south. To his west was the open doorway of a traditional looking drinking establishment, complete with a creaking wooden sign featuring what the crafter had intended to be a proud wolf, but due to a tragic misunderstanding of scale and basic anatomy instead looked more akin to a slightly distressed terrier.

A flicker of movement caught his advisors' eyes, and suddenly their tone was one of panic.

"Reese, two goblins have stepped out of the crowd. Quickly, turn to your left ninety degrees and go into the inn. Hurry, before they see you!"

Reese quickly turned and, trusting in his advisors, walked quickly forward into the safety of the inn. The door slammed shut behind him.

*

"Well team," Treguard said, observing the establishment which Reese had entered in order to avoid the menacing of the goblin brothers, "supplies and sustenance may be gained here I think, and perhaps even some useful information, for this is one of Wolfenden's premier establishments, The Wolf's Howl Inn. As far as dens of inequity go, this one is fairly upmarket. I understand that even their bar fights are by invitation only these days."

Reese was indeed in a bustling inn. There were tables and chairs all around, filled with a varied tableau of patrons and serving wenches attending to their needs. One of the staff came over to Reese; the advisors noted how she looked far scruffier than the other wenches. Her hair looked like it needed a comb and her dress was somewhat lopsided.

"Hello there, traveller," she said sweetly to Reese. "I see you wear the helmet of the Powers That Be... so let me guide you to a table." She gently took Reese's arm and led him to an empty seat and table.

"Hmm. Odd, that a lowly wench should recognise the Helmet," Treguard mused out loud.

The wench helped Reese to sit down.

"My name's Jane Ragnell by the way, though everyone calls me Raggie. Can't for the life of me think why," she said, causing the advisors to smirk; they had a fairly good idea. "What's your name?" she asked.

"Reese," he said, finding her voice pleasing to his ears. Not for the first time, he cursed his inability to see his surroundings - anyone with a voice like Raggie's must be equally as pleasing to look at.

"Well, what can I get for you, Reese?" she asked, smiling sweetly. Just then the advisors noticed that Raggie had a brooch pinned to her dress - a silver dragon, just like the one Queen Kalian had asked them to retrieve. They relayed this information to Reese, who nodded. He suddenly had an immediate goal.

"That's a nice looking brooch you have, Raggie," he said conversationally.

"Oh, thank you. I got it to wear for a special person," she said, blushing slightly. She didn't seem to wonder how it was that Reese could know she was wearing it with the Helm obscuring his face.

"Would you be willing to part with it?" Reese asked tactfully.

"Oh no," Raggie said, shaking her head, "I want to look pretty for him when he comes to see me next, and this brooch helps with that."

The advisors conferred for a few moments, then instructed Reese on what they thought he should do.

"I've got a lovely genuine pearl necklace," Reese said, holding up the necklace so Raggie could see. "I think this would look even nicer on you than that brooch."

Please let this work, he thought. It was either this or the gold amulet. This quest depends on whatever she thinks would look nicer. Please let her like the pearls...

Raggie looked at the necklace.

"Well, they ARE very pretty," she said, unsure.

"Why don't you try them on?" Reese suggested. Raggie thought about this for a few moments, and then - shrugging - she took the offered necklace and put it on.

"You look gorgeous," Reese flattered, pushing every advantage available to him. He was rewarded with a deepening in Raggie's blush.

"You really think so?" she asked.

"Yes indeed, much nicer than that plain old brooch."

Raggie smiled.

"How much would you want for this necklace, Reese?"

"I'll trade it for the brooch."

Raggie thought about this for a moment, then unclipped the brooch and handed it to Reese.

"Here you go, and thank you for the necklace. Now, you'd best be on your way - some of these patrons are not the best of sorts, and they've been giving you funny looks for the last five minutes."

She helped Reese stand up and pointed him in the direction of the door out of the inn.

"Oh! Before you go, I was asked to pass this along to the first dungeoneer I saw today," said Raggie. From her dress she pulled a rolled up scroll that was somewhat crumpled; Raggie was seemingly able to pass her dishevelled appearance on to her possessions as well, no matter how briefly they were hers to do so.

"This is a spell, called FOG. I was told to pass it along by someone who claimed to be your friend."

Reese raised an unseen eyebrow at this.

"Did this friend of mine leave a name?"

"No, he didn't. I never seen him before, neither. All I remember about him was he wore these really expensive looking gloves. Bit funny, I thought, wearing gloves indoors. Anyway, off with you now! And feel free to drop in again, should you be around," she smiled.

The advisors took it from there and quickly guided him out, congratulating Reese for a nicely done trade. Unnoticed by them, Treguard was smiling knowingly.

*

Reese found himself once more in a wooded clearing; this one, however, was smaller and bare save for an orange lying in the middle. The advisors directed him towards the orange, and Reese quickly dropped it into his knapsack. The advisors were just about to guide him towards the elf path that was visible at the edge of the clearing when the hulking figure of Fatilla the Hun stomped into sight.

"Hold up! Hold up right there!" the portly Hun bellowed in a deep, booming timbre.

"Caution, team, this is another member of the old regime of the Opposition... and it looks like unemployment has made Fatilla even more belligerent than he was before!" Treguard intoned ominously.

"Right, you just stand there you Dunga-thingy. Since old Bonehead got replaced by... new Bonehead, Fatilla the Hun has been... 'between jobs'. Yeah, dat's da bunny. But if I blips yer and then blops yer, maybe I'll get me job back! So just you hold still!"

Fatilla readied his club to hit Reese.

"Quick, team, think fast or all is lost!" Treguard encouraged the team. Quickly the spellcaster jumped into action, casting the FOG spell. Almost instantly a thick fog began to form around Fatilla, obscuring his view.

"Eeere, what's going on?" the Hun bellowed as he blundered about in the fog, trying to find his way out. But the fog moved with him wherever he went. Eventually the inevitable happened and he walked face first into a tree.

"OUFF!" the Hun said as he slumped to the ground, unconscious. Quickly the team guided Reese onto the elf path.

*

The elf path led them into a small hut. The advisors decided that this would be a good place to fulfill their pact with Queen Kalina. Reese stepped slightly further into the hut then called out:

"Kalina, Kalina, Kalina."

There was a flash of light and Queen Kalina stood once more before them.

"Well done, dungeoneer. I see you have honoured your side of the bargain. You may approach me and hand over the brooch." She elegantly held her arm out to receive the brooch. The advisors guided Reese. Kalina clasped the brooch to her chest upon receiving it.

"My thanks once again, dungeoneer, for this service you have rendered unto me. I give you a parting gift as a token of my thanks: another small spell. This one is called PATH. Now... farewell."

There was another flash of light and Kalina was gone. The advisors guided Reese out of the hut.

*

Next Reese found himself on a long wooded pathway. The team started to guide him along it, when a squelching sound started to emanate from behind him and two aquatic looking creatures lumbered into sight.

"Extreme warning, team, miremen loose in Level Two! Their touch is fatal but they are slow on land!" Treguard warned the team.

The advisors quickly guided Reese along the pathway and away from the miremen. Despite the blindness, Reese was proving to be quite adept at navigating the forest path. He next came to a crossroads; there was a lake to the right, with a thick wooded area separating the two paths.

One of the two paths was blocked by big rocks and slowly coming down the other one, heading straight towards him, were two more miremen. Just then, the two who had been following Reese also started to lumber into view and then - just to compound Reese's problems even further - emerging out of the lake came yet another two miremen.

"Think fast, team, or your quest is doomed!" Treguard urged the team. "Fight, or flight! One or the other! But decide NOW!"

PUZZLE PAGE ONE

Knightmare Wipeout V

Each of the two grids below contains twelve answers, six of which fit into the category at the bottom and six of which don't. Identify all six correct answers if you can, chalking up cumulative amounts of theoretical money as you go (£10 for the first answer, £20 for the second, £30 for the third etc) up to a possible £210 for each grid, but just remember this - one wrong answer will wipe you out completely, so be careful!

Mellie	Olaf	Brangwen	Merlin
Sidriss	Hordriss	Gundrada	Elita
Stiletta	Dooreen	Dooris	Doorkis
CHARACTERS THAT APPEARED ON SCREEN WITH MOTLEY			

Smirky	Hands	Elita	Motley
Grimaldine	Treguard	Merlin	Lissard
Pickle	Mogdred	Sidriss	Olaf
CHARACTERS THAT APPEARED ON SCREEN WITH HORDRISS			

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 4

Quest: The Shield of Justice.

Dungeoneer: Vicky James.

Advisors: Sarah, Susannah and Katrina.

Home town: Wymondham, Norfolk.

Team score: 4½ out of 10.

Perhaps it was a good thing that these suspected Amazons had the shortest journey to Norwich of any team, as their attempt to conquer the Nightmare Dungeon was barely worth the price of the petrol/train fare!

Level One: A slightly wobbly trip through the Place of Choice leads (as usual) to the chamber of Dooris, where the team scores a notably average two out of three. Vicky goes on to make the obligatory pact with Hordriss, who is this time after a potion, which he says is clearly marked as his property. With the eye shield on her arm, Vicky proceeds to the Forest of Dunn, where Treguard and Pickle give the team a lengthy warning about assassins. Predictably, Vicky then comes across an assassin in a clearing, and has to shout at it in order to scare it away, a task which she carries out in an unbelievably unconvincing manner.

Oakley's glade follows, where (after Oakley has scared off a couple of goblins) the team scores three out of three, much to the obvious surprise of Treguard and Pickle. Despite this impressive score, Oakley does not give them any advice, and Vicky leaves the clearing with a key and a necklace in hand, having rejected a jar labelled *Stealth*. Predictably, Dungarth is the next port of call, where Vicky is accosted by an ogre. The *Stealth* would undoubtedly have been useful here, but Vicky manages to distract the ogre with the necklace and run past, much to Pickle's surprise: *"I think you may have done it, team, well done!" - Pickle.*

After running past a giant lizard, Vicky arrives at the wellway, where Fatilla is on guard. He has a list of people who are authorised to go down the well, but as he is apparently unable to read, he relies on Vicky to tell him whether or not her name is on the list. Fortunately, the advisors are quick to realise that Vicky should answer in the affirmative, which she does. Fatilla still wants a tip, a situation for which the necklace would surely have been useful, but as he is not the brightest of guards, Vicky manages to fob him off with the key, assuring him that *"it will open... lots of doors"*, which is a prospect that Fatilla appears to relish immensely. He allows Vicky to climb into the well, and she descends to level two.

Level Two: Vicky lands in a room where Gundrada is mooching about, and is promptly mistaken for a dwarf. A chaotic scene ensues, involving far too much panicking and far too little brainwork, but eventually Vicky manages to

convince Gundrada that she is not a dwarf. Gundrada proposes (not entirely uniquely) to accompany the dungeoneer further into the level, and once Vicky is standing next to her, she is gracious enough to acknowledge her mistake: *"You're quite tall, actually, I suppose you don't really look like a dwarf at all."*
- *Gundrada.*

However, Vicky's friendship with Gundrada is short-lived. They find Mellisandre in some stocks, and Gundrada presents the team with the choice of leaving the maid to her fate, or doing without the help of the compassionless Sword Mistress. Sensibly, the team decides to free Mellie, which is undoubtedly the right thing to do, even though they get absolutely nothing in return. Bereft of the company of both Gundrada and Mellisandre, Vicky arrives in Merlin's chamber, where the team's fate is sealed. As usual in this series, Merlin has dressed himself up in Cedric's old costume and is planning to test the team's wits in an unusual fashion: *"As for this guardian, I'm beginning to find his style of trickery somewhat familiar."* - *Treguard.*

Merlin has set himself up as the Guardian of the Chamber of Opposite Extraction, which means that everything he says is the opposite of what he means. He asks the team three oppositely phrased questions, and they are soon completely lost in confusion. (Despite the fact that they don't make any real attempt to get to grips with the challenge, it seems to me that they don't know any of the answers anyway, so I think they would have been doomed here even if Merlin had been speaking coherently!) With no questions answered correctly, Merlin says that he is awarding them a spell called SPRINT, which means that he isn't awarding them a spell called SPRINT.

Without this vital magic, the team would have been doomed in Ariadne's lair later in the level, but as the series is entering its latter stages and no one has won for almost two years, Vicky is quickly killed off at the Block and Tackle. Treguard tries to persuade us that Merlin's magic was required for this challenge rather than for Ariadne (*"A magic room, team, and magic may help you get through it!"*) but he's not fooling anyone! He even tries to convince us again once Vicky has been squashed by a block: *"Magic could have saved you, but I'm afraid you didn't earn it, team."* - *Treguard.* Yes, Treguard, magic could have saved them, but not directly!

Summary: A very forgettable team with a very unresponsive dungeoneer, and three advisors who never really pulled themselves out of the realms of bare mediocrity. They coasted along until they were required to really get their brains into gear, at which point things fell apart rapidly.

THE WICKEDEST SHOW IN THE REALM

By Ricky Temple

There was no moon in the night sky and the stars offered little in the way of illuminating light in the small streets of the settlement of *Glameldal*. The small fishing village was a sleepy type of place; very little happened here. It was too small to warrant a Powers That Be garrison, and in an area of little to no strategic value as to draw the attention of the forces of the Opposition. However, the peace of this village was about to be shattered. Lurking in the shadows was a sinister, shadowy figure which was making its way through the village. It was obviously human, yet its incredibly broad shoulders, unnaturally long arms and oversized hands more resembled those of a gorilla. Slowly this human monster made its way towards one of the houses. One of its oversized hands reached out and pressed against the door. The hand withdrew slightly and then quickly struck the door dead centre. The door caved in off its hinges like it was little more than paper, and the hulking figure entered the house...

In his hut on the outskirts of *Greenshades*, the sun rising had stirred Rio Bolt from his sleep. Now the young Dungeon Ranger was stoking the fire to try and warm the place up a bit. As he was doing this his eyes wandered to a small shelf on the opposite wall of the hut. It was adorned with a collection of odd bric-a-brac and knick-knacks - mementos from all his previous missions... coins from a forgery ring, a dragon claw, a broken goblin horn... All his missions were represented on the shelf, apart from two... his last two. The mementos of those were of a different nature - one had nearly ended his career and its memento was the metal augmentations that now adorned one third of his body, or had replaced flesh and bone... and the other, a memento of his most recent mission, was currently...

His train of thought was interrupted by a low buzzing sound emitting from the spyglass on the table. Dismissing his previous ruminations, he went over to the table, picked up the spyglass and activated it. The face of Calwain, Chief Dungeon Ranger of the Powers That Be, appeared in the shiny polished surface.

"Greetings, Ranger Bolt, I hope your leave has been restful," Calwain said.

Rio saluted his superior. "Yes thank you, sir, though I'm starting to get a bit itchy to get back on duty."

Calwain nodded. "Well, I have good news for you, Ranger. Yours and Ranger Silverdale's presence is required at Nightmare Castle. There's been an incident at Glameldal and the local Powers That Be agent has requested aid in the matter."

"Who is the local agent in that area, sir?"

"I believe you know her, Ranger - Ariel Martinez."

Rio smiled and nodded. "Oh yes, sir, the young half-witch. I met her during that business with that coven of Black Witches trying to infiltrate the Hall of Folly. She's a very good agent."

"Yes," Calwain nodded. "She specifically requested I send you down."

"What exactly has happened, sir?" Rio enquired.

"You'll be told the full details in the briefing, Ranger," Calwain responded, "but there's been a murder and it's got some odd elements to it."

Rio nodded. "Yes, sir... is that all?"

"No, actually, there is something else," Calwain said. "Ranger Silverdale... you don't happen to know where she spent her leave, do you, or where she is right now?"

Rio looked blank. "Sir?"

"We can't seem to find her at her lodgings and her spy mirror is turned off...."

Rio bit his bottom lip. "Ah, well, no need to worry, sir. That girl can take care of herself, and I think I know where I can find her."

Calwain nodded. "Very well, Ranger Bolt. When you find her, just pass on my instructions, will you?"

Rio saluted. "Will do, sir."

Calwain returned the salute and ended the communication, his image fading from view. Rio replaced the spyglass on the table. At the same moment, the door to Rio's bedchamber opened and a young female stood in the doorway.

"Yes, I'm sure you'll have no trouble locating the missing Ranger Silverdale," she chuckled.

Rio's memento from his most recent mission - Dungeon Ranger Zyssa Silverdale - stood in the doorway of Rio's bedchamber wearing nothing more than a thin white bed sheet wrapped around her. Her tousled hair and bright eyes gave a hint as to what had been happening but a few minutes ago between herself and Rio. She had spent the whole two months leave at Rio's place... getting to know him better. Rio smiled and went over to the young girl who was both his partner and good friend in the Ranger service, and now - after the last two months - also his lover. He took her in his arms and tenderly kissed her.

"How much did you hear?" he asked.

"Pretty much all of it," Zyssa responded, adding with a teasing smirk, "including you telling Calwain I can handle myself... Whatever made you say that, I wonder?"

Rio gave her a sarcastic smile. "Oh, I don't know... how about the scratches all down my arms and back?"

Zyssa laughed slightly. "Sorry, my love... but I did warn you I'm quite a physical girl in that area."

Rio kissed her again. "Yes, you did... now, we'd better get dressed and set off for Nightmare Castle."

Zyssa smiled, and in response she started to unbutton Rio's tabard.

"What's the rush?" she said seductively. "We've got time. It's a two hour ride from here to Nightmare Castle."

She finished unbuttoning his shirt and ran one hand over Rio's chest.

"And besides," she said in a breathless tone of voice, as she looked up at Rio with eyes that sparkled brightly with desire, "you had to find me before you went there."

She then proceeded to pull him into a passionate kiss; Rio returned the kiss with equal passion. As they kissed, Rio pulled the bed sheet from Zyssa's body. He threw it to one side and one of his hands began to roam over her body. Zyssa's head lolled backwards, her eyes closed and her eyelids fluttered like hummingbirds while an unintelligible moan escaped from her mouth, and she pulled Rio back into the bedroom.

Four hours later, the two Rangers were in the antechamber being briefed by Chief Ranger Calwain and the Dungeon Master Treguard.

"At some point last night in the village of Glameldal, the house of Captain Sol Keel - a former member of the Powers That Be militia - was broken into. He and his manservant Herbert Mun were murdered, and the house was ransacked," Calwain explained. "Captain Keel was a highly decorated soldier and had fought in a number of campaigns, but he had never been a standout figure that could have drawn a revenge attack from the Opposition or its sympathisers... so it does appear to be a robbery."

"Well then, sir, why is the local agent requesting our presence there?" Zyssa asked.

"Because of the manner in which the crime was committed, Ranger Silverdale," Treguard said bluntly. "The door of the house had been literally torn from the hinges, and the two victims had been killed by having their backs broken."

Rio stiffened slightly at this - it sounded frighteningly familiar to him.

"And also, though the local agent isn't aware of this fact," Treguard continued, "this isn't the first such case... there have been two other such killings in recent months in other towns and hamlets."

Calwain now addressed the two Rangers. "Your instructions, Rangers, are to go to Glameldal, investigate the killings there and also the ones in other areas of the realm, find out what's going on... and stop it! Your contact will be local area agent Ariel Martinez. A Powers That Be apothecary is already down there examining the bodies. He'll be able to fill you in on anything else that they can reveal. However, the Dungeon Bureau of Inquisitors has also sent an agent down..." Calwain looked at Rio. "Lieutenant-Inquisitor Sir Charles Edward Finley."

"Oh gods!" Rio sighed, but he was quickly silenced by a cough from Calwain.

"Just remember, Ranger Bolt, this is an assignment like any other," said the Chief Ranger, "so treat it as such and don't let personal animosities cloud your judgement."

"Yes, sir," Rio affirmed. He could see out of the corner of his eye that Zyssa was looking at him in a puzzled manner, and he was aware of the fact that she had been ever since his reaction to the manner of the deaths.

"That will be all, Rangers; you're to leave for Glameldal straightaway. There are horses already saddled and waiting for you in the stables. Take whatever provisions you need. Good luck," Treguard said, dismissing the two.

Rio and Zyssa bowed and left. They collected their provisions and made their way over to the stables. Rio was unnaturally sullen. Once they were inside, they started to put the provisions into the horses' saddlebags. Rio seemed

lost in thought and took longer than Zyssa to do this; all the while he could feel Zyssa's eyes on him. He finally could take it no more and turned around.

"What?" he snapped at her.

The surprise and slight hurt in Zyssa's eyes at this response was evident. "I... I just thought that something was the matter, Rio... and I was wondering if you wanted to tell me what it was, my love."

"Well, there isn't, so no, I don't... Ranger Silverdale," he said firmly.

Immediately Rio felt bad for this harsh retort, and kicked himself when he saw Zyssa nod sadly, trying to fight back tears of hurt. She then quickly turned her back on him and half walked, half ran to her horse, which she quickly mounted and spurred out of the stables.

"Damn it, Rio, that was smoothly handled, wasn't it?" Rio berated himself. "You just hurt the girl you love and for what? Your stupid pride? The fact you can't let go of the past? The fact you never got over it?"

You failed another like Zyssa that you cared for... remember? a voice said in the back of Rio's mind.

Rio tried to ignore it as he mounted his horse.

"I don't even know it's him for sure," he told himself.

Oh, but you do know... you just don't want to admit it! the voice crowed at him. *Because you know you can't stop him. You failed her and you're going to fail Zyssa... he'll do the same to her as he did to Kristina... what was it she looked like again, when you found her? Oh yes, a broken ragdoll!*

"Shut up!" Rio hissed to himself, as he rode to catch up with Zyssa to try and apologise.

And those pretty eyes of hers, all the life gone from them... looking up at you with that blank, accusing stare, asking where you were when she needed you the most... you're going to see that look again, only this time it will be

Zyssa's broken, lifeless body you'll be cradling in your arms, and it will be all YOUR FAULT!

"No... it won't happen again... I won't let it!" Rio said firmly, silencing the voice.

He looked up and noticed that they had covered a good distance already, and Zyssa was just slightly ahead of him. He urged his horse on to catch her up. As he got closer he became aware of a sound that made him feel like a knife was being driven into his body... Zyssa was gently sobbing to herself. Rio realised how much his actions had hurt her. He drew alongside her.

"Zyssa," he said gently.

Zyssa refused to acknowledge or even look at him, but she did slow her horse down somewhat so he could keep up with her. Rio reached out and laid a hand on her shoulder.

"No," she said, softly but firmly, and moved her shoulder away. "You've really, really hurt me, Rio. I thought we trusted and loved each other, and then you go and treat me like that..."

She still didn't look at him, which was to Rio far more painful than even her words.

"Do you see me as just someone to share your bed, Rio?" Zyssa asked.

"No!" Rio said quickly.

Zyssa finally turned and looked at him, her eyes still moist with tears. "Then what is so wrong that it changes you so much in the space of but a few moments? Ever since the briefing you've been sullen and withdrawn."

Rio bit his lip. "Something about this mission dredges up bad memories for me," he said evasively.

"What memories?" Zyssa said, not prepared to be fobbed off with a non-answer.

Rio looked away slightly. "Memories I'd rather not relive, Zyssa," he said.

"Or that you don't wish to share with your whore!" Zyssa said bitterly.

"Zyssa, I do not see you like that!" Rio said, starting to get annoyed.

"Then tell me!" Zyssa said. "We promised each other that first night, Rio... remember? As we held each other as close as it is possible for two people to hold each other, we said that all we were, all we had been and all we will be was now one, and that we would share everything with each other. I meant it from my heart... what about you?"

Rio bowed his head and his annoyance faded away into humility.

"It came from my heart also, Zyssa," he said softly. He took a deep breath. "If - and I underline *if* - what Treguard said about the way these two people were killed is true, I think I may know what we are riding into."

Zyssa stayed silent and just looked at Rio.

"Some years ago, before... the incident," he said, gesturing to his metal hand, "I was tasked with guarding a family of five - two parents and three children, two girls and a boy, who had been marked for death by an Opposition financed crime boss. I and another Ranger - Almier - were assigned to guard them. I ended up striking up a close friendship with the oldest daughter, Kristina. Well, one night the crime boss's killer came for them... only it wasn't just some ordinary Opposition assassin or underworld thug."

Rio shuddered at the memories.

"What was it?" Zyssa asked, some concern for Rio showing through.

"A monster, Zyssa," he said simply. "It was more of an ogre than a man... he towered over us all, and his face... God, it was hideous. He literally smashed the front door in... a solid oak door... it may have just as well have been paper, Zyssa, the way he broke it into splinters with his bare hands. Me and

Almier confronted him and tried to stop him, but our crossbows didn't even faze him... he must have taken nine or ten direct hits and he still just kept coming..."

Rio shook his head, and Zyssa looked at him sadly.

"It was dark, Rio, and you were both probably under great stress... maybe the shots went wide," she suggested.

Rio sadly shook his head. "No, we could see the bolts sticking out from his body... I rushed at him, but he knocked me aside like I was a feather and I lost consciousness..."

Rio fell silent. Zyssa watched him for a few moments, then tenderly she reached out and laid her hand on his shoulder. Rio didn't look at her but he laid his metal hand on her hand, almost as if seeking comfort and reassurance as he continued his story.

"When I came to, that monster had done its grisly work. Almier and the whole family were dead... their backs were broken."

Rio suddenly took his hand off Zyssa's and clasped it into a fist. To Zyssa's shock and horror, he smashed it down on his right leg, which she knew was still all flesh and bone.

"RIO! You'll break a bone!" she cried.

Rio's face twisted in a grimace of pain. Zyssa pulled her horse to a stop and grabbed the reins of Rio's horse. She dismounted and went round to Rio.

"Give me your hand, my love. We need to stop and rest - we're both physically and mentally unprepared at the moment. Let's take some time to get ourselves back into the right frame of mind before we head on," she said softly, offering her hand up to him.

Rio looked at her for a few moments, then took her offered hand and let her help him down. Almost as soon as his right leg touched the ground, it buckled

under him. Zyssa caught him and stopped him falling all the way to the ground.

"Lean on me, Rio," she whispered to him, and placed one of his arms over her neck and shoulders. She walked him over to the side of the road and into the hedges. She laid him down against a tree.

"I'll be right back," she said, and went to get the horses. Rio started to gently massage his leg.

"That was just plain stupid!" he said to himself. "Zyssa's right - we're in no fit state mentally for this mission at the moment. We need to get our professional and personal issues sorted out... Ours? Mine, more like, since I caused all this with my stupid pride!"

Zyssa returned, having tied the horses up out of sight. She had brought some ointment from one of the saddlebags with her.

"Zyssa, I'm sor..." Rio started to say as she sat down beside him, but she simply smiled and placed a finger on his lips.

"I know, my love," she said reassuringly. "I already know, and so am I. Let me have a look at that leg."

Rio nodded and rolled his trouser leg up. There was an ugly red mark where he had struck himself. Zyssa looked at it for a few moments.

"This ointment should soothe some of the pain," she said, and dipped her fingers into the jar; she then started to tenderly rub it over Rio's leg.

Rio smiled at her. "I never forgave myself for it, you know. That's my biggest failure - I let myself down, my partner down, the family I was assigned to protect... and most of all I let Kristina down!"

Zyssa shook her head sadly. "You did your best, my love... no one can do any more than that, and no one's perfect... you can't blame yourself for what happened, and Calwain was right... if you let personal feelings like those dictate how you act... well, then we've already lost."

Rio smiled at her; he leaned forward and kissed her. "Now I know why I fell in love with you, Zyssa Silverdale. You're smart, beautiful, kind, loving, sexy, you have a good sense of humour and you're a good friend."

Zyssa giggled. "Oh... you're just in love with what I can do to you between the sheets," she teased.

Rio smirked. "Well, there is that as well."

Zyssa mockingly gasped with shock and playfully slapped Rio's arm.

"Hey!"

Rio laughed and tried to grab her hand. Zyssa laughed and tried to get away, but Rio caught her. They started to playfully wrestle with each other on the ground, but after a little while this playful fooling around developed into something more and Zyssa found herself pinned to the floor, looking up at Rio, whose eyes were alight with desire and lust, and she knew that her eyes were exactly the same. No words were spoken. Zyssa simply nodded her head and she was soon engulfed in a whirlwind of pleasure. The air around her seemed to become sweet, hot and heavy. Her breath caught in her throat and her vision became a mass of sharp clear colours... except for the sight of Rio himself.

He told her afterwards that she had let out the most beautiful scream at the end, but she had no memory of it. All she remembered was the pleasure and the love they had shared, and she knew that their love was as strong as ever. She also knew that Rio still had a way to go emotionally. She could tell that he was still hurting a great deal inside over many things from his past... but with time she was sure he could be helped. They dressed quickly and mounted their horses.

"Zyssa?" Rio's voice snapped her out of her internal reflections, and she looked at him. "Thank you."

"My pleasure, my love," she smiled. "We both needed to let those feelings out before we faced whatever challenges may lie ahead."

Rio nodded. "Well, it's another hour or so to *Glameldal*. We should get there about dusk, so I suggest we just go straight to an inn to seek lodgings and we'll contact Ariel in the morning. What do you say, Zyssa?"

Zyssa smiled. "I think that sounds like a good idea, my love."

Rio smiled and spurred his horse on. Zyssa did the same and - as Rio had predicted - they arrived in *Glameldal* just as the sun was setting. They found themselves an inn and booked in for the night, before making their way to their room and quickly falling asleep.

However, elsewhere in the small town, others were not sleeping. That monstrous shadow was once again moving through the streets, towards yet another house...

CREATURE FEATURE

Series 4/5. Level 1/2.

THE FERRYMAN

It was the job of this cowled oarsman to row dungeoneers (and perhaps other denizens of the Nightmare realm) across the Dunswater between Dunkley Wood and the Tower of Time. Although human in shape (as he was played by Paul Valentine) the surly boatman may have been less than human in nature, as he communicated almost exclusively with guttural grunts, and was only known to speak coherently when declaring his catchphrase: "*Deep is the Dunswater, and cold. The fare for the crossing is silver or gold.*" - **Ferryman**. If he was feeling particularly avaricious, this might be increased to silver *and* gold!

It has often been speculated that the concept of the Ferryman was largely based on the Greek Mythological character Charon, and I think it's fair to say that most Nightmare enthusiasts acknowledge this point as almost certainly true. The Ferryman was certainly a very foreboding figure,

and taking a ride with him could not really be described as a pleasant experience, although Treguard was always quick to assure us that travelling with the sinister oarsman was far safer than swimming in the Dunswater.

His role may have been comparatively small, but the Ferryman was undoubtedly an interesting (and potentially inspiring) addition. We can only imagine (as some fans have, and maybe will again) what the face behind the cowl was really like - a simple human face, or something more discomfiting? The Ferryman is one of those creature-characters with plenty of potential fanfic material, for those whose imaginations are stimulated by such things.

After rowing Helen, Alistair, Dickon and Giles across the Dunswater in series 4, the Ferryman returned for one brief appearance in series 5, when he took Sarah for a short voyage at the start of her quest. The lake in this series was not the Dunswater from the previous series, but Treguard did go on to describe it as such in series 6, despite the fact that it was clearly a different body of water, and the Tower of Time had disappeared!

Fear Factor: 7 Unnerving at the very least!

Killer Instinct: 2 Seemingly not, but it was hard to tell.

Gore Factor: 4 Depends what you want to imagine under the cowl!

Humanity: 9 Seemingly human, but maybe not quite...

REMEMBER HIM?

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

MERLIN

Merlin has always been one of my very favourite Nightmare characters, and he was certainly the one that made the greatest impression on me when I was four years old. The wise and powerful Arthurian wizard with his white beard and flowing green robes played a very important role in Nightmare's early years, and the crucial part he (and his magic) played in the potential success of the quests should not be underestimated. I have always been a great fan of John Woodnutt's portrayal of the character - even though it is undoubtedly more than a little dodderly in nature (which

may have been partly due to Woodnutt's advancing years) I think it strikes all the right notes in all the right places.

As I have said before, Merlin's three appearances in series 1 are somewhat protracted, partly because he is given a lot of lines to say (discussing such subjects as Casper, Mogdred, level two hazards and boiled eggs) and partly because he says them quite slowly, although this only adds to the tremendous sense of wisdom and mystery surrounding the character. Unfortunately (thanks to the ineptitude of the early teams) Merlin did not get to appear on level three during this series, but he made up for this in series 2 and 3 with some very nice appearances in his vast third level chamber. The addition of the "three steps" aspect to Merlin's chamber in series 3 was a very nice idea, and served to underline the crucial importance of the team's level two meeting with the wizard, although I think it's a bit of a shame that only six of the twelve teams did well enough to complete this challenge successfully. Just goes to show how hard series 3 is, I suppose!

Despite my fondness for series 4, I can see why some people object to Merlin's portrayal in this series. I suspect (possibly falsely) that John Woodnutt had been asked to sign a new two-year contract after series 2 (when the rest of the original cast was mercilessly culled) and by the time series 4 was taking shape, Tim Child and friends were unsure what to do with the character. Seeing Merlin dressed in sackcloth robes and pretending to be a peddler or an imprisoned monk is not nearly as satisfying as watching his earlier appearances, I admit, but then Merlin is the Master Wizard and he has every right to test the teams in whatever ways he wants, and we have no right to judge him for it!

JAKE'S QUEST

By Greg Ford

This is an enthralling account of my own experiences in the Nightmare Dungeon, as chronicled by Raven fan and recent Nightmare re-discoverer Greg Ford.

Treguard:

Enter, Stranger!

Jake enters.

Treguard:
Who challenges my Dungeon?

Jake:
Jake Collins.

Treguard:
Well don't just stand there, bring your advisors to us now!

Jake:
Tom, Beth, Ross, come!

Treguard:
And who guides this brave dungeoneer?

Tom:
Tom Barratt.

Beth:
Beth Barratt.

Ross:
Ross Thompson.

Treguard:
Jake, here is a knapsack. It is to help your Sprite of Energy, but place only food in it. Now you must put on the Helmet of Justice.

Jake puts the helmet on.

Treguard:
Turn to face the Dungeon door, and step boldly forward.

Jake steps forward.

Jake:
Where am I?

Beth:
Right, okay Jake, you're in a room and there are two doors, one to your left and one to your right. There seems to be some symbols on the floor.

Ross:
Maybe they are what his quest could be.

Treguard:
Don't waste time, team, or Jake's quest may be over before it's even begun.
Pick a symbol and then get out!

Ross:
Okay, Jake, can you hear me?

Jake:
Yes I can, Ross.

Ross:
Right, step forward two paces.

Jake steps forward two paces.

Beth:
Sidestep to your... hmm... left.

Jake takes one sidestep to the left.

Tom:
Okay, Jake, I want you to take three steps forward and then take one sidestep to your left.

Jake:
Okay.

He steps forward three steps and sidesteps one pace to his left.

Beth:

Step forward!

Jake steps forward and is taken to the next room.

Jake:

Where am I?

Beth:

Right, you're in a room and there is a scorpion lashing its tail out.

Treguard:

Warning, team, life force level is Amber - don't waste time!

Ross:

Right, crouch a little then sidestep as best you can to the left, okay?

Jake:

Okay.

Jake crouches and sidesteps to his left one pace.

Ross:

Keep on going.

Beth:

Keep going until I say stop, okay?

Jake continues to sidestep.

Beth:

Stop! Right, shuffle forwards a bit.

Jake starts to shuffle forward.

Beth:

WHOA! STOP!

Jake:

What's the matter?

Ross:

This is worse than Thrall Demons.

Beth:

Shut up, Ross, this isn't Raven! Right, Jake, sidestep one pace to the left and then take a step forward.

Jake sidesteps and steps forward, and is in the next room.

Jake:

Where am I?

Tom:

Right, guys, let me direct him. This is important.

Treguard:

Warning, team, life force condition Red! Get the food!

Tom:

Step forward four paces.

Jake takes four paces.

Tom:

Right, can you see the table?

Jake:

Yes, I can.

Tom:

Put the grapefruit in your knapsack.

Jake picks up the grapefruit and places it into the knapsack.

Tom:

What's on the table?

Jake:

There's a dagger, some gold and an egg timer.

Treguard:

Warning, team, manifestation occurring! I think it's a wall monster... probably Granitas. He likes to torture dungeoneers.

Granitas:

I am Granitas of Legend. Face me or perish!

Treguard:

Turn Jake around, team!

Beth:

Right, Jake, turn one hundred and eighty degrees anticlockwise.

Jake does so and faces Granitas.

Granitas:

Three riddles I have. Truth is what I seek. Get all three wrong and I feed on you! Here is my first. Paul's height is six feet. He's an assistant at a butcher's shop, and wears Size 9 shoes. What does he weigh?

Ross:

I think it's meat, because he's an assistant at a butcher's shop.

Beth:

Hmm. Are you sure?

Tom:

Trust him on this one, Beth. I trust him.

Granitas:

One riddle, one answer, name it now!

Ross:

Right, Jake, say meat!

Jake:

Meat!

Granitas:

Truth accepted! Here is my second. When you have me, you feel like sharing me. But if you do share me, you don't have me. What am I?

Beth:

I don't know the answer, guys, do you?

Tom:

Hmm... Love? I'm not sure.

Ross:

Hmm...

Granitas:

One riddle, one answer, name it NOW!

Jake:

What should I say, guys?

Tom:

Say love.

Jake:

Love!

Granitas:

Falsehood! A secret is the truth I sought.

Ross:

Damn!

Granitas:

Here is my third. The person who makes it has no need for it. The person who purchases it does not use it. The person who uses it does not know what he or she is. What is it?

Tom:

Hmm... Could be a box, possibly...

Beth:

COFFIN!

Jake:

Should I say it?

Beth:

Yes!

Jake:

Coffin.

Granitas:

Truth accepted! Two is the score, you may learn more. Your quest is for the Shield, though you may not bear it. You will encounter the witch. Rock I was, and rock I now become.

Tom:

Right, pick up... the gold and the egg timer.

Jake picks them up.

Beth:

Right... let's take a step to the right.

Jake steps to his right.

Beth:

Keep going until I say stop.

Jake continues.

Ross:
WHOA! JAKE, STOP!

Jake stops abruptly.

Beth:
What are you playing at, Ross?

Ross:
He's going the wrong way. Right, Jake, go to the left and keep going!

Jake continues off to the left and is sent into the next room.

Jake:
Where am I?

Tom:
You're in a bomb room. Right, sidestep to the left and run forward!

Jake sprints forward and into the next room.

Jake:
Where am I?

Beth:
Okay, Jake, keep calm, but you're in a room where there's a snake's head, and a woman is looking at you angrily.

Lillith:
Who are you? Name yourself, intruder!

She points at Jake.

Jake:
Jake Collins from Harpenden!

Lillith:

Why are you here? ANSWER ME AT ONCE, OR I SHALL TAKE THE
GROUND FROM BENEATH YOUR FEET!

Jake:

I have come for the Shield.

Lillith:

Oh, you're a dungeoneer, I see. Hmm... do you have anything for me?

Ross:

Give her the egg timer, Jake.

Jake:

I have this egg timer for you!

Lillith:

AN EGG TIMER! WHAT WOULD I WANT AN EGG TIMER FOR? HOW
DARE YOU INSULT ME!

Beth slaps Ross, who looks upset. Tom looks gutted.

Lillith:

ROCK! ROCK! I WISH TO WAGE A WAR! DEFEAT MY ENEMY, AND TAKE
THE FLOOR!

The ground beneath Jake crumbles and he plummets downwards.

Treguard:

Tut-tut! Lillith clearly wanted the gold... not the egg timer, Ross, you silly
child! Just so you don't have the trouble of explaining how Jake fell to his
death, I will show you that he is safe.

He points to the screen. Jake is standing there, shaking his head.

Treguard:

Jake has been taken from the quest, so I must now get rid of you all.

SPELLCASTING: D-I-S-M-I-S-S!

Oh dear, I didn't last very long, did I? I blame my advisors - I think I should have chosen them more carefully! Great work with this, Greg - thanks for letting me put it in The Eye Shield!

KNIGHTMARE LOCATIONS

Castle Rising, King's Lynn, Norfolk

Location: Castle Rising Village, near King's Lynn, Norfolk.

AKA: The Castle of Doom.

Series featured in: 4.

These pictures were taken by me, Jake Collins, in September 2009.

Just to remind you, here is the castle keep in its entirety - "it's called Doom, and it's not inaptly named!"



Below we see the level two room with the barred well, which all series 4 dungeoneers passed through at some point, although the well was absent a couple of times:



Approaching this door, you can just hear Mellisandre's striking tones cutting through your brain as you leave the room:



Next Issue: More from Castle Rising.

WHEN WE WERE VERY YOUNG
Pre-school TV Shows of the 1980s VII
By Gehn "Lex" Luthor

As we have progressed through the *When We Were Very Young* series, we have gone from such traditional *See-Saw* programmes as *Chock-A-Block* and *Postman Pat* to shows that are far more closely associated with the late afternoon and the "Broom Cupboard". This issue, we are going to examine four programmes which I personally never recall seeing during the *See-Saw* slot, suggesting that we were well into the '90s before they were moved thither.

Corners (from 1987):

The first of these programmes is *Corners*, which ran for sixteen series from 1987. The original hosts were Simon Davies and Tracy Brabin, but from Series 2 Brabin was replaced by Sophie Aldred, whom *Doctor Who* fans will know as "Ace".

So, what was it all about? I shall admit that, because I would watch ITV far more frequently than BBC1 during the late afternoons, my recollection of *Corners* is somewhat limited, but fortunately, online help is at hand. Viewers would submit various sorts of questions to the programme, and the hosts would try to answer them. The style of question would determine which corner of the studio (hence *Corners*) the presenters would go to in order to provide an answer. Therefore, a scientific question would be answered in a different part of the studio from an artistic question. The corners themselves would contain objects and devices to complement the respective genre of question, causing the studio to appear fairly untidy.

The two presenters were assisted by a puppet named Jo Corner. Exactly what he was supposed to be is beyond my knowledge, but I do remember him being green and having an exceptionally annoying voice. Anyway, some questions would be put to him, and he would answer them with the aid of a "Beam Machine". As far as I remember, the Beam Machine had a monitor and would give graphic answers to the questions while continually making bleeping sounds.

I do recall seeing a *Corners* section in a magazine (or an annual) several years ago. What this was I cannot say for sure, although it could well have been related to *Buttons*, which would feature strip cartoons of such programmes as *King Rollo* and *Postman Pat* (my thanks go out to our editor-in-chief Mr. Collins for reminding me of the existence of *Buttons*). Anyway, the point of this is that there was a section on the *Corners* page called "Jo Korner" (note the spelling). There were no images of the Jo mentioned above, nor was there a Beam Machine; instead, there were a few jokes (Jo Korner -> Joke Corner), but whether this suggests that Jo Corner also used to make jokes I cannot say for sure.

I was never really a huge fan of *Corners*, although this could simply be because of what channel it was on and at what time. Still, it was educational and fairly entertaining, as the answers to the questions were done in such a way as to be able to keep the attention of younger viewers.

Educational Value = 5/5.

Entertainment Value = 2/5.

Wizbit (1986-1988):

As with *Corners*, *Wizbit* is a show that I cannot remember particularly clearly, and I cannot claim to have ever been especially fond of it. Still, since it apparently featured during the *See-Saw* slot at some time, it qualifies for a review here.

Three series of *Wizbit* were made, each one being one hundred and fifty minutes in length. Yes, I know that is a strange unit in which to measure the length of a television series, but my information tells me that, although each series did not contain the same number of episodes, the total length of each series was the same. How does this work? Well, Series 1 and 3 consisted of six twenty-five minute episodes, while Series 2 had fifteen ten minute episodes, and basic mathematics will demonstrate that each series was two and a half hours in length. What inspired this change in episode length I have no idea, nor can I remember the show well enough to categorically decide which format worked better, so I apologise for that.

Wizbit himself was a large yellow wizard's hat that sported eyes and a smiling mouth. He was from the planet WOW (World Of Wizards) and had come to Earth for a year and a day to learn about life here. To do this, he and his friend Wooly (a large white rabbit) would have to solve puzzles in a town called Puzzleopolis, which was inhabited by various items related to magic (magic wands and playing cards, for example). Of course, things were not as simple as that, as such antagonists as Professor Doom would be causing trouble in Puzzleopolis, meaning that Wizbit would be required to help out, often by using magic (his magic word was "Ostagazuzulum").

Paul Daniels and Debbie McGee, who were at the height of their popularity at the time (I for one loved to watch *The Paul Daniels Magic Show* on Saturdays), also played key rôles in the show. Daniels was the owner of the theatre in Puzzleopolis, and was always dressed in the traditional magician's

outfit of a black dinner suit. The fact that Daniels was involved in the show leads me to question why I was not fond of it, unless - even at the tender age of seven - I was such a fan of *The Paul Daniels Magic Show* that I felt *Wizbit* was "beneath me" in terms of magic.

Anyway, through the magic of *Wizbit* and Paul Daniels, *Wizbit* and *Wooly* would overcome their adversaries and solve the puzzles around Puzzleopolis. The programme encouraged interaction from the viewer, as the puzzles would be introduced at the beginning of the show, allowing the viewer to try to solve them as the programme progressed.

Finally, as an aside, I have a memory of going to see *Wizbit* live at Princes Hall in Aldershot, probably the best part of twenty years ago. Perhaps more strangely, nobody else in my family remembers this event, but the reason it has stuck in my mind could well be because the one day we went was the one day Paul Daniels could not be present, meaning that he left a recorded message for the audience. Of course, I was gutted. Anyway, I am sure that we picked up a black *Wizbit* book at the event, and should I ever find it, I shall know for certain that the show was not just a figment of my imagination.

Educational Value = 4/5.

Entertainment Value = 3/5.

Henry's Cat (1983-1993):

Yes, this five minute show also made it to the *See-Saw* slot. Well, I say "five minute show", but my research tells me that, out of the five series, only the first two consisted of five minute episodes. Episodes in Series 3 and 4 were fifteen minutes long, while the episodes in Series 5 were thirteen minutes in duration. Altogether, fifty-one episodes were made, split into the five series thus: 20, 15, 6, 6, 4.

Anyway, I am fairly certain that I never saw any episodes that were greater than five minutes in length, although given the dates of the later series' original broadcasts, this is not particularly surprising. *Henry's Cat* was written by Stan Hayward and produced and narrated by Bob Godfrey, who also produced *Roobarb*. (I apologise if there are any readers waiting for a review of *Roobarb*, but it does not appear on any *See-Saw* lists, and the only time I recall seeing it was early on a Saturday morning during the late '80s.)

Henry's Cat himself was a greeny-yellow cat who was fond of food and daydreaming, and had an extremely annoying habit of preceding every sentence with a lengthy "Oooooohhhhhh". His friends included Chris Rabbit, a bright blue rabbit who was always full of energy (quite the opposite of Henry's Cat), Pansy Pig and Denise Duck, while his enemy was Constable Bulldog. In the earlier series, episodes would often revolve around a daydream of Henry's Cat's. An example of this is the episode entitled *The Good News Day* (from Series 2). Henry's Cat is watching the television when the news comes on. The newsreader says that there is no news and shows the camera a blank piece of paper. Subsequently, Henry's Cat falls asleep in his chair and dreams of becoming an airline pilot, and the scrapes he gets into cause news to be broadcast.

In later series, the storylines are more adventurous and involve such ideas as Henry's Cat and Chris Rabbit heading to the U.S.A. in an attempt to run for presidency. Indeed, the whole show was Americanised to an extent from Series 3 (for example, the adventures in America and the narrator adopting a slight American accent), perhaps in an attempt to break into the American market. Series 3 also featured a change in the style of animation, from felt pens on white paper to celluloid-based animation.

I have scored the educational and entertainment values of *Henry's Cat* according to the five minute episodes of the first two series, primarily because I had no knowledge of the longer episodes until the composition of this article. As with all five minute shows, there are limits as to how much education and entertainment can be offered. However, I feel that *Henry's Cat* focused more on the entertainment side of things, and although it was never a favourite of mine, it deserves a decent score.

Educational Value = 1/5.

Entertainment Value = 4/5.

Two by Two (from September 1988):

Merely seeing this show appear on the list of programmes that were moved to the *See-Saw* slot was a surprise, as I never would have thought of it in a million years. However, the surprises did not end there, for I soon discovered that there was absolutely no information on it anywhere, which is

why I have chosen to make it the final programme for this issue's article (more on that later).

Two by Two was a wildlife programme, presumably named after the story of Noah in the Bible. It was presented by Jenny Powell and used material from such other wildlife programmes as *Heads and Tails*, *Caterpillar Trail* and *Animal Fair* (*Animal Fair* being the only one of these three shows that I have actually heard of). Three series were made, with fifteen episodes in the first, ten in the second and nine in the third.

As I am sure you will all remember, there were a fair few wildlife shows around during the late '80s, *The Really Wild Show* probably being the most well-known. Not being particularly interested in wildlife at the time (not that my interest has increased much since), I would tend to change the channel if any such programme came on, which obviously makes the construction of this section somewhat difficult. I could just about stomach *Animal Fair* for a couple of reasons: firstly, it was only ten minutes long and secondly, I always enjoyed the game that featured at the end of each episode.

Two by Two was not helped by the fact that I did not care for Jenny Powell. What caused this dislike I have no idea, but it could be because she deviated from what I considered the "traditional" style of presenter (Don Spencer, Brian Cant and Carol Leader, for example). You can imagine my annoyance, therefore, when she appeared on *Wheel of Fortune* as Carol Smillie's replacement.

As far as wildlife programmes go, *Two by Two* was not too bad. As with all such programmes, the bias is heavily on the educational side, and to be fair to it, it managed to get its message across fairly coherently. I was never particularly entertained by it, although this is most likely because of my dislike of wildlife and Jenny Powell. The theme music was particularly annoying as well, as the singer could well have been Jenny Powell. However, since there is no information readily available about the show, this is only conjecture.

Educational Value = 5/5.

Entertainment Value = 1/5.

The next issue of *TES* will see the eighth and final part of *When We Were Very Young*. In that article, we shall step back to 1990/1991 to look at four programmes that I personally remember seeing at lunchtime, but which do not appear on the list of *Watch with Mother/ See-Saw* programmes. Online information about these shows ranges from average to non-existent, hence the placing of *Two by Two* at the end of this article. Therefore, if this month's issue has appealed to younger readers, perhaps the final instalment will whet the appetites of the slightly older fogeys.

KIDS' TV SHOWS I GREW UP WITH

Focus on: The Animals of Farthing Wood.

Original Broadcast Run: December 1992 - December 1995.

UK TV Channels: BBC1, BBC2.

The Animals of Farthing Wood is a popular children's novel by Colin Dann that was first published (originally in two volumes) in 1979. It tells the story of a group of animals who decide to leave their home in Farthing Wood (which is being developed into a housing estate by the thoughtless hand of humankind) and set out for the safety of White Deer Park, a nature reserve from which one of their number - Toad - has just returned after a lengthy absence from Farthing Wood, thanks to his capture and imprisonment in a jam jar at the hands of a small child - again, the theme of humans interfering with the natural world is apparent! The animals agree to protect and help each other under the Oath of Mutual Protection, setting aside their natural instincts to eat each other.

In December 1992, CBBC started screening a cartoon adaptation of the book, and a remarkably faithful one at that, which was co-produced by the BBC and a French company. The main characters are pretty much identical to the ones in the book, including: Fox, the animals' cunning and courageous leader; Badger, the very old and very wise father figure; Mole, the greedy yet sensitive slowcoach; Toad, the impulsive yet self-doubting guide; Adder, the sinister yet surreptitiously loyal complainant; Tawny Owl (a long-eared

owl in the cartoon, and therefore only addressed as "Tawny" in the books), a pompous and fussy bird who wanted to be the leader; Kestrel, the animals' main scout; and Weasel, the only one mentioned so far who had a lot more character in the show than in the book. All these characters were male in Colin Dann's original writings, but the cartoon changed all of them except Fox, Badger, Mole and Toad into female characters, despite the fact that Kestrel was drawn with male head markings - I sense a production error!

The other animals (and there were a lot of them) were vastly scaled down from the book to the screen, by which I mean that the book contains innumerable rabbits, hares, hedgehogs, fieldmice, squirrels and so on, each of whom elected a leader for their particular group who then became known as Rabbit, Hare, Hedgehog, Fieldmouse, Squirrel and so on. In the cartoon, this menagerie was reduced to a small family of each animal, usually consisting of Mr and Mrs Rabbit/Hare/Hedgehog or whatever, many of whom had one or two children. The one exception to this rule is the vole family, which consisted of Mr Vole and his aged, deaf mother. Obviously it would have been impractical to draw and animate the dozens of each animal that appear in the book, and this was the obvious solution. Interestingly enough, the cartoon added a pair of shrews to the vole and mouse party, and changed the lizard family into newts... goodness knows why!

Two other characters were introduced during the course of the book/cartoon - Vixen, who became Fox's mate, and Whistler the heron, who had a hole in his wing (caused by a gunshot) which made a whistling sound when he was flying. He lived in a disused quarry, and joined the group in the hopes of finding a mate in White Deer Park.

The animals of Farthing Wood encountered many dangers on their journey, some of which claimed the lives of some of the travellers - yes, this is hardcore stuff and not for the faint-hearted! A forest fire (caused by a cigarette butt - see the familiar theme?) seemingly claimed the lives of the lizard/newt family, while Mr and Mrs Pheasant were both shot and eaten by an unfriendly farmer. The baby fieldmice were speared on a thornbush by a red-backed shrike (the so-called butcher bird) while one of the baby rabbits was killed in a pheasant shoot.

The final fatalities of the journey occurred when the animals were forced to cross a motorway, as two of the hedgehogs were too slow and got run over. Interestingly enough, thanks to the difference in animal numbers between the book and the cartoon, the hedgehogs that get run over in the book are said to be two particularly old and slow members of the party, leaving Hedgehog and most of his relatives free to complete the journey to White Deer Park and appear in the sequels. However, as the cartoon only features two hedgehogs - Mr and Mrs Hedgehog - they're the ones who get run over and no hedgehogs make it to White Deer Park!

We didn't originally watch the cartoon from the beginning, but picked it up a little way in. Being a sensitive child, I was almost traumatised by the first few things I saw - Mrs Pheasant getting killed, Mr Pheasant getting killed in the very next episode, and then Fox and Badger seemingly getting killed when they were hit by a massive amalgamation of debris in the river. However, as it turned out, Fox and Badger both survived the experience, although Fox was swept away by the river and separated from the rest of the animals for a few episodes, during which time he met Vixen. Fortunately, despite its more disturbing moments, Rosey and I both realised what a good cartoon it was, and stuck with it. It wasn't long before I bought all the books, and soon realised what a faithful adaptation the first series of the cartoon is - there really are no remarkable differences in plot, although the entire journey is undertaken by night in the book, whereas the animals nearly always travel by day in the cartoon, so that we can see them!

The two sequel series, however, did deviate from the books quite a lot, although they intertwined the plot strands of the different novels quite cleverly. The second series incorporated: *In the Grip of Winter*, in which the animals have to survive a particularly harsh first winter in White Deer Park; *Fox's Feud*, in which Fox and his family get involved in a war with White Deer Park's existing fox population; *The Fox Cub Bold*, in which Fox and Vixen's son Bold leaves White Deer Park and strikes out on his own; and a couple of ideas from *The Siege of White Deer Park*, the main plot of which (involving a wildcat terrorising the reserve) was never incorporated into the cartoon.

New characters for the second series included: Measly, Weasel's mate, and the only animal in White Deer Park who enjoyed her tuneless singing; Speedy, Whistler's overbearing mate; the Warden, the only human in the

show who wasn't a total rotter; the Warden's Cat, a very pompous animal who befriended an injured Badger; Mossy, Mole's clone of a son; Paddock, Toad's mate; and Scarface and his extended family. In *Fox's Feud*, Scarface was a red fox, but the cartoon turned him into a blue fox (not a real breed, disappointingly) so that we could easily distinguish visually between the two warring families. Scarface and his sneering mate, Lady Blue, were overtly proud to be blue foxes, rather than "common" red ones - a social comment about the futility of racial hatred, perhaps!

I've always felt that the second series tries to cram too much into thirteen episodes, but my main gripe with it is that Badger is killed off a few episodes before the end. He dies peacefully of old age in his sett, an event which is perhaps intended to help young viewers come to terms with the inevitable death of aged relatives, but this is something that does not happen in the books, and I don't think it should have happened in the show because it's just too sad! However old and senile Badger became in the books, Colin Dann obviously could not bring himself to kill the character, and it is Badger who has the last word in the final book, *Battle for the Park*. I've always believed that writing the character out of the series was a deviation too far, and it still rankles with me to this day!

Animated in a strikingly different style, the third and final series takes a bit more inspiration from *The Siege of White Deer Park*, while combining the plots of *In the Path of the Storm* and *Battle for the Park*. While Owl flies off in search of a mate (Hollow, based on the female Holly from the books, whom she meets on the housing estate that was once Farthing Wood) and the white stags battle for leadership of the herd, White Deer Park becomes overrun with rats, led by the cunning, intelligent and thoroughly nasty Bully. Also, in a plotline that has nothing whatsoever to do with any of the books, Weasel and Measly leave White Deer Park and have a lengthy adventure of their own, along with their newborn twins Cleo and Fido. As in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, it takes a colossal hurricane to bring some order back to the chaos in this series, returning Owl, Weasel and their mates to White Deer Park to help with the tricky job of getting rid of the rats. (Just in case you haven't worked it out by now, this is by far my least favourite of the three series.)

The Animals of Farthing Wood TV series was accompanied by a wonderful magazine series called *Farthing Wood Friends*, which (thanks to our father's credit card) would pop through the letterbox every week (usually on Wednesday or Thursday, but occasionally on Tuesday or Friday) and provide many hours of entertainment. Not only did *Farthing Wood Friends* recount the events of the TV series, it informed us about everything you can imagine to do with nature on a worldwide scale, and provided many fun puzzles and make-and-dos. It ran for one hundred and thirty issues (and four holiday specials) over two and a half years, and I just couldn't get enough of it - I still find it a very interesting and universally accessible magazine to this day!

In conclusion, The Animals of Farthing Wood is a very good cartoon that - in various ways - made a big impression on my life in the early to mid '90s. It is one of those shows that should still be enjoyable to watch as an adult, although anyone who's prone to crying at sad cartoons (regardless of age) should exercise caution whilst watching it.

TOP 35 KIDS' TV VILLAINS (Part One)

By Ricky Temple

35. The Headman (G.I. Joe, DIC Series):

Although he only appeared in the two-part story *The Greatest Evil*, this G.I. Joe villain has a place in both the show's history, and also the history of the toy line itself. The Headman is the leader of a criminal group called the Evil Head-hunters - they were the first ever toy line faction that was not allied or linked to Cobra in any way when they were first released. The Headman and his head-hunters are a paramilitary drug cartel; they smuggle and supply.

In his sole cartoon appearance, the Headman's "product" and its effects are so devastating and wide-reaching that G.I. Joe and Cobra actually join forces to stop him when a member of each faction suffers in some way from his actions. Unusually for G.I. Joe, the Headman is actually visually killed off on-screen; he ends up overdosing on his own drugs when, during a fight with the combined G.I. Joe and Cobra forces, he is caught in a flood of the drug

when one of the containers he ships the stuff in bursts and submerges him. His body is later seen in the rubble of his hideout.

34. The Hooded Claw (The Perils of Penelope Pitstop):

The old cliché - the mocking, melodramatic, showman-like, greedy, master-of-disguise, murderous villain of the Hanna-Barbera Wacky Races spin-off, The Perils of Penelope Pitstop. He is, in fact, the wealthy heiress Penelope Pitstop's very own guardian Sylvester Sneekly. With the aid of his two thuggish henchmen, the Bully Brothers, he creates fiendish death traps for Penelope that are foiled due either to a bumbling but somehow successful rescue by Penelope's protectors, the Ant Hill Mob, or by Penelope's own brains and initiative.

Sneekly is a self-professed master of disguise, although his disguises - however authentic the clothes - always include his trademark Hooded Claw mask. Even his Hooded Claw outfit is not the most elaborate costume, consisting of a multicoloured suit, a wide-brimmed hat, his trademark mask/hood, and a cape. Yet somehow Penelope and the Ant Hill Mob never realise his true identity. The Claw is, of course, a send-up of moustache-twirling villains of the early days of cinema, just as the show itself is a send-up of the old "adventure serials" of early cinema and television.

33. M. Bison (Street Fighter, The Animated Series):

I am both an Anime fan and a fan of the Street Fighter game series so I was interested to see this animated series based on it when I first heard about its existence. While it's not the best example of an attempt to bring the Street Fighter franchise into another media, it's by no means the worst... not that that really says much. One thing the show does have going for it, however, is its portrayal of the superhuman criminal mastermind and leader of the Shadowloo crime syndicate, M. Bison.

Bison is always portrayed as a real and very potent and dangerous presence throughout the show's three seasons. You really believe that he has inhuman powers and that he can very easily take over the entire world. However, he is mainly kept in the background and his minions are the main antagonists in most episodes, which really dents the show as none of them match up to Bison in terms of character.

32. Dr. Gangreen (Attack of the Killer Tomatoes):

Dr. Putrid T. Gangreen is the "Angry" (not "Mad") Scientist behind the hordes of Killer Tomatoes in both this animated series and also the three live-action sequel films to the original Attack of the Killer Tomatoes movie, though there he was called Professor Mortimer Gangreen.

His goal, like any halfway decent villain, is to - surprise, surprise - take over the world! Aided by his Malibu-born wannabe-reporter henchman Igor Smith and his main Tomato sidekick Zoltan, he constantly schemes to achieve this aim. Surprisingly for a kids' show villain, he actually does manage it in the last season of the show, only to be betrayed by Zoltan, who takes control instead. Consequently, Gangreen ends up turning good and helping to fight against his own creations.

31. Gossamer (Loony Toons):

Gossamer was the giant, furry, orange/red tennis shoe wearing monster from some of the original Loony Toons theatrical shorts. He is truly one of the most popular minor Loony Toons characters, with only three prominent appearances to his name... in fact he wasn't even given a name until his final appearance! Gossamer chased and tormented Bugs Bunny in two "horror parody" shorts - *Hair-Raising Hare* and *Water, Water Every Hare* - and then in his final prominent appearance he turned up as a hench-monster to Marvin the Martian, harassing Daffy Duck and Porky Pig in *Duck Dodgers and the Return of the 24th $\frac{1}{2}$ Century*.

An imposing and actually quite intimidating figure for younger viewers, Gossamer has enjoyed a recent surge in popularity with Warner Bros seeming to have really seized upon the character for marketing purposes, turning up in videogames and making cameo appearances in other Loony Toons spin-offs like Baby Loony Toons, and even the live-action/animated film Space Jam.

Each of the two grids below contains twelve answers, six of which fit into the category at the bottom and six of which don't. Identify all six correct answers if you can, chalking up cumulative amounts of theoretical money as you go (£10 for the first answer, £20 for the second, £30 for the third etc) up to a possible £210 for each grid, but just remember this - one wrong answer will wipe you out completely, so be careful!

Olgarth	Granitas	Igneous	Brangwen
Gretel	Giant	Troll	Mildread
Stiletta	Bartram	Dwarf	Oakley
CHARACTERS THAT NEVER MET A WINNING DUNGEONEER			

Dooris	Doorkis	Dooreen	Oakley
Olaf	Granitas	Dwarf	Hordriss
S-Jack	Folly	Gretel	Merlin
CHARACTERS THAT SAID "FALSEHOOD"			

THE FORBIDDEN FEAR
Chapter 3: Last Stand of the Fallen
 By Chris Lunn

Pickle impatiently strode around the Descender waiting for it to stop. As he waited, he slipped the Cup into his knapsack. The Descender stopped with a jolt and Pickle looked at the two doors ahead of him. One bore a strange symbol that looked rather like a knight, but crueller and somehow meaner. The second was just an ordinary door.

"That must be the frightknight that the Master mentioned in his book," Pickle thought.

Pickle turned to face the plain door and strode purposefully forward.

The darkness rescinded and Pickle blinked and looked around. Despite the gloom, he could make out four windows and a large door. In between the top two windows was a shield with a lion on it. As the gloom lifted, Pickle could make out a set of stocks tucked away in the corner, with what looked to be some kind of court jester stuck in them. As Pickle made his way across the room to the exit, he heard a soft cry emanating from the stocks.

"Please don't go! Help me out of here, mate, and I'll make it worth your while."

Pickle walked over to the stocks and peered into the darkness where he reckoned the jester's head to be.

"Who are you?" Pickle asked. "How did you get here?"

"Oh, well, erm... it's a bit embarrassing, really, but I kinda maybe said something to upset Merlin."

"What in the Dungeon's name did you say to make him do this?"

The jester grimaced, remembering exactly what he had said.

"I might've said that his magic was nothing but parlour tricks and mirrors."

"You're lucky old Merlin didn't turn you into a toad or something really silly," Pickle chuckled.

"I know. Oh, please let me out!" he pleaded.

"If I let you out, what will you do for me?" Pickle asked.

"I will give you a spell which will help you later on, although I can't for the life of me remember where."

"Deal!" said Pickle.

He moved forward and removed the top of the stocks so the jester could move.

"Oh, thank you!" he said. "Now, the spell is called FREEZE - that's F, R, E, E, Z, E, got it?"

"Yes."

"Good. Now, I'd better go before Merlin gets back and sticks me back in that thing!"

The jester gesticulated wildly at the stocks, and then fled the room as if a swarm of bees was chasing him. Pickle shrugged his shoulders, turned to the door and walked out.

Pickle felt the crackle of branches under his feet and realised that he had found another wooded area in the Dungeon. He emerged into a clearing where a woman - dressed from head to toe in body armour - was brandishing a sword which, it appeared, was about five sizes too big for her.

"Halt! Who goes there?" she said in a shrill, rather pompous voice.

"My name is Pickle and I am an elf... a-and you are?" Pickle stuttered, realising that the woman's sword was pointed directly at his throat.

"My name is Gundrada, which is what you may call me!" she declared. "Other people tried to call me other things, but they're dead now!"

Pickle gulped.

"Now, what's your business?" she barked.

"I am trying to return Treguard to this realm and close the door on the Forbidden Level," Pickle said.

"A noble quest. Do you wish for some assistance, as it might help me to complete my own quest?"

"Do I have a choice?" Pickle asked.

"Nope, I'm coming whether you like it or not!" she said, suddenly sounding like a precocious five-year-old.

She grabbed his arm and drew him deeper into the wood.

Meanwhile, deep in the bowels of the castle, Lord Fear strode into his newly created Goblin Pens, intent on maligning the slight figure of the Goblin Master, who cowered in the corner.

"SKARKILL, YOU FAILED AGAIN TO CATCH THAT MISERABLE ELF, EVEN WITH THE HELP OF YOUR TWO FINEST GOBLINS!" Lord Fear bawled. "YOU ARE JUST LUCKY I'M FORGIVING!"

"Thank you, Your Fearship... Lordship," Skarkill grovelled.

Lord Fear brought out his sceptre and pointed it at the nearest goblin, which suddenly shot up five feet and broadened around its chest and waist.

"A hobgoblin!" Skarkill exclaimed. "Oh, thank you Master!"

"NOW TAKE OUT TINY AND GET THAT ELF!" Lord Fear thundered, before turning on his heel and marching straight out of the room.

In the forest, Pickle and Gundrada approached the cave leading to level three. As they peered around a particularly thorny bush, the two companions' faces fell. Skarkill had beaten them to it and left Tiny guarding the cave. Pickle sat back against a nearby tree.

"Now what do we do? I can't get past that thing, it would eat me up for breakfast!"

Gundrada looked at him with a grim smile.

"You can't, but I can!"

Before Pickle could protest, she strode into the clearing.

"Hobgoblin, draw your sword and face me before I get really cross!"

The hobgoblin turned and raised its mace, which was decorated with a multitude of spikes. A huge smile broke across its craggy face and it charged. Gundrada leapt to one side, her sword glancing ineffectually off the mace.

"Is that the best you can do?"

She leapt high into the air and landed squarely on the hobgoblin's back. Pulling the thing's pigtails, she gave a throaty if slightly girlish laugh.

"This is too easy!"

He threw her off his back with a mighty bellow. As he rushed at her, Pickle cried:

"Spellcasting: F-R-E-E-Z-E!"

Just at that moment the hobgoblin flung its arms wide and caught Gundrada square on her temple with its mace. She fell to the floor next to the body of her foe. Pickle hesitantly ran from his hiding place to Gundrada's prone form, all the while scanning for Tiny's master.

"Gundrada!"

He felt for a pulse, but there was none.

"Your sacrifice will never be forgotten, brave warrior."

He bent and closed her eyes, wiping a tear from his own. He caught a glimpse of Gundrada's shield leaning against a nearby branch.

"Why didn't you take it with you?"

Looking more closely, he realised why.

"The Shield of Truth," he breathed.

He picked it up and slipped it into his knapsack.

"Two down, one to go."

He turned and faced the cave, steeling himself for whatever he might find, and then darted forward.

Pickle found himself on a conveyor belt, and in the distance he could hear the sound of cogs whirring.

"The Corridor of Blades!" he muttered.

As the blades came towards him he darted this way and that, avoiding them all. Eventually the door came into view. Pickle dropped to the floor to avoid a particularly vicious blade that attempted to take his head off, and rolled through the door into level three.

Standing up, Pickle looked around. He was in a blue room with a door at the far end and a chest in the middle. Walking to the chest, he lifted the heavy latch and peered inside. He found just one spyglass and decided to take a look.

"Can't hurt to know what the Opposition is up to."

In the spyglass Pickle could see two figures; a man and a woman. A frosty chamber surrounded them, with a dark pit in the middle. He recognised them both immediately.

"Merlin and Aesandre?" he puzzled.

"I beg of you Aesandre, reconsider your foolish actions!" Merlin urged. "Don't let Lord Fear cloud your judgment with lies!"

Aesandre met Merlin's gaze with her own obsidian stare.

"You are too late, fool! He has already granted me permission to take level two and all it contains for my own."

"But Treguard..."

"What do I care that the silly old fool finally made a mistake? The way is open, the world is mine, and you will not stand in my way, old man!"

She flung out her wrist and a ball of ice shot at Merlin. He flicked his hand and it disappeared.

"This is a battle you cannot win, my dear," said Merlin wearily.

Her only response was more icy projectiles. Merlin flung out his hand and turned them into fire, before throwing them back.

"I call upon the old magics as delivered to me by Fear itself!" cried Aesandre.

The walls trembled and lightning crackled at her fingertips. She pointed a finger at Merlin and he was borne up into the air.

"This you cannot do, Aesandre, for you will incur the wrath of many beings, and even of Treguard himself!"

"He's gone, and now so are you!"

She closed her palm and he fell, missing the side of the walkway, into the darkness below...

POETRY CORNER

Despite the fact that they were the only winning team of the series, Ben and friends from series 6 are not universally acknowledged as the champion team of that series, and I myself am a fairly recent addition to the Sofia Supporters Club. All a team can do, of course, is complete the challenges they are given, but did this lot even do that to any creditable degree? Well, that's up to you to decide, but in the meantime, why not sit back and enjoy their quest in verse?

From Salisbury Plain there came four lads,
Whose hair was based on '90s fads.
They bought a potion with some gold,
Which left Sly Hands out in the cold,
For Sidriss got a big surprise,
When magic scales fell from her eyes.
With minstrel's password Dreadnort fled,
Across the causeway Ben then sped,
To level two via dragon-flight,
To find a ring and bottled sprite.
The Witch Queen said its name was Puck,
Then Skarkill came to have a ruck.
The pooka scared him just enough
To give the key, he's not so tough!
A trundle down Descender's shaft
Revealed a ship with hatchway aft.
The astrolabe was grabbed with speed,
The spider was denied her feed.
This made a happy Nemanor,
Who sailed Ben to the Mines of Gore.
A TRICK brought Hordriss into play,

He gave Ben SPLASH, then went away.
 The Causeway Great proved not too hard,
 Then Fear arrived with his trump card.
 With magic cast the quest was won,
 And Lord Fear didn't find it fun.
 Although Ben's team had won the day,
 It wasn't hard, I have to say!

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Knightmare Wipeout V:

Correct	Correct	WIPEOUT	WIPEOUT
Correct	WIPEOUT	Correct	WIPEOUT
Correct	WIPEOUT	WIPEOUT	Correct
CHARACTERS THAT APPEARED ON SCREEN WITH MOTLEY			

WIPEOUT	WIPEOUT	Correct	WIPEOUT
Correct	Correct	WIPEOUT	Correct
Correct	WIPEOUT	Correct	WIPEOUT
CHARACTERS THAT APPEARED ON SCREEN WITH HORDRISS			

Knightmare Wipeout VI:

WIPEOUT	Correct	WIPEOUT	Correct
WIPEOUT	Correct	Correct	WIPEOUT
WIPEOUT	Correct	Correct	WIPEOUT
CHARACTERS THAT NEVER MET A WINNING DUNGEONEER			

Correct	Correct	WIPEOUT	Correct
WIPEOUT	Correct	Correct	WIPEOUT
WIPEOUT	WIPEOUT	WIPEOUT	Correct
CHARACTERS THAT SAID "FALSEHOOD"			