

DENTAL PLANS FOR NPCS

“Sir Nancy, what’s your daughter's name?”

“It's...it will come to me.”

“Sir Nancy, I don't think we’re real.”

"Whatever could you mean, Sir Peel?"

"So Nancy, how long have we been guarding this entrance to the Citadel of Darkness?"

"Oh, Peel. You know when we started. It's your traditional nine to five. It's the best job we've been able to get for a long while. We even get dental."

"But I don't remember any previous jobs. Do you?"

"Well, no, but what does that matter? This job is better than any of those anyways."

"Sir Nancy, I don't think we're real."

"Oh, not this again."

"There should at least be some duskiness to the sky when we come and go, but do you think we even come and go?"

"I don't know. You're hurting my head with these questions. Are you trying to tell me that my beautiful family isn't real either? That yours isn't?"

B

"Yes, Sir Nancy, I think that is what I am trying to say."

"I ought to pound you, Sir Peel."

"You can't, remember? Our hands are glued to our spears."

"Oh, right. Anyways, where was I? How could you say that about my family?"

"Sir Nancy, you have a daughter."

"Yes, what of it?"

"What's her name?"

"Well, her name is..."

"Take your time."

"Betty. Her name is Betty."

"And was that her name yesterday?"

"No. I don't think it was."

"Don't you see what I mean then? I can always remember that I have a family. I can even remember their names. I just can't place faces. Can you?"

"I'm going to be sick."

"Well can you Nancy!"

"We really aren't real are we."

B

"Well, I think we're real in that I'd be very sad if one of those brigands we protect this keep of darkness from, or even a goblin, were to kill you. I'm not a heartless monster. But I don't think we're real as in really real. If you know what I mean."

"But who are the real people, then? It doesn't make any sense for there to be just almost real people and no full people."

"I think you're right, Nancy. But I don't know."

None

[SYSTEM MESSAGE:]

**Outer entrance to the Keep of Darkness has been breached.
Prepare for combat.**

"Sir Peel, do you think those two adventurers could be the real ones?"

"Yes, Sir Nancy. I think you're right. They must be the real ones."

"Agh!"

"Ugh!"

None

[SYSTEM MESSAGE]

Sir Nancy. Level five. Keep of Darkness, Door Guard. Defeated.

+15 XP.

[SYSTEM MESSAGE]

Sir Peel. Level five. Keep of Darkness, Door Guard. Defeated.

+15 XP.

DeathAngel777 crouched beside the door guard he'd killed and carefully wiped the blood from his rapier.

Across the way, ThisIsNotMe123 stood from his kill, finished looting.

"It's always bronze coins with these ones. Why couldn't it be silver? Or gold every so often? Once in a century."

DeathAngel777 just grunted in response as he tried to pull the door guard's spear away from his body, but found it, as always, glued to the NPC's hand. *What kind of sick system glues an NPC's weapons to their hands?*

"You want this one's spear?" ThisIsNotMe123 asked.

"Sure."

DeathAngel777 manually selected the mental button to loot both spearmen's corpses. He checked his inventory and grimaced. The NPC's hands had come with the spears. The system was even more messed up than he'd thought.

"Lets hurry," ThisIsNotMe123 said, stepping towards the door leading further into the Keep of Darkness. "The boss will be waiting for us."

B

DeathAngel777 nodded, rising to stand beside his companion. "You know, they were talking before we killed them," he said.

"So what. It's not real. It's just the system filling in the quiet. Like music in a Starbucks."

ThisIsNotMe123 did jumping jacks in place, his breath coming out in fast sharp puffs as the adrenaline loaded.

"You don't think they're real, do you?"

"Not like us, of course. They're just miniature AIs. Things the system puts in front of us to defeat. They're not real, Peter. Get that in your head now. They're not real." ThisIsNotMe123 said, drawing his sword.

DeathAngel777 nodded. They're not real. They couldn't be real. How could he have ever wondered.

+15 XP, he thought. And felt nothing.

None

[SYSTEM MESSAGE:]

Side quest complete.