


THE EYE SHIELD



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MESSAGE FROM ME

Welcome to issue 49 of The Eye Shield. Goodness me, can it really be 2008 already? (As I type this, it's still 2007, of course, but you're reading it in 2008, so the point remains.) Well, whatever else may change in this busy, confusing world that the human race seems to have made for itself, rest assured that TES will be with you throughout the year, providing a shining beacon of hope in times of trouble, and proving to be a faithful old friend in times of turbulence. So, what's the on the cards this month, I hear you cry. Well, let's see...

In this issue, I take a long overdue look at the finer points of Nightmare's six undefeated teams as we consider the *Nightmare Stalemates*, while in *Kids' TV Shows I Grew Up With*, Rosey takes a look at some of her favourite children's programmes of the 1990s, which was a time we both very much enjoyed, in terms of what was on the telly, anyway. (It was a rather nice lamp, actually.) Happily there is at least one reader contribution this issue - after a short hiatus, Ricky Temple presents the third part of *The Fastest Draw in the Dungeon*, in which you can catch up with troubled Dungeon Ranger Rio Bolt. When we left him, if you remember, Rio was running over in his mind the experiences that had turned him into something less than human, and now you can find out what those experiences were... Thanks again for this, Ricky - it's a corker!

In addition to these tantalising treats, all your regular favourites are ready and waiting to entertain you, including the first part of a fairly comprehensive look around Bodiam Castle in East Sussex, parts of which can be spotted frequently in series 5, 6 and 7. But before all that, let's take a look at some of my fan-mail...

Here is the latest from The Eye Shield's number-one fan, Ross Thompson.

I've just finished reading issue 48 of The Eye Shield and I really enjoyed it. I was interested in your views on kids' shows now and in the '80s. (I wasn't alive in the '80s!) I kind of remember a programme called Little Bear that I watched when I was young. I also used to love The Shiny Show and Rugrats.

You are indeed fortunate, Ross, to be just old enough to have missed out on the worst of the kids' shows overload of the modern television climate. I remember watching Little Bear a few times, and who can honestly say that they've never seen (and secretly enjoyed) Rugrats? It is testament to Nightmare's enduring popularity that the Challenge repeats (and the Sci-Fi repeats before them) have garnered hordes of new, younger fans for the show, which just goes to prove that if Nightmare were still being made today, it would be just as popular and iconic as it was twenty years ago, contrary to the misguided beliefs of misinformed television executives like former

CITV controller Vanessa Chapman. Anyway, Ross, thanks again for keeping in touch, and I hope TES continues to enthrall you for many issues to come.

Well, Rosey's recent e-mail about Folly and Motley really seems to have sparked off a proper TES-based discussion, which is fantastic! Let's see what original Eye Shield reader Ben "Pooka" Maydon has to say on the subject.

Motley was always my favourite Nightmare character. Folly is often compared to Motley, which I think is rather unfair, as they were very different types of jester. Folly was much more of a dark jester, with an air of mystery about him, whereas Motley was more of a comic character.

Motley produced many more laughs than Folly, who (although he had a mercurial sense of humour) never actually made me laugh. Motley's acting was much better – he had a sort of manic energy (especially when interacting with the Dungeon girls) and seemed to be much more at ease with dungeoneers than Folly ever was.

I agree with Liam Callaghan about the whole "court jester/stand-up comic" thing. In traditional lore, jesters were meant to be quick-witted rather than funny, and Motley (despite his natural charm) probably didn't have that. But then again, Motley performed anywhere and everywhere, rather than in one place, so he fulfills his function!

Thanks for sharing your jester-related views, Ben. You make the interesting and pertinent point that Folly and Motley were "different types" of jester – Folly always reminds me of the Fool from Shakespeare's King Lear, not least because I was studying this play for my English A-level at exactly the same time as I was copying videos of series 1 and 2, but the experience certainly made me appreciate the meaning of Folly's assertion that "there's more wisdom in foolish wit than ever you can imagine" more than I might otherwise have done. Anyway, thanks again, Ben.

Finally this issue, here is some more from the ever-prolific Liam Callaghan.

One thing that bugs me now; I applied to go on Nightmare, sadly after series 8 had finished, and as such I got a reply saying that they weren't making any more. I was 12 at the time, and thought I remembered hearing somewhere that that was the minimum age requirement, but watching series 8 recently, I noticed that Dunstan was 11!

Just for the record, the plan was that I would have been the dungeoneer, although looking at the series again, I can't help but think I'd have been better as an advisor. I think it's natural at the time to want to be the dungeoneer, because they're more in the limelight – you tend to remember the dungeoneer's name more than the advisors'. Actually, that was one of the really good things about series 4-6 – thanks to Pickle, the advisors were called by name much more regularly.

It took me a few years to discover that I would have been just old enough to audition for series 8 if I'd wanted to, but at the time, the thought never occurred to me, sadly. (I think the prospect of actually being on the show would have scared me witless, but

it would be fun to have a failed audition tale to share with you all!) Yes, being an advisor (particularly the team captain) gives you a lot more control over the quest, but being the dungeoneer ensures that your name is the one that will be remembered by Nightmare fans for all time. (I, for one, have always remembered teams by their dungeoneers' first names, and sometimes I have to think for a moment to recall the names of all three advisors when I'm writing Classic Quest.) However, if your advisors blow it, there's nothing you can do about it!

And now for the moment of truth - who is the champion of Martin "HStorm" Odoni's Nightmare QI quiz? Read on, and all will be revealed. By the way, I have included my own score this time, as I had a go at the questions when Martin first sent them to me, before I saw the answers. Thanks again for the questions, Martin - in the words of someone we all know well, ooh nasty!

1. Who is the odd one out? Pickle, Majida, Motley, Merlin, Hordriss, Treguard.

Answer: Motley.

Cliché: Hordriss, because he wasn't a member of the Powers that Be.

Explanation: Hordriss effectively did become a member of the Powers that Be at the end of season six, when he forged an alliance with Treguard. Motley is the only one who was never seen setting foot in the Dungeon antechamber.

2. What is the significance of the following sequence? (The correct answer to question 1 will give you a clue.) FILC, KCAJ, NHOJ, IVAD, OGUH.

Answer: If you reverse the order of the letters, you get the first four letters of the first names of each of the actors who were shown in the Dungeon antechamber, i.e. HUGO Myatt, DAVID Learner, JOHN Woodnutt, JACKie Sawiris and CLIFFord Norgate.

Cliché: Anything to do with dungeoneer names or foreign languages.

3. According to Nightmare lore, who was the heir to the throne by right of Norman/Angevin descent at the time of Richard the Lionheart's death?

Answer: King John.

Cliché: Rosamund "Queen Hel" Plantagenet.

Explanation: Queen Hel was the daughter of the Lionheart, and a student of the Fortress of Assassins, according to the novella of the same name. But she was born out of wedlock, and therefore was illegitimate. Those who think she had a realistic claim to the throne are just assuming it must be true simply because Treguard said so. Treguard is ignoring not just the issue of legitimacy, but also the contemporary attitude to gender; a female line of descent at the time would not have held precedence over a male sibling, at least not without a huge dispute.

4. Who is the odd one out? Barry Thorn, Greg Armstrong, Jason Karl, Sylvester Hands, Dunstan Roberts.

Answer: Greg Armstrong.

Cliché: Sylvester Hands.

Explanation: "Sylvester Hands, as he wasn't a dungeoneer" is a cliché, as Greg Armstrong was on Stuart's team in season 2 - he was an advisor and not a dungeoneer. "Sylvester Hands, because he was the only member of the Opposition" is also a cliché, as Stuart's team accepted the infamous invitation from Mogdred to join the Dark Side, therefore they - including Greg Armstrong - effectively joined the ranks of the Opposition. "Sylvester Hands, because he wasn't a real person" is

another cliché, as Jason Karl isn't a real person either – it's a stage name for Julian Smith. Greg Armstrong is the correct answer, as the others were all dungeoneers, except for Sylvester Hands, who disguised himself as one in season 5 in an attempt to evade capture by Gwendoline. Greg was therefore the only one never to be seen in the series wearing one or other incarnation of the Helmet of Justice. It is not acceptable to take Greg as the correct answer simply by virtue of him being the only one who was an advisor; by that brand of negative reasoning, you could equally argue that Hands was the odd one out as he was the only one who was a professional thief, or that Julian/Jason was the odd one out as he was the only one who went on to present *Most Haunted*.

5. What was the total number of levels completed by champion teams throughout Nightmare?

Answer: 23.

Cliché: 24.

Explanation: Eight teams became winners of a Dungeon three levels deep, and eight threes are twenty-four, but Dunstan's team only completed two levels, as they were allowed to bypass level two altogether.

6. What was the total number of episodes of Nightmare produced by Tim Child?

Answer: 107.

Cliché: 112.

Explanation: 112 is the number of Nightmare episodes that were broadcast on ITV (and later on satellite channels). But Tim Child did not produce the eight episodes of the pre-*Broadsword* first season; despite devising and writing season one, Tim was too busy working for *Anglia TV* directly for the production role. Instead, they were produced by Sally Freeman. 104 is closer, but is still wrong. The correct answer is 107. There were two versions of the pilot episode made in 1986 - the original, called *Dungeon Doom* - and a remix with the correct title, both of which were, to the best of my knowledge, produced by Tim Child. He also produced the pilot for the unmade *Nightmare VR* series in 2004.

Rank	Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
1	Liam Callaghan	4	4	1	3	4	2	18
2	Ross Thompson	4	4	1	1	4	2	16
3	Ben "Pooka" Maydon	2	1	1	3	4	2	13
4	Jake Collins	3	2	4	-10	4	2	5
5	Joe Grocott-James	2	0	1	2	4	-10	-1
6	Gehn "Lex" Luthor	1	2	0	1	-10	2	-4

As you may have noticed, we have a new champion! Well done indeed, Liam. Your prize is to write the questions for the next round. Have you done that? Good, then let's get on with it. The following questions have been devised by current Nightmare QI champion Liam Callaghan, with a few suggestions from me here and there. Thanks again for these, Liam. Get your brains into gear, readers, because here we go! (As I'm feeling kind, here's one last tip for you - watch the wording!)

1. How many times did a quest come to a natural end (i.e. not including getting cut short for the end of the series) at the end of an episode of Nightmare?
2. In which series did all the dungeoneers perish?
3. Who was the first dungeoneer to make a pact with Hordriss that involved retrieving an object for him in exchange for magic?
4. Which is the last quest to feature part of the original life force clock?
5. Who was the first dungeoneer to cross the Dunswater in exchange for a bar of gold or silver?
6. During which quest was Hordriss first seen?
7. Which was the final dungeoneer to go head-to-head against Mogdred?
8. Which is the first dungeoneer to be presented with the eye shield at the start of their quest?
9. How many dungeoneers (of the ones who met a wall monster in series 1-3, and yes, that does include Brangwen, as well as Golgarach, Granitas, Igneous and Olgarth) failed to answer at least one wall monster question correctly?
10. Who was the first dungeoneer to converse with Smirkenorff?

There are some real toughies there, aren't there? E-mail or PM me your answers by Sunday February 17th 2008, and you could be our next Nightmare QI champion! Remember, for each question, a correct answer earns you one point, identifying the cliché earns you a further point, and there are two bonus points available for supplying some Quite Interesting supplementary information. Don't forget to watch out for those clichés - each one you hit will decrease your score by at least ten points, so be careful!

REMEMBER THIS?

Series 4/5/6/7. Level 1/2.

THE CRAZED HEIFER

This inn, which Pickle described as *a notorious gathering place for thieves and fellow travellers*, featured quite prominently in level one during the last three quests of series 4. Arriving at what appeared to be an old cottage in the woods, Dickon, Jeremy and Giles found there was no choice but to enter the open front door, particularly as each of them was being molested by a pooka at the time. Inside The Crazy Heifer, we were

treated to the sight of a traditional, oak-beamed, medieval inn, with plenty of tables full of customers drinking themselves silly, a door at the back that presumably led up to the bedrooms, and a set of stairs leading down into the cellar, which also acted as the exit from this room. I'm not sure where the actual bar was located, but there we go...

The members of staff at The Crazy Heifer during series 4 were Millie, who provided the food, Molly, who provided the drinks, Mellie, who provided the information, and Motley, who provided the entertainment. Dickon was able to exchange a bit of information with Mellisandre in order to ensure safe passage through Oakley's glade, while Jeremy and Giles both picked up a useful bit of magic from Motley. The Crazy Heifer was a very nice medieval setting to include in series 4, and was the site of a few memorable moments, including Motley getting pelted with rotten cabbages when the punters didn't like his jokes!

The Crazy Heifer returned for an appearance in series 5, although the jaunty music that used to pervade the air (which you can hear to this day at one point along the Wall Walk at the Tower of London, and is often used on programmes like *ZigZag*) was no longer present. Motley was on hand once more ("*This is The Crazy Heifer, so I think we know who the resident entertainer is!*" - **Treguard**) to help dungeoneer Chris pick up a useful scroll clue. He needed quite a lot of help, too!

In series 6, The Crazy Heifer made a further appearance, as the setting for a meeting between dungeoneer Alan and his new *friend*, Sylvester Hands. Fortunately, Sly was too drunk to present much of a threat to the dungeoneer, and Ridolfo soon appeared and chased Hands off with his sword, before giving Alan the causeway code in exchange for a musical scroll.

The Crazy Heifer made two final appearances in series 7, although Lord Fear once referred to the inn as The Mad Cow, which is, of course, a name synonymous with the establishment's given name - maybe it was a kind of nickname used by the punters. Marta was on hand on both occasions to trade information with the dungeoneer (you can read more about these meetings in this issue's *Remember Her?*) and Sylvester Hands appeared once as well, completing Paul Valentine's full set of appearances in The Crazy Heifer at some point during all four of its series.

Difficulty: 5 The friendly staff will part with information, for a price!
Killer Instinct: 1 Much vital knowledge was learned here.
Gore Factor: 4 Well, the place did look a bit grotty!
Fairness: 10 A very nice room to include, and a useful source of food and information.

ADVENTURE TIME

In this never-ending quest season, the Dungeon holds an impressive lead of 14 defeats to 5 wins. Dungeoneer Josh has just reached level three, where the sweet taste of victory lies in wait, embittered only by the possibility of the sour taste of defeat.

Josh is in a large green chamber with four doors on the far wall, two of which can be reached only by staircases. There is a table in the room, containing a jar labelled *Sleep Scent*, a red gem, a round shield and a horn. Josh describes these objects to his advisors.

"Be careful here, team," Treguard advises, "for any decisions you make on level three will certainly prove crucial to your survival."

As the advisors discuss their choice, a transparent image of a large head appears just above the table. There is no mistaking the head's owner - it is Morghanna.

"Extreme caution, team!" Treguard urges. "This lady means you no good, you can be sure of that!"

"My enemy has ousted my power from this level," Morghanna intones distantly. "This is only a temporary state of affairs, I assure you, but he is just as determined as I would be to see you fail, little dungeoneer. However, in this case, I am determined to see you win, and so break my enemy's power over the third level. For this reason, I am here to tell you that the dragon slumbering on this level will only part with his magic if you feed him with fire. Also, there is a Medusa blocking the path ahead; you must find some defence against its gaze, or else be turned to stone. There, I have told you all I can. For the sake of my power, I wish you good luck on your journey."

With that, Morghanna's image melts away. The advisors discuss her helpful hints at length.

"She wants us to defeat Mogdred," one opines. "I think we should take the firestone and the shield, just as Morghanna advised us."

"It could be a trick, though," demurs another. "I don't think she really wants to see us win, even if she does want to see Mogdred defeated."

"But both the things she mentioned are often found on level three," considers the spellcaster. "She could be telling the truth."

"No, she means us no good, no matter how much she hates Mogdred," Josh is certain. "I'm taking the horn and the jar."

The advisors do not argue with Josh about this, so the two objects are quickly collected and then the dungeoneer is guided out of the clue room.

He emerges into Merlin's level three chamber, where a glowing M sits on the table. As Josh approaches it, a magic sword appears, along with peals of Mogdred's evil laughter.

"This magic is Mogdred's work," Treguard remarks. "Quickly, Josh, you must summon Merlin at once!"

Josh touches the M, a flash of lightning occurs, and a large image of Merlin appears in the chamber. He points his silver wand at the haunting.

"Avaunt thee, spectre!" Merlin commands authoritatively. "Well done, Josh, for surviving this far into the Dungeon. The choices you have made so far have all been wise; let us hope that you and your friends will continue in this vein from this point on. The reward for progress is called FLAME, and it should get you out of a tight spot... or a black one, perhaps. Step bravely now, for you have only a short way to go."

Merlin disappears, and the advisors direct Josh out of the chamber.

He emerges into a long corridor that is swarming with goblins. As soon as they see him, the carnivorous critters rush forward with their weapons raised.

"Extreme danger, team!" Treguard exclaims. "You must find some way to pass these enemies, or your quest ends here!"

"How about the potion?" muses an advisor.

"No, blow the horn!" instructs the spellcaster.

Josh raises the horn to his lips and blows, whereupon a shrill wailing sound fills the corridor. The goblins raise their hands to their ears and drop to the ground in disarray, allowing Josh to run straight through their ranks and out through a nearby exit.

He next finds himself in a blue-tinged cavern, where a large image of Mogdred is looking down upon him from between two tall portals.

"Welcome to the third level, Josh," Mogdred sneers. "This is my dominion now, and I have been expecting your arrival for some time. Seeing as you are walking in my realm, you must wish to pledge yourself to me, or else you will incur my wrath. So, Josh, I will give you one more chance, and only one - will you pledge yourself to me?"

The advisors natter together for a few seconds, but there really is only one choice to make.

"No!" Josh replies defiantly.

"Very well," Mogdred laughs evilly. "Then we'll be seeing each other again soon, Josh; it will be our third and final meeting!"

Mogdred's image disappears to peals of echoing laughter, leaving the team visibly shaken.

"Don't let him faze you, team," Treguard advises. "Remember, fear lives stronger in the threat than in any deed!"

The advisors pull themselves together and direct Josh out of the chamber.

He arrives in a room that is pitch black, with no discernable features whatsoever.

"Danger, team!" Treguard warns. "You must do something about this darkness, or else risk your dungeoneer becoming prey to the unseen creatures that dwell within its encompassing folds."

"Spellcasting:" says the spellcaster. "F-L-A-M-E!"

There is the sound of a match striking, and then the room is flooded with light. It turns out to be the cave of Owen, the large earth dragon. Josh is standing with his back to the left-hand door, and Owen is before him, just beginning to wake up.

"Who turned on the light?" the dragon grumbles. "I was having such a nice doze."

"I hope he doesn't really want a firestone to eat," one of the advisors mutters to the other two.

"Come, speak," Owen says to the dungeoneer. "Who are you?"

"My name is Josh; I'm on the quest for the Cup," Josh says uncertainly. "I'm sorry to have woken you up, Your Grace."

"Oh, that's all right," Owen chuckles softly. "Well, seeing as I'm awake now, I might as well ask you one of my riddles. Would you like to hear it, Josh? I'm sure you know the consequences of getting it right, and the consequences of getting it wrong."

"I'm ready to hear your riddle," Josh says boldly.

"Then listen carefully, all of you," Owen advises. "Touched by fire, I am bright. Constant use will change my height. Alive at night, out all day. Used too much, I'll fade away. What am I?"

The advisors begin to chatter amongst themselves, but Josh has the kernel of an idea about what the answer might be.

"Could I hear that one more time, please?" Josh asks the dragon.

"Very well," Owen rumbles. "Touched by fire, I am bright. Constant use will change my height. Alive at night, out all day. Used too much, I'll fade away."

"It's a candle," Josh blurts out.

"Truth accepted," Owen says warmly. "Well done, young dungeoneer; it's nice to meet a human with a bit of intelligence for once. As a reward, I gift you with the spell OPPOSITE. Use it wisely, for you may only use it once."

Owen closes his great reptilian eyes and begins to drift off to sleep again. The advisors direct Josh out of the room, into a rocky cave where four cavernwights are completely blocking the path ahead.

"Warning team, these creatures are carnivorous and, although they can neither hear nor see Josh, they have already smelt him out as their next potential meal," Treguard says gravely. "You must find some way to get past them, or you'll fall at the final hurdle."

"Cast the spell!" suggests an advisor.

"No, open the *Sleep Scent*," suggests the spellcaster.

Josh uncorks the jar, and the room is filled with a pall of sickly-smelling pink mist. Josh's nostrils are protected by the magic of the Helmet of Justice, but the cavernwights are overwhelmed, and all four of them drop to the floor in a heap.

"Fantastic!" Treguard booms. "Now, hurry on, team - I sense the sweet smell of victory close at hand!"

Josh is directed out of the cavernwights' cave, into a large blue window-arch that contains a stone altar, on which sits a shining golden chalice, with rubies encrusted around its rim. Before Josh can reach the magic artefact, however, Mogdred crashes into the picture before him.

"Well, Josh, here we both are at last!" Mogdred cackles. "You've done very well indeed, and I've enjoyed watching your progress, but I'm afraid I'm now going to have to bring that progress to an end! I cannot allow you to break my power here in the third level, and so your time has come at last; prepare to receive the doom of Mogdred!"

"Come on, team, take action!" Treguard urges desperately.

"Spellcasting!" cries the spellcaster, at a loss for anything else to try.
"O-P-P-O-S-I-T-E!"

There is a flash of lightning, and a change takes place in Mogdred. His black robes become green and gold, a long white beard sprouts from his face, and Merlin is standing before Josh.

"Ah, well done, young Josh!" Merlin smiles broadly. "You have defeated Mogdred's power here in level three and, in doing so, you have won your quest. Let us now take hold of the object of that quest, the Cup that Heals, and be transported back to the Great Hall of Nightmare!"

Merlin leads Josh up to the altar, where the two of them each take hold of one of the Cup's two handles. There is a tremendous flash of golden light, and Josh and Merlin reappear in Treguard's antechamber, where the team and the Dungeon Master join them in boisterous celebration.

"But where's the Cup gone?" asks Josh.

"The Cup that Heals cannot be redeemed in quite the same way as the other quest objects, but rest assured that you did redeem it nonetheless!" Treguard booms. "Remember the courage, skill and bravery that you found here in Nightmare Castle, and you will carry it inside you forevermore! Josh, Danny, Connor and Liam, you will walk forth from these halls as true champions of chivalry! Spellcasting: H-E-R-O-E-S!"

So, Josh's thrilling victory has reduced the Dungeon's lead to 14-6. How will the next team affect that scoreline? Read the next Adventure Time to find out.

KIDS' TV SHOWS I GREW UP WITH

Kids' TV of the 1990s

By Rosey Collins

Chipmunks Go to the Movies (1990)

I cheat. *Chipmunks Go to the Movies* just fits into the 1990s category, but it is actually the eighth and final season of *Alvin and the Chipmunks*. Singing rodents Alvin, Simon and Theodore, and their long-suffering guardian Dave Seville, were actually created in 1958, when a musician named Ross Bagdasarian discovered it was funny to speed up a recording of his voice. The original *David Seville and the Chipmunks* had a good run,

I believe - and then one day it died, as shows are apt to do. But in 1981, Ross Bagdasarian Jr. re-launched the careers of the rodentine trio with a touching, though slightly bizarre Christmas special, which has been shown at Christmases within living memory and is so obviously the bridge between the two incarnations of these characters. This spawned the series *Alvin and the Chipmunks*, which began in 1983.

With much less standing around and singing than I believe they used to do in the original, Bagdasarian Jr. had wild and reckless Alvin, brainy and down-to-earth Simon and cute, loveable and easily led Theodore attending school, planning camping trips in the woods, entering boxing matches to win the money for a much desired kitchen appliance... plots, basically, with a song or two thrown in at an appropriate moment. While Bagdasarian voiced Dave, Alvin and Simon, the voice of Theodore was performed by Janice Karman, who also provided the voices of the Chipettes - a trio of singing chipmunk girls created by Bagdasarian Jr. when it occurred to him that the anthropomorphic chipmunk population of the world might be in danger. In simple terms, Brittany, Jeanette and Eleanor were essentially female versions of the Chipmunks - although there was more to them than that, if only it were appropriate to dissect their characters now. The Chipettes were in some episodes, in which case Karman had loads more to do than Bagdasarian; and not in others, in which case she hadn't nearly as much to do.

I feel somewhat justified in heading this section *Chipmunks Go to the Movies*, as I think that it was better than *Alvin and the Chipmunks* as a general rule (though inevitably there were some weak episodes). It was basically the Chipmunks, sometimes Dave and as many Chipettes as they needed doing film parodies. Perhaps Ross and friends thought of it when they realised that the strongest episodes of *Alvin and the Chipmunks* were those such as "Dreamlighting" (based on the show *Moonlighting*, which brought fame to Cybil Shepherd, as I understand it) and the truly classic "Alvie's Angels" (which shows how well the Chipettes can carry an episode).

There's too much of these characters to go into, but as succinctly as I can I must mention their movies: *The Chipmunk Adventure*, released theatrically in 1987 and marvellously entertaining, if a little strange. It involves the Chipmunks and the Chipettes racing each other around the world in hot air balloons, unwittingly couriering stolen diamonds. Two TV movies were made not so long ago: *Alvin and the Chipmunks Meet*

Frankenstein in 1999, promising for the first half, in which the Chipmunks (no Chipettes this time) meet and befriend a Frankenstein's monster - but then there comes a point when it goes *seriously* downhill; and *Alvin and the Chipmunks Meet the Wolfman* in 2000, very much better, and the Chipettes remembered (Eleanor far more than her sisters) - but now I really must move on.

Extreme Ghostbusters (1997)

I think of this one now because I am reminded - and Jake will remember this as fondly as I do - of the morning after our cousin's wedding, when we woke up in a hotel in Cardiff (like you do) and watched "Alvie's Angels" followed by "The Crawler" - a very funny episode of this particular show. I knew the year for this one off the top of my head; in stark contrast to the Chipmunks, the 1997 series was its only one. Tragic, as far as I'm concerned, this being my favourite cartoon - and indeed children's television show - *ever*. I am fairly active in the Ghostbusters internet community, of which I would estimate about 10% do *not* hate this show. Even those that like it have a tendency to compare it occasionally to the two *Ghostbusters* movies, but mostly to its 1980s predecessor *The Real Ghostbusters*, which I don't plan on mentioning again in this article. Comparisons are odious. The reason I like this show so much is because I judge it on its own merits.

Enough of my opinion; let us move onto facts. Dr. Egon Spengler, who happened to be an original Ghostbuster (always voiced by Maurice LaMarche, who did a wonderful job of providing the voice of the werewolf in *Alvin and the Chipmunks Meet the Wolfman*), oversaw the efforts of a new team of teenage Ghostbusters recruited from his class at the New York City Community College (which is named on a map, so it's not just conjecture): overzealous paraplegic athlete Garrett Miller, layabout with a(n underused) heart Eduardo Rivera, mechanical whiz and straight man Roland Jackson, and highly intelligent odd-one-out Goth-like finally-a-woman-Ghostbuster-thank-you Kylie Griffin (voiced by the very wonderful Tara Strong, then Charendoff, queen of all voiceovers, the best thing that can happen to an animated character). Joining them in the series were secretary Janine Melnitz and their loveable, childlike pet ghost Slimer, both from way back.

There are a million things I could say about this show, some of them dotted around online, on various Ghostbusters message boards. But I think I shall leave it there for now - except to make it abundantly clear

that I remain to this day a devoted Eduardo and Kylie shipper (I'm sure you wanted to know).

Blazing Dragons (1996-1999)

Speaking of cartoon ships, one of the first that really captured my imagination was a couple of anthropomorphic dragons who starred in this gem of a cartoon: Flicker, squire to Sir Loungelot, knight of the Square Table; and Princess Flame of Camelhot. You get the idea? Starring alongside them were King Allfire, Queen Griddle (Flame's stepmother, you understand), Sir Galahot, Sir Burnevere, Sir Blaze (Jake suggests based on Sir Kay, at which I say with a hint of smug, "Well, Kay was Arthur's stepbrother, and Blaze is Allfire's stepson," by which you'll work out that Griddle is his mother), Sir Hotbreath (er...) and a little two-headed dragon called Cinder and Clinker, who acted as a general lackey round the castle (announcer, court jester, waiter and such). The bad guys were humans Count Geoffrey, whose primary goal was to move out of Castle Threadbare and into Camelhot; his henchmen - Evil Knights numbers One, Two and Three - and Merle the Wizard, who is the most original take on Merlin I have ever seen: she's deliciously evil *and* a woman.

It's a tad clichéd, but immaculately done. Everyone's a complete idiot except for Flicker and Flame. Flicker does *everything* (well... Flame helps), and lets Sir Loungelot (who is seriously rubbish) take the credit for his triumphs each week. Flame tries to convince Flicker to come forward, a bit because she's his friend and has his best interests at heart, and a lot because she wants him to be knighted so she can marry him. Apart from one or two slightly weak episodes, I have nothing but praise for the first series. It was intelligently done, compelling and at times side-splittingly funny.

There was a second series. It was so different to the first: eleven- rather than twenty-two-minute episodes; new character designs, some of them drastically different; less sophisticated plots; not nearly enough of Princess Flame, and only a microscopic romantic element in just one episode; and they even got rid of Sir Galahot and Sir Hotbreath, in spite of the focus being so much more on the dragon knights (now an awesome foursome consisting of Loungelot, Burnevere, Blaze and Flicker, still a squire and still doing most of the work, though Blaze and Burnevere had become pretty competent by this point). I have to say, it's a travesty of the first series, all of which was building up to Flicker being knighted and marrying Flame. But we never got to see it! Apparently they got in a whole

bunch of new writers and re-imagined the show for a younger audience. I wish they hadn't. But, as I said before, comparisons are odious. If you look at this second series for what it is - a fun little cartoon for children aged between about six and eight to watch when they come home from school - it's actually very good, perhaps even above average.

Ah... I should have left Merle until last, for now I have no link to:

Sabrina the Teenage Witch (1996-2003)

I didn't imagine I'd be finishing on this one. I never enjoyed it quite as much as any of the above - but it was a lot of fun to watch, and still is if you happen to catch it on Nickelodeon.

The title says it all, really. Sabrina was a trainee witch, played by Melissa Joan Hart, whom everyone already knew from *Clarissa Explains it All* (which was quite entertaining). She lived with her two aunts, straight-laced Zelda and fun-loving Hilda, and Salem: once a warlock, but he was turned into a cat (a black one) as punishment for using his powers to try and take over the world (in one episode, it is revealed that Hilda helped him just a little bit, and her more lenient punishment was to keep Salem free of worms). In the golden days of the first three/four seasons, Sabrina attended high school (for one year too many, actually, but never mind) with her beau Harvey, best friends Jenny (season one) and Valerie (seasons two and three) and arch-nemesis, cheerleader Libby. And of course there were teacher characters: Mr. Poole, who wasn't a particularly compelling character and left after season one; Mr. Kraft, who was a very funny, malevolent teacher played by Martin Mull (who provided the voice of Vlad Plasmius, sublime villain in the sublime cartoon *Danny Phantom*), who was romantically involved with both of Sabrina's aunts at some point; and ditzy Miss Quick. Obviously, Sabrina got herself into a lot of scrapes involving her inexperienced use of magic.

After season four Sabrina started attending college, made a whole bunch of new friends who weren't a patch on Jenny or Valerie, tried having boyfriends who weren't Harvey, had her witch's licence and it was all a bit rubbish, really - and just when it was coming out of the 1990s too. I didn't watch much of it, but I think even Hilda and Zelda disappeared at one point (disaster!). But always there was Salem, Sabrina's confidant and in my opinion, one of the strongest TV characters ever. If it wasn't for Salem, who if you'll remember once tried to take over the world, Sabrina wouldn't have tried half so many risky spells with hilarious consequences

as she did.

What's interesting (well... *I think*) about this series, which I didn't realise at first, is that it's *definitely* set in the same universe as classic American sitcom *Bewitched*. I started watching the odd episode of that show when we first got cable, and noticed a great many similarities to *Sabrina*. Examples? But of course. The term "mortal" (which a certain someone has replaced with "Muggle") to describe non-magical persons. The Other Realm, which Sabrina can access through her linen closet. The Witches' Council, who are just generally in charge and do things like decide that a warlock intent on world domination should be turned into a cat. Correspondence from other witches and warlocks arriving via the toaster. And, which I think is a nice touch, the Sabrina crew kept the *Bewitched* tradition of always having witches' names end in A (in *Bewitched*: Samantha, her mother Endora and, in some later series, her nauseating little daughter Tabitha; in *Sabrina*, Hilda and Zelda have a sister called Vesta, and she a daughter called Amanda).

As this is being read by Nightmare fans, I feel I should mention the more traditional witch elements that made it into this modern take on the species. The use of cauldrons springs to mind, as well as an episode in which Sabrina (pretty girl as she is) is devastated by the appearance of a particularly nasty wart on her forehead, which she is told is a normal symptom of stress in witches. There's also an episode in which Sabrina flies out on a vacuum cleaner, this having replaced the broomstick in its *other* capacity; but I think we're all sick of that joke now, so I won't dwell.

PUZZLE PAGE ONE

Them's Fighting Words

The following quotes all started off a fight or confrontation between two Nightmare characters. Name the character responsible for the quote, the character to which it was said (i.e. the other person involved in the fight), and also the winner of the fight.

- 1.) "Personally, I can't stand rudeness, so I reckon it's about clobbering time!"
- 2.) "Opposition? Never heard of him. As for that business, this sounds like monkey business! Can't have that so, have at you!"
- 3.) "Oi, push off, Daddy-longlegs. Me and my heroic chum Alan is trying to have a quiet drink together."
- 4.) "Oh contraire, my dear mindless monk, oh contraire! With your appalling rudeness, you have challenged me, and therefore the priority of combat is mine!"
- 5.) "You abomination! You pollute the threshold! You offend!"
- 6.) "I do believe it's one of Merlin's nasty little protégées. But what's it doing wandering around level two in the company of a hairy barbarian?"
- 7.) "Oi, you! Yes you, with the immensely ugly appearance. If you don't keep quiet, and push off, I'm gonna make you very unhappy!"
- 8.) "Golly, combat time! Stand back, Alistair; I definitely saw him first!"
- 9.) "Alright, you scum, get back!"
- 10.) "Oh, look - goblins!"

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 3

Quest: The Shield.

Dungeoneer: James Walker.

Advisors: Philip, Puerk and Jamie.

Home town: Ipswich, Suffolk.

Team score: 3 out of 10.

A classically poor attempt to conquer the Dungeon this time, I'm afraid. Following hot on the heels of Leo's exciting, epic quest, James and his Suffolk crew had a lot to live up to. How did they fare? Well...

Level One: After rolling the die and exiting through the left-hand door, James ends up beside the pool of purple water. There is a door at the far end of the causeway, so escape is not a problem, but Treguard warns the team to hurry, as something is stirring beneath the water. Sure enough, a haunted sword rises from the depths as James hastily makes his escape. In the clue room, Golgarach is on guard. With two out of three questions answered correctly, the team learns enough information to take a bar of gold and a horn from the clue table.

As James approaches the Dungeon Valley, he is chased by the Armoured Behemoth. The marauding knight follows James through the entire length of the winding, green-lit valley, and into the Vale of Vanburn. Treguard tells the team that there is no escape from their warrior foe, and instructs James to sound the alarm. James blows the horn, and Velda turns up. She shoots the knight with her crossbow, knocking him to the ground, and tells James to follow her to safety. James travels through a dwarf tunnel, to meet up with Velda in what is usually the spectral scorpion's chamber. Velda demands that James give her the horn, as she does not like to be summoned without permission, which is a theme explored in more detail later in the series, during Scott's quest. Once James has handed over the horn, Velda is happy to leave him to continue on his way.

The next room is the Dungeon Kitchen, where Mrs Grimwold is sitting at the table. (By the way, this is Mrs Grimwold's one and only appearance in the kitchen, which reportedly belongs to her in this series.) Festus is with her as usual, and he is apparently feeling a little playful: "*Festus has been known to get a bit playful with strangers. Usually he likes to play with their livers!*" - **Mrs Grimwold**. James presents the old witch with the bar of gold, in exchange for which she agrees to let him go without sending Festus to fetch him back! Before leaving the kitchen, James just about manages to pick up an obscurely placed pie. The next challenge is the Lion's Head and the Broken Path. The first section is negotiated without issue, but when James reaches the point where the safe paths are at opposite right angles, the advisors make no attempt to guide him with

sufficient skill or care. James sidesteps right off the path, and plummets into the darkness below.

Summary: This was an incredibly dull and boring team, who were never likely to produce a truly classic quest. They coasted through level one with no problems (and no excitement or enthusiasm either) until a simple guiding error brought the quest to a very sudden end. Was anyone bothered? I don't think so!

REMEMBER HER?

Series 7. Level 1/2.

MARTA

This blond and buxom serving maid, who was one of the horde of new characters in series 7, was played by Jacquelin Joyce. As I have mentioned previously in this section, I really did not enjoy Joyce's portrayal of her main character - Romahna - but Marta was a different kettle of fish altogether. Her "ooh-ah" accent, friendly manner and cascade of blond curly hair made her a really believable medieval serving wench, and it is a shame, in my opinion, that she was not featured more often in the series.

Marta worked at the inn that was once known as the Crazy Heifer, where as well as dispensing food and drink, she was more than willing to part with useful snippets of information in exchange for gold, gems and other such valuable items. Her manner often seemed to suggest that she would have been willing to offer plenty more besides if the price was right (or was it just me?) but none of the dungeoneers ever thought to ask her for *that* kind of service. Anyway, Marta proved herself to be a useful source of information on several occasions.

Marta's first appearance was with dungeoneer Simon in level two, when she parted with a useful spyglass in exchange for a green gem. After offering Simon some *information*, Marta seemed to be quite surprised that it was actual information Simon was after, and needed a bit of persuasion before she revealed the spyglass.

When we next saw Marta, she had been turned into a cat by Sidriss. Nicola returned Sidriss's wand so that the daffy sorceress could change Marta back, but she ended up turning her into a dog instead! However, Marta was back in human form by Naila's quest, when she was involved in another scene in the *Crazed Heifer*, along with Sylvester Hands, during which she revealed to Naila that Grimaldine was a good source of firestones for dragon-riding.

Marta's final appearance was with Ben in level two, when he rescued her from a locked chest and she gave him the combination to the Trial by Spikes in return. Of course, we saw Jacquelin Joyce in her Marta get-up during two episodes of Barry's quest, but she was playing the part of Lissard in disguise, as part of Lord Fear's plan to deceive Hordriss, who apparently found Marta quite attractive. So did Lord Fear, actually...

As you can probably tell, I think Marta is quite a good character, although she's not one of my absolute favourites. She is certainly a nod back to the likes of Gretel and Mellisandre, which is nice. She was slightly underused, in my opinion, and would perhaps have been a better main character than Romahna for Jacquelin Joyce.

Fear Factor: 3 Feisty, but mainly friendly.

Killer Instinct: 0 Not in the literal sense, anyway...

Humour Rating: 4 Certainly didn't take kindly to Sly's brand of humour.

Oscar Standard: 9 Very nice.

KNIGHTMARE STALEMATES

As we all settled down on a Friday night for our weekly fix of *Knightmare* all those years ago, we knew that the team we were watching would either die horribly (which was very likely, let's be honest) or go on to win, right? Wrong! There was a third possibility, namely that the end of the series would be reached before the team had time to complete their quest. With only six teams experiencing this fate, it was an even rarer phenomenon than seeing someone win (just about).

Watching a team that had no chance of winning due to time constraints was perhaps a little less exciting than the normal Nightmare viewing experience, as they really were just filling in time until the end of the series. How many potential champions, then, were cruelly cut short in their prime, and would be justified in feeling cheated by the Gods of Nightmare Team Selection? Below I rate the six undefeated teams from the least to the most competent, and score them out of five under the following categories:

Luck and help: How much were they assisted to coast along until the end of the series?

Appeal: A likeable team, or a bunch of idiots you couldn't wait to see the back of?

Intelligence: Did they really have the brains to do well, if circumstances had given them the chance?

Shelf life: Do we remember them fondly (or not so fondly) now, or have they been absorbed into the grey realm of obscurity?

Indignation: The acid test - do they have the right to feel hard-done-by, or were they really just chosen to kill a bit of time because that was all they were good for? (By the way, it's worth noting that they were all incredibly lucky to be chosen to be on the show at all, considering the hundreds of disappointed teams who were rejected each year.)

6. Oliver, Anthony, David and Matthew.

Time on Nightmare: Series 8, episode 10.

Home towns: Leicester and Melton Mowbray.

This lot should never even have been on the show in the first place, but I'm sure you're all well aware of my feelings about Dunstan and the Short Cut by now. My dislike of this team really isn't just sour grapes, though - I honestly believe they were one of the worst teams ever, with their constant arguments, inadequate instructions and directions, and their blatant disregard for scroll clues to rival even that of Richard, Rebecca, Angela and Rowena. They just about managed to give Sidriss back her spell book and then charm Smirkenorff to help them find the Short Cut in level one, before spending a few short minutes in level three, at which point the series ended, quite mercifully, it has to be said.

Luck and help: 5 I think I've made my feelings clear on this already.

Appeal: 1 A bunch of complete idiots I couldn't wait to see the back of.

Intelligence: 1 Look no further than their disregard for scroll clues.

Shelf life: 4 For all the wrong reasons.

Indignation: 1 A gift appearance not only in level three but in the whole show, and thank God there wasn't time for them to win!

5. Chris, James, Alex and Tim.

Time on Nightmare: Series 3, episodes 15 & 16.

Home town: Bristol.

These likeable lads stepped in to fill up the remainder of series 3 after Martin was killed by Morghanna. They retrieved an hourglass for Hordriss and gave a bone to Festus in level one, before walking over the Mills of Doom and answering two of Merlin's riddles in level two.

Luck and help: 3 Treguard always steered them in the right direction when the need arose.

Appeal: 4 A fairly charismatic bunch, I find. Chris's skilful and spirited summoning of Merlin's three steps is particularly appealing.

Intelligence: 2 Had a lot of trouble with the bricked-off window puzzle, and needed to bone up on their nursery rhymes.

Shelf life: 2 Following hot on the heels of the famous Martin, they can be easily overlooked.

Indignation: 2 They really were only there to fill in the rest of the series - they never would have won if given the chance.

4. Kelly, Keeley, Tarin and Rachel.

Time on Nightmare: Series 5, episodes 15 & 16.

Home town: Rochdale.

These girls do a fair enough job of keeping us entertained as series 5 draws to a close, but there's nothing much to say about them. They bought a goblin horn from Sylvester Hands and presented Gwendoline's arrow to the Gatemaster in level one, and restored the power of Hordriss's staff in level two, by holding it in Aesandre's fire. Ouch!

Luck and help: 2 They went through all the usual series 5 motions.

Appeal: 3 They really got into their quest, and were quite watchable.

Intelligence: 3 They seemed quite sharp, although they were duped by Hands. However, this was probably a kind of forced mistake, as it were, like when Julian opened that destructor bottle thingamajig.

Shelf life: 3 Not a classic quest, but it had some memorable moments, such as the first appearance of Tiny the hobgoblin.

Indignation: 3 They could have done much better than Duncan's dreary team (which preceded them) I'm sure, but I don't really think they would have won.

3. Karen, Nicola, Angela and Pamela.

Time on Nightmare: Series 2, episodes 15 & 16.

Home town: Denholm, near Hawick.

These Scottish lasses had a lot of fun, and seemed to know what they were doing most of the time. They had a rather back-to-front trip through the early part of level one, before bringing a flying Mildread back down to Earth and then rusting the Automatum with a well-timed spell. In level two, they blew up Bumptious and had a quick chat with Casper.

Luck and help: 1 This was a very complicated quest, actually, with the vastly confusing "back-to-front day" and the only appearance of the Automatum where he had to be physically defeated.

Appeal: 3 A fairly fun and lively bunch, on the whole.

Intelligence: 4 They scored full marks with Granitas, and had to answer the Dwarf's questions for a vital spell too.

Shelf life: 3 The first undefeated team - worthy of a place in the Hall of Fame for that, surely.

Indignation: 2 I don't think they would have won. Interestingly enough, they were only the second all-girl team of series 2 (and indeed the whole programme) but they were held back until they had no time to win. Hmm...

2. Chris, Nicholas, Gavin and Simon.

Time on Nightmare: Series 6, episodes 14 & 15.

Home town: Ruislip.

There were two whole episodes that needed filling at the end of series 6, and these four North Londoners did a good job of making them fairly interesting. They hit Julius Scaramonger on the head and freed Elita from a chest in level one, before charming Sylvester Hands's warts and gaining Greystagg's favour with some witch amber in level two. Chris also brought back the lightning rod for the famous end-of-series scene involving the crash-landing of Red Death on Mount Fear.

Luck and help: 1 Some things were very obscure, such as how they were supposed to curry favour with Greystagg - she wanted more than just the witch amber, and they had to remember a somewhat obscure clue from an earlier spyglass sequence.

Appeal: 2 Okay, if you like that sort of thing.

Intelligence: 4 Sharp enough to get to level three, I should think.

Shelf life: 3 Thanks to their part in the downfall of Red Death.

Indignation: 3 They might have been able to win under normal circumstances, but they probably would have died in level three.

1. Giles, Andrew, Robin and Brett.

Time on Nightmare: Series 4, episodes 14, 15 & 16.

Home town: Somewhere in the New Forest.

Thanks to the slow nature of the game-play in series 4, this is the only undefeated quest to span more than two complete episodes. The boys were intelligent, charismatic and enthusiastic, and I know that many people feel they were cheated out of a victory. They made a pact with Merlin and gave Fatilla something foul to smell in level one, freed Gundrada from a pillory and called Motley to get rid of Ariadne in level

two, and found Merlin's key before completing the Block and Tackle in their own unique style in level three.

Luck and help: 3 Their quest was shorter than most in series 4, particularly level two. They didn't really have to do anything to earn their magical defence against Ariadne, although they were hardly unique in this respect (>cough< Dickon >cough<).

Appeal: 5 You couldn't help but be drawn to their overriding enthusiasm.

Intelligence: 4 Disregarding giant oysters, and they were as bright as buttons.

Shelf life: 5 A rare level three performance, which is something to be remembered for. That scene with the Block and Tackle really seals the deal - no one's ever going to forget that!

Indignation: 4 Their victory could have been squeezed in, and doubtless it would have been if the series had not already had a winner. However, they had not quite received the full challenge.

There we have it, then. Of course, these are just my opinions. If you feel differently in any way about anything I've said here, I'd love to hear your views, and share them with the other readers. So, if you fancy compiling your own countdown, you know what to do!

KNIGHTMARE LOCATIONS

Bodiam Castle, Hastings, East Sussex

Bodiam Castle. Vital Statistics:

Location: Bodiam, near Hastings, East Sussex.

Century of Origin: 14th.

Also Known As: Various Dungeon rooms new to series 5.

Series featured in: 5, 6 and 7.

These pictures were taken by me, Jake Collins, and scanned by Rosey Collins, in October 2006.

This is the front of Bodiam Castle, which was one of Smirkenorff's landing places in series 5. The grassy area in the middle of the moat is the dragon-pad!



Below is a close-up of the dragon-pad - this is the view that the dungeoneer would have had after stepping off Smirkenorff's back, if they had been able to see, of course.



And finally this issue, here is a close-up of the entrance to Bodiam Castle, where series 5's Richard and Ben chose their level one clue objects after stepping off Smirkenorff.



Next Issue: More from Bodiam Castle.

PUZZLE PAGE TWO

True or False?

In the style of the door monsters, here are twelve questions relating to Knightmare's consortium of spellbound creatures (wall and door monsters, plus Oakley). Check your score in the *Puzzle Answers* section to see whether you've earned the right to cross the drawbridge!

- 1.) Guy Standeven is the only actor to have played two spellbound creatures. True or false?
- 2.) Olgarth completely disappeared from series 1 after only the second episode. True or false?
- 3.) The last spellbound creature ever seen on Knightmare was a door monster. True or false?
- 4.) Oakley only said "Falsehood!" twice in total. True or false?

- 5.) The first word ever spoken by a spellbound creature was a pronoun. True or false?
- 6.) All the spellbound creatures met at least three dungeoneers. True or false?
- 7.) Pickle is the only Nightmare character to use the term *door monster* to describe the weeping doors. True or false?
- 8.) Oakley and the wall monsters guarded clue objects in every single one of their appearances. True or false?
- 9.) All five wall monsters said their own names on occasion, unlike Oakley and the door monsters, none of whom ever did. True or false?
- 10.) The last two objects taken from a wall monster's table were an hourglass and a bone. True or false?
- 11.) The episode spread for spellbound creatures is 101-503. True or false?
- 12.) The first bird in most English dictionaries is the albatross. True or false?

DUNGEONEER DWELLINGS

Series 5

-



9. Kelly
Rochdale

3. Sarah
Northampton

6. Alex
Buckinghamshire

8. Duncan
Windsor

2. Richard
Gillingham

4. Ben
5. Jenna
Exeter

1. Catherine
Liphook

THE FASTEST DRAW IN THE DUNGEON

By Ricky Temple

Rio shuddered as the memories of that mission all came flooding back to him. He picked up the poker and leaned across and prodded at the fire. It didn't need it as it was burning quite healthily; he just needed something to do to try and take his mind off these thoughts.

But it didn't work. The mission had started off well enough. Rio and his two fellow Rangers, Armstrong and Merick, had managed to trail Edward Deal back to the port of Lingham and stow away on the *Golden Galleon*. Hidden in its cargo hold, they had crossed the *Great Mire* to the Opposition fortress of *Marblehead*, and that was where things had started to go wrong. Their contact who was supposed to get them into *Marblehead* was not there to meet them; it later turned out he'd been killed by a group of graylings.

"So I decided to improvise," Rio said to himself, as he sat back in his chair, looked at the fire and allowed the memories to flood back.

"Rio, you can't seriously think you can scale these walls. It's impossible!" Armstrong said to his younger companion. Armstrong had been a Dungeon Ranger for the best part of ten years; he had basically seen it all and done it all. He was the leader of the group.

"And besides, what are you going to do when you reach the top? The treasure room's on the lower levels of the building!" Merick added. Merick had only been a Ranger for a year, but he was regarded as a steady head, which is why he'd been sent on this assignment to counterbalance the hot-headed and impetuous Rio Bolt.

"I'm not going to scale all the way to the top," Rio said, as he unwound the rope from his shoulders. They had brought the rope in order to climb onto the *Golden Galleon*, thereby avoiding Raptor and his *Mire Men*, who were on guard duty. "Look, there's an open window about halfway up this tower. We can climb up this rope and in through that, and then make our way down to the treasure room, which, if that map we have is accurate, should only be about two floors down."

This discussion continued for another minute before his two companions

reluctantly agreed to his plan and Rio threw the rope up towards the window. The grappling hook on the end bit into the window's ledge, and held fast. The three Rangers scaled the wall one at a time, unaware that they were being observed.

"Hmm, most resourceful. Oh, you've got to give them credit, Lissard. Treguard's little tin soldiers are a determined lot," Lord Fear chuckled as he watched Rio, Armstrong and Merick scale the fortress wall.

"Yesss, your Lordness," Lissard hissed in agreement. "Shall I tell the Goblin Master to set his goblins onto them, Lordness?"

"No, me old newt, I have a much better idea in mind for these three, and for that I need them alive." Lord Fear turned and looked at Lissard. "You know what goblins are like - they always eat their prisoners. No, we'll wait and let them get into the treasure room."

"But Lordness, what if they find the Talisman?"

"You mean this, Lissard?" Lord Fear took something out from his robes; it was Merlin's Talisman.

"The Talisman-ness! But how? Lordness, it was in the treasure room - I personally put the box containing it in there!" Lissard exclaimed.

"What you put in the treasure room, Tuna Breath, was but the empty box that that stupid old Celt stored it in," Lord Fear explained. "Do you really think I'd be stupid enough to put something this valuable anywhere but on my own person? Or that I wouldn't realise that old beardy would send someone out after it? No, Lissard, what is in the treasure room is but the cheese that will lure our three stupid mice into the fiendish trap that I have devised for them! And once they are inside it, they will be at my mercy!"

Lord Fear laughed as he watched the three Dungeon Rangers making their way down to the treasure room, unaware that they were walking straight into his trap.

POETRY CORNER

Join me now, readers, on a quick jaunt through series 5, where Chris's quest seems to be trundling along nicely... or is it?

For Chris and friends the time was right
To face the Dungeon's awesome might.
Down the lift shaft first of all,
An inn was the next port of call.
Motley showed a useful scroll,
A gem and honey paid the toll
To Skarkill, who was cruelly stung,
With name revealed, Elita sung.
The final test was Brother Mace's,
Chris revealed his crusade aces.
Smirky flew to level two,
And Chris received a task anew,
To find a firestone was the key,
But Lord Fear's plan was quite tricky.
From Julius a spell was bought,
CHANGE would do the trick, they thought.
But it made Chris a goblin fey!
Looked like this quest had gone astray.
Motley was the chap to find,
But Chris was really in a bind
Without the jester's magic stick,
So let's get to the end quite quick.
There was no help for **Goblin Chris**,
Who blundered on in naive bliss,
Until a blocker, looking pasty,
Found his goblin dinner tasty!

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Them's Fighting Words:

Winner/Loser. The person responsible for the quote is in **bold**.

- 1.) **Cedric**/Gumboil. Episode 204. Mark.
- 2.) **Sir Hugh**/Skarkill. Episode 511. Alex I.
- 3.) Ridolfo/**Sylvester Hands**. Episode 605. Alan.
- 4.) **Folly**/Cedric. Episode 107. Richard I.
- 5.) **Gatemaster**/Tiny. Episode 516. Kelly II.
- 6.) **Mogdred**/McGrew. Episode 308. Ross.
- 7.) **Elita**/Skarkill. Episode 613. Sofia.
- 8.) **Gundrada**/Fatilla. Episode 404. Alistair.
- 9.) **Gwendoline**/Skarkill. Episode 508. Ben I.
- 10.) **Brother Mace**/Brother Silence. Episode 406. Nicky.

True or False?

- 1.) **False**. Zoe Loftin played Dooris and Dooreen in series 4.
- 2.) **True**. Olgarth questioned David in episode 1 and Simon in episode 2, but all the other series 1 dungeoneers met Granitas.
- 3.) **False**. It was a tree troll (Oakley, of course) in episode 503.
- 4.) **True**. Once to Helen and once to Jeremy. Nicky also got only two right with Oakley, but ventured no answer at all to her second question.
- 5.) **True**. As in "*I am Olgarth of Legend!*"
- 6.) **False**. Dooreen, of course, met only one (Dickon).
- 7.) **True**. Although he always agreed with Pickle's observation that there was *another door monster*, Treguard never used the term himself.
- 8.) **False**. Oakley's final appearance (in episode 503) has him guarding the password for level two instead of clue objects.
- 9.) **True**. Although they did not introduce themselves in the same manner as Granitas, Olgarth and Igneous, Golgarach and Brangwen both referred to themselves by name on more than one occasion.
- 10.) **True**. Taken by Chris II from Brangwen's table in the final episode of series 3, to give to Hordriss and Festus respectively.
- 11.) **True**. From Olgarth in 101 to Oakley in 503.
- 12.) **False**. The first bird is the aasvogel (a type of vulture), which is only a couple of entries after aardvark!

Your score:

0-3: You ain't goin' nowhere!

4-7: You just get through, but you should be ashamed of yourself!

8-12: Truth will out, ah yes, truth will out, and so will you.