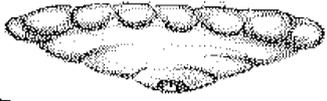


THE EYE SHIELD



Issue 33

May 2005

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MESSAGE FROM ME

Welcome to issue thirty-three of The Eye Shield. I'm pleased to see that my appeal for feedback last issue seems to have had a very good effect, but I'm still hungry for more, so please get writing! Tell me anything you've been dying to get off your chest about anything to do with Nightmare, and your comments might just crop up in the next issue of The Eye Shield.

This issue heralds the start of a new story, which I wrote in July 2000. I have considered many times putting it in TES, and I have finally decided to do so. *The Lord of Dreams* is a crossover between Nightmare and Mona the Vampire, which, as you may know from *The Best of the Rest*, is a Canadian cartoon that I enjoy quite a lot. I realise that very few - if any - of you are probably Mona fans, and may even consider it quite sad that I am, but there's plenty in the story for Nightmare fans, as it takes place in the realm of Nightmare with Mona and her friends taking on the role of dungeoneers. I urge you, if you like Nightmare stories, to give it a go.

Also in this issue, you can take a trip through the Dungeons of series 8, pay another visit to Castle Acre Priory, also known as Dungarth, catch up with Curran and Laurel on their journey to the Tower of Time, search for some hidden dragons, and, of course, enjoy all of your regular favourites as usual. The time has also come for me to reveal my ten least favourite teams of all time. Which teams have been hapless and unimpressive enough to make it into the Hall of Shame, and do you agree with my choices?

It's all waiting for you, readers. Don't keep it waiting too long, will you?

CORRESPONDENCE

My thanks go out to Eye Shield reader Joe Grocott-James, who responded to my plea for feedback in exuberance. Here is just some of what he had to say about series 7.

Dear Eye Shield.

I started watching Nightmare rather late, about a third of the way into series 7. I remember at least once rushing to get home after taking my mum home from work. I was a bit puzzled as to what would have happened with Barry's team had they taken the Shield instead of the troll hammer. From what I can gather, I think they would have been given strong hints if they were going to choose the Shield, or else they would have re-filmed it. I also never figured out the Play Your Cards Right puzzle. I

remember thinking that there wasn't much point to the Brollachan because it never knew the answers.

Thanks for all that, Joe – I really do appreciate your input. I couldn't figure out the card puzzle for years, but it's actually much easier than it looks. It's true that Brollachan never provided a real threat to the quest, but he was certainly an impressive piece of techno-wizardry, the kind of thing for which Nightmare was renowned in its day.

The following e-mail comes from Richard W. Lowe.

Dear Eye Shield.

I tend to agree with most of your selection of favourite teams. Ben's team from series 6 was probably my second favourite, behind Barry's. How easy was it to find the outdoor castle locations for *Knightmare Locations*? I'm with you on series 4 being better than series 3. Series 4, 5 and 6, in my opinion, were the most enjoyable, with series 7 being close behind - the outdoor sections, the advancement in graphics, and better characters all contributed to this, I believe. Anyway, thanks for continuing TES, and I look forward to reading the next installment.

Thanks for sharing your opinions with me, Richard. I think the two of us are more or less alone in our esteem for series 4, but it's nice to know that I'm not the only one. I photographed Castle Acre Priory and Castle Rising while I was on holiday in Norfolk during the summer of 2002, having seen them on a postcard I bought in Holt. They were easy enough to find using a road atlas. I'm glad you're enjoying TES – please keep reading, and writing!

Finally, here is something from Pete Schofield.

Dear Eye Shield.

I have been an avid reader of your fanzine for about 4 years, and I always enjoy reading it. You clearly have a dedicated interest towards *Knightmare*, and other related topics. I would like to make some suggestions for your magazine. Firstly, I'd like to see more pictures, to spice up the pages. Secondly, some more factual information about the Dungeon wouldn't go amiss.

*I've always been aware of the lack of pictures in TES, but the inclusion of *Knightmare Locations* was designed to rectify this to some extent. However, as I've said before, I'll quite happily re-launch Art Desk if anyone wants to send me any *Knightmare*-related pictures. I'll have a think regarding that factual information about the Dungeon...*

Challenge question: Which dungeoneer shook hands with Lord Fear?

REMEMBER THIS?

Series 8. Level 1/3.

RAINING FIREBALLS.

This challenge involved getting through a room whose floor was made up of squared blocks. There didn't appear to be any obstacles at first, but as soon as the dungeoneer began to cross the room, fireballs - one of Lord Fear's favourite weapons in series 8 - began to fall from the ceiling and destroy the floor, block by block. Such was the pattern of the fireballs' assault, it quickly became very difficult to manoeuvre the dungeoneer around the holes that were formed in the floor. The first three fireballs fell just in front of the spot where the dungeoneer entered the room, which meant that either a very careful walk between two gaping holes was required, or a longer alternative route - with the threat of further fireballs falling from the ceiling - had to be very quickly worked out. So, was this challenge really as difficult as I've made it sound here? You bet it was!

The first team to encounter this challenge was Daniel's, and Gideon described it in his typically OTT way: *"As the fireballs are coming down, they're sort of killing blocks on the floor, okay? So they've gone!"* - **Gideon**. It was, I feel, a surprisingly hard challenge for level one, although Daniel did manage to get between the first two fireball-holes before the third made the most direct and easy route completely impossible to use. The room was not used again on level one. In fact, it was so tricky that it was moved to level three, as the final challenge before the Quest Chamber.

Nathan's team was the next to attempt this challenge, in the closing stages of level three. The added obstacles of fireballs shooting out from the wall, as well as a very inconveniently placed piece of food, ensured that Nathan fell through a hole in the floor, bagging this room a victim! However, magic from Maldame could have saved the team, if they'd asked for it.

The third and last team to attempt this room was Dunston's. There were no fireballs coming out from the wall this time, and it was completed without incident. I could speculate about why that is, but instead..

Difficulty: 9 Surprisingly tricky for level one.

Killer Instinct: 8 One victim out of three is an excellent record.

Gore Factor: 4 A quick disappearing act.

Fairness: 5 Too much for level one, but good in level three.

ADVENTURE TIME

It's Autumn 1994 and you're about to take another quest through the Knightmare Dungeons. Beware, though, for Lord Fear will be watching your progress all the way, and will send his minions to defeat you wherever he has the opportunity to do so.

1

Treguard welcomes you into his Dungeon home. Once he and his assistant Majida have prepared you for the long journey ahead, you prepare to set out into the Dungeon and beyond.

"You must travel through dungeon, tower and mire," Treguard tells you. "There can be no short cuts this time, so keep your wits about you. Your quest is for the Shield." You enter the Dungeon via the lavish new gate and find yourself in a square green room with a table in the middle. Here you find a key, a green-bladed knife, a red and yellow folderol and a bar of gold. There is a scroll, which you read: *His tool of trade is missing. Some weapons belong to friends.* Make your choice of two objects and then go to **5**.

2

"Snip-a-snap, this one's too smart for Jack" Snapper-Jack complains. "We go for easier pickings."

Snapper-Jack slinks off, so you are able to leave the sewers. You are in a small blue room with one door. As you make for this, Raptor and two miremen run in to block your path.

"Hold it there, me hearties!" Raptor declares in true pirate fashion. "The game's up for you, dungeoneer. I'll just be taking you to Lord Fear, or you can try to escape and let the miremen have their fun. Either way, there'll be no more adventuring for you!"

If you offer Raptor a green gem as a bribe, go to **28**.

If you have an old boot and think you may be able to make use of it here, go to **18**.

Failing either of these options, you are powerless to stop Raptor from enforcing his threats and your adventure ends here.

3

You find yourself at the edge of a large pit, from which the head of Smirkenorff the dragon protrudes. He is slightly groggy after a long sleep, but if you are well equipped then he might well feel like talking to you.

If you have a firestone and wish to offer it to Smirkenorff in exchange for his help, go to **33**.

If not, go to **22**.

4

The feather allows you to fall safely into level three. You land in one of the corridors of Linghorm. This great tower was built by Lord Fear, but now the sorceress Maldame is squatting here. You walk along the corridor until you reach a clue room.

There is a jar that is labelled *power to rule*, a potion labelled *sight*, a red key and a short, silver wand. There is also a scroll, which reads: *The key to Marblehead is the one who would be queen*. Decide which two objects you wish to take and then go to **21**.

5

You are in another green room, where Motley the jester is waiting for you.

“Hello, Helmet Head” he greets you. “You off on a quest then, are you?”

You answer this somewhat pointless question by explaining who you are and what you’re doing.

“I thought as much” Motley replies curtly. “Well, you must know the rules by now. I’ve got something very important for your quest, but if you want it then you’ll have to fork over my folderol first.”

If you have Motley’s folderol and are willing to give it to him, go to **10**.

If not, you must leave without the jester’s help. Go to **15**.

6

When you touch the card, the path below you crumbles and you fall helplessly into the abyss. Sorry, but aces are high in this particular game, as the scroll in the clue room warned you. Your adventure ends here.

7

You are in a small room that has a bench in it. On this you find a scroll, which reads: *paladin*. This is a powerful spell and should be used at the climax of your adventure. You leave the room by going to **23**.

8

You are in one of Goth’s black corridors, where there is a barrow with some objects on it. You discover an old boot, a green gem and a white feather. There is also a scroll, which you read: *Control your flight. Play high. Put your foot down*.

Decide which two items you wish to take and then go to **24**.

9

“Hmm, I might be able to make good use of this” Maldame considers interestedly. “Alright, dungeoneer, through the portcullis before you lie the docks of Linghorn. The Golden Galleon that is docked there sails soon for Marblehead, so I suggest you make sure that you are on it. I will give you a spell to get past the miremen that guard the ship. The spell is called SHADE. Now, leave me.”

Depositing the jar in front you, you bear Maldame’s advice in mind as you go to **27**.

10

Motley takes the contraption from you and hands over a red stone in exchange.

“This is a firestone,” Motley explains to you. “And I’m sure you can guess what sort of creature you’re supposed to give it to. Well, you’ve got a long way to go – be off with you, then.”

You leave this chamber by going to **15**.

11

“Oh, you useless bumbler!” Maldame shrills. “Leave this place at once, and may Fear fry your useless bones.”

You are forced to beat a hasty retreat through an open portcullis. Go to **27**.

12

As you cast the spell, a paladin warrior appears before you. He blocks Lord Fear's attacks and then chases the evil sorcerer from the room to the sound of frustrated cursing.

"Well done" Hordriss congratulates you. "You have defeated your greatest foe, yet you still cannot reach the object of your quest whilst it is imprisoned in that field. If you can release me, I will procure the Shield for you."

If you have the wand from the clue room, go to **34**.

If you do not have this object then you must abandon your quest at the brink of victory.

13

The correct answer is *drag*.

If you answered correctly, go to **2**.

If you answered incorrectly, Snapper-Jack catches you in his enormous butterfly net and your adventure ends here.

14

The correct answer is *Anubis*.

If you answered correctly, go to **29**.

If you answered incorrectly, Snapper-Jack catches you in his enormous butterfly net and your adventure ends here.

15

You are in yet another green room, where Stiletta is rummaging through some of her loot in a large chest. She spots you and comes over to meet you.

"Well, hello" says the knife maiden pleasantly. "You look like a fine, strapping young adventurer. Where are you bound, then?"

"Level two" you tell her.

"Hmm, not my personally preferred route to Marblehead, but it's as good a way as any" Stiletta remarks. "I say, if you're going to try and get down the trapdoor then I've got something jolly useful to help you. What can you offer me in return?"

If you offer a key, go to **30**.

If you offer a knife, go to **20**.

If you offer a bar of gold, go to **26**.

16

The spell makes you invisible and you are able to sneak below decks and hide. When the ship docks at Marblehead, you slip off. You enter Lord Fear's castle and walk along another corridor until you come to a place where two doors are set into the wall on either side. There are no clues; which way will you go?

Left. Go to **23**.

Right. Go to **7**.

17

You hold the ring up before you and the skeletron falls apart and disappears. The only exit from this chamber is the wooden trapdoor in the floor, which you proceed to

stand on. You jump up and down a few times and the trapdoor swings open, ready to pull you into level two.

If you have the spell FLOAT, go to **8**.

If you do not have this spell, you plummet downwards and are splattered all over the walls and floor of one of the corridors of Goth. Your adventure ends here.

18

You slam the boot down on the floor in front of you. A large magical version of the garment crashes into the room and squashes Raptor and the miremen flat. You leave this room feeling very satisfied, but find yourself in a place that quells the feeling straightaway. You are on a thin ledge that leads to a doorway. There is one large hole between you and the exit, and two blank playing cards on the wall just before the hole. As you approach, you see another playing card on the wall, just before the blank ones. You touch this card and it reveals itself as the Ace of Spades. As you approach the gap in the path, the two blank cards turn over as well. They are the King of Spades and the Two of Spades. Touching the correct one will surely complete the pathway for you, but can you be clever and play your cards right?

If you touch the King, go to **25**.

If you touch the Two, go to **6**.

19

The correct answer is *footsteps*.

If you answered correctly, go to **31**.

If you answered incorrectly, Snapper-Jack catches you in his enormous butterfly net and your adventure ends here.

20

“Ah, my number four!” Stiletta exclaims joyfully as she takes the weapon from you. “Thanks awfully for returning that to me, dungeoneer. In exchange, you can have this ring. It’s jolly useful, because it disintegrates skeletrons when you get really close to them. Believe me, you will need it.”

You take your leave of Stiletta and go to **3**.

21

You are in a courtyard that is overlooked by a high balcony. Upon this stands Maldame. She looks down at you disdainfully as you explain your quest to her.

“Oh, I really don’t have time for all these pesky dungeoneers that keep trespassing in my domain!” Maldame complains. “The sooner you get to Marblehead the better as far as I’m concerned – you’ll be Lord Fear’s problem then. Well, he’ll be yours, really.”

“Can you help me get there, then?” you ask hopefully.

“How dare you be so presumptive!” Maldame bristles. “I will only help you if you help me first. Well, what have you got?”

If you offer Maldame a *sight* potion, go to **32**.

If you offer her a jar that reads *power to rule*, go to **9**.

If you offer her a wand, go to **11**.

Failing these options, you are doomed to remain in Linghorm forever and your adventure ends here.

22

You have reached the trapdoor chamber, but a skeleton is on guard. The reconstituted figure of bones raises his sword menacingly and begins to advance on you.

If you have Stiletta's ring, go to **17**.

If you do not have this object, the skeleton continues its attack and neatly slices off your head. Your adventure ends here.

23

You are in a green room with a large portal at the far end. As you are making for this, Snapper-Jack slinks into the room and blocks your path.

"Ah, well, look who it is" Jack grins in recognition. "You thought you were pretty clever last time, didn't you? Well, his Lordship has asked me to guard the quest chamber, so now I've got two questions for you. If you don't get them both right, your quest goes no further. Here's your starter, so best be smarter. He has a canine's head, and he governs dead Egyptians. Who is he?"

When you have an answer to this, go to **14**.

24

You are in the Sewers of Goth. There is no boat to row you across, but you spot a door to your left. Out of the door steps Snapper-Jack, the fool taker who has a snapdragon for an arm.

"Snip-a-snap, look here's Jack, mistakes are a-making so a fool's for the taking" Snapper-Jack chants at you. "Ah look, a dungeoneer. Is it a fool then, Snapper? Let's find out. I'll ask you a question, dungeoneer, and if you're a fool and get it wrong, then I get you! It's a boring person, the pulling of a heavy object on the ground, and resistance. What is it?"

When you have an answer to this, go to **13**.

25

The path is completed and you leave the room safely. You emerge into another trapdoor room. This is the way down to level three, but with no spells to help you this time, can you survive the fall?

If you took the feather from the clue room, go to **4**.

If not, you are doomed to remain trapped in the inhospitable environment of the Black Tower of Goth forever. Your adventure ends here.

26

"Hmm, I'm afraid I'm just not in the market for that kind of thing at the moment" Stiletta tells you apologetically. "Sorry about that. Good luck with your quest, though."

You take your leave of Stiletta and go to **3**.

27

You have reached the docks of Linghorn, where the Golden Galleon is making ready for its voyage to Marblehead. As you are sneaking on board, two miremen spot you on the deck and begin to advance.

If you have the spell SHADE, go to **16**.

If you do not have this spell then the miremen dispose of you in a way far too horrible to mention. Your adventure ends here.

28

“Ha!” Raptor scoffs. “Pirates like gold doubloons, not green rocks!”
And with that he knocks you over the head and you know no more. Your adventure ends here.

29

“Smart, but is it smart enough, I wonder” Snapper-Jack taunts you. “Here’s the last one, and then we’re done. The more of these you take, the more you leave behind you. What are they?”

When you have an answer to this, go to **19**.

30

“Hmm, I’m afraid I’m just not in the market for that kind of thing at the moment” Stiletta tells you apologetically. “Sorry about that. Good luck with your quest, though.”

You take your leave of Stiletta and go to **3**.

31

“Two gets you through,” says Jack, and he turns to Snapper. “No kidsey for you. But snip-a-snap, snip-a-snap, fool about and we’ll be back.”

Snapper-Jack leaves the room, and you make for the portal. You emerge into another green room. The Shield of Justice is propped up against one wall and protected by a forcefield. Hordriss is trapped in a skeletal body cage nearby, and he shouts a warning as you enter.

“Beware, dungeoneer!” he exclaims. “Lord Fear has trapped me here, and now he will surely do the same to you!”

Sure enough, Lord Fear strides into the room. He sneers at you from under the brim of his skull helmet.

“Well, you’ve made it to the end of your quest at last” Lord Fear tells you. “I don’t mean the Shield, of course – I mean your death! Now, you just hold still while I prepare my fireballs, and then we’ll get down to business.”

If you have the spell PALADIN, go to **12**.

If you do not have this spell, you can do nothing to stop Lord Fear from flaying you where you stand and your adventure ends here.

32

“Oh, you useless bumbler!” Maldame shrills. “Leave this place at once, and may Fear fry your useless bones.”

You are forced to beat a hasty retreat through an open portcullis. Go to **27**.

33

“Ah, that’s just what I need after a long snooze” Smirkenorff says dreamily. “Thank you, dungeoneer. In return, I gift you the spell FLOAT, which will help you pass safely through the trapdoor to level two. To open the trapdoor, just jump on it a few times and brace yourself for a fall. Well, off you go then, and leave me to slumber in peace.”

Go to **22**.

34

You use the wand to dispel Hordriss's body cage. The mage is released, and he uses his magic to dispel the forcefield around the Shield. He passes the object to you and you slide it onto your arm and hold it aloft triumphantly. There is a moment of sudden weightlessness, and you are back in Knightmare Castle. Treguard comes forward to take the Shield from you as Hordriss conjures up your trophy.

"This is only a small reward," Hordriss concedes. "But then you have achieved what few have achieved: the fame. And with the fame, what need the fortune?"

"Congratulations, adventurer" Treguard says to you. "You have proven equal to the Knightmare challenge. You should indeed feel proud of yourself for this achievement for it is a testament to your wits and skill, no matter what phase of the Dungeon the challenge is based in. If you have completed all eight quests then you are indeed a worthy champion. Take from this place the wits you have gained and the courage you showed, and remember that you will always steer right if you follow the path to Knightmare!"

PUZZLE PAGE 1

Dragon Word

Find the names of all the Knightmare dragons hidden in the grid below.

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

Bealwit
Bhal Shebah

Red Death
Smirkenorff

Firestorm of Marblehead
Owen

Snapper
Talionis

REMEMBER HER?

Series 2. Level 1.

MILDREAD

Mildread was everything you could ever ask for in a Dungeon witch - ugly, old, loathsome and cackling, with a bubbling cauldron and a stick to prod people with. She was played by Mary Miller, who also played Lillith, and a meeting with either Lillith or Mildread towards the end of level one was a pivotal part of every quest in series 2. Despite the fact that she only appeared on one level in one series, Mildread seems to be a very well-remembered Nightmare character. Her cackling voice and warty appearance helped to make this so, I'm sure, as well as the fact that Mildread was in series 2 quite a lot. She featured in nine of the sixteen episodes, meeting eight dungeoneers during that time, leaving only five for Lillith. Mildread could be very helpful to the quest, but failing to please her could be the team's undoing: *"She can be useful, but she's always dangerous."* - **Treguard**.

Mildread was a voice-changer. On a couple of occasions, she spoke using the voice of one of the advisors, trying to direct the dungeoneer into peril. This amusing special-effect was probably created by getting the advisor to record some "practice directions" before filming, which were then used as Mildread's instructions to the dungeoneer.

Mildread was also a shape-changer, as witnessed during Julian's quest when she turned into Gretel, and Chris's when she turned into Treguard. Mildread also liked to change the shape of her room, disguising her bubbling, smoking cauldron as a wellway, into which she would entice the dungeoneer to step. Mildread was certainly something of an obstacle, but - like Lillith - her help was vital for level one to be successfully completed. This often involved giving her a magical ingredient to turn her cauldron into the real wellway, which Chris did with a sprig of gravewort, Tony did with a jar of ground bats' wings, and Jamie did with a purse of small change: *"Wort and worms, make a spell, conjure up a deep dark well!"* - **Mildread**. The first quest of the season ended thanks to Mildread and

her well-spells. Martin had not taken a jar of ground toads' legs from the clue room, so he was denied the wellway he needed and then finished off in a mined chamber: *"You've got nothing to offer me and I've got nothing to offer you!" - Mildread.*

However, Mildread sometimes had other help to offer instead of changing her cauldron into a wellway. She gave Neil's team the word *stalactite* in exchange for a bottle of potion, but no explanation was given as to its use. As it turned out, the word was a red herring, but the advisors kept getting Neil to say it in sticky situations, right up to his infamous final scene with Cedric. Mildread only ever awarded one spell - RUST - which she gave to Karen as a reward for helping her end an out-of-control broomstick flight, in the final episode of the series. This spell was used to incapacitate the Automatum in the wellway room, and was certainly the most useful help that Mildread ever gave: *"Mildread's not everyone's idea of a friend, but there's no doubt she can be useful."* - **Treguard.**

Mildread was a striking character who was involved in many memorable scenes, and she enjoys a long shelf-life disproportionate with her single series appearance. She could help or hinder the quest, but was mainly there to be repulsive and loathsome.

Fear Factor: 7 Definitely a tangible threat.

Killer Instinct: 6 She sent Martin to his death with no qualms.

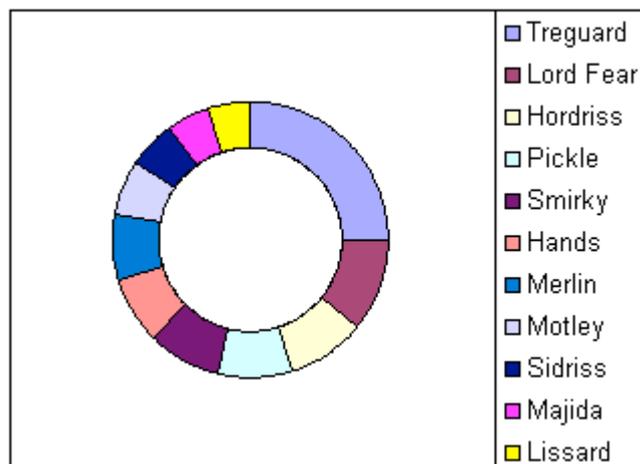
Humour Rating: 4 She laughed, but more from madness than humour.

Oscar Standard: 9 A convincing performance, totally different from Lillith.

KNIGHTMARE TOP TEN

This section is for lovers of statistics everywhere. Each issue there is a different category, with a list of the top ten Nightmare characters in that category. This issue we look at the characters with the greatest number of dungeons met, by which I mean quests featured in, hence the inclusion of Lord Fear and Lissard.

Position	Character	Dungeoneers met
1.	Treguard	69
2.	Lord Fear	30
3.	Hordriss	26
=4.	Pickle	24
=4.	Smirkenorff	24
6.	Sylvester Hands	22
7.	Merlin	21
8.	Motley	18
9.	Sidriss	15
=10.	Majida	14
=10.	Lissard	14



The Tower of Time

By Rosey Collins.

"There's nothing here," grumbled Curran.

They had reached Nightmare Castle. It was sunrise. There was nothing within miles of the fortress but woods and dells and that kind of thing. Curran was singularly unimpressed - and certainly there wasn't another castle anywhere nearby.

"There is," argued Laurel. "The castle. We have to go in."

"That's not the castle we want."

"I know that, Curran. The castle *we* want is around... sort of... down there."

Curran looked at her. She was pointing at her feet. Reflexively he looked down. There was nothing to be seen but grass and a particularly fat earthworm.

"Look," Laurel went on. "It's not *quite* down there. Not in the strictest sense, I don't think. It's bit hard to explain, to be honest with you. Now listen, I didn't tell you earlier, because I knew there was no point. You wouldn't have believed it. But the truth is there's quite bit more to Nightmare Castle than meets the eye."

Curran raised questioning eyebrows.

"There's no point trying to explain it to you," said Laurel. "You'll see once we get going. Come on."

"Who challenges my Dungeon?" the bearded man in the antechamber asked in deep, rich tones.

"I'm Laurel," replied Laurel. "This is my friend Curran."

"And what brings you to my realm?"

"Curran here is trying to get to the Tower of Time. I'm - er - here for moral support."

"Hey, Laurel," Curran hissed furtively. "Is this bloke for real?"

"Then you do not wish to journey as far as most," the bearded man remarked. "I trust you know who I am...?"

"Treguard of Dunshelm," Laurel provided.

"Indeed," Treguard smiled approvingly. "I wish you luck on your journey - but before you go, some advice. My Dungeon is fraught with danger, and if you wish to get out alive you must reach your destination without mishap, for this is no game of numerous lives. And remember that the only way is onward: there is no turning back. Step forth..." and he moved aside with an elaborate gesture indicating the doorway to this mysterious Dungeon of his.

"Thanks," Laurel smiled gratefully as she passed him.

"Yeah," mumbled Curran, thinking that this guy was a few sandwiches short of a picnic. "Thanks."

They found themselves in a dense forest, treading through a myriad of shrivelled fallen leaves. Curran was stupefied for the first two minutes of their journey. Finally, when they came to a clearing dominated

by a large oak tree, he grabbed Laurel's arm and said, "Wait. Where are we?"

"We're in the Dungeon," Laurel replied simply. "Beyond that I'm afraid I don't know. A wood of some kind, I guess."

"Quite," Curran deadpanned. "But we were in that nutter's castle a minute ago. How did we get to a *wood of some kind*?"

"It's magic," Laurel tried to explain. "I don't really understand it myself. It's all to do with when a big monster or something called the Gruagach was in the castle... I don't even know. Just don't worry about it and go with the flow, ok? Ooh - hang on..."

"Humans!" a gruff voice exclaimed.

Curran jumped, and then turned to face the direction from which the voice had come. "AAH!" he exclaimed, and for a moment Laurel thought he was going to leap into her arms, when he beheld the face that had just appeared on the large oak tree.

"*All humans is thieves and despoilers!*" the tree remarked angrily.

"That'll be Oakley," Laurel whispered to Curran, smiling slightly at his reaction. "Or at least that's what the stories say. Don't worry, we'll get along fine - sounds like he's from the West Country like us."

"So?" Curran squeaked nervously.

"You may not take one more step in this forest unless I think you be tree friends," Oakley proclaimed dramatically. "Now answer me this: harvest time it is, and the berries in full bloom. But on which day is it wisest to gather the fruit of the bramble?"

Curran was stumped. It had sounded like it was going to be a farming question, which he wouldn't have had a problem with, but then it had just descended into nonsense. There was no one specific day on which to gather berries!

"St. Michael's Day: October tenth," Laurel answered at once.

"Truth accepted," Oakley conceded. "Very well then. Time is precious, but it could be on your side. Take what you need and go - but mind where you tread."

The face disappeared from the tree, and Curran breathed an audible sigh of relief. He then turned back to face Laurel and said simply, "Wha...?"

"Fruit of the bramble: blackberries," replied Laurel, as though that explained everything.

Curran continued just to stare at her.

"Don't you know anything? Satan was kicked out of Heaven on St. Michael's Day and he landed in a bramble bush. And now, apparently, he

goes around spitting on all the blackberries every day except St. Michael's Day."

"Who says?" demanded Curran.

"I don't know - it's just a myth. It's almost certainly not true but you never know and I got the riddle right, didn't I? Look." Laurel nodded towards a tree stump a little to his left and her right. "Rules say we're allowed to take some of that stuff."

"Silver," declared Curran, sauntering over to the stump and picking up a silver bar. "You can never have enough money."

"Oh no?" Laurel raised her eyebrows. "We should consider this carefully, you know. We also have a key and an egg timer here. Well, let's not forget the clue the tree gave us." She picked up the egg timer. "You really think that stuff will be more useful than the key?"

"Absolutely."

"We've got money. Still, we did spend quite a bit on the journey here." She fumbled around inside her pocket, which felt surprisingly spacious. "Hmm... all right, you win. Perhaps they wouldn't accept our money here anyway."

"Why not?" asked Curran.

"Because life's like that. This is a strange and mysterious place - I keep telling you."

She started off into the woods and Curran followed, understandably alarmed by the constant baying of wolves around them. The next clearing they came to hosted a quaint little inn from which wafted an inappropriately jovial sounding melody.

"*The Crazy Heifer*," Curran read from the pub sign. "Great name for a pub. Fancy a drink?"

"Yes," said Laurel, "and it's not even as though there's anywhere else to go."

The moment they entered, they were seated by a curly-haired young maiden.

"Hello," the maiden smiled pleasantly at them. "Do sit down." They did, and she helped herself to a seat on top of the table. "Now then, what can I get you? We have three items on the menu here: food, drink and information. If you want food, you need Mollie. The drinks waitress is Millie. And if it's information you want, you need to talk to me - I'm Mellie."

"Nice gimmick," remarked Curran.

"Actually," Laurel said to the kindly maiden, "we'd like a little of all three. We can pay you silver," and she nudged Curran, who offered the silver bar to Mellie.

"Oh, thank you," Mellie beamed delightedly, taking the silver bar and pocketing it. "Mollie! Millie!"

She beckoned the other two waitresses over. Millie, a chaste looking girl in a white dress and bonnet, carried a large jug of less than pristine water, with which she filled two tumblers that were waiting on the table. Mollie, for some reason, looked less presentable, with greasy hair and a ragged brown dress. Still, she smiled pleasantly enough when she offered her breadbasket to Curran and Laurel.

"Thanks," Laurel smiled back at her, as she and Curran accepted the food.

"So," ventured Mellie, when they'd had a chance to take the edge off their thirst and hunger. "What is it you want to know?"

"Well," began Curran, "we're trying to get to the Tower of Time."

"The Tower of Time..." mused Mellie. "Well, I've never been there, but I've heard that it lies deep in level two. To get there, you'll need to find a wellway. Go through that door" - she pointed - "down the stairs, and you should find your way back to the forest. Follow the path until you get to the ruins of Dungarth. They say that the entrance to level two is hidden there."

"And how reliable are 'they'?" Curran asked sceptically.

"Curran!" hissed Laurel, kicking him under the table. Then to Mellie she said, "Thank you, that's very kind. Come on, Curran - we can't hang around here all day."

"Right," agreed Mellie, getting to her feet to see them out. "And some of these people are giving you two some very funny looks, so you'd best be on your way. Good luck!" she called after them, as they started down the stairs.

"You fancied that Mollie, didn't you?" teased Laurel, once they were out in the woods again.

"She was all right," shrugged Curran. "God, Laurel - look at this place! 'Follow the path' wasn't all that helpful if you ask me."

"Come on." Laurel grabbed his arm and led him onwards. "See where the leaves are all trodden down? That's a trail if you ask me."

"And how are we supposed to recognise this Dungarth of hers?"

"She said it's in ruins. It'll just look like a ruin. It'll be fine - come on!"

Curran felt reluctant, but thoughts of his dead father urged him on as his companion led him deeper and deeper into the sinister forest.

So Curran continues to follow Laurel deep into the heart of the Nightmare realm, but does he really know what he's letting himself in for? Look out for the next chapter of Rosey's story in issue 34.

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 7.

Quest: The Shield.

Dungeoneer: Alex Rothman.

Advisors: James, Neil and Richard.

Home town: London.

Team score: 7 out of 10.

Another high-quality quest from series 7, which was the best of the series until Julie turned up and won.

Level One: After a dwarf tunnel maze, Alex meets Sidriss and Fidjit. Fidjit has been turned into a giant toad, so Alex agrees to look out for a spell to make him human again. At a clue table, Alex acquires a key and a potion called *shadow*. Through a spyglass, Lord Fear tells Brollachan to look for Smirkenorff in level one instead of level three, and Lissard tells Lord Fear that he has negotiated with a troll, which is now lying in wait for Alex. The team make use of the potion to sneak past the troll and its swinging club, and then Alex meets Grimaldine. The green wizard shows Alex a spell-chest, which he unlocks with the key. There is a scroll inside that gives the team the spell RESTORE. The Sliding Floor chamber follows, then Alex meets Fidjit once again. The RESTORE spells turns him back into his usual self, so the locksmith accompanies Alex and unlocks the door to Smirkenorff. By informing the dragon that Lord Fear is tracing him from level one, Alex earns a flight to level two, which duly follows.

Level Two: Through a spyglass in the Rift of Angar, Lord Fear and Lissard gloat over a trapped Hordriss, who has been imprisoned in a forcefield. Through Fear and Lissard's discussion, the team learn that an Anode of Power is required to release Hordriss, and can be acquired from a friendly wizard or witch. In the dwarf tunnels, Alex meets Brother

Strange. The monk tells him that the only available sorcerer on the level who might be able to provide an Anode is Queen Greystagg. Alex picks up a glow-light and some witch hazel from the floor of the tunnel, as well as a SIGHT spell from a scroll. At the Trial by Spikes, Romahna warns the team to look out for a cowardly assassin called a grayling, which will never attack head-on. She then shows the team how to complete the spike puzzle, which they eventually succeed in doing with the help of the SIGHT spell. An encounter with Brollachan and his three questions follows, and then Alex meets Greystagg. In exchange for the witch hazel, she provides him with an Anode of Power. Alex next encounters a grayling in the dwarf tunnels but, following Romahna's advice, he scares it away by walking straight towards it and shining the glow-light in front of him. Alex encounters Hordriss in his forcefield and uses the Anode to release him. In return, Hordriss magically transforms the room into the Descender, which transports Alex down to Goth, and level three.

Level Three: In the corridors of Goth, Alex picks up two potions - *dragonsbreath* and *starclimb*. He spies on Lord Fear and Lissard, who discuss the fate of Atlantis and the whereabouts of Brollachan. After the spyglass sequence, Brollachan himself appears and asks three more questions. Alex next arrives in the Sewers of Goth, where he earns a boat ride from Grimaldine by telling him where Lord Fear is keeping Brollachan. Then it's Play Your Cards Right. Despite a VISOR spell from Grimaldine, the team's indecision coupled with Alex's impatience allows this puzzle to claim its second victim. They manage to make it to the end of the Hearts, but the choice between the Queen of Diamonds and the Eight of Clubs proves to be too much.

Summary: A very well played and exciting quest, but the lack of communication between the advisors and their dungeoneer was their downfall at Play Your Cards Right.

CREATURE FEATURE

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

SPECTRAL WEAPONRY

The haunted swords and axes were threats to life force. They were introduced into the Dungeons of series 3, and could be found throughout the levels, sometimes under the control of characters, but mostly freelancing. The flashing see-through weaponry was obviously inhabited by some kind of evil spirit, which fed on life force to survive.

The haunted axe made three brief appearances in series three, but it proved to be far from ineffective. After chasing Leo down the wellway to level two, it made contact with him and severely damaged his life force in the chamber with a giant's foot behind the doors. The haunted axe reappeared in Ross's quest, under the control of Morghanna in level three, and this time it was double-headed! The menacing haunting was a big factor in Ross's death, as its presence unnerved the advisors and forced the error of guiding Ross one step too far, off the precarious path.

By far the more common haunted weapon, however, was the haunted sword. It had dozens of appearances in series 3, rising out of a pool of water, guarding an item of food, hanging around the Cavern Range in the hope of picking off a dungeoneer or two, or even manifesting in answer to a spell cast by Leo to scare off Hordriss! The haunted sword even bagged itself a victim - Cliff, the second dungeoneer of the series. Having cast a spell to subdue McGrew, the team should have shown mercy and dispelled their magic straightaway, earning McGrew's allegiance. As it was, however, Cliff was left stranded in the minecart chamber with no friendly Scottish claymore to save him from the malignant haunted sword, which soon brought an end to the quest.

The haunted sword was back for a brief appearance in series 4, when it was used by Mogdred to attack Helen II. Quick counteraction was required and, as the team failed to cast the right spell in this situation, the haunted sword actually managed to bag itself a second victim. Not bad work!

Fear Factor: 6 Incorporeal, but a very real threat.

Killer Instinct: 9 Bye-bye, Cliff, Ross and Helen!

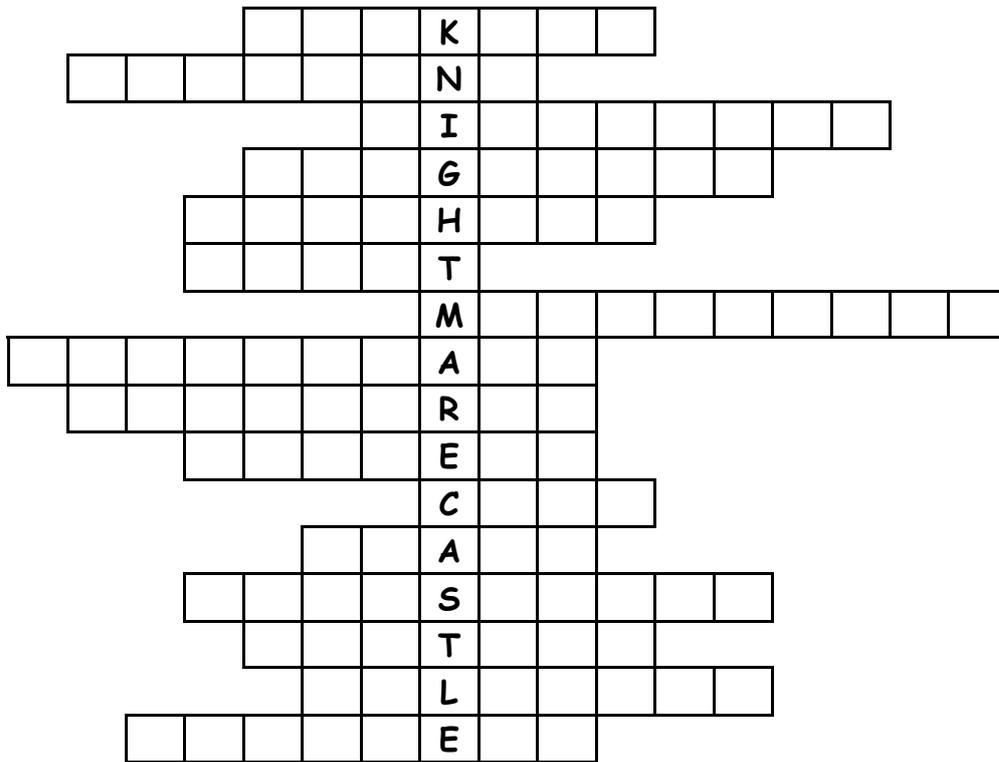
Gore Factor: 0 Not in the least gory in themselves, really.

Humanity: 0 Possessed by a spirit, maybe even sentient, but not human.

PUZZLE PAGE 2

The Path Through Nightmare Castle

Fill in the missing words, with only the words **Nightmare Castle** to help you.



K. Arawn's race and title.

N. What Sir Hugh does, mostly.

I. It can be green, amber or red.

G. A large goblin, or a Tiny goblin.

H. Meat most desired by Elshander.

T. A seeing-eye spell.

M. Lord Fear's mire-world home.

A. Rothberry's main employment.

R. "Man of bones with blade of steel."

E. Race of both Velda and Pickle.

C. Merlin's universal remedy.

A. Race of Bumptious and Elshander.

S. Treguard's magical dragon-sword.

T. Helmet, Sword or Shield of...

L. Name of Smirkenorff's mother.

E. Initial name of Nightmare Castle.

KNIGHTMARE LOCATIONS.

Castle Acre Priory, Swaffham, Norfolk.

Castle Acre Priory. Vital Statistics:

Location: Swaffham, Norfolk.

Century of Origin: 13th.

Also Known As: Dungarth.

Series featured in: 4 and 6.

These pictures were taken by me, Jake Collins, in August 2002.



Here is the view approaching the front of the priory, as seen through the eye shield.

Below is a view of the secret entrance that leads towards the wellway to level two. The dark doorway is, in fact, full of pigeons and their various secretions, and it stinks to high Heaven!



This is a view of Castle Acre Priory from the back, just out of interest. As you can see, there is no second secret entrance on the right.

Next Issue: Our final trip to Castle Acre Priory.

KNIGHTMARE UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

Here you must identify a particular dungeoneer's quest as your starter for ten, and then identify which characters are responsible for three quotes from that quest as the bonuses for five points each. If you answer the starter correctly then you can have a go at the quotes, but if you get a starter wrong then the bonuses that follow it cannot count towards your total score.

1. Series 6. Boys from St. Albans. A fatal fall in level three. (10)

- a. "Hmm, the cheek of it. So like a human!" (5)
- b. "Just because you've got a face like a goblin's backside, doesn't mean you have to keep it hidden all the time." (5)
- c. "If anything has crept aboard, I shall despatch it myself!" (5)

2. Series 8. London Jews, one OTT. Level three cuts them short. (10)

- a. "Jolly dangerous walking towards me when I'm in the middle of target practice!" (5)
- b. "Shall I sing you a nice boaty-person's song?" (5)
- c. "Cut the cackle, and make me an offer!" (5)

3. Series 1. Yorkshire boys. The first team to reach level two. (10)

- a. "At last, my champion! Somewhat smaller and weaker than I expected, but nonetheless, bearing my favour." (5)
- b. "If you want to beat the clock, just hold me up before the lock." (5)
- c. "The deep spells I recall, but the elementary magic I have forgotten. Jog my memory three times and a little magic is yours." (5)

4. Series 3. "Gritty lads from York." Without dragon magic... (10)

- a. "You can't go pinching things just because they take your fancy." (5)
- b. "If you're ignorant then you've got to remain so." (5)
- c. "My curiosity is exhausted, so I stoop to extinguish your flame!" (5)

5. Series 4. Devon-made. First winners for two years. (10)

- a. "Just a few moments more, and the desired effect will be realised." (5)
- b. "I never had any schooling. Well, except in comedy of course." (5)
- c. "What you have achieved is worth far more than any treasure." (5)

Answers:

1. Alan, with Jim, Nick and Mark. (10)

- a. Smirkenorff. (5)
- b. Elita. (5)
- c. Captain Nemanor. (5)

2. Daniel, with Gideon, Ben and Justin. (10)

- a. Stiletta. (5)
- b. Sylvester Hands. (5)
- c. Maldame. (5)

3. Simon I, with Steven, Jonathan and Simon. (10)

- a. Lillith. (5)
- b. Casper. (5)
- c. Merlin. (5)

4. Martin II, with Darren, Lee and Jamie. (10)

- a. Motley. (5)
- b. Owen. (5)
- c. Morghanna. (5)

5. Dickon, with Dominic, Tim and Pravine. (10)

- a. Hordriss. (5)
- b. Motley. (5)
- c. Merlin. (5)

Score:

0-45: Come on!

50-95: You might make it to the semis.

100-115: A finalist to be sure.

120-125: An ultimate Nightmare University Challenge champion.

THE LORD OF DREAMS

By Jake Collins

Mona Parker knew that she was different from all the many other kids in her school. It wasn't that she was denied any of the usual chances in life, or given any extra ones. It was just that she was a vampire. Not that she wasn't a regular ten-year-old as well, mind you. She didn't drink people's blood, turn into a bat or sleep in a coffin. She didn't burn particularly easily in the sun or find garlic particularly revolting. It was just that she had a link with the dark dimension of evil which existed within her town. Lover of all things spooky and macabre, when she donned her vampire fangs and kitchen-curtains-cape, she knew that she had transformed into Mona the Vampire, fighter of ghosts and monsters everywhere. When they emerged from the not-so-distant netherworld to wreak havoc on the unsuspecting town, it was up to Mona to tackle them, defeat them, and consign them to imprisonment in her magic Book of the Slimy. With her vampire bolts, undead strength and copious knowledge of all things supernatural, Mona was a terrifying foe for any creepy-crawly-slimy thing that crossed her path.

But Mona was not without allies. As well as her faithful brown cat and sidekick Fang, Mona's two best friends, Lily Duncan and Charley Bones, were always on hand to help out. Donning their superhero costumes, they too proved worthy foes for any beast from beyond the grave. Putting on her blond wig and high heels, the usually gentle and passive Lily became Princess Giant, and the bespectacled computer expert Charley put on his green alien costume to become Zapman, master of all things that zap. Together, Charley, Lily, Fang and Mona were the town's only defence from the great danger that lurked within its shadows.

One Monday morning at school, Mona was telling the class all about her eventful weekend.

"Then the werewolf leapt from the bushes and tackled me to the ground!" Mona proclaimed. "He was snarling and growling and his breath smelled foul..."

"Thank you, Mona" said Miss Gotto, the teacher. "That's enough."

Angela, Mona's arch-nemesis, scowled and leaned over towards her unwilling underdog, George.

"Listen to her!" she spat. "Making up these stupid stories. I hate her."

"But why?" George queried. "It's not doing you any harm. I think you're just jealous of all the attention she's getting."

"Shut up, George!" Angela snapped. "You don't know anything anyway. I hate Mona and I want to make her suffer. Every time I try to ruin her stupid vampire schemes she gets the better of me and it all blows up in my face!"

"Perhaps she's cleverer than you are" George suggested.

"She is not cleverer than me!" yelled Angela.

"Angela!" Miss Gotto scolded her. "How dare you shout in class like that! Go to Principal Shawbly's office immediately."

Angela was fuming as she left the room. She whispered to Mona as she walked by.

"This is the last straw, Ms. Vampire" she hissed. "I'll get you for this!"

Later, Mona, Fang, Charley and Lily were walking home together.

"Angela sure was cross after she got sent out of the classroom" Charley said. "I wonder why she hates us so much."

"She's jealous of my supernatural powers" Mona replied flatly. "All heroes have a nemesis; Angela's mine. By the way, don't forget to join Fang and me for our MGM at eight o' clock tonight."

"Sure thing" said Lily. "The Monthly General Meeting is vital if we're going to keep track of the monsters in this town."

"Darn right" Mona said. "Don't be late, will you?"

Mona was the boss, and they knew it. All of a sudden, Fang hissed and arched his back.

"What is it, Fang?" asked Mona.

Her question was answered as Angela stepped from the shadows to meet them.

"Oh look, it's the Scooby Gang" she jeered.

"Go away, Angela," said Mona. "No one wants to talk to you."

"You will pay for what happened to me today!" Angela threatened as she pointed at Mona. "I don't deserve to be treated like that; my family's rich!"

"You shouldn't have been talking in class then" Mona retorted. "C'mon, guys, let's go."

Angela watched the four of them walk away. George slunk up to join her.

"There you are" she greeted him roughly. "Did you get it?"

George handed her a hefty tome from the school library.

"Arcane Spells and Curses" read Angela. "Good. Now Mona will regret messing with me."

"You don't really believe those things work, do you?" asked George.

"Of course not!" scoffed Angela, rubbing her hands with glee. "But Mona does. When we crash their meeting tonight we'll show them who controls the supernatural dangers in this town."

The storm raged in the half-light of dusk outside Mona's bedroom window. Mona the Vampire sat at her desk, completing an entry in her diary. She thought it was very important to keep meticulous records of her escapades so that others could read about them.

"After all" Mona told Fang, who was loyally watching her. "It's only by studying the heroics of others that you can hope to become a hero."

Fang purred as he rubbed himself against Mona's legs. Then lightning struck outside and Fang meowed in fright as he shot under the desk to cower in fear.

"Oh, Fang!" scolded Mona. "A vampire sidekick shouldn't be afraid of a little storm. Why can't you be more brave?"

The doorbell sounded downstairs and Mona heard her father welcome in Charley and Lily. Soon enough, the stairs creaked and her door opened.

"Hi, Zapman, hi, Princess Giant" Mona greeted them as she swivelled round in her chair. "Come and sit down."

Charley and Lily sat on the carpet and looked up at Mona expectantly.

"Now, to business" said Mona. "The MGM is in session. Apologies first, I think. Anyone?"

"I think we're all here, actually" noticed Lily.

"Right" said Mona. "Next item: potential new supernatural dangers in town. Zapman?"

"Two possible sightings in my sector" reported Charley. "Mysterious localised disappearances of manhole covers in the area and a spiritually-animated privet hedge in my neighbour's garden which leans over the fence and keeps taking bites out of me."

"Princess Giant?"

"One or two in my sec..." Lily began, but was cut short by a violent rapping at the door.

"Who is it?" called Mona, somewhat annoyed.

To everyone's surprise, Angela burst into the room. She was red in the face and looked very tired. She was out of breath and had obviously been running.

"Oh, Mona!" she cried. "You have to help me."

"Me? Help you?"

"Yes!" Angela panted. "There's some squelchy, slimy monster roaming the streets. It's got George!"

"What, for real?" piped up Charley eagerly.

"Of course it's real!" snapped Angela.

"Wait a minute," said Mona dubiously. "You've just come here to make fun of us and waste our time, haven't you?"

"No, no, it's really out there!" Angela screamed, running over to Mona and clutching at her collar. "You've got to help me!"

"Okay, we'll take a look" agreed Mona reluctantly. "But you'd better be telling the truth."

The four of them left the room. Disturbed, Fang got up and cantered after them. They all went out into the dark street. Angela screamed and pointed at something. Sure enough, a dark shape was looming up the street towards them. Two piercing eyes glowed in the dark.

"Whoa!" exclaimed Lily. "What is that?"

"Looks like some kind of humanoid entity" noted Mona. "Fascinating."

"Mona the Vampire!" The being's voice was a tinny, echoing wail. "For your crimes against my kind, it is my duty to make you pay. You are to be sent to a place where there are so many of us that even you cannot survive!"

"It's chanting a spell!" exclaimed Charley.

"What shall we do?" fretted Lily.

"It's making the first move!" cried Mona. "They never make the first move; I do!"

"Looks like there really is a first time for everything" sneered Angela.

"You inhuman abomination!" Mona spat at her. "I'll teach you to mess with Mona the Vampire."

Mona leapt at Angela, who covered her face in a gesture of protection. But the attack didn't come. Angela looked up to see a huge whirling void, into which Mona, Charley, Lily and Fang were being sucked.

"Aah!" she cried. "George, you idiot, what have you done?!"

"Sorry" said George, as he shed his disguise. "The spell seems to have worked."

"Worked!" screamed Angela. "What do you mean worked?"

"It was real," said George. "They've gone."

"Oh God!" cried Angela. "What have I done?!"

Mona felt soft ground under her head. She dragged herself to her feet, and looked around. Charley, Lily and Fang were lying nearby. They appeared to be at the edge of a forest. It was still night. Far in the distance, through the forest, Mona could see a mountain with a majestic castle on its peak. The others were beginning to stir.

"That Angela" cursed Mona. "Look what she's done!"

"What'll we do?" panicked Lily. "We've never been in this much of a fix before."

"Yeah" said Charley. "We don't have any way of knowing where we are."

Mona's mind was on other things.

"How strange that Angela and George had the intelligence and will to work a spell" she mused. "I wonder if they even know where they've sent us."

"I wonder where they have sent us," Charley said.

"I believe I can answer that" came a voice from nowhere. Fang's back arched and he stiffened as a figure materialised amongst them. He wore robes of red and a medallion of gold, and his white hair and beard were streaked with red. "This is Nightmare."

"It sure is!" said Lily with feeling.

"My stars!" exclaimed the newcomer. "It's Mona the Vampire. "It is indeed an honour to meet you; Hordriss the Confuser, at your service."

"How do you know me?" asked Mona, perplexed.

"Your works do not go unnoticed" Hordriss told her. "We in Nightmare are great admirers of yours. Nightmare is a world of fantasy and illusion, inhabited by creatures of myth. This is just a part of it. The mainframe is that fortress over there. Once it was called Dunshelm, but now it's more usually known as Nightmare Castle."

"Wow!" Mona exclaimed eagerly. "How exciting."

"Who are these people you bring with you?" asked Hordriss, seeming to notice the others for the first time.

"My staunch allies" Mona explained. "Zapman, Princess Giant and Fang."

"You are all welcome" smiled Hordriss. "What brings you to this world?"

"Well, to be perfectly honest, we really aren't meant to be here" Mona said. "You see, my arch-nemesis Angela sent us here for revenge because she thinks it's my fault that she got told off in school today."

"Oh dear" Hordriss sympathised. "How unfortunate for you."

"Can we go home, then?" asked Lily hopefully.

"Not just like that, I'm afraid " Hordriss replied. "You say you were brought here by magic?"

"Yes."

"Interesting. One would not attempt to worry you, but I think it's quite possible that that means that you will be affected by the physical laws of the realm."

"What do you mean?" asked Mona.

"Well" said Hordriss, stroking his beard. "I know that in your world your costumes are only for show, but here they may well cause you to become what you imagine you can become."

"You mean I'm a real vampire?!" Mona exclaimed. "Wow!"

"It seems to me that we need to get you home" Hordriss went on. "You cannot survive in this state between dimensions for long."

"Can you get us home?" asked Charley.

"Sadly, despite one's arcane powers, one cannot" Hordriss admitted.

"Then who can?" asked Mona. "Who's in charge around here?"

"Your only hope is Shiek Kahib" Hordriss told them. "The Lord of Dreams."

"Where is he?"

"He lives in Nightmare Castle. If you are to find him, you must first traverse Fetlock Forest. But be warned: it is not only a forest, but also a sanctuary for all sorts of faerie creatures of both benign and malign intent. The only way to get through safely is by following the elf paths, so you may well step into the realm of the elf kin. Elves are tricky and treacherous, so keep your wits about you. I suggest you try to make the castle before sunrise; Mona may not appreciate the gift of daybreak as she usually does. Remember, the darkest hour is just before dawn. When you get to the castle, enter by the southern door. If you call for me, I will assist you in traversing the dungeons to find the Lord of Dreams. My calling name is Malefact. You must call clearly three times, then I will appear. Now, do you understand?"

They all nodded.

"Very well then. Good luck."

Hordriss disappeared in a flash of lightning. Mona turned to her friends. They saw that she was smiling.

"Well, Zapman, Princess Giant, Fang" she said to them. "Are you up to this adventure?"

"I guess," said Lily, slightly nervously. "But we've never done anything like this before. How're we gonna do it?"

"The same way we always do," said Mona. "By knowing our enemy and staying several steps ahead of him."

Mona strode into the forest, Charley following and Fang loyally padding along behind. With slightly more apprehension than usual, Lily set off after them.

Fetlock Forest was a dark, cold, forbidding place. The bushes rustled on either side of the elfin path. Bringing up the rear, Lily felt sure that she could feel something breathing down her neck. A shape fluttered from the darkness towards them and screeched as it flew over her head. She screamed, and the noise reverberated around the forest like a banshee's wail.

"Don't be scared," said Mona, watching the animal land on a branch up ahead. "It's only a bat."

They continued along the path, shimmering silvery light showing them the way.

"I don't understand" ventured Charley. "Why is this path all lit up?"

"Because it's an elf path" Mona explained. "The elves have made it to show travellers the way through the forest without stepping into their realm; they hate intruders, you see, and by keeping to their paths we can be sure to find the way out. Of course, others may want us to stray from the path, and there's nothing to stop them from walking it to do so. If we step off the path we can quite easily become lost in the never-ending depths of the wildwood, never to find the way out."

"Well let's stay on the path then" said Lily.

"Obviously we'll do our best" said Mona. "But there might..."

She was cut short by another scream from Lily. They swung round to see that she had been grabbed by a winding, sinuous tree branch. In a split second, she was dragged off her feet and pulled into the depths of the forest.

So, will Lily be lost forever in the heart of the wildwood? Will the adventures reach Nightmare Castle? Read the second chapter of *The Lord of Dreams* next issue to find out.

MY TOP TEN WORST TEAMS OF ALL TIME

Yes, here they are, the ten quests which I think are the worst attempts to master the Dungeon. Bear in mind that I don't hate watching all of these quests - some of them are very enjoyable, in fact. Purely from the point of view of how good a stab at playing the game each team had, these are the ten that I think made the least laudable attempts. If anyone

wants to send me their own list then I'll be pleased to include it in a future issue of TES.

10. Martin, John, Lee and Tony.

Home town: Sunderland, Tyne and Wear.

Quest: The Sword of Justice.

Level reached: 1.

Time on Nightmare: Series 2, episode 1.

A very short and unimpressive start to series 2. This team got two riddles right with Olgarth, but didn't bother to examine the clue objects closely enough to avoid being blown up. *"The armourer's gauntlet could have saved you, but the secret of its use you never learned."* - **Treguard.**

9. Duncan, Ian, Deborah and Richard.

Home town: Windsor, Berkshire.

Quest: The Sword of Freedom.

Level reached: 1.

Time on Nightmare: Series 5, episodes 14 and 15.

A one-man guidance team and an inability to count levels in the Descender spelled doom for Duncan's dreary band. *"You missed your station, and now Duncan is missing parts of his body."* - **Treguard.**

8. James, Philip, Puerk and Jamie.

Home town: Felixstowe, Suffolk.

Quest: The Shield of Liberty.

Level reached: 1.

Time on Nightmare: Series 3, episodes 6 and 7.

A very boring and unremarkable team, who sent their dungeoneer straight off a suspended floor and into a pit! *"Little hope there is for those who haven't learned to fly!"* - **Treguard.**

7. Jenna, Andrea, Kelly and Anna.

Home town: Exeter, Devon.

Quest: The Crown.

Level reached: 1.

Time on Nightmare: Series 5, episodes 9 and 10.

Hot on the heels of Ben's winning team came these very mediocre girls. They weren't doing all that badly, I suppose, but they stupidly stepped off the true path on the Causeway, and paid the price. *"Chose the right path, but you didn't stay on it!"* - **Treguard.**

6. Anthony, Darren, Alan and Mark.

Home town: Ash, Hampshire.

Quest: The Shield of Justice.

Level reached: 1.

Time on Nightmare: Series 2, episodes 13 and 14.

A very poor and dreary team, whose inability to read labels on bottles caused them to fall foul of Lillith. *"If you can't read labels then you can't read the writing on the wall."* - **Treguard.**

5. Akash, Kirsten, Carrie and Tanya.

Home town: Sutton and Worcester Park, Greater London.

Quest: The Sword of Justice.

Level reached: 1.

Time on Nightmare: Series 2, episode 7.

What a complete shambles this quest was! With no ice pack for Lillith, Akash fell to his doom. *"Ooh, nasty. Poor old Akash!"* - **Treguard.**

4. Richard, Rebecca, Angela and Rowena.

Home town: Bracknell, Berkshire.

Quest: The Crown.

Level reached: 1.

Time on Nightmare: Series 8, episode 1.

You all know what I think of this laughable effort. They ignored the obvious scroll clues, and burned their dungeoneer as a result: *"Oh good, a tasty helping of dinner."* - **Bhal-Shebah.**

3. Maeve, Christina, David and Lee.

Home town: Rawtenstall and Edenfield, Lancashire.

Quest: To survive the Dungeon.

Level reached: 1.

Time on Nightmare: Series 1, episodes 1 and 2.

The second-ever quest was a load of rubbish really, but the team were very much being used as guinea-pigs for the whole format. If only they'd remembered to take two objects from Granitas, perhaps Lillith would have let Maeve through. *"What a shame you didn't take the comb when it was so obviously needed."* - **Treguard.**

2. Douglas, Derek, Matthew and Richard.

Home town: Weston-Super-Mare, Avon.

Quest: The Crown.

Level reached: 1.

Time on Nightmare: Series 3, episodes 9 and 10.

This was a complete waste of time from start to finish, and ended in a well-deserved bomb explosion. *"Ooh, what a terrible mess!" - Treguard.*

1. Oliver, Anthony, David and Matthew.

Home town: Leicester and Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

Quest: The Shield of Justice.

Level reached: 3.

Time on Nightmare: Series 8, episode 10.

I've always made no secret of the fact that I hate this quest, and it's definitely my least favourite of all time. The team was rubbish, the situations were forced and rushed, and the whole thing was completely pointless and blighted the last few minutes of Nightmare's run-time. It's an abomination! *"We can begin a quest, but the big question is, can we finish one?" - Treguard.*

POETRY CORNER

A quest that's a complete farcical blunder from start to overdue finish - that's series 3's Scott and friends!

The dungeoneer whose name was Scott,
Rhymes with his home, Aldershot!
In the vale he nearly sank,
And with Golgarach, looked quite blank!
With only one, a step was missed,
The quest was doomed - you get the gist?
Still on they blundered, past the crone,
Then Velda had a moody moan.
Down the trapdoor, on the wheel,
The leap was timed with misplaced zeal.
Past the bricked-off room below,
Steps from Oracle and crow.
A ghostly brush between the crags,
And this is where the doomed quest sags.
A gap was left near Merlin's throne,
Because the first step was not known.

A plucky leap, but then, alas!
 Scott fell into the crevasse.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Challenge question: Alan (series 6, team 3) shook hands with Lord Fear, but he was in disguise as Hordriss in disguise as Harris at the time.

Dragon Word:

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

The Path Through Nightmare Castle:

