The Saga of Ellora the Elven Archer

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Chapter 1

Book 1

1.1 Preface

Hiya,

I have composed the following for those of you that were so nice to have helped me out (See thread "Seem to be at an Impasse" for more details).

Please understand that I’m not asking, nor expecting advice on how to play the game.

This is just my personal experience with the game of Nethack so far. It is quite long (very much longer than intended), but once I started, I just got more and more into it. Most of it is reconstructed from memory and some notes, but I have put in a lot of time with this particular character and remember many of the turning points in the game so far.

The game is ongoing, but temporarily on hold until I catch up with this (again, see previously mentioned thread for details). Also I type slow, so it may take several installements over a few days.

If you enjoy this, then I’m pleased to have gone through the effort.

Reagrds,

Kryisia’s Krusader

1.2 Beginning

I used to play D&D (and later on AD&D) when I was younger. I’ve noticed that there are similarities in Nethack to this old favorite game. This has probably helped me with some of the monsters, from what I remember (I think the Oracle of Delphi has mentioned this to me also.), I also put in countless hours, years ago, on a computer game called Master of Magic. My favorite hero in that game was Ellora the Elven Archer. After acquiring enough experience / enchantments / equipement, she could kill big bad monsters with one shot from her bow.

I think Elves are a slick race. They’re intelligent, cunning, and sexy (to me anyways). So most of my games in netnack have been with this race. There are many times that passages, doors, AND traps are hidden. The "Guidebook for Nethack" describes Elves as: "Elves are agile, quick, and perceptive; very
little of what goes on will escape an Elf." I remember that Elves had a better chance of discovering secret doors in D&D compared to other races, and I see that this has been carried to Nethack.

I never liked playing characters that just bulldozed through everything (fighters, barbarians, etc.), instead preferring the thinking classes (magic users, thieves, etc.), a Lawful/Evil female Illusionist being my all time favorite AD&D character. In Nethack, there are only three classes for Elves; Priest, Ranger, Wizard. Of the three, Rangers is where I would get the farthest on average. Probably due to being able to hit monsters with some stand-off weaponry (bow and daggers). Wizards come in second (mainly with the force-bolt spell), and we'll not even discuss how quickly my poor Priestesses died.

After getting used to how the game looked on screen and getting familiar with the commands, I found that I couldn't stop playing this game! I had become addicted... (groan). Often times I got killed due to making a mistake on the keyboard (over and over again), as well as not considering all my options (like running from, and avoiding conflicts in order to live another day). Hence, not thinking and/or considering things - which is what I pride myself on (!).

After playing through many characters (at least a 120 of them), I was able to get to about level 16 - 20 of the dungeon and the bottom of the caverns (to make sure you are at the bottom, just keep going till you can't dig through with a pick-axe). The puzzle/boulder levels (that go up instead of down), I can now get through about 1/3 of the time (if it is the easy ones to solve).

So with anger at my own impatience, and new found determination, I swore that I would take my time and not rush things. Also to start taking notes and paying more attention. If a situation came up, I would just simply stop, have a cigarette + coffee, and for the love (hatred) of Mars - THINK!

I fired up the game and entered the options (that I have seen far too many times):

- Who are you?
  "Ellora"

- What are you?
  Ranger / Elf / Female / Chaotic (no choice on alignment, but that suits me fine).

Hokay... I'm the instrument of Mars, chosen from birth to be the one that gets him the amulet (just like the 60 other Elven Rangers before me), go forth and blablabla... So I make a little pact with Mars:

"Fine Mars, I know your the 'Chaotic God of War' and all, but just be nice a little bit this time, eh? Hopefully, by now I've learned all the stuff that annoys you and will no longer do that. I know a few things you like, and will endeavour to please you - WHENEVER IT IS AT ALL HUMANELY (Elvenly) POSSIBLE! I won't bother you too often, but there may well come a few times when I "might" need a hand, put in some kind of effort to come through (or else I may take my characters to another god in the future) if you want the amulet so bad."

That done; I take a look at my stats (I always write them down and see how I progressed at the end).

Str: 14 Dex: 9 Con: 14 Int: 14 Wis: 14 Cha: 10

Hrmph. Another fumble-fingers, ugly (though I've had uglier ones in the past) Female Elf Ranger. I always remembered that Elves were good looking and dextrous in D&D (and pictures). < If anyone of you who programs this game ever reads this, I have a suggestion: Give Elves a better DEX (especially for Rangers, cause they're supposed to know how to shoot) and CHA (for whatever that affects - maybe charming monsters). Give them a hit in CON if you want to balance things out. Just my 2 cents. >
1.3. *Journey to the Oracle of Delphi*

**Situation First Room on Dungeon Level 1**

- I find a Japanese sword called "Snickersnee", and a chest. - I immediately turn autopick-up to "off", as to not pick up the sword by accident (Once had a character die from picking up a sword called "Giant Slayer"). As a Ranger, I’m crap with swords anyways. Maybe Mars will accept it later on if I can find an altar to him. If not, it will probably be worth a few zorkminds at a used weapons shop.
- I check for traps on the chest 10 times in a row. I don’t find any. Normally I check 5 times, before trying to open it, but I’m just starting out and have very few hit points. Rangers have pathetic hit points. Even my Wizards start with more I’ve noticed. If there would be an exploding trap on the chest, I would surely be killed. - I try to loot the chest. It’s locked. I’m kind of relieved. Traps go off at any time. I’ll leave it for later when I have more hit points. Hopefully a crude dagger (to force the lock) or a lockpick will turn up some time. Trying to open locked chests with say, a battle-axe, just makes a big mess of things, AND will set off the trap for sure. - Step into the corridor. Yikes! Here come the grid bug horde! - Run back into the room and bravely hide behind Sirius. Stop moving Sirius, you have to start earning your keep! Sirius is faster than me and can attack several times compared to what I can do. If things go well, Sirius will grow into a large attack dog some day. I will get better too (hopefully), but for now, Sirius can take most of these guys out where I have a chance of dying. If only he would hold still... - Phew. Sirius dispatches the insectoids and I only lose a few hit points. Didn’t have to use any arrows, although my finger was hovering over the "fire" trigger.
- Sirius picks up "Snickersnee"! No no boy. Put that down. I need to know where it is for the future.
- Sirius wonders off into the corridor. Sirius! Come back here. I run after him.
- Sirius drops "Snickersnee". Now look at where it is. In a dark corridor. Any lowly kobold or goblin can now find it. Chat with Sirius. Sirius yips! (I roll my eyes)
- Kick "Snickersnee" towards the room. It stops at a corner. Can’t kick it from this angle. Sirius gets by me. "You hear noises in the distance."
- Peek around the corner. Sirius eats a sewer rat corpse. Don’t see anymore rats about. Must have been only one. Good. Now back to the problem of this sword in the corridor bend...
- You are hit by a potion! It breaks on your head. You can’t see!
- An emergency situation has just been declared in my brain. Okay. Take a breadth. Stop and think. Whatever you do; don’t hit any keys!! - Whatever monster this was, It has to have arms, else it couldn’t "throw" something. Since it has arms, it can pick up AND use weapons. I can’t leave this square (I’m standing on "Snickersnee"), unless I want to face something wielding this sword while being blind. Also, if I move about, I may hit Sirius by accident. I already know where he is (Having a snack in the room while I’m in trouble in the corridor, if he hadn’t picked it up in the first place, I wouldn’t be in this predicament!). No choice. Have to use some of my sparse supply of elven arrows. Man, is this game starting out hairy or what?!
- Quiver the +0 arrows (if I so much as feel something next to me - out will come the killer +2's!). Make sure I'm welding the bow. Point it down the corridor. Start shooting. Shoot. I missed it. Shoot. I hit it. Shoot. I missed it. Shoot. Shoot. I hit it. I missed it. Shoot. I kill it!
- Shoot again. In case there's more of whatever behind it. I'm blind, and I'll be damned if anything closes range and touches me (I hate that). No sound except for the arrow landing in the distance. - Wait 2 turns (hit the "s" key twice), and shoot again. Nothing... Repeat.
- "You can see again." I walk over and see no corpse. Whatever it was, I'll never know. There's just a few arrows strewn about, of which I pick up. Take inventory. Lost three +0 elven arrows already (you always lose arrows when shot). Damn. But heah! I'm alive and can still carry on.

Having survived this initial baptism, Sirius (who has picked up "Snickersnee" again) and I, carry on into the dungeon...

We explore each level systematically, killing monsters, gathering booty, discovering where certain features are, etc., until we reach the chamber of our old freind "The Oracle of Delphi", who this game was found on Dungeon Level 9.

**Dungeon Level 1**

- locked chest
- a sword called "Snickersnee"
- sink
- altar (lawful)
- statue of a goblin
- statue of a sewer rat

**Dungeon Level 2**

- stairs to the Caverns
- potion shop (with 59 potions)
- statue of a newt

Here I found a shop with 59 potions + 1 small mimic. My eyes nearly popped out of my head when I saw that! Fifty-nine friggin' potions all in one spot! This was a situation just asking for a disaster. Like a mob of hill orcs rampaging through here and picking up all this stuff. Shopkeepers sure watch me, but monsters always have a free reign in shops (sigh). No way was I going to let this happen. I dispatched the mimic with about 16 thrusts of my trusty +1 elven dagger (Don't throw weapons in shops - you have to buy them back!).

This is how I snuff shop mimics:

- Search ("s" key) one square at a time (there's nearly always a mimic, especially in huge shops like this, sometimes 2 or 3 even). Eventually you'll get... - "Wait! That's not a potion (or whatever). It's a small mimic!" - Take a step back (one square only). Make sure you have lots of elbow room behind
1.3. JOURNEY TO THE ORACLE OF DELPHI

you. - Count how many turns it takes for the mimic to step next to you (usually it’s 3). - Thrust with dagger (#1). - Thrust with dagger (#2). - Thrust with dagger (#3). - Take another step away. - Mimic steps up next to you again. - Thrust with dagger (#1). - Thrust with dagger (#2). - Thrust with dagger (#3). - Take another step away.

Repeat till mimic either dies or turns to flee. If it flees, wait one turn before stepping forward and finishing it off. This works for me all the time now. Your almost guaranteed to go up a level also. This is now the easiest way to go up a level within the first 5 levels of the dungeon. Beats the heck out of facing a stampede of rothes or a wererat that calls in help. Trust me.

So after dispatching the mimic (there was only one), I gather up all the potions and stack them in a corner. All in one pile. There’s much less of a chance that a pack of monsters will wander unto just one tile at the far end of a shop. The prices ranged from 6 to 444 zorkminds depending on the type of potion (bubbly, murky, pink, etc.). I make a note to come back here if I ever get high enough in levels, or if I find a wand of death.

Dungeon Level 3

- large box

First few levels are a pain to make sure that I get into a room before Sirius does. That’s where the rolling boulder traps are, all traps as a matter of fact (except for the caverns which are one big room). I have never encountered a trap in a corridor. I’ve had many pets squished by boulders in prior games (sad face). So by getting in a room ahead of my dog, I can quickly run around and set off (and hopefully avoid) those boulder traps. Usually enough time has elapsed by the end of dungeon level 3 so that Sirius has grown up from a little dog to a regular dog. At that point, he’s on his own if he wants to go sniffing ahead of me. (By the way; I have no idea where Sirius has dropped "Snickersnee"...)

Dungeon Level 4

- altar (lawful)

Things aren’t bad, though I would have liked an altar to Mars (chaotic) instead of those lawful ones. Like, they’re diametrically opposed to him and all. Hmm... Gonna have to rectify that situation eventually, lest he gets upset later on at me hanging around those of Mercury...

Dungeon Level 5

- antique weapons shop (a morning star thats expensive - 49 zorkminds)

Here I found a really out of the ordinary priced morning star. The rest of the stuff was uninteresting. I’m getting an idea of what gathers what price in weapons and armour, and have learned that anything more expensive than a battle-axe (40 to 50 zorkminds) is worth my attention. I don’t run into this type of weapon too often at all, so I look at my possible ability advancements (#enhance), and see that I can progress in morning star. Rare, cause besides the battle-axe and pole arms, rangers have a sucky choice for melee weapons. I make a note of this item for future reference.
Dungeon Level 6

- fountain - chest

Dungeon Level 7

- (nothing interesting)

Dungeon Level 8

- fountain
- beartrap (too dangerous for me to disarm at my level).

Don’t remember getting hungry too often. Had enough jackals, snakes, newts, iguanas, coyotes, ponies, etc., added to the food found along the way to sustain us this far. I don’t eat icky things like spiders, nor any of the despised orc family (orcs, goblins, kobolds) being an Elf and all. I have learnt the danger of violet fungus (oh wow, man), and have barfed on eggs many times too often. I give the eggs to my dog (he loves ’em). Sometimes food is very scarce. As long as I know I haven’t done anything to upset Mars, I pray if I’m starting to faint while weak. There I get a message saying Mars is well pleased (phew), and my stomach is now content. But only do this after starting to faint!

My armour class has probably dropped down to around 2, and have gathered a few daggers, darts, and arrows to throw/shoot at monsters. I have enhanced my dagger skill to "skilled" by now and can sometimes get 3 off in one shot. I’d love to advance my bow skill, but there just aren’t enough arrows to be found. Arrows (darts and bolts) also get mulched way too often when fired. Strangely enough, I can weld a bow AND wear a shield. How that works out is beyond me.

Just clearing out one level at a time and then moving down to the next, my experience level stays about the same of the dungeon level on average (or within two at the most), at this phase of the game. By being methodical on each level, it gives me something to do while waiting for Sirius to catch up.

No monster was insurmountable along the way, but I run a lot now compared to my earlier games. I don’t run to completely avoid fights, instead just to a spot where the terrain is more to my advantage. Since I’m going to fight, may as well be on the battlefield of my own choosing when ever possible. This is especially true with ants and rothes and killer bees. With these guys I emminently set to an action plan for the upcoming battle (as I can’t outrun them for long AND they come in hordes). If you see one, you can bet there are more just around the corner (trust me on this one too). Sirius, doorways and corridors so that I have to face only one at a time mostly. Fun battles are against the hill orcs / mordor orcs. These guys usually have crude daggers that they throw (they always miss), and I pick them up and wait for them around a bend. When they pop out, I fling daggers at them point blank and take a step back so they can’t retaliate with their curved swords. They fall for it all the time. Orcs are so stupid (laugh). Also they’re good for some orcish helms, iron shoes, crude chain mail, red-eye shields that helps my armour class in the begining, I just can’t get enough of these guys (laugh at orcs again).

I now run a "clean dungeon campaign" in my games. There is so much clutter that accumulates after a while (it boggles the mind). I’ve realised that I’m gonna be here for a while, and want to know where everything is, as well as keep it out of the hands of gruby orcs and other assorted monsters (had a real bad experience with monsters picking up stuff in an earlier game). Also, you can carry only so much!
1.3. JOURNEY TO THE ORACLE OF DELPHI

Like Elves aren’t known for their physical prowess. When I get burdened (and it happens often), I know it’s time to ditch stuff (more on this subject later). I set stashes in what I call broom closets (one tile rooms with a door you find here and there) on each level. If I have a lockpick, I also lock the door. But so far this game, I hadn’t found one. Boxes and chests are good to, but again, only if I have a lockpick.

Dungeon Level 9

- Oracle of Delphi
- 8 centaur statues
- 4 fountains

On this level, I enter a large room and see a few centaur statues. Immediately I recognise that this is my freinds chamber (besides shopkeepers, he’s the only one that welcomes me), The Oracle of Delphi. As I’m making my way around to the opening of his inner chamber, I see a black unicorn hopping all over the place. Black unicorns are my freinds too (they’re peaceful), so I take this as a good omen, the Gods are in a good mood at this time...

Situation Centaur Chamber on Dungeon Level 9:

- Sirius runs ahead of me and starts to try and bite the black unicorn. Sirius is a large attack dog by now, and is pretty brave, but unicorns are really fast and can hop around at a fair clip. Sirius will get tired of this after he takes a few buts on the chin. I’ve seen this many times in prior games.
- From around the top of the room, out pops a monster. I’ve never seen one like this before. It looks like a red rooster to me.
- I do the look (";"), and see that it’s a pyrolisk. I have no idea what that is. It isn’t peaceful, and still quite far away.
- I cautiously take a step sideways (neither advancing nor retreating), just to see how many times it moves compared to me. This is so that I can judge how many times I can throw daggers at it before it gets to close.
- "The pyrolisk’s heat gaze singes your skin!" (or something like that). I think either a few potions bubbled and exploded, or something burnt in my pack at the same time.
- Woah! I look at my hit points and see that it hit me for like 1/4 of them!
- Reacting (and without thinking), I take a few steps sideways to line it up for some dagger throws. Sirius is still playing tag with the black unicorn.
- I throw a couple of daggers, the rooster is at extreme range and I missed.
- "The pyrolisk’s gaze burns you again!" Now I’m at 1/2 hit points! I turn and run to put the Oracles Chamber wall between me and the rooster with micro-wave eyes. At the same time; "Sirius eats a black unicorn corpse." Man. Sirius sure did a good job in no time at all. I’m impressed by his hunting skills. However, I realise that Mars will be upset at one of his creatures going down. (groan) There’s gonna be hell to pay for this, I can feel it. But quickly I change my thoughts off of this track, I have a more pressing problem with the fire rooster (!). - I’m hiding behind a centaur statue next to the wall of the Oracles Chamber, desperately calling Sirius to forget about lunch so that we can high tail it out of here. I’ve recovered a few (very few) hit points when Sirius finally pops around the bend. Great! Follow me. Take a step towards the exit and the rooster pops around the corner.
- "The pyrolisk’s heat gaze burns you!" "The pyrolisk’s gaze burns Sirius!" "Sirius yelps (or something)"
I notice that on that last shot from the rooster that Sirius and I weren’t lined up. So this thing has
a wide dispersal angle gaze to boot! - Well that’s it. My mind is made up completely. I’m in no way
prepared to handle this. Gotta get out of here pronto. I curve around the Oracles Chamber and head
for the door, Sirius is right on my heels every step of the way. Who says dogs aren’t smart! Eh? - Get
to the door and step in the corridor. Sirius, is right behind me. It’s a long corridor. I have to close
the door, else it will burn us again before we get out of range. I have a gut feeling that roosters can’t
open doors like some other monsters.
- I move back and try to displacement Sirius. "Wait, Sirius is in the way!"
- Yeah, well if I don’t get that door closed, we’re gonna be shishkabobs. I try again.
- "You displaced Sirius!" Great. I close the door. It didn’t resist my efforts, thank Mars. - Before I so
much as have a chance to catch my breadth. I see about 4 squares down the corridor a fire ant!
- AW SHOOT! (I said something worse than that actually)
Time out! I step away from the computer and go have a smoke so that I don’t do anything stupid, like
hit any keys. After collecting my thoughts, and confident that I will take my time, I go back...
- Okay, think. Fire ants are incredibly fast, that one will be here in two turns, that’s for damn sure.
So every move counts.
- Without a doubt, there will be at least three more behind him. You can count on that too.
- A wand of lightning would be just beautiful right now. But I have to stop fantasyying.
- Opening the door and facing the pyrolisk while fire ants are behind us, is definitely out of the question.
- I’m at 1/4 hit points. I can probably take 2 hits (which is like one round with these guys). The third
hit will kill this game right here.
- Sirius has been singed once for sure from the pyrolisk. He probably took a few unicorn butts as well.
I make up my mind that he has probably a few more hit points than me, maybe twice as much. You
get a gut feeling about your dog after being around him for many games.
- Hit Inventory ("i") and see what’s available. Nothing that’s a sure thing. Have some unknown scrolls
and a few mystery potions. I have a wand that’s been zapped a few times at monsters, no idea what
it does. I make sure that my bow is indeed welded. It always is, but this is no time for not making
sure. - Okay, I come to a decision. Sirius is going to have to take the first one on. I quiver my best
ammunition, the stellar +2 elven arrows. I make a mental note that when all hope is gone, I’ll drink
the bubbly potion. If that doesn’t pan out and I’m still alive, I’ll read the scroll called KERNOD
WEL. After that, I’ll see what everything is when the game asks me if I want my stuff identified...

NOTE: All this has not taken any time on the clock so far!
- Assuring myself that this is the best plan for the situation at hand, I chat with Sirius. Sirius whines.
He senses the dire situation as well. This takes a turn. The fire ant has closed to two squares from
me, one from Sirius.
- Forcing a smile on my face, I chat with Sirius for what may be our last time. This has taken another
turn and the fire ant has closed to melee range with Sirius. "You hear noises." The battle has begun...
- Sometimes I can see the results of the battle, other times I don’t. - After a few rounds, I believe that
Sirius has killed the first one and is working on the second fire ant. Then all goes quite.
- I fear that Sirius is on his last gasp. Okay, he’s done his part, now it’s my turn. I try to squeeze by
him and take his spot (I hit key 6 on the numberpad). "You have displaced Sirius!" That worked well.
- The fire ant must have been taken by surprise. It did not expect that Sirius and I would switch spots. I take immediate advantage and fire at it’s ugly head. Two shots. Both hit! It’s still standing. Damn.
- It recovers and we both move simultaneously. I fire twice more and it lashes at me several times. It goes down, and I believe the last arrow hit another behind. I have taken two hits, but not been damaged as much as expected.
- I decide to stand my ground and face the next one for one round. Mars better take note of my bravery.
- I fire. It lashes out. I’ve hit it but huge damage has been done to me in return.
- I step back and exchange places with Sirius. Sirius attacks and I hear noises for a round or two.
- Things are quite again. Feeling sad for my dog’s predicament, but realising that the game will end if I go down instead of him, I hit the "n." key twice. (If only I could fire my bow above him.)
- Sirius is still there but no noise is coming. Time to make a move. I reach at my belt and quaff the bubbly potion. It has no effect (I really don’t remember it doing anything at all). Oh well, maybe it’s one of those delayed reaction potions...
- I displace Sirius again, and stand in front. The fire ant is at range three! I don’t question this, but immediately fire! It stops and turns towards me, closing the range to point blank in one round.
- I fire again. Three arrows spring from my bow. The first two bring the beast down and the last one lands in the distant darkness.
- I turn around and kneel in front of my dog, grabbing him with both arms in a long hug while he tries to lick my face. Tears are streaming down my cheeks as I chat with him and he yips. We have both survived!

After a while, I gather my remaining arrows. I take a long look at the closed door to the chamber of the Oracle. All my zorkminds way heavy in my pack. There will be no consultations from the Oracle today, nor for many days to come. Until I have figured a way by this infernal pyrolisk, the road towards retrieving the amulet stops here.

With a heavy heart, but a sense of accomplishment at surviving another lethal situation, Sirius and I, start to head towards the upstairs of dungeon level 9. There are other things needing to be done; like appeasing Mars for the accidental death of the black unicorn, and exploring the staircase that leads down into the Caverns...

### 1.4 The Descent into the Caverns

Having been blocked from venturing further into the dungeon (See Part #1 ([1.3 on page 9](#))), Sirius (my pet dog) and I, proceeded to climb back up several levels and establish a base camp on dungeon level 4. It was about half way through what had been explored (8 1/2 levels), near the stairs that leads to the Caverns (level #2), but most importantly had an altar (important for verifying cursedness of accumulated booty).

No lockpicks had been found yet, but an unlocked box and chest found at other levels provided respectable containers. These I lugged to the appropriate room where the altar was located. Next came the long tedious task of accumulating all the booty found thus far and bringing it to the base camp. This took several trips to all the different levels (another reason why dungeon level 4 was very
CHAPTER 1. BOOK 1

convenient, being equi-distant from top to bottom). All the neat stuff went into the chest, while all
the garbage went into the box. After a while, I divided it by really good stuff into the chest, okay stuff
into the box, and 2 garbage piles (1 pile of weapons, 1 pile of armor) next to a wall in the room.
One thing I’m particularly careful about when organising my base camp is; never to stow arrows and
bolts, near bows and crossbows. Always keep the bullets in a separate spot from the gun. What I do,
is lock ALL the missile units (arrows, bolts, daggers, darts, knives, etc.) in a box or chest. That way,
if an orc picks up a crossbow, I’ll live with him swinging that at me instead of him shooting me in the
back when I’m not looking.
Now having everything neat and tidy and organised. It was time for some experimentation with some
of the booty.
Tried all the whistles I’d found again, just to make sure. No effect. Darn.
Tried all the uncursed rings. One was a ring of levitation. First time I get one of these ever! Spent
lots of time getting used to it, and how it worked in different situations. Not so great for combat, I
found. Although it was a great discovery that would serve me well throughout the game.
Tried zapping some wands at any monster that wandered into the room. Don’t remember anything
special here at all.
I tried improvising on a flute. Made some noise. Tried to read a spellbook. I think I got a massive
headache and became confused. It only went away after a long time, if I remember correctly.
Looked at my collection of scrolls, saw that my favorite one (FOOBIE BLETCH) was not amongst
them. So decided not to read any. (A personal note from my experience: Never read the scroll called
READ ME. It’s a trap designed to suck you in.).
My favorite potion (effervescent) wasn’t one I had found either, so decided to forego any potion testing
for now.
Stuff that might come in handy for the caverns was quickly assembled into a kit. We had found a
candle somewhere, this would surely be handy. I applied ("a") all of my potions (found this out once
by accident when typing the wrong letter trying to apply something else in a previous game). Luck
was with us, one of the cursed potions was oil! Add that to the kit. The newly discovered ring of
levitation. Two food rations for me and a couple of eggs for Sirius rounded out the rest. Plus my usual
weapons and armor, of course.
Left base camp, went to dungeon level 2 and descended the stairs to the caverns.
The Caverns:

**Dungeon Level 3**

- (nothing special)

Only thing was that it was a lit level. Or one of them that gets lit when you walk around.

**Dungeon Level 4**

- unlit level

Used the candle sparingly as possible.


Dungeon Level 5

- unlit level

Fell through a trap door and landed on dungeon level 6. I recognised it right away as the town with the temple level, and was right near the upstairs. So I immediately went back up to find my dog again. The caverns weren’t too tough so far. But yielded surprisingly little useful stuff thus far. Just the usual gems and weapons and armor. No pick-axe, or any dwarvish mithral chain mail. I was dissapointed. I bought some candles and completely explored every nook and cranny up to and including dungeon level 6. Most useful was probably some daggers, and I was surely now at expert level in them too.

Gnomes go down with 1 hit from the dagger (very rarely do I need two). So when it’s only a gnome, I punch "nlt" in succession in order to conserve ammo. If I see a gnome lord, that’s another story. They carry wands sometimes, and must be dispatched immediately. I’ll sometimes take a shot from a gnome at close range in order to concentrate on a gnome lord at a longer range. I always try to drop gnome lords on sight.

The ring of levitation came in handy when trying to crawl out of pits. It was great, only one turn required and your out!

Dungeon Level (Temple Town) 6

- food shop
- general store
- hardware store
- candle shop
- temple of Venus (neutral)

Here, the town was different than any I’d seen before. It was laid out all half-hazardly. No logical sense in layout to me at all. Shops and rooms were just thrown together in a mish mash.

The temple was to Venus (sigh). The priestess wanted a contribution, as usual. But I don’t give money to other temples, lest I should anger Mars.

Sirius had to be put into an empty room, and then closing the door. He was constantly taking swipes from the gaurdsmen when he’d bite them.

Found a chest in a shop - it wasn’t a mimic! Emptied the crap that was in it and the price dropped considerably (26 zorkminds I think - what a steal!). Set up a base camp in an empty room near the temple. With the way the town was set up, it took so long to get anywhere and do anything. Very aggravating, I found anyways.

Nothing useful in the shops (tried the whistles - no luck). No lanterns. No lamps. No lockpicks. Lot’s of looking glasses for sale, but I already had a few of those.

Bought more candles for the levels below. Izchak (he’s always in the candle shop), the only shopkeeper that talks differently, didn’t say anything I hadn’t heard from him before.

Went through the motions of discovering the cursedness of all the booty at the temple of Venus. Priestess kept getting in my way. What an annoyance she was. Then trying it all on. Then storing /
piling it at the base. Nothing to exciting that I remember. Armor class was probably around -2 by now.

I know that there’s around 4 - 5 levels to go for the caverns now. The town is at about the half way point. So there may only be a few levels of easy gnomes left. Since I’m at expert in daggers, may as well start practicing some back-up weaponry skills. I picked out a few uncursed weapons to practice with from the pile; an axe, a knife, and somekind of polearm that didn’t make me burdened when I picked it up.

So made sure everything was tidy, got Sirius out of the room, and went for the downstairs.

**Dungeon Level 7**

- unlit level

**Dungeon Level 8**

- unlit level

**Dungeon Level 9**

- (nothing special)

**Dungeon Level 10**

- (nothing special)

**Dungeon Level 11**

- Bottom. Can’t dig down.
- fountain

Don’t remember having problems, but it was long. The unlit levels used many candles.

For all the stinginess of the upper levels, the lower one’s made up for it. Here I found loads of potions, scrolls, dwarven mithril chain mail, and some pick-axes. I tested all of them at the temple for cursedness, and found one that was +2! Great stuff. My armor class improved considerably and would carry me far into the depths of the Mazes of Menace. It was probably around - 12, or - 14.

Got the ability to advance in all the weapons that I had brought with me, but didn’t actually do so. Only have so many boxes to check. Those are for emergencies later. Haven’t quite figured it, but experience says that I can get to Expert in two of them, and basic or skilled in two more before dying usually. Daggers and the bow are the two I save expert for. Melee weapons just don’t pan out compared to me being able to throw several daggers, or shoot several arrows in one turn. If anything is left over, then I see what’s happening. I’m still curious about that morningstar back in the Mazes of Menace. But like I said, I know that the Caverns are finite, and the rest of the dungeon won’t have easy monsters like here to practice on. Found a weapon that I never saw before. A boomerang. I can advance in it (!). Practiced with it also. Wasn’t very impressed.
1.5. **PUZZLING OUT THE BOULDERS**

Biggest thing with the caverns is that they’re dark and loaded with traps. Being Elf helps a lot in that respect. Both for trap detection and infravision. Also the wide open spaces lends itself well to ranged attacks. Ranger is easy compared to a Preist or Wizard in this respect.

So I cleaned up all the caverns, made all the trips with the booty back to my base at the town, organised it and set off with Sirius back to the Mazes of Menace. Ran into a pack of hill orcs and one of them was carrying an ice box. I couldn’t lift it, but finally figured out that it was full of bodies (you have to loot it to find out). One of the bodies was some kind of giant. I had to take all my armour off and drop everything I had in order to be able to lift that body out of the ice box. Had incredible difficulty lifting it. Stupid thing. Why can’t I just roll the box over to dump it? Anyways, I brought it back to the base in the town, and put in the extra food rations and such that I wasn’t needing. Now they won’t rot ("Blech. Rotten food. You feel sick.").

Felt apprehensive about not being able to lock my chest or the door to my base. When is a lock pick going to turn up?

So, loaded up with all the scrolls and potions I could carry and went back to my base on dungeon level 4 in the Mazes. Took a quick trip up to the potion shop on level 2 to make sure all the potions were still there. The shopkeeper wouldn’t let me in cause of the pick-axe I was now carrying. These guys never miss a thing! Leave the pick-axe outside and go look at the pile of potions. Yep, 59 potions still. Good. Pick up the pick-axe and head to base camp.

Played with a few more wands, and rings, and what not. Don’t remember anything special. Read a spellbook and memorised the spell of dig. Even with no armor on, it was at 100% failure. Oh well, run of the mill for a Ranger. I got a pick-axe now, any ways. I can dig with that.

1.5 **Puzzling Out The Boulders**

By now I probably had a few more levels and hit points (don’t remember how many, but hit points are low for Rangers.). Haden’t found an altar to Mars yet. So no easy way to fix that incident with the black unicorn. Nothing left to do but head back to the Oracle level and face that infernal rooster (pyrolisk). Everything else that I could think of had been done.

Got to the door on level 9, it was still shut. Quivered my +2 elven arrows, took a breadth and entered the centaur statue chamber. There it was. Took a few rounds for me to line it up. Got burned by the microwave beam once, but 2 rounds at 3 shots fired each time, killed the red rooster. Pretty anti-climactic, I know. But I was skilled in the bow by now (finally) and had a few more experience levels. Seemed to make all the difference.

Picked up the unicorn horn from the black unicorn that Sirius killed last time we were here. These things are handy. The Oracle had told me about them several times, and they cure lots of ills. I immediately adjusted the inventory letter of the unicorn horn to "u". I do that for certain things, that way I don’t have to keep looking at what letter it is in my inventory all the time.

Talked with the Oracle all we could (I had brought all my zorkminds with me), wrote all his wisdom down, and tried to make sense of some of it. After this, we finished exploring level 9, and descended to level 10.

**Dungeon Level 10:**

- Monster room + throne + chest
• stairs to the boulders
• statue of a rust monster

Here we found a room full of monsters (bugbears, orcs, hobgoblins, centaurs, etc.), and when I moved out of line of sight, a throne and a chest would appear. The monsters didn’t come after me, so I knew that they were guarding the area. I decided not to disturb them for now and finish exploring the level first. In case I would have to run, and therefore know more of the terrain.

Next we saw a statue of a rust monster. Uh-oh... Statues come to life sometimes when you get near them. And since I now run a clean dungeon campaign, I always move statues around to see if there’s anything underneath them, or just to relocate them to a more appropriate spot. I hit inventory to see what could get affected by a rustmonster. Too much stuff that would be hard to replace; my mithral mail, helm, shoes, and weapons (although I just can’t understand how mithral can rust - it still does).

Okay, Sirius you stand guard for a minute, while I strip off some armor and put down my weapons. Cautiously I approach the statue with my bow and some crude arrows (expendable ammo in case they should rust) as my only weapons, with cloak and gloves as my only armor. Rust monsters can’t hurt me physically, but if a horde of fire ants were to show up now, things would get pretty tense - pretty fast.

Search one square from the statue - nothing. Step on the same square and search again - nothing. Pickup the statue - "A statue of a rust monster. You see a staircase up here." Okay, move the statue over a few squares, and go put my armor back on before doing anything else.

I went back to the staircase, and after doing a "mimic search" saw that they were for real. I went up to take a quick look and saw the boulder/puzzle level. I decided to give it a try for now, as the monsters guarding the throne and chest downstairs weren’t going anywhere anyways. Also this area yields lots of different kinds of booty, often times real interesting stuff. Went back down, finished up exploring level 10, and got Sirius to follow me upstairs.

Sirius just loves this area of the dungeon. We play one of his favorite games here - hide and seek! There’s often eggs and tripe rations strewn about, and Sirius is real quick at moving between the boulders and sniffing these out (lots of laughs). He’s also always waiting for me to move a boulder out of the way to go see what’s there. Although he gets in my way a lot in this area, I appreciate his presence. While I’m trying to figure out the puzzles, he’s always on guard and intercepts many monsters for me (as I’m always deep in concentration and not paying as much attention to whatever is trying to sneak up on us).

This is a good area to meet nymphs on. They can’t teleport away. So Sirius and I have tons of fun with them here. I think we once got 8 looking glasses from just this area one game. Leperchauns get slaughtered here too. Which reminds me: Don’t eat leperchauns! They give you a twitchy feeling or something, and you teleport around for the rest of the game! No fun at all, believe me.

So the first level was easy (I’ve never failed it).

The second level took some effort, but nothing too strenuous. Big thing here was that we finally found a lockpick (!).

The third level was real tough. I think it took me a day (in real life) to get it. Thought several times I had blown it. What happened was that there were like three mimics immitating boulders. So when I had drawn my plans and went to move some boulders, I would get; "Wait! That’s not a boulder, it’s a large mimic!" And THAT would screw my plans that I had laid out. Grrrr... All that time wasted. And it’s impossible to go check all the boulders that are deep, or the ones that I can’t get a line to
1.5. **PUZZLING OUT THE BOULDERS**

shoot some darts (or whatever) at. Extremely frustrating. Walked away from the computer many times angry, I remember.

I cringed as I climbed the stairs to see what the last level was like...

YES! I shouted! It was an easy one. Well, not easy; but one that I had solved previously (the one with several horizontal walls). So I knew that since I had done it at least once before, I could do it again. Just had to think, and be patient. Also, you can access most of the boulders from the start and do mimic checks. Turned out much easier than the level before.

Well, I had figured out the puzzles this time. But if I don’t, and it happens, then I move all the boulders I can to get at whatever booty may be hanging around. Bring a pick-axe in case there are some that you can’t get at and smash the ones that are in the way.

What I found that helps me out in this whole area, is my experience in the game of chess. Although, I don’t find that this area brings anything to the game. If I wanted to do puzzles, then I’d play a puzzle game, not a fantasy exploration game. Just my 2 cents.

Went down the long hallways and checked the door for traps, many times - none. I unlock it with our recently found lockpick (All the doors are always locked in the boulders area.). Open the door, and take note of the monsters that I can see from my vantage point; cockatrice, mumak, dwarf king, centaur, soldier ant, ettin mummy, leperchaun, killer bee, etc. After a long time of considering things, I close the door and lock it again. I’ve decided to come back after having found something else that may give us more of an edge. Like a wand of micro wave heat, with a wide angle dispersion beam (remember the pyrolisk?).

I gather all the stuff we found in the boulders area, and the stuff that I won’t keep on me I lock it in a broom closet next to the stairs and the rustmonster statue on dungeon level 10. This takes several trips, of course. There’s always lots of stuff from this area.

I gather all the wands, rings, potions, and scrolls that I can carry and go back to the base camp on dungeon level 4. Dump it all there for a few minutes, and run up to that potion shop on level 2 (Yeah, he caught the pick-axe again). All the potions are still there. Good. I lock the door to the potion shop with the lock pick. I feel a LOT better now.

Back to base camp on level 4. Organise everything in their place, test for cursedness, try on rings, etc. Discover something new...

There were a few monsters that came into the room during this time, don’t remember what they were exactly, but I distinctly remember one of them was a lizard. So I went into the chest for my wand collection and started zapping them in order, just like usual: Zap - nothing, next wand; zap - nothing, next wand; zap - Magic Missiles! (the lizard croaks and leaves a corpse) next wand; zap - nothing, next wand; zap - nothing, but there’s another lizard there (?). That’s odd. Wait a few turns for all the monsters to come forward a few squares. Nope, the lizard corpse has definately disapeared. Hmmm....

Kill all the monsters with daggers. Pick up one of the corpses and throw it next to Sirius so that he eats it and thereby stays out of the way. Zap that last wand at the remaining corpses and, lo and behold, the lizard appears again! No corpse. (shrug) I name the wand "Lizard Lifesaver" and stow it in the chest with the rest while Sirius goes to play with the lizard.

I can now lock the box and chest. I feel way better about this.
1.6 Two Missions

Now I’m starting to feel a little more confident in our abilities. So I set some goals for Sirius and I:

1. Keep exploring downwards until we start feeling that we’ve reached a depth where; the monsters we’re encountering are an equivalent challenge to tackling that last room in the boulders, and if so, then we turn back and take them out. Failing that...

2. Keep going until we’ve found a device that will let us accomplish this.

So off we go...

Dungeon Level 11

- large box

Dungeon Level 12

- leperchaun den
  - monster room with a throne
  - chest

Here there was a room with a gang of leperchauns. We didn’t take them out right away. I had a lockpick now, so was able to lock the door. We’d take care of them at a later time, or maybe on the way back up, depending how things were going. But acquiring a pile of zorkminds wasn’t in the mission plan for now. What I did do though, was look very carefully throughout the whole level (did a lot of searching), hoping to discover an altar to Mars. No luck. Damn. Mars always asks me for leperchauns, and here was a gang of them all in one place.

Nothing comes to my recollection about this monster room. So we probably just took them out looking to fulfill Mission #2.

Dungeon Level 13

- large box
- fountain

Dungeon Level 14

- temple to Venus (neutral)
- fountain
1.6. **TWO MISSIONS**

I remember being very excited when I saw a Kestrel (I hardly ever see any in the Mazes of Menace). I was pretty disappointed when it turned out this was a temple to Venus again. Like, come on. She already has one in Temple Town.

Poor Mars. We have discovered two altars to Mercury, two temples to Venus, and nothing for him. I make a mental note that this situation will no doubt have to be rectified the hard way sometime in the near future...

**Dungeon Level 15**

- statue of an ochre jelly
- large box

Glad that, that statue, stayed a statue (!).

**Dungeon Level 16**

- portal to Home
- fountain
- statue of a coyote

I have "portal to Home" marked here, but that's for you guys (in case you're keeping track). I didn't discover it till much later. At this point in the game (and my Nethack experience), I didn't even know that these kind of portals existed.

By the time we got to this level, I had noticed that Sirius wasn't fighting as much as he used to. Like he still did, but it seemed like he was picking and choosing the monsters that he would engage or not. I took it as a sign that things we're getting more dangerous, or Sirius was getting old. Or... maybe Sirius had a premonition that we were getting near the following ghastly place...

**Dungeon Level 17 (Ghost Level)**

- Glen Wilkerson's skeleton

This is the level that when you enter it says something like: "You enter what seems to be a very different world." Well they're right! It's like playing those games when computers first came out, and the windows operating system didn't exist. Dots, lines, letters, shading, and a black background on the computer screen. The whole level is eerie and lends itself well to being in a haunted place - just like in the old black and white scary movies on television. Lighting is different here as well. The rooms are never lit, and it's a good place to get taken by surprise. I can almost swear that my candles always get blown out on this level (lots of laughs!).

So with extreme caution we enter. The only reason we did so, was cause we hadn't fullfilled our mission parameters yet (though I had just about reached the threshold of my confidence upon seeing this place), AND we had a candle with us.
Slowly were exploring each room. There’s only one door out of each room, so everything is progressing in a linear fashion. Sirius sticks to me like glue. I eventually come up on one of the funny symbols and have to do the "$/" command. It says something like; "You gaze upon the ancient bones of Glen Wilkerson." Next thing I hear is Sirius whimpering.

Hokay. I’ve just lost my nerve. Time to go.

I know what’s coming up next. As soon as I see someone’s skeleton with all his equipment still on, I know he died a ghastly death - and I don’t want to end up lying there next to him! I always come across someone who died on this level. It’s truly not a place you want to hang out in. I’m sitting in my chair at the computer, and I feel cold.

We quickly retrace our steps to the upstairs. Okay we exited (phew). Now what?

I ponder a while, and figure that if I start hauling all the loot from each level back up to our base camp, that something will probably turn up in the way of fulfilling mission #2. Great, that’s what we’ll do. I’m not going down there again unless I have a lot better stuff and/or equipment. Sirius seems to be very happy with this plan as we start heading back up in the Mazes of Menace...

We’re lugging loot upwards, level by level, and at level 13 (I think, cause I remember a fountain being right next to me), we get our big break. A throng of Uruk-Hai (orcs with white hand painted on their shields), are meandering their way along the corridor towards us.

There must have been at least 8 of them, there were a lot. It was a long battle. Not cause they’re above my capabilities, they ARE orcs after all, and I’m an Elf. But these guys are the "Old Guard" of the orc "Grande Armee Imperiale". They have decent equipment, and often a special item or two. But most importantly, they have the "poison tipped crude arrow" as a missile weapon. Those we definitely want for ourselves. I now realised that Sirius and I, were going to fulfill our mission after all. We had a killer weapon at our disposal. Just have to make sure not to get poisoned ourselves, and take them from these guys...

The battle was long, but not complicated. Loot, apart from the poisoned arrows, revealed a wonderful whistle. The kind that when you tweet, your pet appears within two squares of you! Now I could use Sirius tactically at my desire for combat. Not to mention that moving from level to level would now be much quicker, as I no longer needed to wait up for my dog (unless he’s eating). I immediately change the letter of the whistle in my inventory to "w", and name it "Sirius".

What a blessing these Uruk-Hai were. My spirits were lifted quite high indeed!

Several trips were made up and down the levels to complete the transfer of loot to our base camp on level 4.

### 1.7 Grand Finale At The Boulders

So we’re back at base camp on dungeon level 4. I go through all the motions of verifying for cursedness, trying stuff out, blablabla. Don’t remember any major discoveries other than the previously mentioned poisoned arrows and the the wonder whistle, which is named "Sirius". Most of the Uruk-Hai arrows turned out to be uncursed (around 55 of them!). I would have been just as happy if they were all cursed, to tell you the truth.

I then go to one end of the room (it’s a long room) with the poisoned arrows, the +2 elven arrows, and my trusty daggers. I shoot some arrows, and throw some daggers several times in one direction.
1.7. GRAND FINALE AT THE BOULDERS

I count the number of squares they travel. I repeat this several times to make sure. I want to know what my maximum range is with my weapons.

Note: What it was at the time, I no longer remember. I know what these ranges are now; 8 for daggers, and 9 with bow + arrow, but I’m at a higher experience level and now expert in the bow, I wasn’t then nor as high in experience. So they have probably changed since that point in time of where I was in the game.

Having figured that out, I prepare a kit for out next mission; clearing out that last room in the boulders. I’ve done it not too many times before, but there’s always lots of stuff that comes from there - if I don’t die, of course. I’m getting tired of all the booty trips. So I’m not going to be carrying lot’s of stuff as say, when we go on exploration missions, in order to minimize the hauling trips back to base camp.

So just the weapons, the wand of magic missiles, the wonder whistle, a couple of food rations, and a potion of extra healing in all likelyhood (as I carried one on me for the longest time in the begining I remember). And down the Mazes of Menace we went towards the boulders section.

Went up the stairs near the statue of the rustmonster, and made our way to the last room on the uppermost level of the boulders. Made sure the door was still locked (it was), and I then counted the number of squares from the door up along the corridor that gave me max arrow/dagger range. I dropped something there to mark the spot (probably some food). I then went to the door and unlocked it, ran to my spot in the corridor, with bow at the ready, and waited.

And waited.

I remember waiting long enough that I had to eat some food.

Hmmm... No one is coming out.

Okay, I’ll open the door to make it easier for them. I went and did that, then ran back to my spot again to wait for the monsters to come out, whereby I’d shoot them as they did.

And I’m waiting... Man, these guys aren’t as stupid as orcs.

Well... I’ll have to go and bait them to come out. So down I went and stood outside the open door to the room full of monsters. Hit "," for several turns. Nothing.

I took a step forward and stood in the doorway. Hit "," a few times again. Nothing. Not one of them budged !?

I had to reconsider things now. Things weren’t working out as planned (I hate that).

I didn’t want to throw any daggers in there, as I’d have to wait for the battle to be over in order to retrieve them, and I only had so many. I counted my arrows and decided to use a few up here, but not on the only creature that was in firing line of sight (I forget what it was, but certainly it was something that I thought was resistant to poison). Since the monsters weren’t moving until provoked, I would take a step in and line up something else, like that cockatrice over there. Then I’d run out of the room and down the hall, where I’d just pepper them all when they would follow me out of the room.

Note: For some reason that I just can’t seem to fathom at THIS present time, the above plan was very attractive to me at THAT point in time with the game (lots of laughs!).

Here’s about how things went...

Situation Last Room of the Boulders Level 6:

- I step from the doorway square into the first square of the room. Now I’m right next to three monsters. The top one is a cockatrice.
- Decide that I would rather NOT be next to a cockatrice, in case it doesn’t fail it’s saving throw to the poison on the arrow tips.
- I step one square down (now 2 moves from the doorway, 3 from the hallway, and way too many to be on the road to my spot up the corridor). As I do that, this message appears at the top of my screen: "You hear the sound reminiscent of an elephant stepping on a peanut."
- I go what...? Then the whole room literally EXPLODES into life!
- A white beam of pellets goes ricoheting around the walls of the room.
- Every single monster either; moves around, throws something, drinks something, reads something, or takes a swipe at me.
- The message part of the game is just full of stuff. So much that it stops at "- more -" and I have to hit "enter" to be able to read it all. Like lots of times!
- Luckily; I’ve made my saving throw from what I now know what those pellets are - a wand of frost! Also the swipes and things they chucked my way, haven’t knocked me down in hit points much - phew.
- After reading all the messages, I notice that the cockatrice is now standing right next to me, and is now blocking the path to the door!
- All I did was take a step down! I haven’t even fired a shot yet!! Where in the name of Mars is that clumsy elephant?? When I find him - HE’S GONNA GET CROAKED SO BAAAD!!!!

Okay. Time Out! We have a "situation" here. Have to collect my thoughts and do some heavy thinking. I step away from the computer and go have a coffee + smoke a cigarette.

- I come back, and go over all the messages again. Taking note who is doing what, and see if I can somehow extricate myself from this.
- After much thought, I come to the conclusion that; I have to get to the doorway and back in the hallway. There I can fight everything on one. Being amongst a mob in tight quarters, is not where a Ranger wants to be.
- Okay, so first order of business is to drop that cockatrice blocking my shortest route to the doorway.
- Quiver the poisoned tipped arrows and let him have it.
- Another round of endless messages (as well as many, many more rounds to come).
- No shot from the wand of frost, but lots of other stuff.
- The cockatrice makes its saving throw and is still there. It hasn’t attacked me, thank Mars I move faster than it, and got a free round on it.
- More swipes are coming at me. I think a centaur is giving me a hard time with butt kicks.
- There’s a killer bee stinging me; but I make my saving throw versus poison.
- A leperchaun is picking up gold off the floor.
- Nearly everybody has moved around.
- I curse that elephant.
- Shoot poisoned arrows at the cockatrice again. Still doesn’t go down.
- It bites me! I make my saving throw versus stoning.
- Frost pellet beams are bouncing all over the room.
- Something breacks on my head. I’m either confused or hallucinating now.
- Message after message continually appears on the display.
1.7. **GRAND FINALE AT THE BOULDERS**

- It’s a bar room brawl!
- I pull out the wand of magic missiles. **DIE COCKATRICE!** And I start zapping it. Magic missiles ricochet all over the place. Adding to the general mayhem.
- I hear noises coming from the corridor.
- Sirius! I remember the wonder whistle all of a sudden. Blow it and my attack dog is now part of the general entourage, somewhere in the room.
- I switch to the +2 elven arrows, and just keep peppering whatever is on the way to the door.
- Whenever something goes down. Another monster takes it’s place. I can never take a step towards it. Argh!
- The stuff around me is really hitting hard now. Probably that ettin mummy and the mumak.
- Have to step away from them, thereby putting me still further from the door.
- More arrows spring from my bow.
- More noises. I have no idea how Sirius is doing.
- More beams are bouncing all over the place. Amazingly, I’m making all kinds of saving throws.
- I have a wall at my back now. There’s an ochre jelly next to me on my left. I use +2 arrows on it. I no longer care about the future. Every round is a life and death affair.
- When will the messages start to abate??
- Everything is blurry. This battle never ceases. I hit the fire button ("fire"). I get a message saying I’m out of ammunition! No more +2 arrows.
- I quiver the poisoned ones.
- Something has got to give! I pull out and just keep zapping the wand of magic missiles until it’s empty.
- The frost pellets have stopped as well. No idea if that wand of frost is empty, or if I’ve killed the wielder.
- Something next to me has gone down and nothing has stepped up to take it’s place.
- I blow the wonder whistle with all my breadth. Sirius appears next to me. Good. He’s still alive.
- A dwarf king is giving the leperchaun some competition in picking up gold off of the floor. Good. You keep that up for a while.
- The messages just all meld together in one long blur.
- Something rubs itself against my legs. What now? There’s some kind of eel next to me. Strange, I thought the hallucinations wore off. Maybe not.
- Sirius eats a corpse of whatever. NO! I need you now! But he won’t listen. His stomach is number one priority. Always was.
- Fire more arrows.
- There's a mindflayer in the room!
- How long have I been doing this battle?
- No idea if anything has gone down to the poisoned tips. I ceased reading the messages some time ago. I just hit enter until I don’t see "– more –" anymore. Then I see if I’m still standing. Then I look at how many hit points I have left. Then I point my bow at something, and let fly. This is my new pattern of action for many turns.
- There’s an opening in the front row. I can see the doorway! I step towards it.
- Every time I step somewhere, I get a message saying; "There are many objects here." I’m constantly fighting the impulse to take a turn off fighting and pick up some arrows. I never do.
- There’s an umbrerhulk in the room! I’m confused from the gaze.
- Keep firing.
- Sirius and I are seperated again. Monsters have filled the gap between us.
- The doorway! It’s clear! I can step into the doorway! I do so.
- Now step into the hallway. Something has kept pace with me and has stepped forward into the doorway I have just vacated. I start fighting it off.
- There’s a gang of carnivorous apes coming down the corridor. Sure, I say. Just bring it all on.
- I fire down the hallway. Round after round of poisoned arrows. I can hear the sounds they make when they embed themselves into the ape bodies (thump - thump - thump).
- Something keeps dingin me from the doorway.
- "You are hit!" "Your not affected by the poison." "You are hit!" "Your not affected by the poison."
- I have no idea how I keep making all these saving throws. Surely I’ll blow a roll sooner or later...?
- The apes are on top of me now. Back to facing opponents at melee range from more than one direction.
- I see some ants lining up behind the apes. I don’t even bother checking what kind of ants. Won’t make anymore of a difference to what’s been happening lately. I scream into the computer screen: "Welcome to the party!"
- I see on the status line that I’m hungry. No idea how long that’s been there.
- Nothings standing in the doorway now. But that square is full of bodies and stuff. I know that I can’t close the door. But I try anyways. "There’s something blocking the doorway."
- Keep firing.
- The ape besides me goes down. An opening. Is Sirius still alive? Tweet the whistle. He appears next to me in the corridor.
- Hit points are low. Quaff that potion. "You don’t have this in your inventory." Huh? Must have quaffed it earlier (shrug). Keep on fighting.
- I hear noises. Sirius has engaged the ants. I concentrate on whatevers coming through the doorway.
- Fire more arrows. I’m out of ammunition. Just daggers left now.
- Black pudding! What’s this thing doing here? It touches me. Something happens to something in my inventory. I make it eat daggers.
- Step back into the room. Something stands in front of me (a barrow whight?). I fling daggers.
- No more ammo of any kind. I hit "x" and start lunging with old faithful; the +1 elven dagger.
- Lot’s of bodies everywhere. I can see walls.
- There’s something slow moving over in a corner. I run towards it and just keep stabbing it until it dies.
- I turn around and scan the room. Only a few monsters left; leperchaun, dwarf lord, and some kind of mummy.
- I pick up a stack of arrows and some daggers. I gun them all down.
- The leperchaun is the last to fall. He leaves a mountain of gold. Looks like he spent all his time just picking it all up.
- I faint. Fell to weak status at some point.
- Wake up to a gecko nibbling on me. I kill it and eat some kind of corpse from the pile I passed out on.
- Sirius is in the room near me. I go to look in the hallway. Don’t see anything that’s moving.
- It’s over.
I save the game, switch off the computer for the night, and collapse on the couch. I’m exhausted...

1.8 The Death of Sirius

The next day, I fire the game back up and start assessing the whole battle.
I have 4 hit points!
There must have been a chameleon amongst the throng somewhere. That would account for some of the really strong monsters I’d seen the night before.
Someone must have created extra monsters somehow. There are way too many corpses here. And corpses are never a sure thing when you kill something either.
Most every shot I fired was at point blank range. Though as I tried to, I don’t remember ever missing once.
There’s one boulder inside the room, and two more where there should be doors. Suspicion besets me. I don’t go near them for now. There’s bodies and junk all over the place. I go and collect all the stuff in the corridor and in the doorway. Bring it all inside the room. Shovel the bodies out that are blocking the doorway, close and lock the door. I need to heal up and regain some hit points real bad.
Sift through all the corpses in the room and find the cockatrice. The Oracle has told me about these. Also... I lost one of my best characters ever in AD&D many years ago to a cockatrice. That painful experience never left me. You can never be too cautious. If I were too pass out again, I wouldn’t want to use that as a pillow. Also, sometimes monsters just appear out of nowhere, although in the boulders they can’t teleport and I’m locked in a room, I still wasn’t taking any chances - ESPECIALLY after last nights battle! I lock it in the closet with "Elbereth" burnt into the floor. No choice, the other two closets have boulders instead of doors.
There’s an amulet there, and I suspect what it is, but am not 100% certain at this point.
While waiting for my hit points to regenerate, I sort out the booty. Yep, more than I can carry. I was right before coming here. This will take several trips.
Hit points are still low. I sit on the floor ("#sit") and lean my back against a wall. I will follow it with multiple "," commands. The game asks me: "Having fun sitting on the floor?" Oh yes, absolutely. I say. It’s nice just to relax (wink). Hit points are back up, and so are Sirius’s, I’m sure. Go to the boulder in the room and do a mimic check. Sure enough, it’s really a giant mimic disguised as a boulder. I sniff it and then do the same to the two others blocking the broom closets. Sirius gorges himself on one while I start to haul some of the booty back down the stairs.
During these trips, there were a few scrapes with wandering monsters. I didn’t think that any were a real problem, but there was one point where I let Sirius handle four human zombies all by himself. I guess he got hit a few more times than I had noticed.
I carry all the booty down to level 10 of the Mazes of Menace first. See how much I can carry while burdened, and lock the rest in that now popular broom closet at the stairs and statue of a rustmonster.

We were heading towards the upstairs of level 10, when we entered a room and a few white pellet beams zoomed by me, bounced off of a wall, the ricochet hit me this time (I made my saving throw again), and then hit Sirius (I guess he failed his saving throw). Next thing you know, in came running some winter wolves. I spent a round dropping all the extra junk I was carrying, to be able to get more moves per round. Sirius engaged in combat right away. We dispatched the winter wolves fast enough (I seem to recall there were just two of them in all), but not before a few more frost breath attacks. I was always making my saving throw, so that didn’t really affect me, and Sirius had only taken that one hit. Battle being over almost as quickly as it begun, I went to reburden myself with the booty, while Sirius ate a winter wolf corpse.

I took a step out in the hall, where the winter wolves had come from and saw that a lizard was just a few squares to my left. This was only a lizard, I thought to myself, I’m going to ignore it and just keep on heading to the stairs. Sirius will take care of it, he was just a step behind me. Sirius and I, had done this with far worst monsters than a lizard many times before. I never doubted what the outcome would be. Sirius would kill the lizard, and if still hungry, would eat the corpse. Then when I would reach the upstairs, I’d just blow the whistle. Then I would chat with him, and see if he was still eating before going up the stairs.

The messages came up on the screen, like they had a thousand times previously. "Sirius bites the lizard." "Sirius bites the lizard." "The lizard bites Sirius." "Sirius is killed!"

What?! I was dumb struck. I was staring at the message with my mouth open. I could not believe it! I looked at the playing area, and only saw the lizard picture. Sirius wasn’t there. Can’t be, I was trying to convince myself. Sirius must have gone back in the room. That’s why I can’t see him.

With my fingers trembling, I blew on the wonder whistle named "Sirius."

A strange whistling sound echoed through the dungeon...

My dog did not appear...

I killed the lizard, and stepped onto the square with it’s corpse.

Sure enough, there was another corpse there. It was of a large dog called "Sirius."

I picked up the lizard corpse and threw it down the hall.

I was in shock.

I picked up Sirius and gently put him down one square away from me.

Took a step back, dropped all the junk, pulled out the pick-axe and dug a pit at the spot where he had fallen. I then dug around the dungeon level to open up a path for a boulder that was some distance away. Once cleared, I brought the boulder nearby.

I picked up my dog and held him in my arms for the longest time. Remembering all the things we did together. Never would I see that face of his anymore, nor his tail wagging in the air. No more would I hear him yip when I chatted with him.

Gently, I laid him in the grave.

I pushed the boulder over the pit, thereby covering it up.

I engraved in the dirt: "RIP Sirius You were the best companion I ever had."

I stared blankly at the screen for a long time.

I deposited the wonder whistle named "Sirius" on the ground to mark the grave.
Sullenly, I made my way back to base camp on dungeon level 4. I’m devastated by the death of Sirius. The recent major accomplishment; clearing out the last room of the boulders, now meant very little to me.

I saved the game, and did not play Nethack for several days.

## 1.9 Lessons On Greed

After several days, I was twitchy about playing Nethack again.

I consoled myself over the recent loss of my companion by vowing that I would not let all his efforts go for naught. He had helped me tremendously in advancing on the journey of retrieving this so called amulet of Yendor. With even greater resolve to pay attention and be careful, I fired up the game, and once more typed in "Ellora" when prompted on who I was.

I’d been away from the game a while, so didn’t want to do anything overly complicated right off the bat. I dunno about you guys, but as you can probably see by now, my consciousness eventually melds into that of my character. The game then becomes very familiar to me, and I start to get a "feel" for everything in the dungeon.

So in order to ease back into the fold, I sort some of the booty I had brought back from the boulders. Tested it for cursedness, and saw that the amulet was not cursed. I put it on, nothing happened. But strongly suspecting it may be an amulet of reflection, kept it on.

I then adjusted the inventory of the amulet to "l". The letters "L" (capital L) and "l" (little l) confuse me in the game all the time. Since I may never access this item (the amulet) in the inventory for the rest of the game, I assign it this letter. Now I don’t have to worry about typing in the wrong letter when the game asks me what I want to apply/wear/wield/put-on/take-off, etc.; [H or ?] or whatever.

Are you all confused yet? I’m starting to be (laugh)! It’s just something that you have to experience several times over, I guess. There are a few things that are confusing in this game - to me anyways - and that’s one of them. Hokay, back to the story...

With the amulet on (and adjusted), I decide to give it the old test. I rummage through the chest for that wand of magic missiles. Hmmm... It’s not here. Oh yeah, I emptied it at that big battle at the boulders, and it’s locked in the broom closet on level 10. And come to think of it, there’s still a pile of booty there too. May as well start trudging back and forth to localise all the booty here. I’ll get a few wandering monsters throughout the trips, which will get me going with the feel of this game again.

Now having a mission plan, I want to travel light, since I’m just doing booty ferrying. So I only take 8 daggers for general combat, about 12 poisoned tipped crude arrows for emergencies, my +1 e eleven bow, the old trusty + 1 elven dagger, and off I go.

Trudge - trudge - fight - trudge - trudge - etc., for all the trips it took. Every trip I made, I did it on purpose to take the long way around from the stairs and the broom closet on level 10. This way, I would avoid having to see Sirius’s grave each time.

Finally, I’m at the last trip I’ll make from the broom closet on level 10, to base camp on level 4. I load up, burdening myself in the process of course, and heading back the long way to the stairs when a little kitten appears. I really didn’t want a pet again, being no where near over the loss of Sirius yet. I pretend to ignore the kitten. In the back of my mind, I knew full well this wouldn’t work.
CHAPTER 1. BOOK 1

Being burdened, it got to attack me several times in quick succession, but for hardly any damage at all. I keep walking. It keeps trying to bite, but invariably just misses me all the time. My armor class is really good, and this is just a little kitten.


Urgh... This is annoying having to see this in the messages all the time. What a pesky little critter.


Okay. I can’t put up with this anymore. It’s now going to be added to the list of killed monsters at the end of the game.

Not bothering to unburden myself for such a pest. I start to fling daggers at it.

Round 1: "You hit the kitten!" "You hit the kitten!" "The kitten misses." "The kitten misses."

Round 2: "You hit the kitten!" "You hit the kitten!" "You hit the kitten!" "The kitten misses." "The kitten bites!"

Round 3: "You hit the kitten!" "You hit the kitten!" "The kitten misses." "The kitten misses."

Wow. It took seven daggers from me! What a totally tough little kitty this is. I know for a fact, that I’m no slouch when it comes to dagger flinging either. And it sure has a lotta spunk too. Look at the way it’s still coming at me! Hmmm...

Okay, you proved your worth. Who knows, maybe Mars put you in my path as a gift / test or something. I look at my inventory and see if I happen to have anything to feed it. Wouldn’t you know it, I don’t.

So I pick up my daggers, while this thing is still trying to jump all over me, and start roaming from room to room on the level, looking for something that it will eat.


Where is a wandering monster when you need one, eh?

Finally something suitable shows up. I forget what it was. I killed it, picked up the corpse, and threw it at the kitty. It devoured the corpse, and the little heart showed up next to it’s picture. I checked to see how badly gnawed my ankles were, and called her "Missy Prissy". "Prissy" for the spunk she had, and "Missy" for all the times she missed me. Sounded good to me at the time. So now I have a pet kitten.

With all the roaming I was just doing on this level, I noticed that we were pretty close to that room full of monsters with the chest and throne (Refer to "Part 3: Puzzling Out The Boulders" for details (1.5 on page 19)). So decided to reconnoiter it a little more in detail. I’ll then form a "plan" to take it out once I’ve dumped all this junk I’m carrying at the base camp.

I approach the room. The kitten is still eating somewhere behind me. Remember that these particular monsters don’t move, even though I’m in their line of sight. Also I’m still burdened. The room is 5 squares vertical, by 4 squares horizontal. There’s 15 of them in there, three vertical rows of five monsters each. The middle back row monster, on the far right, is covering the throne. The chest, at the middle far left of the room, doesn’t have a row of monsters covering it. The entrance (no door), is at the top left of the room. The corridor is quite wide, three squares that eventually taper into 2 squares that taper into a one square wide corridor at the entrance. Like a big funnel.

Hmmmm... An idea begins to form in my head. (I can see all your eyes rolling - laugh!) I approach and stop right at the entrance. Hit "." a few times. Nothings happening.

I step into the first square of the room. I’m now standing right next to a bugbear and something else. I hit "." once. Nothing.
I hit "s" once. Nothing.
Hmm...
Okay, I sure as hell hope that 'Dumbo the Elephant' isn’t hanging around these parts (Refer to "Part 5: Grand Finale at the Boulders" ([I.7 on page 24]) for details on how elephants can ruin your day).
I take two steps down and am now on the same square as the chest. Three rows of immobile monsters are on my right, a wall on my left.
I check the chest for traps - ten times in a row. I don’t find any.
I loot the chest. It’s locked, of course.
I pick the lock with my lockpick.
I loot the chest again. It’s full of loot! Don’t remember what it all was, but it looked very good to me at the time. Scrolls, potions, a wand, and a ring probably. But the game won’t let me. I can’t take anything out. My pack won’t hold anymore!
Huh...? I look at my status and suddenly remember that I’m burdened. I look at my inventory and see that I’m jam-packed with booty. Darn.
I don’t want to drop ("d") anything, in case it makes any kind of noise. I sure as heck am not going to drop a whole bunch of stuff simultaneously ("D"), cause that will surely cause a clamor. Stop and think a minute....
Got it!
I loot the chest and put "in" a few items from my pack. Now I have some free spots in my inventory. Man, am I able to think things out or what (grin)!!?
I then pick-up the chest. "You have great difficulty trying to pick up the chest. Continue?"
Urgh... I don’t feel so smart anymore (sad face). I hit "y".
I’m now strained. Deep in a room full of monsters. Hardly any weapons on me. What could possibly go wrong?
I take a step up towards the exit. This consumes at LEAST 2 ticks on the clock.
My new kitten suddenly pops in the entranceway of the room (Oh Nooo!).
I’m talking to the computer screen in a low soothing voice: "Nice kitty. Don’t make any noise kitty. Please turn around kitty. I’m coming back out kitty. Gooooood kitty."
Gingerly I press the number 8 key on the numberpad, therby taking another step towards the exit...
"Missy Prissy misses the bugbear." "Missy Prissy misses the bugbear" "Missy Prissy bites the bugbear!" "Missy Prissy misses the bugbear."
AAAAArrggghhh!
The message area of the display fills up. More of this "- more -" stuff.
Crossbow bolts are flying my way. What ever monster is next to me lashes out.
Why did I tame that kitty again, I ask?
I step diagonally up and left, squeezing by the kitten while exiting the room.
Something breaks into shards on my head, but I’m not affected.
One square out into the corridor I’m still hobbling with the chest and all my booty. I can get away with all of this, I wishfully try to convince myself. They can now only get to me one at a time. Just a few more steps sideways...
"You hear a zap!"

Okay... what happened? I look at the screen carefully. I don’t see anything different. Another step sideways and now I’m next to a... mumak!?!?

Where did you come from?! I have infravision, and the corridor tapers outward. I would have seen it coming along the corridor at least two moves ago, of this I am absolutely certain.

"You hear a zap!" There’s that noise again?

Now I have an orc shaman next to me too! And there’s a crocodile behind him! And there’s a human mummy two squares away! And a black naga besides it! And a G-cube (what I call a gelatinous cube, it’s a holdover from my D&D days) is in the entrance way I just vacated two moves ago!!

I see a bugbear (yes, the exact same one that "Missy Prissy" attacked initially) back in the room, is the one that’s zapping a wand of monster creation!

(Long drawn out moan.) Why, oh why did I not just dispatch that kitten when I originally wanted to?!

Hookaay...

I hang my head. Swivel in my seat. Make a pot of coffee. Have a smoke. Have more coffee (it’s going to be another long night). Another cigarette. Sit back down in front of the computer. Put my head in my arms, and stare at the mess my character is now in on the screen...

It’s not the kittens fault. It’s squarely my fault. In fact, this was downright stupid. I should have known better. Actually, I do know better. I got greedy trying to do everything at the same time. I already had a mission plan; finish hauling the booty and THEN form a plan for taking this room out. It’s not like I was catapulted into this predicament, like falling through a trap door, or being teleported amongst a throng of monsters.

I recalled the promise I made, and determination I had when starting this game. Then I renewed it after Sirius passed away. Stupid, idiotic, greedy, selfish, numbskull. I chastised myself. I’m a disgrace to the Elven race.

Okay. I got my character into this, I’ll get her out of it - no matter what.

The rest of the night was spent fighting the battle. I was now surrounded by very mean monsters in the corridor. Everything was considered before I would hit a key. I tapped into all my knowledge about the game so far. I played it out like a very complex game of chess. The night wore on, but I did not notice time going by. All my efforts were focused to what was developing on the screen. I cannot recall all of the battle. Was concentrating to hard on it, I guess. What follows are the instances I can recall...

In one fell swoop, I dropped ("D") everything that was not necessary to my immediate survival. My movements were no longer restricted due to encumbrance. More monsters kept appearing. There were many that materialised in the corridor; an air elemental, a fire elemental, a vampire, a black pudding, a leocrouotta, a burning sphere, a kobold shaman, a raven, plus the previously mentioned ones are what I remember.

I was engulfed at least two times. Things got so bad, that I actually prayed. Mars surely must have felt my determination to carry on no matter what. As he restored my health during this crucial period.

There was an invisible monster, but it wasn’t a stalker. Somehow I lost a level of experience, but don’t believe it was from the vampire (?). I regained it immediately upon killing the next monster though.
1.10. **CONSOLIDATION**

I played with auto-pickup being either "on" or "off" each and every single round, in order to pick up ammunition, so as to not lose time in picking it up. Upon killing the air elemental, I was able to retrieve all the daggers I had flung at it while engulfed. Sometimes (not often) this would backfire. I would pick up a corpse and/or a suit of armor amongst the junk on the floor, burdening me in the process. Then I would have to figure out if I should spend a turn either dropping it again, moving, or firing.

From time to time, different monsters would turn to flee. How this came about, I do not know. Perhaps things were just too crowded for them to execute their programmed tasks (I’m no good with computers or how games are programmed. This is just pure speculation on my part.), and fleeing was a default recourse for them to follow. These instances would allow me to concentrate on monsters that were not fleeing, giving me occasional respite.

The G-cube ate the chest and eventually all of it’s contents, as well as, other objects that had fallen to the ground from the battle. Miraculously, it never hit me. Although I spent many turns next to it. As in the big battle at the boulders, I nearly always made my saving throw. Only against some kind of level drain, and blindness did I fail.

I never fought any of the monsters that were in the room with the throne. Besides that bugbear in the entranceway, nothing ever came out. Noises in the distance were amongst the messages all the time. So I assume that the kitten was quite busy in there.

Eventually, my battle in the corridor came to an end. That bugbear with the wand was the last to fall. Having picked up whatever was left of my daggers and arrows, cautiously I made my way back to the room.

Out from the room, a beast popped into the entrance way. Ready I was, to slay it there as it stood. My finger hesitated above the fire button. I hit look (";"), and discovered it was a large cat called "Missy Prissy". Incredibly, my kitten had grown all the way up in one engagement! I went to look inside the room. Only corpses and objects were strewn about.

I was immensely impressed with her. I knelt down in front of her and chatted. "Glad to have you along", were the words that came from my mouth. "Missy Prissy purred."

1.10 Consolidation

Wrapped up that adventure, and sorted out what was left of the booty at base camp on dungeon level 4. Okay now, consider what to do next...

The Oracle has been tapped, the caverns have been rifled, the boulders had been solved and looted. We have penetrated as far as the ghost level, and after that last outing, cleared out everything except the leperchaun den on dungeon level 12. Still haven’t rectified that incident with the black unicorn either.

Okay, we’ll go and see if we can find some kind of place of worship to Mars around that level with the little green poppers again. Who knows, maybe we’ve missed something there. Although base camp on dungeon level 4 was great, it’s getting to be a little far to walk back and forth to now. If we don’t get lucky there, we’ll try and breach the ghost level. Maybe we can then find someplace appropriate beyond that.

(If your keeping track, and wondering why I don’t consider setting up a base camp where the temple of Venus was, on dungeon level 14: It was cause that was a very small temple, no room to move around
in there. And I didn’t want to be constantly having to rub elbows with a preistess not of my own alignment. No use risking angering Mars needlessly just cause I was getting lazy. There weren’t any staisfactory rooms nearby the temple either. It was one of those levels with hardly any rooms, doors, and probably no broom closets either. Just lot’s of horizontal corridors back and forth.)

Mission plan now defined, Missy Prissy and I, set off and headed down the Mazes of Menace...

We had no luck with finding an altar around dungeon level 12 again, so we forged ahead (downwards). Okay, we’re again back down to the Ghost level. Let’s see how it goes...

Down the stairs. Light a candle, and keep our eyes peeled. I have infravisim, but if the monster doesn’t disengage any heat, I can’t see it until it’s on top of me. Missy Prissy is a cat, therefore able to see in the dark. She goes around doing her own thing. Not like Sirius, who stayed closer to me I seemed to recall.

So we’re winding around the level. Came up to Glen Wilkerson’s skeleton. Gave it a wide berth by hugging the opposite wall of the room. Then it touched me: "The ghost of Glen Wilkerson touches you!"

Oh! Ick!

I hate it when something touches me. (I’m an Elf and a Ranger.)

At the computer, I freeze. I’m now in my; "don’t take any time off of the clock mode".

I look at my hit points. They’re fine.

I hit inventory and see if anything’s been affected. Nothing that I can notice.

Ponder...

I’ve been touched by ghosts from this level about twice in prior games (now you know why I call it the Ghost level). These prior incidents, doesn’t make me feel any better about it happening to me now though.

What can this possibly do to my character?

I come to the conclusion that the spirit must be aging me somehow. I seem to recall that from my D&D days. I see nothing on the display that records my age. So then how would this be reflected in Nethack?

Okay... Elves’ have no souls. Everybody knows that. That’s why we live longer than most other races. Since this ghost is harming me by aging me with every hit, I’ll die from old age faster (if there’s a time limit at some point), or at least become more susceptible to dungeon sickness (poison, rotten food, spores in the air, rheumatoide arthritis from the dampness, etc.).

That’s it! It’s lowering my saving throw with every hit.

In Nethack, it’s usually something, or a combination of things, that weakens you for the next monster that comes along to off you. Just look at all my games to date, and how I’ve mostly died in them (except the ones that I hit the wrong key by mistake).

I gotta get away from this thing. But it can travel through walls, and I’m at a bad spot for getting touched again if I keep going forward. It’s slow though, if I can just line it up for some dagger flinging...

I fling quite a number of daggers at the ghost. Wow. It sure can take a lot of punishment. Maybe I should try some poisoned arrows instead...

THEN I realized what the problem was. Of course (slap forehead). It’s non-corporeal! Poison won’t affect it. Only magical or blessed weapons can affect this thing. Why didn’t I think of that before? (shake head)
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Hit inventory again and see what we have in the blessed and/or magical weapon category.
Got them stellar +2 elven arrows, but not too many left, although I've been pretty good with them so far. Only used them like 3 times this game (In the beginning, they'd be burnt by dungeon level 5 or 6). How deep is the dungeon? Will I have enough to last me? What if this thing doesn't get killed by the time I've used them all up? Then what? Okay... What else?

Got the +1 elven bow. Dunno how effective bashing it with this will be? I have bashed with it on occasion, but usually cause I forgot to hit the exchange command. Means I'll have to stand next to it though... Urgh. What else we got?

Just the ol' trusty +1 elven dagger. More standing next to it while thrusting. Uh - uh.

I got nothing that's blessed on me. Don't remeber if that battle-axe back at base camp is blessed or not. Still means I have to stand next to it in order to do some hacking. Not much different than bashing with the bow, or thrusting with the dagger. I have no where near enough blessed missile weapons back there either, that I keep much better track of then melee weapons.

While I'm thinking of weapons... I Just recently went through two "really" tough battles, now this ghost, and who knows what lies farther below. I don't usually get too far past this level come to think of it...

Go read the guidebook to Nethack again. The following applied to my situation:
"Objects can also be blessed. Blessed items usually work better or more beneficially than normal uncursed items."

Okay. I've just come to realise that in order to become more effective (and thereby have a chance at retrieving the amulet of Yendor), I need better weaponry in my arsenal. Blessed ones will do the trick! Retreat... (Or should I say; strategic withdrawal?)

Trudge back to base camp on dungeon level 4.

I'm sorting through my junk, when an owlbear comes waltzing in the room. Hmmm... I think that Mars likes creatures such as you. You would be a good addition to his army in the sky (or where ever he resides). Okay, while I'm at it, I'll take this opportunity and try to desecrate this lawful altar to Mercury... Lured the owlbear close to the altar, and killed it. Good, it left a corpse. Dragged it towards, and heaved (and I mean heaved) it up onto the altar.

These rituals are tricky, so we need to do some preparation here...

At home, I put a Black Sabbath CD in the drive.

Lit a candle then wielded it.

Now I stripped naked, save for my +2 elven cloak. Dropped all the stuff in my inventory, save the +1 elven dagger, and the lit candle.

Next, I performed a decadent dance of debauchery. It's the chaotic thing to do for your chaotic god. Held my breadth and offered the corpse (#offer). The following appeared... "There's a struggle between Mercury and Mars."

At home, I'm cheering for Mars. Get him Mars! You can do it!

"Mars wins! You successfully changed the alts alignment!" (Or something to that effect.) Yipee!!

No more hanging around an altar to Mercury. I'm proud that Mars saw I was worthy, and that gave him incentive to fight well for control of the altar. Went to the large box and pulled out the figurines I had collected so far. Placed them on the altar with some other miscellaneous stuff that I figured would be appropriate. This makes the area look more like a shrine (it does to me anyways).
Once satisfied with my decorations, went back to working on the arsenal...

Took a hard look at what we had discovered so far, hit the ('\n') button. By this point in the game: I’ve been hit by lots of potions and; had lots of scrolls read at me or read near me; and seen wands zapped by monsters, plus my own experiments with them. Therefore, I had quite a list in the display. So far, I’ve only played Elves. If you remember what I wrote in the prologue, I have some idea of what the arcane arts is like - namely spell casting, books and scrolls. Probably have played around 40 Wizards and 20 Preists already. I’ve seen lots of scrolls. I haven’t yet tried them all, but I’ve seen them all (unless there’s some super special ones that I’m unawares of), if you know what I mean.

Furthermore, here’s what the guide book has to say:

"One of the most useful of these is the scroll of identify, which can be used to determine what another object is, whether it is cursed or blessed, and how many uses it has left. Some objects of subtle enchantment are difficult to identify without these."

As far as I can tell, they’re right. Now the big thing, is identifying this particular scroll. Especially for the position that I’m presently in. Remember In Part #1 Journey to the Oracle (see [1.3 on page 9]?)

There I had found two shops, and had mentioned some prices of different things (potions and a morning star). Well, this is what I discovered about this particular scroll: No matter what it’s called, it’s always the least expensive. Yes, it’s even cheaper than the blank scrolls (the ones with nothing written on them). How come? I dunno. No clue why that is. This applies to both for buying and selling. I would venture to say that it’s never above 30 zorkminds. The most I’ve ever had to pay for one has been 26 zorkminds. That’s what I have marked on my lists, anyways. Since it’s cheap; you would think that it would also be the most plentiful, eh? No way. Those happen to be the scroll of teleportation. In my games anyways.

Now, in this particular game, the shops have been pretty scarce. Besides the ones in Temple Town, I’ve only discovered that potion shop on level 2, and the weapons shop on level 5. Only way I can get some idea of how much each scroll is worth in zorkminds, is either at; a scroll shop, a book shop, or a general store (these deal in everything). Only general store in the game so far, is back at Temple Town, in the caverns. I groan at the prospect of having to trek out there. But not more than that. I just look at it as a neccessary step towards fulfilling my present mission - upgrading my arsenal.

Now I’m trying to figure out which one of my remaining scrolls in the collection could be the ones I’m looking for. I have a list besides me of the few I’ve been able to get appraised when I was back in the caverns. Yes, I do keep notes. Also I have the ones that have been revealed through my discoveries list ('\n'). So, through process of elimination, I grab the possible ones (as well as a few other things I’m curious about), and start heading for the only place I can get them appraised. The general store at Temple Town. Anyways..., all that to say that I’ve got a system (laugh).

You might be wondering why I just don’t read some? Two reasons:

1. I’m trying to play smart. And the above system, although it involves quite a painstaking process, has worked for me with the least pain to any of my characters. I’m trying to get somewhere in this game.

2. Sometimes you get a gut feeling about things, and even though I have a favorite mystery scroll (FOOBIE BLETCH), I still see no reason for taking any unecessary chances. Remember - I’m an Elf! (Note: I’m well aware that my two recent major battles don’t reflect what I just said. However, I sure would not forget the lessons learned from them.)
1.10. CONSOLIDATION

Got to Temple Town. I was very happy that none of my stuff had been stiffed while I was away. I locked the chest and the door to the room at my base camp. Had everything I could get appraised done so. And for some reason (probably either cause I dislike the way this town is set up, or I had a brain spasm), came back to base camp on dungeon level 4 in the Mazes of Menace right away.

Sorted out all the junk from the trip, and started to get myself organised for some magic dabbling.

In the meanwhile, a white unicorn came prancing in the room. Woah! My eyes lit up. What incredible luck. We now can fix that accident with the black unicorn (See Part #1: Journey To The Oracle (see [1.3 on page 9]). Had a tough time lining it up for dagger flinging, but eventually killed it and dumped it’s corpse on the altar. Okay Mars; I offer thee this white unicorn as compensation for thine black one... (#offer). It got consumed in a burst of flame.

Next, I got one of the following messages: "You are definitely chaotic!", or "You are deemed chaotic!", or "You are aptly chaotic!". Or something like that. I wish I would have written it down at the time. Although I’m not looking for anything that will ruin the game for me: If anyone of you who is reading this has experienced this as well; I would be very curious to know what this particular message implies and/or means. Thanks (smile).

I’m sure I know which one is the scroll of identify now. Went to the chest, and saw that I had a couple more of those. Great. Gather up all the unknown scroll types in my inventory, and try an identify scroll. I got two choices this time! Found the enchant weapon scroll on my second choice, don’t remember what the other was. Oh boy. Now I’m excited. Saw that amongst the enchant weapon scrolls I had accumulated, two were blessed, one was uncursed, and one was cursed. Now had to figure which weapon and scrolls to use for my goals. I don’t get to do this kind of stuff too often. A big decision now has to be made.

Went for a smoke + coffee...

Mentally tried to recollect all my games of Nethack so far. Reasoned out, and came to the conclusion that; my dagger throwing was what really got me this far. Even though I’m an Elven Ranger and all, arrows just get mulched too often. Melee weapons aren’t too great for my role either. So daggers it will be. Went to the chest and pulled out the biggest stack of daggers I had. These turned out to be uncursed ordinary daggers. 18 of them in all.

Now make sure I do this correctly... Wield the daggers (Yes, you can wield all 18 in your hand at the same time!) and read a blessed scroll of enchant weapon. The daggers glowed blue for a while. Great! Go and drop them on the altar. No amber flash. Damn. They didn’t become blessed. Okay... Let’s try again. Read my other blessed scroll of enchant weapon. Same result as the first time with the blue glow. Dropped the daggers on the altar, and no amber flash again. Ah man...

Go read the guide book again... Came across this part:

"Clear potions are potions of water. Sometimes these are blessed or cursed, resulting in holy or unholy water. Holy water is the bane of the undead, so potions of holy water are good things to throw ('t') at them. It is also sometimes very useful to dip ("#dip") an object into a potion."

Oh, oh, oh! Of course (slap head). Why didn’t I think of that before?!

Go rummage through the chest. Lucky again, I have one blessed clear potion! I understand that chucking them at undeads may be neat. But I’d rather be able to chuck daggers at them over the course of the game. Once you throw a potion at something, it’s gone. Just look at what the monsters have been doing to me so far (wink).

Now I dip the daggers into it and... They glowed amber (or something like that)! Dropped on the altar to make sure, and nammed the stack of daggers "BDD" (Blessed Deadly Daggers). Corny I know, but
heah; I didn’t know I’d be telling this story here at that time (laugh). Now I won’t get them mixed up with anything else.

A mob of hill orcs decided to make an entrance on my celebrations. Lucky you, I said. Your gonna be test subjects (evil grin).

Wow - wee! One "BDD" dagger per hill orc was required to put them down. Har - har! I was like a child loose in a candy shop. What fun!

A few left some corpses, I think three of them. May as well give them to Mars. Now that we have this spiffy altar to him and all. Mars gave me the same response as in so many other games for the first two hill orc corpses. "A four leaf clover appears on the ground near you," I dunno why he keeps wanting leprechauns (?). He must be organising a lawn bowling league where he is, or somethin’. (shrug) Sorry Mars, only got hill orcs for you at the moment. I offered the last one, and a voice boomed out from above! "Use my gift wisely." And a dagger named "Sting" appeared at the altar!

Oh-kay... This I had found once or twice in prior games. Didn’t know it was one of Mars’ weapons. A gift from Mars! I’ll do just as you ask. Uh... Do you have an instruction manual for this thing? I suppose not.

Well, near as I can figure. This must be some kind of 'dagger of venom’. My reasoning is: "Sting" = scorpion tail stinger = killer bee stinger, hence it "stings" when it hits. I just can't find the latch to release the poison though...? I tried applying ("a"), invoking (#invoke), rubbing (#rub), etc.

Nothing. I never notice anything about monsters having to make a saving throw like, when I hit them with poisoned arrows. Oh well. Thanks again Mars! I better keep this thing on me, lest he thinks I’m ungrateful...

All right. With all of this figured out. I realised I have to go back to Temple Town. I left a pile of scrolls back there! Man, this game is tough enough as is. What is my problem with being absent minded? Oh well, look on the bright side. Maybe have some blessed water there too, plus other scrolls.

Still have to transfer stuff from there back to here, anyways. It will also let me get a hang of these new daggers named "BDD". Tidied up our base camp, and headed up for the stairway to the caverns (dungeon level 2).

Man - oh - man. I’m just slaughtering everything along the way with these "BDD" daggers. Incredible. Everything just goes down sooo much faster. I’m just tripping on these things (!). Something that we encountered along the way left a ring as booty. I tried out "Sting" a few times here and there. Wasn’t impressed.

Got to Temple Town, and started going over the stuff I had left there. There was a lot of stuff still. One was another scroll of identify. Since I still had an unused one back at base camp in the Mazes of Menace, I decided to read this one here. I just had to know what these "BDD" daggers were like! I tell you again - I just had to know!

"You can identify an object from your inventory. Which one?" I chose ("d"), of course. "Blessed +4 dagger named BDD." Was the revelation!! Woah! And I had 18 of them!

Rummage through the chest, looking to see if there are any scrolls of enchant weapon here. Nope. Oh well. Don’t get greedy! Be thankful for what you have!

Didn’t want to "press" my luck with any more scroll reading. So switched to the list of spellbooks that we’re here. Let’s see what this one is (green, I think) ... Oups! Where am I? I was just at my chest in the room. Oh there I am. On the other side of town! (laugh) I didn’t try that book again.

Let’s see now, I’ll try... The white one. "You memorise the spell of healing!" Well. It was doable. With no armor it was like a 63% chance. From then, to the point I’m at now in the game, I’ve used
it successfully no more than 6 times. Only worthwhile when the battle is over, and your in a safely locked room, due to having to strip all metallic - including mithral - armor off.

The ring was uncursed and turned out to be a ring of +2 strength. My strength naturally was now 18. I'd never seen a character go beyond this. When the ring was being worn, it would increase to 18/02. Great. I assumed this was better.

Okay, pack things up, lock up this base camp, and head back to the Mazes of Menace.

On the uppermost level of the caverns, between both of the staircases, there’s an outcropping of rock. Although this is a lit level, it still obscures my view between them. I had just curved around it, when I heard noises coming from behind me. Missy prissy had found something to play with, obviously. But as you saw in the previous chapter, and in all the encounters thus far, this was one tough cat. I wasn’t concerned at all, but after taking a few more steps, this message appeared: "You get a sad feeling for a moment. But then it passes."

I’ve had this message in previous games. It appears when your not in the direct line of sight when your pet dies. Which was the case here, unlike when Sirius died.

Oh no... My cat just passed away.

I cursed the game. Amongst other things, it hadn’t given me a leash.

I turned around to go take care of my cats body.

When I rounded the rock cropping again, all I saw was an ice troll standing some distance away. An ice troll? Your pretty powerful for this level of the caverns, I thought. I was quite surprised that Missy Prissy would want to scrap with it, but didn’t put it pass her. I stood there and waited for quite a while. I was kind of thinking that maybe something invisible was around also, and the ice troll was merely a bystander. Although the ice troll was moving about somewhat, it made no effort to come towards me. My anger at losing such a valuable pet was also building up inside me.

Eventually I started heading towards it. It seemed to sense my anger, and made no effort to close the distance between us itself. I deliberately held my fire till the range was point blank. I wanted it to see the anguish in my eyes. The daggers named "BDD" made very short work of things. Too short. I took a few steps back from the corpse and bided my time. Nothing that was invisible ever made it’s presence known.

Soon enough, the troll regenerated. When it saw me still there, it feebly tried to escape. It never had a hope. This was a wide open lit level of the caverns. An excellent battle ground for one very pissed Ranger. One round of thrown daggers named "BDD" was now excessive force. It fell to the first one or two, the others flew on to land in the distance. On the way to pick up the daggers that had overshot the troll, I kicked it’s miserable corpse towards them.

Resurection after resurection ensued. The ice troll was now locked in an inescapable loop of a thousand deaths. After a while, I resorted to kicking and pummeling it with me fists. During one of these episodes, I had taken off my gloves. It would die by me tearing it apart with my bare hands. After an unknown amount of deaths, it left no corpse. I see there is even a limit to the amount of punishment a troll can endure.

Missy Prissy had left no body. I did not know the exact square upon which she fell. I pulled out the pick-axe and smashed a bolder. With the rocks it yielded, I formed a square on the ground in the general area of her last battle. In the center of the boundary, I piled the rest. "Goodbye Missy Prissy Wherever you are, you give them Hell" These were the words I engraved in the ground. Put on the ring of levitation, and after assuring it was done correctly, floated out beyond the boundary of her monument.
Little did I care if Mars had bothered to notice my encounter with the troll or not. I had become a force that would refuse to be taken lightly. As long as I did not do anything stupid, I now knew that I would go far this game.

1.11 Breaching The Ghost Level

Made my way back to base camp alone. It was strange not having to wait for Missy Prissy on each and every level. I busied myself, with organising my base camp and the new shrine to Mars on dungeon level 4 of the Mazes. This form of activity had now become customary, yet a comfortable routine. You can compare it to doing something usual, in order to keep your mind off of other things.

A few more denizens had wondered by. Aside from occaisional clovers or the calling for leperchauns, Mars seemed content with the additions to his army in the sky. Although the Oracle had told me that the gods may favor those worthy with named blades whose powers echoed throughout legend, no new discoveries were made concerning the gift of "Sting". Still I carried the blade amongst my possessions close to my body. Perhaps it's secrets would become evident in some future time.

I gathered together enough objects from the multitudes within the chest and the large box. Next mission was going to be one of deep exploration. I was preparing to venture beyond the Ghost level. Strangely, I felt no apprehensions as I'd felt in the past. The last few days of consolidation, seemed to have bolstered my confidence beyond what I had ever felt before.

One last look behind me as I left base camp. Would I see this place any time soon again? Strangely, though I knew not why, I felt that the answer was no...

Surely I made my way down. Level by level, all creatures fell before the onslaught of my daggers named "BDD". Down the stairs from dungeon level 16, I was now immersed in the darkness of the Ghost level. I had been here twice before, and had retraced my steps out as well. This time I went forward boldly.

From room to room I forged. Looking. Searching. Actively seeking. I found myself actually hunting. Finally, I was being a Ranger.

Came upon the remains of Glen Wilkerson and his possessios. Sifted through them but left it all there for the moment. A short time later, his ghost materialised from the darkness. With hands upon my daggers named "BDD", one step sideways was required to line it up... Perhaps two, but no more than three, were the number of rounds it took to send it on. Yes, blessed weapons sure hurt spirits from the netherworld.

I picked up my BDD's and made my way towards the next unexplored room. One after the other until at last, I came upon the downstairs. Referring to the display, the path from stair to stair formed one huge "U". With the upstairs located at the top left most end, and the downstairs at the top of the right. Diligently I searched for a secret door. Hoping to unveil a passageway more direct between the two. Seemingly, none was to be found...

No, no, no. I muttered to myself. This long extinguated path will never do. Before even penetrating down to the next level, I had decided right then and there to cut out a short cut. Pulled out the pick-axe and proceeded to cut straight across from stair to stair. I no longer feared this level as such. But I knew that eventually I'd be required to return to base camp on dungeon level 4. Many times would I have to make the trek through here, even if only to bring the booty further down throughout the Mazes of Menace.
Having satisfied myself with this new tunnel, I turned back and headed to Glen Wilkerson’s remains. I picked up the objects and named each one "GW". What these were, I now forget. Armor plate, weapon, helm, perhaps a miscellaneous object as well. Now off to the downstairs. The Ghost level, with all of it’s ghastly manner, had finally been breached...

**Dungeon Level 18**

- gigantic beehive
- fountain

I made a discovery while exploring this level. There are random dungeon sounds that crop up from time to time. Here, I kept on getting; "You hear a low drone sound." Or was it; "You hear a buzzing echoing through the corridors." (?). Now some sounds are pretty familiar to me: "chiming of a cash register", "someone cursing shoplifters" = some sort of shop on the level; "a crunching sound" or "You hear crashing rock." = a dwarf with a pick-axe somewhere; as examples.

I discovered a secret door, at the end of a very long corridor. Upon opening the door, I got this message; "You enter a gigantic beehive!" And they weren’t kidding. I’ve seen these in some other games, but never this big. I counted the dimensions of the room. It was 13 squares by 5 squares - exactly the same dimensions as that potion shop on dungeon level 2! I saw the queen bee amongst the pack. Excluding her, that meant there was 59 killer bees here!! (The vertical row next to the door was empty.) Woah... I closed the door and locked it, of course. This hive would require a "master plan" to take out (or so I thought at the time). Then it hit me: "droning" and "buzzing"... Bees "buzz" when they fly around. Drones are male bees. They only hang around a hive till the queen bee is fed up with them (then they get fed to the pupae). Therefore... These particular sounds "signify" a special type of area located on that level (!). In this case, it was a "beehive". Maybe they are not all random after all. Hmm...

Now I would pay more attention to what was happening and start including some of these messages in my notes. Acquired a silver dagger somewhere, and somehow on this level. Only thing I remember, was that it was very soon after having breached the Ghost level.

**Dungeon Level 19**

- beartrap
- fountain
- large box x2

Here I put in "beartrap” for those of you who are keeping track of things (this will become apparent later on).

Normally I don’t include the different kind of traps in my notes. But for beartraps, I do. Reason being that beartraps can be disarmed (You have to be adjacent to it - NOT caught in it - and use the #untrap command.). And much to my satisfaction, they can be picked up and re-armed again at a different location. I do this often enough. It’s great for training with unskilled weapons when a
monster gets caught in one, and can’t move about. Also, if I’m in a hurry and don’t have a box or chest to hide booty in; I stack all the stuff in a pile and set a trap amongst it. This really works! They are also quite heavy, I’ve found out.

Since I was on a ‘breach the ghost level and exploration’ mission, I wasn’t going to lug this trap around with me all the time. I locked whatever I found around thus far, including the stuff now named "GW" from the ghost level above, into one of the large boxes here. The beartrap, I had set up on the way to the stairs in the corridor. So anything walking, would get nailed by it. In order for me to get by it, I was using my ring of levitation.

**Dungeon Level 20**

- 2+ swamp rooms
- statue of a trapper

This whole level was, from what I remember, really dark. Many rooms were unlit. My supply of candles was starting to get low. So much exploration was done where you only see the 8 squares directly adjacent to your picture on the screen. That’s why I have the "+" written after the "2" for the number of swamp rooms. "You enter what seems to be some kind of swamp."; were the messages I seem to recall. Maybe also... "You hear the sound of a cockatoo", or something (?). Cockatoos are exotic birds found in tropical climates. Since I am now paying much better attention to the random messages, this seems to make sense.

When I got close to the edge of the water squares that were scattered about, something would leap out of the water and try to bite me. A shark? A piranha? It was some kind of fish with big teeth. Anyway, I haven’t yet completely explored this level, so don’t know if there are more than 2 swamp rooms, nor how large these rooms are, but there are definitely two that have been discovered so far.

The trapper statue was moved only after extreme precautions. I know what these can do from D&D - so this was no time for lackadaisical behavior.

**Dungeon Level 21**

- general store (spellbook is really a small mimic)
- statue of an ettin zombie

Here we had found a shop. Yes, I knew about it before I had actually uncovered it; due to the sounds of the cash register. That’s why I kept on looking in areas that seemed appropriate for secret doors ("s" command). It was difficult to find. Really well hidden. At least 2 secret doors had to be discovered that eventually led into a hallway that stopped at a dead end. Then more searching just to uncover the door to the shop. I knew that I was close to it at the dead end, because on the ground was engraved "Closed for inventory." It was stubborn in revealing itself, at least 24 attempts. Good thing I’m an Elf!

While busy trying to uncover the door. A cackle of chickatrices came down the hallway. I killed them all quite easily with BDD’s, picked up their corpses and dropped them on the square where I was doing all the searching for that shop door. Finally I uncovered it. It was locked, of course, but my lockpick solved that problem again.
1.11. BREACHING THE GHOST LEVEL

The shop was really small. Only 3 squares by 3 squares. Dunno why he (the shopkeeper) needs to do any inventory (!?)! Didn’t see anything interesting in the merchandise either. Only thing that aroused my curiosity was a spellbook - which turned out to be a small mimic (figures).

I took a step back and let the mimic live for now. Maybe I can use it as a guinea pig for some experiments later on. I know it won’t leave the shop. Picked up the chickatrice corpses and flung them to the back of the room. It will give the shopkeeper something to contemplate when he completes his inventory (wink). I locked the door again on my way out. This lockpick is incredibly handy.

Dungeon Level 22

• leash stuck in a web
• grave of Og

Immediately upon descending the stairs to this level. There was a small skirmish that involved around 3 or 4 monsters. What they all were is unimportant except that one was some kind of icky spider (I hate spiders in real life). After dispatching them all, my Elf trap detection ability kicked in. That’s where the whole screen goes dark except for the square where the trap is located. That one stays lit. Then when you hit a key (any key, doesn’t matter which one), everything is back to normal. I got the following message "You detect a trap (web) hidden under the leash."

I didn’t go in that square for a number of reasons:
- I didn’t have a pet presently. Although I did mutter a few choice words at the game for making me have to come all the way down here - just for a leash! Look at all the work I’d done with leashless pets so far this game (mutter, mutter). - When you enter a web-trap, you just keep getting tangled in it. Every time you try and disarm it, or should I say "untrap" something from it, you invariably just spread the web to the adjacent squares. I know this for a fact. I’ve already spread one to include 8 squares near the bottom level of the caverns when Sirius got caught in one.
- It was located right next to the upstairs of this level. As long as I had no pressing need for it, I wasn’t going to risk spreading the web "onto" the stairs. Now that would be a pain in the buttocks every time I wanted to travel through this level! Wouldn’t it now?
- I’ve never seen a monster use a pet (except for wererats/jackals/wolves). So it was safe where it lay for the time being.

Near the downstairs, in a darkened room. I found the grave of Og the Caveman. Pulled out the pick-axe and dug it up. Found some armor (studded leather, helm and boots?) and a weapon (a club, or a mace?). Named all the objects "Og" and locked them in a nearby broom closet. There may have been a ghost that showed up. Memory pretty vague here. Could be thinking of a prior game, if not. However, if one did materialise, I obviously had no problem dispatching it to the ethereal plane of existence.

Dungeon Level 23

• fountain
Dungeon Level 24 (Base Camp)

- temple to Mars (chaotic)
- shattered unknown statue
- chest
- sink

Here was another level with very few lit rooms. There was a statue here when I first came to this level. But some kind of accident with a wand of striking, wielded by a monster not me, shattered it before I ever got to see what it was. The chest was in the same room, so without the identity of the statue, I couldn’t figure if it’s contents was related to it or not. Oh well.

These levels had more traps per area than I had been encountering (or had discovered, perhaps) above the Ghost level. I found myself spending more time searching while exploring the last few levels, not because of monsters, but due to not wanting to be victimised by teleporting/polymorphing/water traps and trap doors. Doing this in darkened rooms seemed to take way longer.

Anyway, half of the way through exploring this level, I saw a priestess in the distance with my infravision. When I hit the look (";") and saw the word "chaotic" in the message, I nearly fell out of my chair. I made a bee-line for her, without finishing my explorations. Stupid move, I now see. I could have triggered something on the way. But I was just so happy (laugh).

Descent summary:

The descent from the Ghost level (level 17) to here (level 24) was not particularly difficult with respects to wandering monsters. Although their average relative strength is surely stronger than those found above the ghost level, I can’t really recall having any real difficulty. That was mainly due to the BDD’s in my arsenal. They absolutely made all the difference in the world.

Bad luck, as well as, bad thinking got two of my BDD’s corroded by an ochre jelly along the way. There was something, probably an air elemental that was giving me a slight cause for concern at some point (Yeah, now that I think of it, that’s what it was.). After killing it, I found myself in a dead end corridor with the tapioca pudding (ochre jelly) blocking the way back out. I really didn’t want anything to happen to any of my armor. So I fired off a round of BDD’s at it without thinking that "they" might become corroded (sad face). I finished it off with the silver dagger. Of which I took a chance at wielding, cause it had not been verified for cursedness yet. Silver weapons aren’t affected by corrosion (and rust); "Your silver dagger seems not to be affected by the ochre jelly."

I do remember that during this phase of exploring the Mazes of Menace, brought on a really higher proportion of unlit rooms within all the levels. Having to rely only on candles for a light source, was beginning to take it’s toll on my supply. Few candles are left at the candle shop in Temple Town, the only source of candles so far. But I will eventually have to journey back there to replenish my stock. Having infravision is great, but like previously mentioned; unless the monster gives off some kind of heat, I don’t see it unless it’s on top of me.

I had left many piles of booty scattered amongst the boxes and broom closets of these levels during my decent. I was on a scouting mission, therefore no need to be burdened. I’ll have the opportunity to burden myself later on once I knew where I was going to relocalse - if anywhere.

Dungeon level 20 was the best I had ever achieved in all my previous games. This was now the deepest point I had ever descended so far in Nethack. So wasn’t really to sure what was happening around
this depth. I can tell you all one thing though; I was extremely happy when I discovered the temple to Mars on level 24! I like the concept of having a base to stage missions from.

1.12 Snow Boots

So last we left off, we had just met the Preistess of Mars. I was so happy to see her. If the game would have allowed it, I would have given her one great big kiss! Right near her, in the darkness, was the altar to Mars.

Finally. A temple to Mars!

Upon chatting with her, she asked for a donation towards the temple. Sure! I’ll gladly donate. Here, take everything I got. She thanked me for my contribution. No problem, I said, there’ll be lots more where that came from. Just wait and see.

I finished exploring the room of the temple. Now this was a real temple to Mars. It was a big room; about 11 horizontal squares by 6 vertical ones. Lots of space. Lots of openings into it also; 5 doors (!). To add even more towards the chaoticism of it all, it was an unlit room. Yup... I’m gonna like this spot. Gonna take a little getting used to maneuvering around in the dark and all, but heah! Who am I to decide what pleases Mars in his place of worship?

Okay... Now where am I going to set up shop in here? Can’t keep all my booty containers too close to the altar. The preistess might not like that, having to constantly avoid my junk and all. Preistesses are very devoted to their gods. They never hover far away from the altar. Never more than 2 squares. Hmmm... Okay, I’ll put my stuff up in the top left hand corner area of the room. There’s a little more space on this side of the temple if we consider where the altar is compared to the boundaries of the room itself. I went to get that chest I found earlier on this dungeon level. Lugged it over to the appropriate spot. Took a few steps back and down, to start dropping some stuff, and...

"The (forget which kind) giant throws a boulder!" "You are nearly hit by a boulder!"

I sure was. Actually this thing (the boulder) was on top of my picture on the screen!

I’m mad. This big moron has the audacity to litter a temple to Mars!?

I move out from the boulder and start heading towards the opening where this thing came in from.

Hands on my BDD’s. Don’t worry Mars. I’m going to handle this. It’s slice n’ dice time.

But, before I can make it the door, another boulder comes screaming into the temple! Not from the original direction, but from a perpendicular one. Not only that, it also had just narrowly missed the preistess! I got the message saying it did that, before the message saying it had missed me again.

That’s how I knew the direction even though I’m in a dark room.

Oh no. That would be absolutely horrible if the preistess got offed!! Would kind of ruin the whole temple thing and all, no?

Okay. Quickly now. Gotta get those doors closed to prevent more boulders from getting in here. I’m closest to the door from the initial boulder point of entry, so I go to close and lock that one. I then proceed towards my right, locking every door along the way towards the right hand side of the room.

I get to the second to last door. The one where the boulder that missed the preistess came in from. I see the giant standing there in the hallway. BDD flinching keels him over. I step out into the hallway and start rounding the corridor along the perimeter of the temple. I’m going to take them out here so as not to risk anything happening to the preistess.
"You hear a loud crashing sound." I look back into the temple. One of the big galoots has just bashed in a door to the temple to Mars! What's the matter with you? You got no manners!?

I step back into the temple and start heading his way. I'm boiling mad now.

Angle of attack for a BDD flinging session is just about here. One more step and... the giant turns to flee! Gawd. What a baffoon. You cause all this turmoil and when time comes to crunch, you can't even follow through! Your dead meat. I follow him out into the corridor. Line him up, and BDD him to death.

I'm now making my way around the perimeter from the other direction of my first attempt. I know these giant types. They like to travel in groups of three to five. Sure enough, another one of them is hanging out here as well.

BDD's away! Thud. The boulder he was carrying fell on top of him when he croaked. Ha! Couldn't have happened to a nicer guy. Teach you to mess around a temple to Mars when I'm around.

At least they died outside of the temple. Won't have to put up with their corpses in there until they rot away. Scavanged their bodies for booty, and one of them had a key. Big stupid knob. Had a key and still broke down the door (mumble grumble).

Went to see if the priestess was okay. I think she was impressed. There will be no questioning my devotion to Mars. Chatted with her and she gave me 2 zorkminds for a couple of beers. I didn't want to accept money from her, so gave it back while we finished our drinks. Pushed the boulders out of the room, and went back to my business of setting up base.

Okay, I got my area of the temple staked out now. I'm on the left side of the room. I've decided where the chest and the piles will be exactly. Now I finish exploring the rest of the level (dungeon level 24).

Of all the wandering monsters I encounter, not all want to off me. Some are peaceful. You have to look (",;") first to make sure. After a while, you get to know which ones will always be aggressive (like despicable orcs), and those that are always peaceful (like fellow Elves). The tricky ones are those that are AC/DC (can swing both ways). Orcs, bugbears, and some type of giant, are what come to my mind at this moment concerning the AC/DC's.

On this level, there's an Elven king hanging around the hallways. Now I like talking with fellow Elves (you have to chat with them), we curse orcs all the time. I customarily exchange pleasantries with the king whenever I cross paths with him, which turns out to be a lot, as he's on my new base camp level.

Find the stairs down to level 25. Go take a quick look, just in case there's anything hanging around the staircase (there often is). Find another dark room. Don't feel like starting to explore yet another dark level. Head back up to base camp. Tell the priestess that I'll be back soon enough, and head back up in the Mazes of Menace to start hauling and centralising all the junk from above, down to here.

Now then, for those of you who've kept up with the story so far: The dungeon is pretty tidy from the Ghost level (17) on up. My last big push into the depths has been from this area on down. Therefore I climb back up to level 18 and start picking up the junk scattered amongst my hiding places here and there. I'm well aware that this will require many trips. The problem with being burdened isn't with going "up" the stairs. It has to do with coming "down" the stairs. What happens is you "fall" down the stairs. I don't know what effect this has in the game, but I imagine that anything fragile has a better chance of getting broken. Now we have to be extra careful whenever we are about to descend. Have to make sure we're not burdened for that. Then run back up and make several little shuttle trips. I did not have this concern before, as base camp was usually higher up in the dungeon,
1.12. **SNOW BOOTS**

unlike the situation that I am now in. Knowing this (from past experience), I start by picking up all the most interesting stuff first. Well... what I find interesting any ways (laugh).

During my first few booty retrieval trips, I had amassed some interesting objects at my new base camp in the temple of Mars. (For some reason, I did not find the priestess of Mars annoying at all. Compared with the ones from the two temples of Venus.) Out of everything, what I remember the most, were a pair of snow boots, and some kind of cloak (ornamental, opera?). These turned out to be uncursed for the snow boots, and blessed for the cloak.

The boots I was really interested in. So tried them on first. After a few moments, I got over my initial disappointment at not feeling any speedier (sad face). I tried jumping around (#jump), but that was a no go also. Hmmm... I couldn't remember what other kinds of boots (if any other) that I had discovered in prior games. Oh well. But the good thing about these snow boots was that they were +3! So I chucked my +2 iron shoes over in the pile of armor that was starting to take shape in my corner of the temple. The snow boots didn't improve my armor class any. In fact it was exactly the same as before. But I assumed that they were lighter, and would also not clang around as much as the iron ones did. Besides, I'm an Elven Ranger. It just looks more befitting wearing snow boots than iron shoes.

Next was that blessed cloak. This was not a mystery to be uncovered once I tried it on. Cloak of protection! And with a humongous +4 to boot! My armor class shot right up (er down) to about -17 or 19. Depending on what type of shield I wanted to tote along. Sadly, I added my old +2 elven cloak to the pile of armor in the temple. I always kinda liked the way it looked. More conforming to what a Ranger should be wearing. It had served me well up to now. The only original piece of armor I've had since the beginning of the game (sigh). Oh well. Have to keep upgrading with the times. Can't stay stuck behind with nostalgia!

Well, with the fine booty figured out. Now began the major hauls of booty back and forth from the ghost level to base camp at the temple of Mars. Many trips ensued.

Sometimes I would let a weak monster get close to me. Just to test out my new armor class some. That combined with my BDD's was increasing my confidence. Funny how that happens (laugh). I was also trying a new tool here and there - the key I got from them obnoxious giants. I've had and used keys in previous Nethack games. Just I never noticed any difference using it compared to the lockpick. I never failed to pick a lock in any of my Nethack games. So not too sure what the difference is.

In order to save both on weight and inventory slots, these are required for major booty lugging, I travelled lighter and lighter on every trip back from base camp at the temple of Mars. The lockpick was left behind, as I was trying out the key here and there. I gradually started leaving more and more BDD's behind as well. I had 16 regular ones, and 2 corroded ones. Which was a pain as they now took two inventory slots instead of one. Hardly anything lasted more than a round of flinging from BDD's anyhow. So no use having to lug so many. And since they were so phenominal at dropping monsters, I wasn't using any arrows either. So no need to carry those. May as well stash the +1 elven bow while were at it. The +1 elven dagger, potions I never used, scrolls I never needed, wands, etc., all went into the chest at the temple of Mars. I even left "Sting" there finally. I figured Mars wouldn't mind as much since it was in such a sanctified place.

I ended up carrying; 1 pyrimidal amulet, 6 BDD's (main guns), 1 corroded BDD (melee weapon), the silver dagger (jelly, puddling weapon), my armor, 1 potion of extra healing, 2 scrolls of teleportation, the ring of levitation, the ring of +2 strength, the unicorn horn named "black", and the key.

I felt fine with just that. And it seemed sufficient for anything I encountered between level 17 and 25. Now, if your doing exploration / penetration / clearing missions, I would advise carrying a more
versatile arsenal and miscellaneous objects. But for just booty retrieval missions, I found this very good.

Some of you may be starting to wonder why I’m talking so much about doing mundane stuff like this. Well... What I’m doing here is trying to play smart. I’ve just advanced to an area of the game I’ve never achieved successfully before. I’m trying to get a "feel" for this area of depth before moving on to the next - whatever that is (and I would find out soon enough). Also, I found that just to be willing to take my time and finish an area before going on to the next was fitting right in with my methodical approach to playing Nethack. Some chapters are written longer than others. I just keep writing till I’ve reached the end of what I’m trying to convey was either; a lesson I learned, an accomplishment, a discovery, and/or event for me in this game so far. I don’t want to start sounding like I’m giving anybody lessons here (laugh) - far from it in fact. Just want to give whoever has been patient enough so far, a glimpse into my thinking process (and maybe have a few chuckles while were at it - laugh!).

Anyhoo... That preceeding paragraph is a good introduction to my next act of brilliance.

I was collecting stuff around level 20, the level with the swamp rooms. I was just passing by one of the doors to one of these, when I glimpsed a square of water. I stoped for a minute, and started wondering if boots of water walking existed in Nethack. I know they do in D&D, seems like many things are carried over to here. Hmmm...

I walked up to one water square near the door. It was somewhat isolated from the more numerous ones that had been uncovered while I was in here with the candle a few days before. I stood next to it for quite a number of turns (hit the "s" key several times). Soon enough something came over and tried to take a bite out of me. I think it was a pirahn. I killed it by stabbing it with the corroded BDD I was weilding. Had no problem, and don’t believe it even hit me. I didn’t want to fling any BDD’s at it, in case they would get rusted falling into the water. Note: How I was supposed to retrieve them after, never came to mind (laugh)!

Now, I consider myself quite educated. I know that pirahnas come in huge schools. So I wait for the rest of the little fish to show up. And I waited... Nothing.

Okay. Guess there was only one. Coast is clear, I tell myself. Next thing I do is hit the number "8" key on the numberpad (to take a step forward)...

Sploosh.

"You fall into the water!! "You can’t swim!!" "Luckily you are able to climb out the other side!!"

Or something like that. Then there was a list of what was affected by the water, and what was not affected by it.

My heart skipped a beat.

I wasn’t really concerned with the list of what the water affected. But the: "You can’t swim!!" part sure caught my eye! That is "exactly the type of message" I get just before the one that asks if I want all my possesions identified!!

Oh man. What was I thinking?!

Pheeeew...

Well. Sure learned a valuable lesson there. This is now on my "Things to never do again in Nethack" list. But really; my character should be aware wether I can swim or not? They can at least put that in the guidebook somewhere. And if any character class does know how to swim - how come Rangers aren’t included among them? Makes sense to me, being the "outdoors type" and all. Just my 2 cents.
Now I'm on the other side of the water, and the fish start to come. I wasn't carrying the pick-axe with me, so couldn't dig through the wall of the room I was now next to. Sure as heck wasn't going to step in that puddle again. The water sure gets deep fast for a swamp (!?). That ring of levitation I found way back when, came in super handy yet one more time. I put it on, and floated back across the water to the other side. Had to take a couple of bites from another piranha or two, but it was a small price to pay considering I just nearly got killed. Good thing most of my armor wasn't affected by the water either.

Now, I also know that snow boots don't rust. Glad I don't have to worry about that for the rest of the game...

Eventually finished bringing the booty down to the base camp at the temple of Mars. Well, almost. I left a lot of armor, weapons, food, and gems in the different hiding places. But all the rest, including projectile / missile weaponry was carried down.

Near the end of these excursions, I was coming up to the temple of Mars just rounding the corridor from the upstairs of the level, when one of those overgrown grid bug types came at me. You know, the monster that sticks its antennae into your boots (?). I forget what it's called. It has the same letter as grid bugs, is it "x"...? Now these things are awful, well to me anyways. They don't do too much damage hit point wise, but they hurt your feet and it slows you down. They're also very, very fast! You can't run away from them, not even with speed boots. So here I am burdened, and since they don't show up with infravision, I don't know it's there until its already poked some holes in my boots. Heah! My brand new snow boots! Grrr... I drop everything and kill it eventually. But now my feet are hurt, and the unicorn horn don't work on this type of ill. It only passes with time.

Okay. I can't help not running into stuff like this while I'm on excursions. That I accept. It's part of the job description for Amulet of Yendor Retriever of Mars. But that don't mean I have to put up with it while I'm at base camp. I know I'm going to be hanging around here a lot. Since Mars likes dark temples, he hasn't said anything about dark corridors leading to them...

Went to the chest, dumped the booty I was carrying in a pile, and fished out a wand of light I picked up somewhere (Yes, I discovered it when I zaped it at a monster somewhere.), as well as the pick-axe. Went out of the temple and started digging out a 5 square swath of corridor all around the perimeter. Then I went along the middle row of this excavation, and zaped light along it. Light from a wand has a 2 square radius. Great. Now even though the temple is unlit, I can now see beasties that don't emanate heat while I'm inside. Now satisfied with that job done, went back to sorting and organizing while my feet finished healing.

I was sorting all my stuff out in their respective piles when I noticed that my 2 corroded BDD's no longer melded into the same inventory slot. The one I had on me got rusted when I was testing how deep swamps are! Now I had three different kinds of BDD's; regular, corroded, and rusted corroded (groan). Wonderful. And now that I look at all my potions, I have one potion of extra healing that's diluted. Uh-oh. I better give all my piles, as well as my inventory, the once over. Yeper, my two scrolls of teleportation are now blank as well. I better exchange them with some spares. Imagine the look on my face if I ever had to use one in an emergency and get the "This is a blank scroll." message! Is my unicorn horn rotted? Nope. Good.

Now I've learned something else, while I was trying to imitate Jesus. Scrolls get blanked and potions get diluted when exposed to water.

Okay. Tidy everything up and go to lock the chest...

"Apply what?" "k" "There is a chest here. Do you wish to lock it?" "y" "You lock the chest with a rusted key."
You know. There really ought to be something in the guide on whether my character can swim or not...
Okay. Let’s go see what’s on the next level. Anything to take my mind off of this.

Dungeon Level 25

- barracks Another dark level. I’m down to one candle and what’s left of another when I came here. So it was pretty slow going cause of the searching in the dark.
Here I got; "You hear snoring" as the random dungeon sound. Hmmm... That could mean anything. First thought in mind was an ogre den. I remember the ogre on the muppet show as a classic snorer. Fine by me. Most of the ogres I’ve met were peaceful so far.
I opened a door (it was not locked) and got this message; "You enter what seems a barracks." Seemed about right to me. It was a long room with two rows of soldiers all in line. Good to know. I’ll be back another time when I have more weapons and a wand of lightning. The Oracle told me a few times about them. They carry wands and something else or another. I locked the door with my rusted key.
Betcha this key is gonna break on me some time now. I make a mental note to get my lockpick back into the inventory next change I get.
I finish exploring this level, but the only thing on my mind is this rusted key. Why would Nethack bother to have keys rust? I’m starting to appreciate all the attention to detail that the designers have put into this game. So it must have a function somewhere... It’s going to break in the lock when I try to open my chest. My lockpick is locked in the chest. I’m then gonna have to bust the lock. Then I’ll be in a fix. An unlockable chest. Boy is that handy. May as well just pile all my valuable stuff on the floor then. I can’t work without a lockable chest.
I’m going nuts! I better rectify this now. Can’t be exploring at this depth while my mind is somewhere else. This is just asking for a stupid mistake and/or bad key pressing on the keyboard.
Okay. Time out. Stop before doing something I might regret.
I look at my notes for where the next closest chest is located. I’m sure I’m going to need another one. Great, the game is pretty cheap with chests I see. Closest is on dungeon level 12. Well. Let’s go see if this key breaks or not.
Back to the temple of Mars lugging whatever booty I could from below. I’m going up the stairs burdened this time. So only one trip required.
I’m making my path to the temple, wave on my way by the Elven king, enter the darkness and next thing you know I get a message saying that something has missed me, or I’m not affected by whatever it was. Okay, what now? Can’t it wait? I need to know if this key is gonna bust in the lock or not!? I’m going to ignore it for a turn...
Now I make a mistake. Well, an additional mistake. My first mistake was ignoring whatever just happened. Instead of going straight up ("8") I went up and right ("9"). That put me inbetween whatever was outside the entrance way (It used to have a door. But a stupid giant who was carrying a key decided to bust it down. Of which I’m now carrying. Which got rusted because my character has no clue if she ever took swimming lessons or not.) to the temple, and the priestess. It sent something our way, missed me, and hit the priestess. The priestess got burned by acid or venom or something. Okay. This can’t wait. I have to handle it now...
It must have been a snake (cobra?) or a naga of somekind. I think it was black if that fits any of their descriptions and it can send something at a distance. That’s not really important though as
compared to what was going to happen next. Since it hit the priestess, that made me mad. Since it
was interfering with my latest obsessive behavior, that mad me madder still.
I chucked a round of BDD’s at it. It was still there, but got a move on me cause I was burdened. So
now it was out of my line of fire. I had to move over to line it up again. This must have taken a couple
of rounds. Monsters start fleeing when they step inside a temple (altar with priestess), unless they’re
peaceful. This thing obviously wasn’t, it turned to flee. So there was some jokeying happening at
this time, which took more time off the clock. Finally I got it in my sights again. I chuck the BDD’s. 
It died, but one BDD flew on...
"You hit the elven king." "The elven king gets upset."

Oops.
I thought you always got the message saying: "Do you really want to hit the elven king?" But I guess
not. Or it doesn’t apply to thrown weapons.
With all of the jokeying around, and me being burdened; the elven king must have had time to wander
near the engagement.
Oh Well. He’ll just have to get over it. It was an accident. I have a more pressing problem: I need to
know if this key is gonna pop the lock to this chest, or pop in the lock.
I get to the chest and it unlocked just fine. Good! Now that that has been settled, I can pay attention
to what’s happening in the game!
I drop all the junk I’ve been carrying near the chest. I then head back towards the Elven king to see
what’s up with his new attitude. I think that he picked up some of my BDD’s on the way towards the
temple entrance. Oh oh. I don’t suppose that means he’s going to be kind enough and hand them back
to me. If he did not pick them up; then I got a message saying he was wielding some kind of weapon
that scared me. In either case, the result was the same: I wasn’t going to approach him anymore.
Therefore, I needed more ammo.
Went back to the chest and pulled out all my BDD’s. Will he flee when he enters the temple? He’s
no longer freindly (peaceful). I waited to see, but stayed out of direct firing line, lest I get nailed by
either; BDD’s or whatever he was wielding. Nope. Not fleeing. Maybe he’s not afraid of the wrath of
Mars (?). Then it hit me.
He’s an Elf. Just like me! This is his temple too.
Oh wonderful. Okay, let’s see what happens when I take a swipe from him. Maybe that will calm him
down. I really didn’t believe that this would work. Although I’d never had a scrap with an Elven king
before, I figured I could take him on - as long as he didn’t use magic or any other special attack(!). I
have a lotta respect for Elves, you know...
Well; no magic, no ranged attack, and nothing else out of the ordinary that I could notice came forth,
save he attacked about twice as much as I could. No serious dammage, but not something I could keep
up with forever either.
Hokay... Sorry king, but I’m on a mission from Mars. If you can’t get over the accident from before, 
I’m gonna to settle this for good. No way I can avoide you forever anymore. This level and the
temple are now my base camp.

Nothin’ doin’. He wasn’t listening. I tried to chat with him, and he wasn’t interested. I took another
couple of swipes from him. Well, at least I tried all I could...
BDD’s away! Couple of rounds later, he had crumpled to the floor.
Went to chat with the priestess to see what she had to say. She wanted to drink more beer. Okay! Sounds good to me. Better than her being mad at me too for what happened. Since she’s "in the know" with how ol’ Mars feels about things, I was pretty confident that he wasn’t too upset, if at all.

1.13 Dark Rituals

So me and the priestess are havin’ a few brews at the altar to Mars. While sitting there, I’m looking at the corpse of the Elven king and whatever he dropped to the floor after our little misunderstanding. I start thinking again (I can’t help it, it’s just the way I’m made - laugh!). Hmmm...

I picked up his loot and verified it on the altar. Nothing was cursed (Nothing is ever cursed from Elves, but this will be for a later chapter.). He had one or two special items. I named it all "Elvis" and did whatever I usually do with them. But, here’s where my thinking was really going... This guy is way up there in the chaotic hierarchy of things. He’s both Elf, and a king. Mars could probably use someone like him. Maybe give him a position in some kind of bureaucratic office in the sky.

Alright. Decision has been made. Dump the corpse on the altar, and offer...

"Blood runs all over the altar!" "Your sacrifice is consumed in a burst of flame!" "Jubilex appears before you!"

(The following best describes my immediate reaction upon reading the result...)

!!!!!!

I’m in shock. My brain is overloaded. All I can do is laugh uncontrollably. I take a break from the computer. Have to come down a bit...

Hokay... Jubilex, eh?

I’m resigned to my fate. The game is about to end.

I know I’m dead. There’s no question about it. It’s like right next to me. Only have one or two turns left to live - if that. I’ve somehow summoned this thing. If not, then Mars is really peaved at me. I’m just shaking my head back and forth. And I was doing so well this game (argh)!

Never encountered him in that game that Nethack is not. But sure as hell new I would never survive such an encounter there either. I know this name. Actually this isn’t even his real name. No one knows it, and even if they did, no one could pronounce it. He’s really known as the ‘Faceless Lord’. That’s because he’s just a mound of putrid slime and guck. He’s a demon lord (chaotic/evil). Demon lords, as well as demon princes, each have a plane in the abyss. There are 666 planes to the abyss. His specific plane is just a swamp of slime and guck also. Ochrre jellies, slimes, puddings, etc., are what inhabit it. Nothing in it’s right mind worship this guy except...

WAIT! What did I just say? He’s a demon. He’s chaotic! Nethack makes no distinction between good or evil (Rangers are good. I’m an Elf. Therefore I’m chaotic/good in the game Nethack is not universe.). Could he be freindly?

I do the look (";")...

He’s peaceful! He’s peaceful! He’s peaceful!

My spirits rise a thousand fold. I might get out of this!

Stay calm now. Think...

Gawd... It’s been so long ago since I played that other game that Nethack is not. How does demon summoning work again? Hmmm... You need a pentagram drawn on the floor. You have to stay within
1.13. **DARK RITUALS**

It has to be drawn with what again...? You need candles or somekind of substance burning in a dish on all the points. That’s to keep the demon at bay. You need blood from some kind of pure animal for the ritual (?)... You have to know the demons true name in order to get it to do your bidding. But no one knows this guys true name. Jubilex is his nickname... (groan)... Just can’t think of it all. Demon summoning wasn’t for the faint of heart. And even the best of magic users often got killed summoning lower demons. No one in his right mind ever tried to call in a demon lord.

Well... Since it’s peaceful. Let’s see what it has to say. I know that this thing is super intelligent... (#chat). "Jubilex gurgles."

(laugh) Obviously, it is beyond my pityable ability at comprehension.

Hokay. What’s the priestess got to say? She should be able to have an idea what to do here. This is her domain of things after all, no?

The priestess wants to have some ale. Good plan! That will just about wrap everything up just nicely here. Isn’t that what got us in this mess in the first place? I’m starting to think that the priestess has a drinking problem.

Hokay, gently now... I take a few steps AWAY from this thing. I can still see it. So now I know it’s warm.

I go to my chest and see if I happen to have any wands of teleportation. I got one. From now on, I’ll keep this on me also. Just in case.

It seems to be just sitting there. Hasn’t moved an inch. Hmm... Maybe it is bound to the altar somehow? It’s chaotic, after all. I take a few more steps, start heading around it. Now, I’m tracing a circle around the altar. Okay... It is definitely not moving. This may not be as bad as I had anticipated. Perhaps I over reacted (If such a statement is sensical when a demon lord shows up next to you!).

All in all, as far as I can tell, it’s eerily kind of cool. A dark chaotic temple, surrounded by light, with it’s very own resident demon lord. What a happening place this temple is turning out to be! I make a note to eventually get the ice box from my base camp in Temple Town over to here. I’ll use it to store some potions of booze for us all. A black pudding showed up at one of the temple entrances. For a moment I thought that Jubilex had summoned it. But upon further consideration; If he would have, shouldn’t it have showed up near him? Like inside the temple at least? Jubilex was right next to the altar. But then I remembered that black puddings don’t show up with infravision. Could he have summoned a whole bunch and now the temple is infested with these things?!

Carefully, I start searching the temple all over the place. It was clear. So I went to my pile of assorted weapons and pulled out a club. You have to use blunt weapons on these things or else they might split in two, then you have a whole pile of problems. Walked up to it, and eventually clobbered it. It left a corpse. I thought about offering it to Mars. But then ol’ Jubilex might take somekind of offense to that.

Ponder...

 Came to the conclusion based on everything I could recall on ’demenology’. These demon types kinda get off on weird and whacky things. Life has no meaning to them. Torture and things getting hurt and/or mutilated gives them a big kick - even if it’s to their own kin. Unlike devils (which is the study of ’devilry’, by the way). They’re lawful/evil so I’m assuming if any show up in Nethack, I’ll be in trouble. They abide by a different code of conduct. They have an organisation to their nastiness, which does not include offing their own kind without a logical cause.

Okay. Now that I have satisfactorily rationalised that out; I heave this big pile of black goop up onto the altar. With Jubilex and the priestess next to me, I offered it to Mars...
"Use my gift wisely," was the big booming response. "Orcrist" appeared at the altar!

Another gift from Mars!

Oooh... This one is some kind of sword. But I can’t use swords (except short ones). (I look at #enhance again.) Now I can! Thanks Mars! Big thumbs up for thinking of everything!

Since I’ve mentioned the above. He gave me "Stormbringer" in a few games already. It’s a sword also, and I was able to get to basic weapons skill with that. But since I’m doing so great this game. He’s giving me new stuff. Or maybe he felt I had done all I could do with "Sting" already, and I needed a more prestigious weapon (shrug).

Well, let’s see if it does anything special... Tried all the apply, rub, invoke commands. Couldn’t discover anything. (sigh) Really could use instruction manuals with these things... Or at least the Oracle could give out some kind of clue. Even if it’s in the ‘major consultation’ price range. Trust me, I would pay!

Now, through one of the right hand doors of the temple, I see a mob of orcs appear in that room with the shattered statue. There’s something about that room. Lots of monsters materialise in there. Or perhaps that statue signified something about it? Over the course of the game, I would spend many turns looking if there was some kind of portal, or a monster generator in there. So far, I haven’t found any.

So these are just plain ordinary orcs. Excellent opportunity for unskilled weapons practicing (grin). And there’s a whole mob of them to boot! I start heading for them, cause I know that they’ll turn and flee if they come into the temple of Mars.

Everything is going so great. I’ve never had a better game going. It seems I can’t do no wrong. Everything just falls into place. My strategy (besides a few bumps here and there) is working out beautiful. This was my ultimate high in Nethack to date!

As soon as I was nearing them orcs, Jubilex teleported right next to me. In fact, he teleported right in front of me. I walked into him by mistake!

"Really? You want to attack Jubilex?" (y/n)

I looked real hard at the keyboard to make sure I pressed the "n" key. Phew! But before I can start figuring out why he teleported here...

"The orc turns to flee!" "The orc turns to flee!" "The orc turns to flee!" "The orc turns to flee!"

Wow. Jubilex sure puts the old fear of impending doom in them I see. He must have an ’aura of cause fear’ as an inate special ability. Even though they’re lowly orcs, I don’t blame them. I’m still kinda getting used to him myself.

Now why did he pop here? I’m not surprised that he can teleport. He’s a demon lord, after all. These types have loads of special abilities. He’s peaceful, not tame. So it’s not cause he’s like a pet. Wonder if it would be possible to tame him? Hmmm...

Naah... Why would a demon lord ever want to be my pet? That’s ridiculous.

Maybe he’s watching me like a gaurdian or something? Could Mars have sent him to watch over me...?

Naah... Gods send minions to do that. Not demon lords. Besides, I’m not important enough for them to bother with anything like that.

Alright. Whatever. Maybe I’ll figure it later.
Okay. Side step Jubilex and go to round up them orcs. I'm kinda curious to what this "Orcrist" blade is all about.

Man oh man... I ended up chasing them all over the dungeon level. Jubilex just kept on popping in all over the place. And whenever he did, which was like nearly all the time, the orcs just ran like hell. What a pain he's turning out to be (urgh). Especially when I'm in a corridor that's only one square wide. He has the knack of popping in the exact same square that I want to enter next. Have to be careful. Have to be very careful, actually. I had to hit the "n" key several times when I kept on getting asked wether I wanted to attack him or not. Needless to say, that unless I knew exactly where Jubilex was, there was no BDD flinging at all.

I gave up on the orcs before I had finished hunting them all down. Things were becoming impossible to do. How am I supposed to kill anything that's not a jelly or a pudding with him constantly around? Even worse was this constant teleporting right in my face. How am I even supposed to be able to get anywhere? I start feeling a little depressed at the computer desk. Jubilex may have ruined my game. This looks like it's going to turn out like that game where I had found a cursed ring of polymorphing (Which is also on my list of "Things to never do again in Nethack", by the way.). I couldn't do anything anymore in that game (sad face).

(Sigh) What a let down. Time for a break...

saved the game, and took a day off to mull things over.

Well... If I carried a pick-axe with me all the time, then I could dig around him. That would be feasible, I suppose. Still an incredible pain though. That would really make the game long also... As if it isn't already... The permanently fleeing monsters will have to be dealt with missile weapons. Have no real problem with that, considering my role and these BDD's I now use. Makes melee weaponry even more useless for me.... I considered the beartrap trick, but decided against it since Jubilex had no legs... Too bad locking him in a room won't work. His teleporting ability cancels that...

Wait! He has never moved except by teleportation. Leperchauns and nymphs can't teleport while in the boulders! If I could get him to a level in the boulders, that will be it for his teleports. I could then ditch him there! Besides that, I'll just have to banish him when I get to be an 80th level Ranger (You can't kill a demon lord unless it's done on his own plane in the abyss. Best you can hope for is to banish him from this plane.).

I'm going to have to start an offering list also, I now see. Better put Elven kings down in the "hold off for now" category.

Alright. Now I have a plan with a very solid basis for success. Well, it all seemed so to me anyways. Fire up the game again...

Make my way back to the temple of Mars. I'm approaching my chest. Jubilex pops in right in front of me again. Right on the same square as my chest! Damn. If he has any g-cube abilities, that will dissolve all my valuable booty! This could be disastrous. I try to push him off the square with the "m" prefix to the direction. Nice try, but no go.

Okay... all the paths from stair to stair on each level have been swept for traps and cleared. Glad that I adopted that 'clean dungeon' philosophy a while back. I'll trek out there with what I have in my inventory. There won't be any problem, I'm sure. I head for the upstairs of dungeon level 24. Jubilex pops near, but not next to the stairwell. Hmm...

How am I going to get him up the stairs? My perfect plan seems to have a fatal flaw (laugh)! I go up the stairs. Of course, I'm now alone. I go back down. Jubilex is still sitting (or whatever) in the same spot. I move around the stairs, search the entire room, and just use time on the clock. I'm hoping that
he pops next to them. He doesn’t. Then I realise that only my pets have ever followed me up and
down any stairs. He’s not tame. He’s peaceful. No peaceful monster has ever followed me anywhere.
Even when next to me in stairwells. There are lots of peaceful types that I pass by all the time in my
travels, even in this game.

Allright... He can’t change levels I guess. But I better make sure. I go up and toodle around level 23
for a while. Even go up to level 22 for a bit. No Jubilex anywhere to be found. Back to level 24 and
head straight for the downstairs. Jubilex pops near but never next to the stairs. Down I go for a little
while, and actually do some touch-up explorations of the level. I was a little pre-occupied last time I
was down here, if you recall.

Fine. Problem solved. Jubilex can’t teleport between levels, or use stairs. Just have to be careful
when I’m around base camp. Especially with BDD flinging. That’s how we got him in the first place.

I engrave "Jubilex No BDD’s" on both squares that have stairs on the base camp level. That way I’ll
be reminded as soon as I enter. No matter where I come from.

Back at base camp, I managed to fool Jubilex as to which square to pop into by deliberately staying
two squares from the chest unitl he popped in. So at worst he could be next to it, but not on it. I
also discovered that as long as I did not change my actual location, Jubilex doesn’t pop. So I could
search, rest, loot, throw, put on, etc., and use all the time I wanted from the clock safely. So long as I
did not move, Jubilex did not pop.

Okay. The game seems like it can be manageable again.

Ha! Demon lords may be supra-genius, but I’m an Elven Ranger (wink).

1.14 Chain Reaction

I have now completed what I had set out to do a while back; breach the ghost level, and find another
base to stage missions from. The Mazes of Menace are pretty well cleared from dungeon level 25 on
up to the surface. There’s a few pockets of monsters scattered on a few levels, but I see no reason for
clearing them out yet. They’re not going anywhere, I’ll handle those at my leisure. As far as I can tell,
I’m able to handle whatever I run accross at this depth. As long as they’re alone, even air elementals
don’t scare me anymore.

I ponder a bit on what I should be doing next... I’ll stick to the general strategy thus far. First, I’ll see
how I can strengthen up my character a little. Then I’ll penetrate deeper into the Mazes until I start
feeling uncomfortable. By then, I’ll maybe have found some more fine booty, and/or make another
spectacular discovery. Then, in any case, I can turn back and see what, if anything, those special
monster areas contain.

Fine. Mission defined, I set about to the task. Rummaged around my loot and assessed what was
available to improve my character.

By now, I have a whole bunch of stuff identified. My discoveries list ("\" command) is so big, that I
have to actually scroll down it to see it all. Never had so much with any character before! I also have
my own lists I keep myself with pen and paper. I won’t explain the whole procedure, but through a
little bit of examination, cross note comparing, previous games experience, and deduction, I was able
to figure out what was the scroll of enchant armor. Well... close enough. I got it on my second try
(laugh).
My orcish helm (Yes, I know it’s orcish and I’m an Elf. But it was +3!) had rusted when I was testing some snow boots at an earlier time, so wanted to improve things in the armor class department. I had two scrolls of enchant armor available. I looked at my inventory and decided to enchant my gloves. All the rest of my armor had an enchantment of some kind already. Who knows? Maybe if I give my gloves a "+", I’ll do more damage when I hit something. In the game that Nethack is not, magical armor gives some bonuses to different things; saving throws, missile defence, etc. Besides, they stood out in my inventory list.

The first scroll got them to +1. Good enough. Now my armor class was back to what it was before I took a dive in that puddle. Everything had an enchantment, and my list looked nice and even when displayed. One scroll of enchant armor left. Where should I apply it? Hmm...

Concluded that my +2 dwarven mithral chain mail was the most valuable piece of armor that I possessed:

- It gave the biggest improvement to my armor class per inventory slot. If you consider everything at base +0, it gave me a net of 6. I know that plate mail, and crystal plate mail (of which I had in my booty stash) gave better, but they’re just too darned heavy. (see note 1.)

- It is mithral. Mithral has magical properties in the game that Nethack is not, as well as in the other game I mentioned in my prologue.

- Dwarves make the finest armor in all the games I’ve played. Here’s what the guide to Nethack says: "Dwarves’ most notable trait is their great expertise in mining and metalwork. Dwarvish armor is said to be second in quality not even to the mithral armor of the Elves."

So I read the scroll and the armor became +4! I never had armor increase more than one "+" before. So something in the analysis above must be correct. Either the magical properties of mithral, the fact that it’s made by dwarves, or perhaps a combination. I dunno. But what really counts is that dwarven mithral is worth it’s weight in gold many times over.

With my best shield, my armor class was now -22. This was a phenomenal amount to me.

I also took this opportunity to do a complete clean up of all the papers that I had accumulated to the game of Nethack near my computer. It’s amazing how it just all piles up, eh? Cleaned up all my pen and paper lists, recopied just what wasn’t identified with a few notes here and there, and threw the old ones away. After all I had nearly everything available in the discoveries ("|") list. This was done at the end of a session on a Wednesday night. Garbage pick up in my neighbourhood is Thursday morning. I’m giving you this completely insignificant piece of information now as it will become apparent soon...

Now I put together a real kit of objects for a deep exploration mission. I’m not going to list it all, but although my backpack was loaded, I was not burdened. I wanted to penetrate another 8 levels. I was aiming for dungeon level 34 at the time (lots of laughs).

So I bid goodbye to the priestess of Mars and headed for the downstairs of base camp level 24. In the last room I waved goodbye to Jubilex, and descended to the recently explored 25th level.

Confident and with my head held high, I marched towards the downstairs of level 25. I was well armed. I had bullet proof armor. I was capable. I was resourceful. Here’s the stairs. Now down we go...

Oh yeah, It’s a dark room. I better light a candle...

Heah! I have no candles!!

Ah man...

Okay. Let’s see how it goes...
Explored the first room with the stairs in the dark. One exit only. Followed it to another room, It was small. Only opening out was to the left. Next room I found some stairs. When a mimic search proved them to be real, I decided to go see if there was anything in the first room downstairs...

- Whole bunch of messages appear on the screen. Among them: "(Something) throws a boulder at you." "You are hit by a boulder!" "The titan casts a spell at you." "You reel from (something)." "You are blinded." "You can't see!"
- A titan? What’s that? Where’s my picture? Where are the stairs?
- Apply unicorn horn named "black".
- "Nothing seems to happen."
- "(Something) hits!" "(Something) hits!"
- Look at hit points.
- Apply unicorn horn named "black". (Come on!)
- "Nothing seems to happen." (groan)
- "You are hit!" "You are hit!" "You are hit!"
- Okay. What’s the story? Am I on the stairs or what?
- Hit "SHIFT" + ">"
- "You can’t go down here."
- Oups. Okay, stay calm...
- Hit "SHIFT" + "<<"
- "You can see again." "There is a stairway down here."
- Look at the dungeon level. It says 26. Ouf! That was close. But wait...
- Something is wrong with me. I think I’m hallucinating.
- Apply unicorn horn named "black".
- Now I’m confused!? What’s happening?
- Take a step towards exit in room.
- Try again.
- And again.
- Walk into wall.
- I notice that I’m burdened. Why? My strength is down to 14!?
- Okay. This isn’t working out too well.
- Look at inventory. Make sure unicorn horn is the letter "u". Yes it is.
- Okay. One more time. Slowly now...
- Press key "a"
- Press key "u"
- "You feel sick."
- I’m now ill. How many different kind of ills can show up on the status line?
- Somethings wrong with my unicorn horn. I think it’s broken.
- Look at inventory again. Look very hard at everything that is written on the screen. I don’t notice anything different... (?)
1.14. **CHAIN REACTION**

- (scratch head)

This is no good. I think I’m dying... This reminds me when I ate something rotten and developed food poisoning once. Only, this is worse. I’m also confused and hallucinating and whatever else. Is it for real? What happened with the unicorn horn? Nothing is showing up different on my inventory. Could there be other things affected? Did I get hit by something that reversed the polarity of all my objects? It’s like, working backwards...

Something walks into the doorway to the room. I’m hallucinating, it could have been anything. I’m in no shape to face anything stronger than a gnewt, and I can’t move safely because I’m confused. I don’t even know if I’m deathly sick or not. I may die before it kills me anyways. Okay. Time for Mars to come through. I pray...

Mars came through. Good, I’ll make it up to him when I get back to the temple. But first I have to get away from this Olog-hai that’s now standing next to me!

I take a step back from it. My Elf secret door detection ability kicked in and a door revealed itself. Unlock (Yes, I ditched the rusted key for the lock pick,) and open the door. The Olog-hai hits. I’m surprised cause I have a super armor class. Move into the hallway. Can’t close it back, this Olog-Hai is too fast, or I’m too slow. The encounter with the titan just before has saped my hit points some what. Since I don’t yet know what the story is with the unicorn horn, I don’t dare try a potion of healing. It also may work backwards. Would be nice if I could regenerate a little more before having to fight this thing at melee range.

Turns out to be a long hallway. I’m exploring and running at the same time. Bad position to be in. I haven’t cleared this level yet. This is not good either. Probably full of monsters just about to all converge on me. I have to make a stand soon. Hallway opens into a small room. At least it’s lit. The Olog-hai is keeping pace with me exactly. Hit points are back up a little. Show time...

I turn and fire a salvo of BDD’s. At the same time I hear the sound of a door being broken into. Oh great. There are giants on the level. Fire again. Only one BDD launched. Damn. Don’t want to take too long dropping this thing. It’s hitting back stronger than I had expected. Is my armor working backwards? Are my BDD’s okay? Fire again. Again only one launched. Luck is bad. This is not good. Fire again. Only one BDD again! Have to change something. The computer is always giving the same results. Have to fool it somehow. I step down and left. There. Now everything will be different.

Fire. Finally, 3 or 4 BDD’s flew. It may have tacked all of them to bring the Olog-Hai down. It’s about time. Now pick up the BDD’s and the Olog-Hai booty, burdening me in the process. Let’s get out of here now. Step towards the doorway...

"You step on a polymorph trap!" "Your dwarven mitral mail breaks asunder." "Your cloak of protection is torn apart." "Your boots are pushed off of your feet." "Your gloves fall from your hands." "Your helmet clangs onto the floor." "You are polymorphed into a winged gargoyle!" "Your movements are no longer encumbered." "You may lay an egg." "Type ¼ sit to lay an egg."

Now get this: There is also a blue dragon in the doorway!

Time out.

You know, this game can drag on for days. Nothing really happens for thousands of turns. Then in just a few, the whole game takes a twist. My brain is overloaded. Too many things are happening all at the same time. Have to assess all of this now. Best to just take it slow. I have gotten pretty good at not hitting any keys in stressed situations lately... - I’ve been polymorped in previous games, so
this was not a completely new thing. Still. No fun when it happens. That’s what happens when you don’t properly search an area before venturing into it.

- There went my super dwarven mithral and that cloak of protection. Damn. That was a tough blow to swallow. Combined, they were worth 17 points to my armor class.

- How come I’m no longer encumbered? Oh yeah, all my armor is either broken or on the floor. Still, I didn’t think it weighed that much? I see that my strength is now 18/**. That probably has something to do with it.

- Are any of my other attributes changed? Not that I can notice. Funny, my charisma is the same (laugh!).

- Armor class was surprisingly better than I would have imagined. Was nothing compared to what I had a turn ago. But better than anything I could recall from previous transformations. It was in the negatives, maybe -2 or something.

- Winged gargoyles, eh? Although I can kind of figure out what it is, I never ran across this type of monster in Nethack. Gargoyles yes, winged no. Well, I figure that I’m made of stone and masonry. Guess I can fly. I’ll have to test that out if I survive long enough. - That "laying an egg" message sure made me laugh. For some reason I found it extremely hilarious! Couldn’t stop laughing for a long time. So much so, that tears were forming in my eyes. So far, that’s the most I’ve laughed for any one particular message recieved. And I’ve seen lots of funny ones - to me anyways.

- That blue dragon was a first also. Didn’t know what it was till I did the look (";") To me the picture looked like a blue pelican. But my vision was probably a little blurry at the time (laugh). Was almost hoping it would be freindly (peaceful), since I was now a monster. But it wasn’t.

Okay... First order of business is to survive untill I can figure out how to play properly as a winged gargoyl. That blue dragon is in all likelyhood a direct threat to that. It was sitting at a range of two from me.

What’s so special about blue dragons again? I tap into my knowledge of that game that Nethack is not... All dragons have 2 claw attacks and a big bite. Depending on their size and age, that is the amount of hit points they have. Had no idea how far Nethack would go into detail for dragons. So since it didn’t say anything like; large, huge, small, etc. I’ll assume it is middle aged. The reason they have different colors, is to differentiate their breadth attack. For example: Red is fire, Black is acid, etc. So then blue is probably either frost or lightning.

In any which case, the more I thought about it, the less I wanted to fight it. Even small dragons are super tuff and very intelligent. Especially against a winged gargoyl that has no clue on how to act like one! Also... I think that I’ll forego the #sit option for now. Laying an egg would have to wait for when I had more time and was alone (laugh!).

Super lucky that there was another exit to this room behind me. Now how fast am I compared to this thing? I picked up (";") all the stuff that fell to the floor during my transformation. It did not move. Good. Now I know it’s not faster than me.

Took a step down and right, towards the other exit...

Breadth attack!

The lightning zoomed passed me. Bounced off the wall behind me. Hit me on the way back. Reflected off my amulet. Bounced on the wall behind me again. Missed me this time. And finally stopped when it hit the blue dragon. The blue dragon seemed not affected by it, was the last message given.

Wow! Dunno about the rest of you. But on my computer screen it was pretty spectacular how that
lightning bolt was zinging around! This was my first experience at blue dragon breath attack. Now I learned a lot from what just happened...

- Dragons don’t move when they use their breath weapon. It was still in that doorway. Now I had increased my distance from it to three.
- Blue dragon breath attack is at least able to range out to three. So, since I’m assuming that Nethack will have other colored dragons, they may do so as well.
- It does not have a wide angle dispersion beam, like the pyrolisk I had encountered way back (See Part 1: Journey to the Oracle (see 1.3 on page 9)). I was now in direct line of sight of this thing, from that step I just took.
- That pyrimidal amulet I’ve been wearing all this time has been revealed. Remember the one I got from that crazy fight back at the boulders? I completely forgot about testing it way back when. So now it’s a confirmed amulet of reflection.
- Based on this and previous games; seems that an amulet of reflection is always there when I clear the last room in the boulders area of the dungeon.

Okay... Now I’m next to the other exit. I can step out and be out of this thing’s line of sight and run (or fly) like a winged gargoyles outa hell!

I’m exploring as I’m running again. Trying to make my way back towards the upstairs of dungeon level 26. But with the titan encounter, followed by the Olog-hai encounter, followed by the polymorph trap and the the blue dragon encounter; I have to head into unknown territory again and hope that an alternate path leads to that room with them stairs. Boy. So much for my plans on reaching level 34 (laugh!).

Along the way, I discover that I can put what’s left of my armor back on. After every piece that was to be put-on, I was glancing at the status line to see by how much my armor class was improving. That’s when I noticed how many hit points I now had... 42! What!? I had twice that amount as an Elven Ranger! (groan) I have to stay out of fights, unless it’s against something really weak. Great, now I have something else to worry about. As if I don’t have enough already.

I ended up in a very long corridor that stretched across nearly the whole distance of the map. It was a dead end, of course. I searched for quite a while, but since I was now a winged gargoyles instead of an Elf, I couldn’t find, discover, or detect anything worth a crap.

Eventually I knew I would transform back into my old self. Since I was at the end of a really long corridor and hadn’t met anything, I figured I was safe from any wandering monsters for a few turns. So I decided to lay an egg. Didn’t want to miss this opportunity in Nethack. It may never happen to me again.

So I hit the "#monster" command. That’s what I was able to do in prior forms in past games for special monster abilities. I got the message that if I could do anything, it was purely reflexive, or something like that. Oh yeah! The game told me to #sit (slap head + laugh). This was my first time at this (laugh). Anyways, I sat and an egg popped out. Forget what it was called, "an egg from you" or something.

Now what am I supposed to do (scratch head)? Keep it warm so it can incubate? Ponder...

I know that winged gargoyles reside at the top of buildings. So maybe they have nests like birds. Maybe they incubate them the same way as birds in a nest - they sit on them (?). I really had no real experience and or knowledge about this. This was just pure conjecture. Well, let’s try. So I sat on the egg...
CHAPTER 1. BOOK 1

The game told me it wasn’t very comfortable. Sure, Makes sense to me. Lucky I didn’t break it, now that I think about how ridiculous I must have looked (laugh!). So I picked it up and laid another one. I had no idea how often I would be ovulating. So may as well do another in case something should happen to the first one. Hokay. Now that I’ve been able to experience that event in Nethack, I headed back along that long corridor.

Halfway through, one of the eggs fell from my pack and a gargoyle appeared with a little heart next to it’s picture. It said "Mama" (Laugh!) Two more steps and the same happened with the other egg. Looks like I have two pets. Only thing I found strange was that they were 'gargoyles', and I was a 'winged gargoyle'. Maybe they’re like kittens, little dogs, and ponies. They eventually grow up with time (?). Hmmm...

I decided to do what has become a regular habit when something new or wierd happens in Nethack: I consulted the guide. Here’s what I found in the pet section... "Like you, your pet needs food to survive. It usually feeds itself on fresh carrion and other meats. If you’re worried about it or want to train it, you can feed it, too, by throwing it food. A properly trained pet can be very useful under certain circumstances. Your pet also gains experience from killing monsters, and can grow over time, gaining hit points and doing more damage."

Didn’t pertain to what I wanted to know. But it explained something I had witnessed earlier this game. Remember when "Missy Prissy" grew up from a kitten to a large cat in that other really big fight (See Part 7: Lessons On Greed (see 1.9 on page 31))? Now I knew why: Pets grow over time, eating, AND killing monsters. Although I have read the guide, I don’t know how many times, I always seem to come across something I either missed, or something that finally "clicks" in my head. So now I figured that these gargoyles would grow into their mothers’ type by; feeding them and getting them to kill some beauties. Just had to get them heading in the proper direction now. Since they were behind me, I had to displace them forward so that they would go out the proper direction from this corridor we were in. I got to re-experience all the joys of herding pets with no leashes or a wonder whistle again (roll eyes). It’s bad enough with just one, but when your dealing with two, the problem is many times more exasperating than by a factor of 2. If I would have known this before hand. I would have laid only one egg...

Eventually, we finally got to a section that on the screen, was just above the room with the upstairs. There was no alternate path I had discovered that led back directly to it. I really, really did not feel like having to go back all the distance through the winding way from my original direction. Besides, there was still a blue dragon to contend with on that road. Well then. Can I use a pick-axe? Yes I can! Great. I dug a passage downwards on the display to the room with the upstairs. Came back and herded my two babies towards it. Remember, it’s a dark room...

I’m trying to get these two babies of mine to be next to me on the upstairs. I don’t know how the messages were worded exactly, but I was suddenly attacked 6 times in one turn. Every attack said something about my helmet protecting me in some way. Two of these said something funny I never saw before. Also the thing was invisible, cause it showed up as a question mark on the display. Could have also been mentioned in the messages that it was invisible, I don’t remember (actually that’s funny that "I don’t remember")! Now, I have never been hit by one of these before. Whenever I saw one, it got killed from a distance. Trust me, I know all about these things from the game that Nethack is not:

Mindflayer.

And it was invisible to boot! Never new that about them.

Actually, I was surprised that I wasn’t dead. Really thought that if you failed your saving throw,
1.14. CHAIN REACTION

your brains got sucked out your nose. In any case I was totally grossed out. If you haven’t figured it out by now… I absolutely hate being touched. I’m an Elf and a Ranger. Having tentacles trying to grope their way up my nostrils was completely revolting to me.

No need to think or ponder about my next action. I have to get away from this thing! I moved left (it was on my right), directly away from it. I assumed it had stepped up with me. One of my babies was now next to me. I’m going to use it as an obstacle for the invisible mindflayer. I keep moving around, and away from where I think the invisible mindflayer is. I’m then going to start spraying the room with BDD’s in order to localise, then kill it. Next step brings me right next to a hill (or stone) giant!

How come I never saw the giant? What happened to my infravision? I do the look. It only says "seen with normal vision". So now I know that winged gargoyles don’t have infravision. Wonderful. I’m going to have to get out of the "Elven Ranger" mind set and into the "winged gargoyle" mind set quick, or else I’m going to get killed by doing and/or assuming something stupid.

Now the problem just got compounded very bad. These giant types come in groups. I’m in the dark with no infravision, and there’s an invisible mindflayer in here too. Man. I’m just running from one disaster into another. This all started with me just going down the stairs to level 27 for a quick look! (lots of laughs)

A battle raged between me and a few giants. I got hurt for over half of my hit points. Found out that attacking with my claws AND bite wasn’t too bad as weapons. At one point, I reached for my wand of teleportation. Funny… I don’t see it in my inventory under wands. Thought I had picked it up back when Jubilex first appeared? Must have put it back when I was reorganising my stuff. Oh well, I’ll get it back if I survive through this.

I eventually got them all, and was able to form some kind of obstacle combining the boulders they dropped with my babies. I blocked off an area of the room I figured the mindflayer was at. Finally found it again by pushing a boulder and getting the message that something was behind it. Then just kept on flinging BDD’s till I got a message saying "You kill it."

My babies never attacked anything. I was wondering why. Sure weren’t up to par with my two previous pets (Sirius and Missy Prissy) in the bravery department. Found a leash amongst all the junk scattered through the room. That was a welcome sign that maybe my luck was changing for the better. Put it around the neck of the closest gargoyle and herded the other next to me on the upstairs. Finally I was able to ascend…

"You feel that you’ve been here before." Was the message that greeted me. Huh? What do you mean? And heah…! What happened to the map!? It’s all black!

What the frag is this?!!

Is the computer broken?

I go back down to level 26. Everything looks normal here. Go back up the stairs.

There’s something wrong… The computer must be tired or something. This happens from time to time. Although never when I’ve played Nethack. Let’s see. I go back down to level 26 where everything was normal.

I save the game and exit. Reboot the computer. Fire up the game again.

Okay. Up to level 25 and… Ah man… What’s the story?

Start exploring for the upstairs to this level again. The one gargoyle that is not leashed is a real pain. I don’t even have infravision to help keep track of it. Finally, I herded them through level 25 towards the stairs to level 24. Pulled too much on the leash once. "It screams!" was the message in response to that action. Wow. That scared me. I could almost hear it.
Up the stairs to base camp level 24. "You seem to vaguely remember being here." What do you mean? How can I forget? This is where the temple of Mars is! The engraving on the stairs was still here as well. So I absolutely knew that I was at this level (!). Now I have to explore this level again as well? An elven king was in the room. I did the look, and saw he was peaceful. Great, but I didn't take the chance of chatting with him. I should have at some point. Would have been interesting if he would have had a different response than "cursing orcs".

Found ol' Jubilex pretty shortly after. Verified to see if he was still peaceful. He was, and with him I chatted. Figure that if anybody would get a kick out of me turning into a winged gargoyle, that it would be him (laugh).

Good thing it was base camp, I remembered most of the general layout. The area around the temple to Mars was lit already from the works I had done with the pick-axe and wand. Still, that didn't make me feel better about it.

The priestess of Mars didn't seem to mind the difference in my appearence. Gave her the few zorkminds I had acquired. Sorry, my excursion got cut short. Ran into a few unforeseen problems. I'll have more zorkminds for you after I figure out a few things...

Dropped the unicorn horn named "black" on the altar to Mars. A black flash appeared. It was cursed. Hmm... Cursed unicorn horns work backwards then. Titans can curse things I see...

Okay. Take everything off, and I mean everything. Drop it all on the altar. Nothing else was cursed. Maybe something that was blessed was now uncursed, I can't recall. But my only unicorn horn was now worse than useless...

Rumaged through the chest for another leash. Nope no luck. But from my notes, I knew there was one caught in a web on level 22. Okay, I'll head there soon. These baby gargoyles are really bad at following me around. Cats and dogs seemed much better I recalled.

Started sorting out all my stuff into the different piles and the chest. It was an activity that I had done many times before. I was now very good at manipulating the #loot command while putting stuff in and out of the chest. But for some reason, I was getting all confused this time. It was like some things just no longer fit, and objects were completely mixed up... (?)

Heah... Where is my +1 elven bow? What are all these scrolls labeled; KERNOD WEL, VENZAR BORGAVE, and GRAVEN DEH doing here? I had nearly everything identified... The potions were all wierd too... And the wands! And everything else in the chest!! I stepled onto my two different piles of weapons and armor. Pressed the "," command and looked at the screens that appeared... There is something very wrong! I take a good look at my inventory screen ("i"). Things are all out of place! In a panic I looked at my discoveries screen ("\"i\""). Oh no no NO NO! NO!!

ARGHH!

My computer has corrupted the files to Nethack. All the data has been garbled. All those months of time invested in playing this game...

I slump in my chair. I'm holding my head with my left arm. The way it is positioned, I see the bottom left portion of the screen only. There on the status line I notice that my intelligence is 12. That's odd. I thought it was 14. I even checked everything after I got polymorphed. After that I didn't notice anything... Wait... I got hit twice by the invisible monster. There were two funny messages... Then it clicked.

Mindflayer.

At least I have my notes, and all my lists. I glance to my right for where I usually keep them. There is only one piece of paper. The cleaned up version.
Oh my god! What day is it? (It was a Thursday night.) Awh geeez...
Mindflayer.
I now hate these things.
Okay... Try and remember what all these potions, scrolls, wand, etc, were. It was impossible of course.
That’s why I couldn’t find my wand of teleportation before, I had forgotten what it was. Joted down
a few notes on what was likely what. I was pretty depressed. Even Elven weapons and armor were
forgotten.
I laid six more eggs and stored them in the chest. They may come in handy later. Now that I know
you can get pets from laying eggs; it was too bad I wasn’t polymorphed into a blue dragon. I know
that dragons lay eggs. That would have been neat!
Next thing to be done was getting that other leash. These baby gargoyles were both slow and not very
good at keeping up with me. I set out towards dungeon level 22 where I knew one was located.
Bumped into Jubilex a few times inside the temple of Mars and around the level. Having no infravision
is horrible once you have gotten used to having it. As I climbed the stairs to level 23, I reflected upon
the last days’ events... Well. The game sure has taken a few unexpected turns lately. The effects
of the encounter with the mindflayer were extremely aggravating. I would have to see if I could make the
best of it...
* Note 1: Talking about weight, being burdened, encumbrance, etc. I would like to see something
concerning how much certain things weigh. Maybe put it in the guide under a 'players’ handbook'
section or something. It would really help people like me figure what to carry and not. Only way I’ve
been able to do it, is by seeing what makes me burdened or not when I pick it up. Like how many
daggers are equivalent to a battle-axe, and so forth. My character should be aware of this, no? Just
my 2 cents.

1.15 The Long Dark Ascent

"You have a sense of deja vu." Was the next message that greeted me when I climbed to level 23. The
map was also black, of course (groan). Did I forget all the levels? All that time spent painstakingly
exploring all those levels since the beginning of this game... I was pretty discouraged, to say the least.
Found the stairs up to level 22. Same crap message and darkness greeted me again when I climbed
up. Search the level for the upstairs. Here we go. And there’s the leash in the web. Well, hope I don’t
spread it around too much...
I went to untrap it. Somehow that didn’t work. No choice, have to step in and go through the process
of trying to untangle it myself. Just have to be careful not to spread it onto the upstairs...
"You rip appart the web with your bare claws!" The web disappeared from the screen.
Woah! That never happened to me before. There’s one advantage of being a winged gargoyle compared
to an Elf!
Picked up the leash and slung it around the other gargoyles neck. Great! Now I don’t have to chase
them all over the place. They were now both leashed. Good. Although I found that getting anywhere
with them took an excruciating long time, at least they wouldn’t be able to stray too far.
Since we were right next to the upstairs of level 22, I decided to take a quick look and see if the above
level was forgotten...
"You have a sense of deja vu." Gawd...
Mindflayer.
Those are truly an evil monster to let get next to you...
By this time, I noticed that my babies were not eating anything. Like nothing at all. I would even linger around a fresh kill for a while in order for them to have a chance at devouring a corpse. Still they never did. Sometimes they would actually pick up the corpse, but not eat it. Okay, what’s the matter with these gargoyles? Don’t they eat? I went back to read the guide again. Couldn’t find anything addressing this situation. In fact according to it, they should be eating (?). How will they grow into winged gargoyles if they don’t? Oh well. Maybe I’ll figure it out later. Okay, lets get back to base camp and figure out what we’ll do from there.
Somewhere, and somehow, on the way back down to base camp, I got seperated from my two babies. Don’t remember how exactly. Some kind of teleportation trap in all likelihood. But what I do remember was being extremely upset that I had fallen victim to a previously known trap that was no longer detected...
Mindflayer.
Took me a while to get back to the level where my babies were. I was like 2 levels away from their last location, and probably had to search for stairs again. During this time, I transformed back into Elven form. Darn. I had forgotten to test if I could fly. Oh well, at least I got to discover quite a few other things on being a winged gargoyle monster (laugh).
When I entered the level where my babies were last known to be at, I heard some noises in the distance. Allright, they’re having a scrap with something. Good, this will help make them grow. As I closed in on them, a gargoyle appeared next to me. I knew it wasn’t one of my babies, as it had no heart next to it’s picture. I saw one of my pets a little distance away. The gargoyle next to me lashed out and hit me easily, as I now had an even worse armor class than when I was a winged gargoyle. These things are slow, so I was able to step back and kill it easily with BDD’s.
Sliped a leash over the baby I found, and started looking for the other one. Where is it? I searched the whole level, thereby exploring it all over again. Did it fall victim to a trap also? Could it have been the one I killed? If so, how come it became wild? I thought they went peaceful, not hostile if you stay away from them for a while (?).
Eventually, I gave up and headed back to base camp with only the one gargoyle. I called him (it) "Grunt", as that’s all it would ever say when I chated with him.
Said high to Jubilex so that he would have a few more chuckles at my transformation again, and went to my piles of booty in order to re-organise my armor situation. Hmmm... I had something compared to what I had before. Another dwarven mithral mail, but it was only +2. Not as good as the one that got ripped apart. Still I was glad that I had another available. Picked up my old +2 Elven cloak. It felt comfortable having it back on again. The green color made me feel more Ranger like.
Okay. Now I need another unicorn horn. Only other one I had was back at the base on dungeon level 4. Have to go back there, and while I’m at it, I’ll pick up a bunch of stuff from there to transport it down to this base. Picked out one of each type of unidentified scroll and a few wands. The potions I would bother with at a latter time. And off we went.
Pretty soon we ran into a dwarf lord or was it a dwarf king? Don’t really matter, I killed it handily. However, it left some dwarven mithral mail as booty. Oh good. I’ll run back down and verify it for cursedness at the temple. I wasn’t far, and who knows, it may be better than the one I have on currently. This is the best mail in the game after all.
1.15. THE LONG DARK ASCENT

Back to the temple of Mars, and discovered it was not cursed. I took off the suit I had on and tried the new one. Dropping the +2 suit in the process for some reason. It turned out to be +0. Okay, good to know, and it was worthwhile taking the time to check it out. Next I went to the chest for something or other. While I was rummaging through it, Grunt picked up the +2 dwarvenmithral mail. Nothing out of the ordinary, he picked up things from time to time. He was on a leash, so I would just get it back when he dropped it again. Then I got this message; "Grunt puts on the +2 dwarven mithral mail."

!!!

Heah! Give it back. That’s my best armor at the moment!

Nothing doing. Grunt meant to keep it on it would seem...

Okay... So then that’s why my mail broke when I changed into a winged gargyle. There was no room for the wings. Probably same reason why the cloak of protection ripped apart. Grunt had no wings. But if he should ever decide to grow into the type of monster that his mother was... Would it not break apart also? Is this a sign that he will never grow up? So then could it be possible that he can wear other stuff? I laid out some other armor on the floor for him to browse through. He didn’t seem interested. Okay, maybe he’ll like what I have at base camp on dungeon level 4 better. Or he can wear only one piece of armor maybe (?). I had no idea. Well, since Grunt was now better armored, I was hopping that he would do a little more fighting. He’ll have to earn that dwarven mail (laugh).

Alright. Organise everything nice and neat here. Said goodbye to the priestess of Mars and ol’ Jubilex, then started to head up in the Mazes of Menace...

At level 21, had to rediscover where that general store was again. But since so much effort had been required to find it the first time, it wasn’t too hard to remember where it was. Avoided the small mimic and had some objects appraised. It was disheartening to begin this process from scratch again.

Every stinkin’ level on the way up had to be re-explored. I didn’t bother rediscovering the entire lay out of each level. Just enough till I found the stairs. I’ll map them all out again sometime in the future. For now, I just wanted to get to the old base camp and organise a few things.

On level 19, I was heading along a familiar corridor. Yeah, this is the way to the stairs. I remember something about this area now. We’re almost there. Then...

"A beartrap closes on your foot!" "You are caught in a bear trap!"

Argh! That was the beartrap I had set myself! (See part 9: Breaching the Ghost Level. (11 on page 44) Gawd dang darn it! I was fuming with anger...

Mindflayer.

Eventually got out of it and continued on up to level 18. My notes told me there was a gigantic beehive here. Well... While we were at it, maybe a good opportunity for Grunt to get some experience at monster killing and grow a bit. Since he was made of stone, he should be impervious to poison. So we explored the level till I came upon the familiar area where the gigantic beehive was located.

Unlocked the door and gazed upon the 59 killer bees and their queen. Removed the leash from Grunt, displaced him into the room, then closed and locked the door. I heard some noises. Okay, he felt big enough to attack these guys I concluded. I spent my time waiting and re-exploring the level a bit. After a while the noises stopped, so went back to see how he’d done. I knew he was still alive, as I did not get the "sad feeling" message.

Unlocked and opened the door. Grunt was at the door with that same stupid blank look on his face that he always had. Most of the bees in the hive were still there (?). What’s the matter with you? I
saw that the remaining bees in the hive had not moved. They were all still in their original locations. Hmm...

Put the leash back on Grunt. Walked into the Hive. Closed but did not lock the door. Took a few steps around. Not one bee moved. Hmm...

Led grunt up to a cluster of bees. He attacked and killed one. The rest of the hive did not stir. Repeated this process till every killer bee had been killed. Sometimes Grunt missed and the bee would strike back. He never, ever, got hit what-so-ever. Not even once! Man, that dwarven mithral sure worked wonders on him! Grunt would not attack the queen. I killed her with a barrage of BDD’s. Collected all the royal jelly from the hive. 32 packets is what I recall. This stuff tastes delicious.

So Grunt killed 59 killer bees and did not become a winged gargoyle. Guess there was a mix up in his DNA. He wasn’t going to grow into a winged gargoyle like his mother was. Oh well, he’s hard to hit, and doesn’t eat much - like not at all. Even though he had an ugly face and a stupid blank look, I was his mother and loved him all the same.

Back to climbing up in the dungeon. Re-exploring the levels untill we found the stairs. Came upon the Ghost level again. This place I knew where the stairs were exactly. I had previously dug a channel directly accross to them (see part 9 (1.11 on page 42)). Good thing I had the foresight to do so at that time. It saved me some aggravation now.

Next event was the leperchaun den on level 12. I had no need for zorkminds. But figured, it would help Grunt gain a little confidence in fighting. I used the same methode as with the bee hive for here. Problem was, that at one point, Grunt picked up some zorkminds and a leperchaun taped him for it thereby teleportating away. We finished trashign them in their room. Grunt killing nearly all of them himself. Again, I never ever saw him get hit once, save for the time he had some zorkminds on him. Eventually, we located the one little green popper that had teleported away previously. BDD’ed him, picked up the zorkminds and continued our climb.

The blacked out levels were relentless. Man, was I ever discouraged at this. It took so long just getting back up in the Mazes of Menace.

At level 10, I put in some effort to rediscouer the grave of Sirius. I had spent a fair amount of time, and had a few memorable episodes on this level in the past, so remembered it pretty well. Everything was still in place as it should be. Remembered Sirius for a little while, and proceeded on up.

At dungeon level 5, an idea came to mind when I heard the "chime of a cash register". Since Grunt can wear armor, will he use weapons? We explored the level untill I had found the antique weapons shop again. I left Grunt outside while I went in. Picked up all the stuff and piled it into a corner. Only peice of equipement I did not do so with, was that overpriced morning star. Went back out and leashed up Grunt. Came back in and stood next to the morning star and waited...

Grunt picked up the morning star! I walked back towards the door. The Shopkeeper did not say anything. I had no bill to pay! I nonchalantly walked out of the shop with Grunt in tow. Not until I had closed and locked the door to the shop did I jump for joy! YES! We had pulled a fast-one on the old shopkeeper! Ha! It was easier than I had ever possibly imagined. Gargoyles were kind of quirky, but neat as pets (laugh!).

Since Grunt was leashed, he would not be let out of my sight. I knew that if he should ever drop that morning star, I would be told. As of yet, he never has. So now Grunt had +2 dwarven mithral mail, and a morning star priced at 49 zorkminds. Must be worth +2 at least. Morning stars are very ominous looking weapons. Monsters would be quivering in their boots when they would catch sight of him. He must have looked very scary (laugh!).
Dungeon level 4 was the first one that we got to where no message greeted us upon climbing the stairs! It was still mapped out. Small consolation. Since I knew it so well, it would have been easy to map it. Would have been nice if a harder level would have been in it's stead. Groan...

Mindlayers.

Finally. Base camp on dungeon level 4. Went through all my junk that had been left here from so long ago. I did not recognise most of it. That forgetting about stuff was really awful.

I laid out more stuff for grunt to mull over. One was a blessed battle-axe. Was curious if he would be interested in it. If so, maybe drop the morning star. Since the beginning of the game, I was always interested in that morning star for myself (!). Nope he didn't want it. Only thing he took was a +2 orich helm. Oh well, at least the morning star was in his hands and not anyone else's. I see that Grunt was pretty fussy in what he wanted for himself. Just stuff that was at least +2 (!). He reminded me of his mother (laugh)!

Okay, tidy up the place here, and pick up that other unicorn horn from the white one that we had offered to Mars all that while back. Picked out also some more unknown scrolls. The general store at Temple Town was closer than the one on level 21 of the Mazes of Menace. I would go and have them appraised there. Besides, I had another multitude of booty located at the base camp there. Was also curious if the forgetfulness applied to the caverns area of the dungeon as well. I was just two levels away from the stairs anyways. After having done 21 levels of re-discovery, what were a few more? So off we went.

Level 3 was the same excercise at remapping a path from stair to stair. But level 2 was thankfully remembered. Headed straight for the humongous potion shop. Rummaged through that pile of 59 potions I had stacked in the corner. Lucky! He had one clear potion that was more expensive, and that did not meld with the rest. Don't remember what I paid for it, but it was well under 60 zorkminds for sure. A bargain considering what I needed it for. Went up the stairs to level 1 for a quick looksee. It was black. I came back down immediately and headed back to base camp at level 4. Verified the clear potion on the altar to Mars. I had figured correctly. It was blessed! Dipped the uncursed unicorn horn in it. The horn glowed amber. Made sure by dropping it on the altar. Adjusted it's letter to "u", and named it "white". There now. If I ever have a titan curse it again, it will still work. As it will go from blessed to uncursed. By then, hopefully I will have killed it before it has the chance to curse it to cursed. Satisfied, we proceeded back to level 2 and the downstairs to the caverns.

So out of 25 levels of the Mazes of Menace previously known, only two had been unaffected from the vilest of creatures imaginable...

The mindlayer.

On the first level of the caverns, we headed for the monument to Missy Prissy. It had been undisturbed as well. We paused for a few moments as we had done for Sirius.

The cavern levels to Temple Town proved to be a mixed blessing. The lit levels were forgotten. However the unlit levels were remembered. Thank Mars. At least that was bearable. Having to re-explore the darkened caverns would have been hard on my already dampened spirits, especially since I had run out of candles long ago.

Ascent Summary:

The climb back up through the Mazes of Menace can be summed up best with the following words; long, discouraging, tedious, exasperating, sad, interminable, aggravating, disheartening, boring, excruciating, and frustrating. It took many days in real life. Only a path from stair to stair is what I really
only have on each level. Mapping out the rest will have to be done when I’m more up to it. I just can’t bring myself to do so at this time. Too discouraged, I guess.

Many caches of booty have also been forgotten along the way. As well as the location of all the traps. (sigh). This combined with having to re-identify nearly all of my booty, nearly compelled me to quit. Only all the time invested into this game, and having reached a depth never achieved before, was what kept me going. Though, with not as much enthusiasm as I had had before the encounter with the invisible mindflayer...

All through these days of ascent, I was thinking how I could avoid the effects of this again should I encounter another one. One thing would stay with me for sure. If there was one creature that must be avoided at all costs; this would have to be the:

Mindflayer.

1.16 There’s A New Kid In Town

"When I get that money, I’ll buy the old ladies home and kick them out. I’ll tear down the orphanage and fire the police department."

- Yosemite Sam

So I’m back in temple Town again, with my pet baby gargoyles Grunt. And... Yes, the town layout had been forgotten...

We’re exploring through it again, encountering the watch along the way. I anxiously watch for Grunt’s reactions, as both Sirius and Missy Prissy had to be locked up when exposed to these guys. No such problem with Grunt; I soon discovered. Although he had both +2 helm and dwarven mithral mail, as well as, an expensive morning star; he was not going to hit any of them. Hrumph... Now I know why he came from an egg - he was a big chicken! Ah well, saves me the trouble of having to lock him up. I untied the leash from him and set him loose. At least I didn’t have to be held up waiting for him, he was slow, when I wanted to go about my business here. I’ll just grab him later when I’m finished.

Went to start organising all the stuff at my base in a room between the general store and the temple. Assembled all the scrolls and went to have them appraised at the general store. Made lots of notes. Did lots of figuring and thinking. Got some of them pretty well figured out. This was frustrating to me, having to go through all of this again. But, I’m trying to not mention the name of that most despised of all creatures there is in Nethack:

The mindflayer.

So after quite a while at busting my head and getting stuff re-identified, I was ready to head back to the Mazes of Menace. Loaded up with all the booty I was able to carry, then noticed that I had forgotten about some booty that we had acquired along the way to here. Okay, I’ll just test this booty for cursedness at the temple to Venus before setting out.

The priestess to Venus was just as annoying as she’d always been. Always getting in my way when I wanted access to the altar. Also she only wanted my zorkminds so that she could spend it on furthering the power of her own god. Take a hike, I told her. I only serve Mars. She was not happy with that reply. She said I would regret my decision or something. Bah. She could go to hades for all I cared.

Anyways, I was trying some stuff on when I made a big mistake. First time in all the time that I’d been playing this particular game. I was thinking of how obnoxious the priestess was, and not paying attention to what I was doing. I put on a cursed piece of armor. Some kind of helmet that turned
out to be -2 also. Ah crap... Just what I needed. I was really upset with myself. This was one of the stupid mistakes that I had wanted to avoid doing in Nethack this game (see prologue to this whole story). Ding dang darn it! I lost my temper...

I took out the pick-axe and started punching holes in the temple to Venus. After that, I started punching holes in some of the spots that annoyed me. The whole town was set up really bad. You couldn’t get anywhere without having to take such a round about route. This had always annoyed me the whole game as well. Coupled with all the frustration of forgetting nearly everything I knew and had mapped - I needed an outlet for my anger. After a while, I managed to calm down...

Now I needed to get rid of this stupid cursed helmet. I went back to the base, dumped the booty that had been verified at the temple, and searched through my stuff for a scroll of remove curse. Wouldn’t you know it, I had forgotten which one it was. Of course. Why should I be surprised at that (mutter, mutter).

Well. Narrow it down to a few scrolls, and read a scroll of identify. The whole message area filled up and then "— more —" appeared. Wow... All the stuff I was carrying on me had been identified! Never had that before! Most of the time I get one, sometimes two choices. This was great! What a stroke of luck. Got the appropriate scroll and got rid of the cursed helmet.

Gee... The gods must be smiling. Upon that thought, my mind began to turn to more sinister thoughts...

I hate the way this town is laid out. I hate that there’s a temple to Venus here. I hate that priestess of Venus. I hate the greedy grubby merchants.

Had another scroll of enchant weapon just recently identified. Took all of my remaining blessed +4 daggers named "BDD" and welded them. Read the scroll. They became +6! And I did not have to identify them again! That’s the way they now appeared in my inventory screen! Wonderful! Now I named these "BDDD" (Blessed Death Dealing Daggers).

The gods are smiling indeed. My luck is turning. Mars must be giving me a sign.

Fine. This town needs a new mayor. I’m taking over in the name of Mars!

Marched up to the temple of Venus. I tore down the whole west wall of the temple with the pick-axe. Priestesses never move more than two from the altar. Let’s see if she moves when threatened. I waited till she was lined up...

Fire!

The priestess got mad or something. I was happy for her.

Fire!

I don’t remember her living past this point.

Something came up in the messages saying something about me not supposed to that, or something. Like I cared how anybody here felt about things. Since when is a takeover agreeable by all parties concerned?

Okay then. Who wants to make something out of it?

A town watchman came along to answer that call. I was in the midst of sifting through the Priestesses booty when he came over to hassle me. Lay off Elf, I told him. Your working for me now. Next he made a bad decision concerning his well being. He hit me with his weapon.

Fine. I stepped back and let him have BDDD’s. He fell right away. Good. Maybe now people will show a little more respect when they see his corpse as well.
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No such luck. It’s like the whole town watch was alerted or something. But the way this towns’ layout was made, they couldn’t all converge on me simultaneously. They all came around one at a time and with a time lag between them as well. Made for easy pickings.

During the fight with the town watch, a white unicorn got caught in the crossfire and fell. Good, I now have another unicorn horn. Also a ghost appeared. Who’s it was, I don’t remember, maybe the preistess of Venus. But it sure didn’t last long to the onslaught of BDDD’s. Only the watch captain was a little tough to take down. He actually got off a swing at me with his sword. The whole battle was fought in and around the temple to Venus. Messages would crop up from time to time about me getting some kind of eerie feeling. But my character showed no fear from this what-so-ever.

Next, I dumped all the bodies on the altar to Venus and started offering them. The first one converted the altar to Mars. I was not surprised. Actually I was fully expecting it. Once you have a determined feeling about something, it usually turns out the exact way you thought. The unicorn gave me that "appropriately chaotic" message again. Glad to be of service Mars (wink). Also had a few messages about blood running all over the place. (shrug) There’s always going to be bloodshed in a coup.

Mars was so ecstatic, he gave me another gift: A sword named "Dragonbane".

Another gift from Mars!

My pleasure Mars. No reward necessary. I was sick of this place myself. But heah! I’ll take good care of it (Finally, I think I can figure this one out.).

With all of the contestations to my authority now settled; I then proceeded to cut clear paths throughout the town. Those shopkeepers that weren’t pleased with my expropriation of their property for the new superhighways, were put out of business - permanently. This was done the same way as; the preistess, the white unicorn, the town watch, and the ghost went: BDDD’s.

Only ones that survived from the original town council were; Izchak from the candle shop, and what’s his face who had the general store.

I renamed the town: "Marsville". From here on end; this is by the name it shall be refered to.

Had to put my plans of going back to base camp dungeon level 4 in the Mazes of Menace on hold for a while. With my impromptu coup, there was much work to be done here...

Collected all the booty from all the bodies and now ungaured shops, and tested for cusedness. Lot’s of different stuff was discovered. Can’t remember it all, at all. But it was quite a looting! Thousands upon thousands of zorkminds were piled in a heap. A bunch of wands. A slew of rings. Weapons and armor galore. A few spellbooks as well. And the mace that the preistess of Venus had, was cursed (ha ha)!

Much time was spent trying on all the different armor. After that I had a pile of it, along with a pile of weapons, that were added to the existing piles I already had at the base. What am I going to do with all of this? It has no use just sitting there. I got Grunt to hover around the piles for a while. But he was being fussy again. So I made several trips to the guy who still had the general store. Armor, weapons, and a ton of miscellaneous stuff. I just dumped it all on him in one gigantic fire sale. This brought on another few thousand zorkminds into my purse. I’ll tell you again: I had a lot of stuff. And there’s still way more than that scattered in my caches in the Mazes of Menace (!).

If I ever need some of it back; my BDDD’s will assure me of a great big discount on their purchase price (wink).

Went to see Izchack and bought out his remaining stock of candles. Hopefully he’ll get a new shipment in by the time I come back.
1.17. QUALIFICATIONS

Hokay. Now that Marsville was all set up to my liking, and all the garbage was swept from the streets, I left a mob of gremlins in charge of running the place. You ever chat with these guys? They’re a riot! Loaded up with all I could carry. Don’t know how many zorkminds I had; 18,000 to 23,000? I dunno. It was more than I had ever acquired in such a short space of time before (laugh). Headed off to base camp level 4 in the Mazes of Menace. Didn’t feel like checking if the levels below Marsville were forgotten or not. I had no real reason to go back there.

Got to base camp dungeon level 4. Dumped all the booty that I did not need for now. Picked up all the zorkminds that I had accumulated since the beginning of the game that was stored here. Combined with those from the sacking of Marsville, I now had like 43,000 zorkminds!! I was loaded. I had a plan that was now going to blow this game wide open for me (or so I thought). With grunt still in tow, I made my way to the Oracle of Delphi on dungeon level 9.

Along the way, whenever a wandering monster popped out, all I had to do was drop all my zorkminds ("d$") and was now unencumbered to face it. But that was only if I was kind of concerned with it. If I wasn’t, the BDDD’s just dropped anything - and I mean anything, like never seen before. If you thought that BDD’s were good, BDDD’s were better. This was now the most powerful weapon I ever had at my disposal in Nethack. Combined with the Ranger ability of being able to fire in salvos, these were beyond deadly.

BDDD’s plus the ease I had with sacking Marsville brought my spirits way up again. I was feeling the same as when I had breached the ghost level. Funny. This game sure had it’s ups and downs (laughs).

Got to the Oracle and started just showering her with gold. Okay. Let’s go. Gimme all your major consultations. I just kept going till she either told me she was through, or she started repeating stuff all the time. Don’t remember, but I had written them all down, and then started with the minor consultations. This took quite some time. Two full sessions actually. I filled up three sheets of notes just from these! I think I stopped cause I got tired (laugh). And a lot of these were pretty useless I found. Just goes to show: You get what you pay for (laugh)!

Now, at this point, I took a day and a bit off from playing Nethack. I had sapped the Oracle of her knowledge, I was going to reflect upon all of this, and combine it with my experiences in the game. I also read the guide to Nethack once more. It is good to take a break and absorb all the recent knowledge gained. That way I may be better able to apply it for the future...

1.17 Qualifications

If you can just get your mind together Uh-then come on across to me We’ll hold hands and then we’ll watch the sunrise From the bottom of the sea But first, are you experienced?

Jimmy Hendrix

Having reflected upon my experiences, knowledge, and discoveries from the whole game thus far; I fired it back up after a day and some.

Okay... What to do next?

Not much really. Mars was super pleased with me. Him and I were working out just fine this game (See the pact I made with him in the prologue before starting this game.). So, no reason for concern there.

Most of the dungeon was cleared out now up to level 26. Including most pockets of the special monster areas.
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I was still testing out "Orcrist" here and there. Wasn’t impressed by anything it did. "Dragonbane" was tested a few times here and there also. But the closest thing I could find to a dragon so far was an iguana. I had an open box for broadswords now in the enhance screen. But until I could figure if these were worth it, I was going to still keep my options open. (shrug) Besides, nothing stood up to the best weapon I had ever experienced: The "BDDD".

Still had all the mapping of the levels to do, due to me forgetting them from the most despicable creature put on this plane of existance:

The mindflayer.

But with a cleared path to each stairwell on the levels, I was okay for now. I had just spent two days of writing down what the Oracle had to say. So was in the mood for something a little more exciting.

Hokay. We’ll get some stuff from base camp level 4, and move it up to base camp level 24. Once there, we’ll explore level 26. If nothing special comes up, we’ll either check out that barracks on level 25 or see what we can do against the titan on level 27.

Good. A mission was now defined.

With Grunt in tow, headed back up to base camp level 4 from the Oracles level.

Assembled all I could carry that I felt was important. Made special sure that I had the candles with me (laugh). Also brought all the gold left over from the shower I gave the Oracle. About 8,000 zorkminds. Was going to give it to the preistess of Mars. I owed her some from my previous promises I had made to her. I no longer was worried about having to buy anything since I now knew that shopkeepers were push-overs.

At dungeon level 16, one of the wandering monsters that appeared was a grey unicorn. Unless they’re orcs, I don’t stop to kill all wandering monsters, else I would never get anywhere. But for some I do go out of my way for. Unicorns are one of these. Especially after that encounter with the titan, which was always hovering in the back of my mind...

So these things really hop around at a good clip, Grunt and I had to go in some of the black sections that were caused by me forgetting the lay out of the levels. All of a sudden the leash went slack and Grunt dissappeared. Some kind of trap that I had never seen before became visible. It was called "Portal to Home" I think.

I finished dispatching the grey unicorn and circled around this new discovery. It looked like a teleporation trap, but was slightly different in appearance. It had an extra squiggle line through it. Hmmm...

Well, I assumed Grunt was still alive somewhere. Else I would have gotten a message saying something else to that effect. Although he wasn’t that useful, he was kind of neat looking with that morning star and armor and all. Besides, he was my baby. I had to make an effort in rescuing him.

This is dungeon level 16. How far could this portal bring me? It must be similar to the stairs that lead to the boulders and the caverns area. Hence, it can’t be as dangerous as compared to a lower level, now could it?

Okay. Decision has been made. I’m going to step into it. First I’ll drop whatever I don’t really need. I don’t want to go through encumbered. Just in case there’s a horde of monsters waiting on the other side. I want to be free for immediate battle action.

I drop the stuff in a pile in the corner of the room I’m in. I searched it all carefully and completely before doing so. Checked my inventory. Made sure I had all the proper weapons wielded and quivered. Took a breadth and steped into the portal...
I got a story on the screen. Something about being back home (?), and seeing the ancestral forest of my village (?).

Clicked "okay" and the screen appeared before me. There were some centaurs in the distance and there was ol’ Grunt just a few squares away.

Okay... Did I exit the dungeon? Am I still in the Mazes of Menace? I looked at the dungeon level indicator. It said: Home 1.

Good. At least I’m not embroiled in a fight for my survival right off the bat! I have time to look things over and such.

Lots of open space on the right side of the screen. Excellent area for a Ranger to scrap in. Too bad most of the Mazes of Menace are in cramped quarters. The left of the screen has something new. Trees! After doing all the looking I could, I ventured towards them...

Had to knock off a few centaurs, and levitate over a pit in order to find that this was some kind of maze. Centaurs were shooting bolts and arrows through somekind of iron grate. A few scorpions were hanging around also. Too bad I didn’t have "Sting" with me to run a test on these.

Okay. This doesn’t look too tough. Let’s go see what lies within this maze.

I left Grunt outside the forest. I wasn’t going to force him through the pit. If he would at least have grown up into the same monster as his mommie, I would have brought him along. Besides, he was okay where he was. He tried to stay near me and hugged the edge of the forest. So I wasn’t worried about him stepping back through the portal.

After a while, I saw that the path was made even longer than just slow closing circles. These iron grates served as a way to extend the tedious length of the path. Okay. Forget this. I’m just going to cut my way through. Pulled out the pick-axe and started hammering away at the trees...

It wouldn’t let me. Okay... How about these grates? Same story.

Urgh. Fine, I’ll do it the long way...

What made it even longer was that not all the centaurs were out to get me. Some were freindly. So I had to constantly do the look before firing. Lest I should kill one by mistake.

Nearing the middle I found a minotaur. Figures. These guys always inhabit the middle of a maze. I remembered that from watching Hercules on TV when I was a kid. Also from my experience with that game that Nethack is not. I dropped the minotaur with just two salvos of BDDD’s. I don’t think he ever got to take a step towards me.

Next were two arrow traps. Side by side. I got a bunch of arrows from disarming them. But, except for poisoned ones, I had ceased using arrows long ago. Nothing could compare to BDDD’s.

All these hunters were moving all over the place. Amongst them was a big guy called Orion. Made it tuff to get anywhere. And once I had disarmed those arrow traps, they just started filling the maze all throughout.

They told me that Orion was having a hard time of late. Some mountain centaurs were hassling them with incursions into their forest. Somebody called Scorpious was the brains behind it all. He stole the longbow of Diana, and without it they couldn’t stop the nasties. Everybody was doomed unless a hero (like me) could go and fix his clock.

Allright. Now I figured out what the random dungeon sound on level 16 of the Mazes of Menace was all about. "You again here the call of help from Orion." That means there is a portal to the home level somewhere. Another big discovery for me!
So I told Orion: No problem. In fact, it just so happens, I was kinda looking for something to do! But Orion got all disappointed like. Said I still needed to learn a few things. I had to go and seek out teachers before I could help out.

What? No no. I'm ready now! Trust me. I just took over a town. I can kill air elementals in one salvo of BDDD’s. I have cleared the Mazes of Menace for 25 levels! I can surely handle a few mountain centaurs and whatever this Scorpious guy is... no?

The answer was no.

Hokay. So where are these teachers then? I asked every stinkin’ hunter there was on the screen. Nobody was telling me.

Fine. Since they weren’t here, obviously, they must be in the Mazes of Menace somewhere.

Trek back through that maze of trees. With the hunters and freindly centaurs now all over the place, and blocking the path; it made for a long trek. Yes, I tried levitating over them trees as well. Made a note that I was going to come back here with an axe.

There was so much booty from killing all these monsters in the maze of trees, that I couldn’t carry it all. I just made piles of it here and there. But I made sure to keep all the missile weapons on me, though. If they wanted to pick up a bow, or crossbow to wield against me; fine. But all of this shooting at me wasn’t going to happen no more. Anyways, I had to come back here eventually I figured. I would pick them all up then.

Got back to the portal and hesitated, in order to think, before stepping back through...

Who and where are these teachers? Only one(s) that came to mind were the Oracle, and possibly Izchak from the candle shop in Marsville. The Oracle for obvious reasons, and Izchak cause of the different things he would sometimes tell me. Besides those two, I had never run across any other teachers...?

There was Mars, who once told me that there was a tune to play somewhere in a past game. But he’s a god. He’s way, way above being a teacher. I just can’t imagin that Orion was talking about him. The preistess never told me anything that was "teaching" either...

I just couldn’t think of anything else (?).

Okay. It must be some kind of switch being thrown within the game: I talk with Orion, switch is thrown. => Now the switch is open to talk with the Oracle => Now I can go back to talk with Orion, cause the other switches have been opened. Just like in some of them old NES games way back during the ’80’s.

Fine. I’ll go through the motions.

Okay Grunt. I’m just going to zip down and chat to the Oracle for a minute. You stay here (you’ll just slow me down for something I can do more quickly without you.), I’ll be back in a jiff. "Grunt grunts," was the reply.

So I stepped through the portal and was wisked back to dungeon level 16. Went to pick up my stuff I had dropped previously. Then waited for a few turns to see if Grunt was going to come through the portal. He didn’t. Must be the same as when I leave him at the stairs on another level. Okay, let’s zip to the Oracle...

Wait! I’m burdened! Ugh.... Can’t zip around while burdened, and where can I ditch all this booty? Besides the base camps, I forgot where all my caches were.

Okay. I’ll go down to base camp on level 24 first to dump all this stuff. It’s just 8 levels away. Then, I’ll go see the Oracle. Makes sense. So down I went...
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Gave the priestess of Mars my pile of zorkminds. She said that my generocity was selfless or something. No probs, I said. Me and big guy Mars have an understanding this game. I do everything for him, and he comes through when I ask. I've been promising you a ton of zorkminds for ages now anyways. Just spend them on some gaudy decorations befitting a temple to Mars (wink).

Sat around for a bit at the altar to Mars with the priestess and Jubilex. Had a few beers and told them the story about me taking over Temple Town, then naming it Marsville in honor of our god. Then I showed them my latest gift from Mars; "Dragonbane". They oooed and awed. After some comraderie, and a few chuckles, set back to the task at hand...

Sorted out all my stuff. Picked out "Sting" to keep on me. This would be a good test for it. If there were more scorpions at this "Home" area, it may reveal itself. Who knows? Maybe it's the bane of this "Scorpious" dude? Maybe I need it to prove my heroism to Orion in order to convince him I can take on Scorpious? (shrug) This thing has to have some use, no?

Bid goodbye to the priestess and Jubilex. Then ziped up to the Oracle at dungeon level 9.

Had a small problem when I got to the Oracle. I had no more zorkminds to talk to her (!). Oups...

Ziped up to base camp dungeon level 4. Loaded up with all the crap armor and weapons from my piles that I thought would fetch a good price. Ran to the antique weapons shop on level 5. After a couple of trips I had enough zorkminds for a major consultation from the Oracle. I figured best to go for the major consultation concerning this particular case about Orion.

Why didn't I just off the shopkeeper you ask? (shrug) I didn't know if he would still come in handy for any weapon or armor appraisals in the futur yet. I can come back and rob his cash register whenever I wanted. Just figured I'd keep my options open for now.

Finally, back to speak with the Oracle...

It was a no go. She had no idea what I was talking about (groan).

Well... Maybe I better go check with Izchak then. Just in case...

Off to Marsville in the caverns.

When I got there, the gremlins were having a ball with the town! They were all over the place (laugh).

What an absolute pleasure it was to have a direct path to the candle shop (grin).

I camped out in the empty candle shop with Izchak (he hadn't received a shipment yet) for quite a while. I listened to all the stories he told me until he was just constantly repeating himself. Fine. See you later Izchak. Thanks for all the info.!

Loaded up with yet more stuff from my base here at Marsville. And back to the Mazes of Menace.

Base camp dungeon level 4. Dump and sort the booty. Picked out an axe from the pile of weapons. Now off to dungeon level 16.

"Orion is calling to you for help." Was the message I got when entering the level. Okay! I'm ready (I hope)! Step into the portal and get whisked to the planes of Home...

Grunt had lost his little heart next to his picture. He was now peaceful. Aww... Sorry Grunt. Took a little longer than I had anticipated. I'll get you back. Just sit tight for a while. "Grunt grunts."

With axe in hand, I walked up to the tress and started chopping...

Clang!

Ah man... This forest is composed of modern day christmas trees; they're made of steel...

(major groan) Made my way through the maze. It was even longer than the first time due to all these hunters blocking the single paths.
Okay Orion. I talked with the Oracle and Izhak. They taught me everything there is to know!

Orion still thought I had yet much to learn...

Wait! Look (I wielded "Sting"!), I have a weapon given to me straight from the gods! It is for the express purpose of sticking it into Scorpious!

Orion wasn’t impressed.

Aw no... I dunno what you want me to do then?

Hmmm... Okay, Gimme the story about the mountain centaurs and Diana’s bow and Scorpious again...

There’s something I’m missing here, obviously.

I got the story from all the hunters again. Then I started thinking about everything I could remember from my old mythology classes. Which wasn’t too much, since they were even before I started playing that game that Nethack is not. Next I consulted the encyclopedia. Things started to make sense on a few things. Here’s the condensed version...

Orion is a hunter (that I knew already). Sirius was his dog (!). Diana was the goddess of the hunt, the moon, and chastity. Diana and Orion had a thing going. Diana’s brother (I forget who he was) didn’t approve. He tricked her into killing Orion when he was having a swim. Diana put him in the sky (the star constellation of Orion), so that she could see him for eternity.

Yep. A wonderful tragedy. However it didn’t do much to help my particular situation. I got no info on Scorpious, or what he has to do with things (?). And even less on these mountain centaurs. Only thing was that they somehow discovered a tonic to poison. Found out that titans were the children of the gods, also. So that would mean they were going to probably be pretty tough.

Felt kind of bad that I no longer had Sirius with me. Maybe Orion would have been more lenient with my qualifications...

Hmmm... Since Orion and Diana were both hunters with bows... Maybe that’s how I have to prove myself...? I have to show how skilled I am with the bow?

Okay, worth a try. Seems rational to me.

I went to the enhance screen and checked the box next to "bows". That now put me at expert skill level with bows.

I approached Orion again. Look! I’m an archery expert!

Nope. That did not seem to work either. (shake head).

What do I have to do? Shoot something with a bow and arrow for you? Is there supposed to be an archery contest somewhere for me to prove myself? That must be it! But I had no bow with me.

I went to pick one up from one of the piles of booty I had made along the route in the maze of tress. I was just about to wield it, but then I thought to myself: What if it’s cursed? What if once I enter the archery contest I can’t go back to one of my bases and get it uncursed? I may trigger a chain of events and not be able to exit this area until it’s accomplished...

Hmmm... I better just go get my +1 runed bow (Yeah. I forgot what an Elven bow was too.). Why take the chance. Although everybody here is lamenting about the dire situation; It’s not like Orion is in any hurry to let me go fix everything up.

Hallright...

Back we go through the maze of trees. Back through the portal. (Good thing Grunt don’t eat. He’d of starved by now.) Back to base camp dungeon level 24. Fish out the +1 runed bow. Exchange
pleasentries with; the priestess of Mars, Jubilex, and both (yes there was now two) Elven kings on the level. Back to level 16. Make my way towards the room with the portal. And...
"The wraith touches you!" "You seem unaffected by the wraiths’ touch."
Ahh! I hate being touched!
Lucky, though. I made my saving throw versus level drain. Wraiths are double dangerous in this regard. They cause you to lose two levels per draining!
No foolin’ around. It’s BDDD time. Fire!
And down it went. In the same message sequence, I went up a level. I was now a level 14 Ranger.
This is the first time I mention a definite number as to what my level was in the game at a particular point. Reason being that I don’t remember what my level was during the other episodes of the story, is cause I never paid attention to it really. After a while, when the level comes, it comes. It’s just a bonus. Plus I didn’t know I’d be telling all of this in a story to the rest of you (laugh). Else I would have kept track of it better. The reason I do remember it "at this particular time", is because that’s the level I’m still at now.
Okay, Through the portal. Hi Grunt! "Grunt grunts." Make my way through the tree maze. Wait for people to get out of the way. Wield the +1 runed bow. Quiver the +2 runed arrows. Get to Orion.
Okay Orion. Look. I got my gear. Where’s the archery range?
Orion said he felt bad about having to ask me to do the dirty work. But unless he stayed where he was, the forest might get overrun by the next mountain centaur raid. So it was all up to me to get Diana’s bow off of Scorpious. A secret door, then appeared nearby.
Finally. I was heroic enough for him. So it must have been the experience level then. Orion could have explained it better. Like he could have said; "Sorry, but you are not yet experienced enough."
Instead of "Seek teachers throughout the land that you may learn from them." (shake head + roll eyes).
Boy, Orion. Your lucky. If this wasn’t going to work this time, I was going to give up on you and go back a titan. By the way; what’s in the chest?
I checked for traps, then unlocked it and found two rings. Wasn’t particularly inclined to taking Orion’s stuff at the moment. So I left everything there for now.
Went to the door and entered a small chamber. There was a stairs down within. What lay below I wondered? Whatever it was, I felt a thrill of excitement as I started to descend...

1.18 The Trees

After a short battle with some centaurs, that thrill I had sensed upon descending was quickly dashed away...
All around me, I was surrounded by tress. Oh no... Am I going to have to be funneled around again like the level with Orion?
I better found out right away. Pulled out the axe and started chopping at the nearest tree...
The tree got chopped down! Great! And some kind of fruit appeared when I did. Hmmm... Choped down a few more. Got all different kinds of stuff; apples, pears, eucalyptus leaves, bananas, etc. So now I had a source of food supply - not that I needed one. But good to know in case I ever decided to
tame a pony. Horsies eventually starve to death on me cause, except for lichen, they don't eat corpses. By the way, the pick-axe also worked as a tree chopper.

Okay. I won't be restricted as before, on this level, it seemed. So things looked up again. I'll list the Home area for you and tell you what I discovered...

**Home Level 1 (Maze of Steel Trees)**

- portal to level 16 in the Mazes of Menace
- Orion
- chest

Here, I started a cache in the small room with the stairs. I could lock the door, and the surrounding tress were impassable. This was a handy spot, for the entire Home area would eventually yield piles upon piles of booty!

**Home Level 2 (Trees)**

- trees which may yeild fruit when axed

Here there was one of them grey stones you see hanging around from time to time. But when I picked it up, I got stressed! Oh oh. What's this? Then I couldn't drop it (laugh). I tried throwing it also. No go. I had to drop a whole bunch of stuff just to get unencumbered again. Guess it was cursed. So then maybe some of these grey stones increase your load bearing capacity (?)... Hmmm... I'll have to look into that in the future.

Went to drop all the stuff in the cache on level 1. Chopped a direct path through the trees from stair to stair. I would be needing to do many, many, many trips of booty caching now that I couldn't carry as much without being "overly" encumbered.

Discovering a scroll of remove curse became a high priority at this point.

**Home Level 3 (Cavern)**

- cave of the wumpus

Here the opening message upon descending the stairs was something like this:

"You have entered the cave of the wumpus... bla bla bla... You must use your meager supply of arrows conservatively in order to have a hope at defeating the masses of monsters which now surround you."

At the last part I laughed! Don't worry - It won't be a problem. I don't hardly ever use arrows!

I've discovered that daggers is the most intelligent way to play a Ranger. I used to try and play them with bow and arrow. Believe me, I did this lots and lots of times. But besides poisoned tipped crude arrows, and some of the +2 ones in the beggining of the game; they just can't compare to dagger chucking. Especially once they have been blessed and enchanted up a bit. (See Part 8: Consolidation *(1:10 on page 35)*, for further explanation.)

A few tough monsters were here; vampires, vampire bats, and an ochre jelly being the most fearsome.
1.18. THE TREES

Notable booty recovered from this level were; a blindfold and two towels. I mention the blindfold, cause as soon as I picked it up; a yellow light appeared. Haha! I said to myself. I put on the blindfold and waited a few turns...

"It explodes." "You seem unaffected by it." Was the message that soon followed.

He he. Yellow lights don’t hurt you, but they blind you. No problem when you have a unicorn horn. Big problem when you don’t and are fighting other monsters at the same time. I would keep this on me now. These are handy.

The wumpus was a big let down. He went down very easily. Don’t know why Orion was worried about my experience level...

**Home Level 4 (Stone walls)**

- unlit level
- beartrap

Good thing I had some candles. Hope the Mazes of menace aren’t too much deeper. Don’t think I’ll have enough. I do not keep candles burning continuously either. Never! Only till I’ve uncovered a certain area of the level. Then to go back to another uncovered area, I extinguish the candle till I’ve reached it. In long single lane passages, I don’t have them on either. What’s the use?

Half way through exploring this level, I found a scroll of remove curse. Goodbye grey stone. I also was very careful in picking up booty now. I did not have auto pick-up turned on. This was in case a monster should pick it up and drop it after I’d kill it.

**Home Level 5 (Stone walls)**

- unlit level
- polymorph trap
- chest
- beartrap

Discovering the chest here was fantastic. I brought it up to the cache room on level 1 right away. Now I had a secure container for all the valuable booty.

As you can now see: Since the encounter with the mindflayer, my notes now include traps I would like to avoid. That’s why the polymorph trap here is listed, and these weren’t in my previous notes until now.

Next stupendous discovery was not one, but two (!), brass lanterns! Finally. I no longer had to depend upon candles. What a long game that turns out to be. First one where I had to do sooo much exploring in darkness. And, as you can see, I explore everything pretty thoroughly. Don’t get me wrong; infravision, and candles are great. But go back over the story and see all I did thus far. This seeming mundane piece of booty (a brass lantern), was quite a boon to me. Believe me!

Throughout all the levels, I had to be careful not to hit the freindly centaurs. Sometimes I thought I had identified one as being peaceful, only to have it hit me when I passed by it (laugh). "Sting" proved to be just as ineffective against scorpions as anything else I tried it on.
Home Level 6 (Palace)

- Scorpious’ hideout
- throne
- chest

Hokay. The room with the stairs had 4 doors going in the major compass points. It was a small room. I had a sensation that there was going to be close-in action. I hate fighting in tight quarters. Really reduces my ranged weaponry effectiveness. Tried to cut through some walls. The game wouldn’t let me. Okay... I took this as a sign that I was maybe getting close to an objective and/or encounter of some kind.

Prepare for a major engagement: I made sure everything was in place.

I wielded my +1 runed bow. "Sting" was in my off hand. The silver dagger, an axe, "Orcrist", and "Dragonbane" remained available. Quivered the +2 runed arrows. Poison tipped arrows were also available. BDDD’s would have to be thrown ("t")

There now, I have a deadly - yet versatile arsenal at my disposition. I can fire arrows and/or throw BDDD’s without losing any ticks on the clock. Quivering uses no time. I’m now expert in both bow and dagger. Depending on the missile, salvo fire will result in; 1 - 4 BDDD’s launching, 1 - 5 runed arrows launching, or 1 - 4 poison tipped arrows launching.

As things worked out, I started by clearing the area in the top and left part of the map. Next was the bottom and left. I was leaving all the doors open as I went along. I wanted to be able to move quickly in case I ran into something big - like a dragon. That way I could run through and close the door on it, if I needed some time to figure something out. The different areas would open up with a mob of monsters just waiting behind the door usually.

Next I opened the door that led into a narrow hallway heading to the right. Another door at the end of it opened into a room with a bigger mob of monsters than previously encountered so far on this level. I didn’t move until I was able to do a complete look (;) scan of what I could see.

Centaur, spiders, bugbears, scorpions, orc shaman, orc captain, and Scorpious is what I could see. Fine. Nothing tuff here at all. I’ll just step back and pepper them all when they file into the corridor. This will be easy. Scorpious’ picture looked like just some overgrown scorpion to me (shrug). I won’t bother wasting poison tipped arrows on him, that’s all.

I took a step back leaving the door ajar. Scorpious immediately disappeared from the room and reappeared on the stairs! I could see his changing of location, as I had left all the doors opened on the level thus far. I had a clear line of sight to the stairs from my current position in the hallway.

Okay... I’ll handle him later. That’s all. So I started opening fire on whatever stepped into the hallway from the room.

Scorpious then popped right next to me! He insulted me, then hit and stung me. I was sick, maybe deathly sick. My strength took a hit also.

Well. I was glad that he had some character. Only thing was that I had him on my left, and other monsters were on my right. Not what I was really planning on! Another thing that concerned me, was that running and closing a door on him would be tough. He can teleport! This being sick was not good either. Didn’t know how bad it would get from turn to turn. Especially if every successive
sting from him would make me feel worse. I had a bad feeling that it would become like; when I was getting worse with that cursed unicorn horn at the encounter with the titan...

A decision had to be made now. Do I fire on Scorpious? Or do I fire on the other monster on my right? Will Scorpious teleport away again? Thereby making me waste a turn on him. Do I heal myself with the unicorn horn? But then I’ll lose a turn eliminating something that’s hitting me now and draining my hit point reserve...

- Throw BDDD’s at Scorpious.
- Scorpious insults me and teleports away to the stairs again.
- The other monster hits.
- Heal myself with the unicorn horn.
- Scorpious is still at the stairs.
- Quiver poison tipped arrows.
- Fire into mob of monsters at my right.
- One or two monsters dropped.
- Scorpious is back. More insults. Stung and sick again.
- Fire to my right. A centaur was there. It was hitting me too often.
- Scorpious is still here. He’s pretty fast for a big scorpion. Hit me two times that turn.
- Can’t take a chance. I apply the unicorn horn.
- Scorpious strikes again. I’m sick yet again.
- Other monster is hitting as well. Okay. Two things hitting you at the same time is enough to worry about. This sickness sting of his and strength sapping is definitely a concern. While I’m healing myself. The rest of the hits just keep coming. Quickly I realise that this will be a battle of attrition that will eventually have but one outcome. Scorpious has to be dropped. BDDD’s will be reserved for him...

- Throw BDDD’s at Scorpious.
- Scorpious insults me and teleports away to the stairs again.

So that’s the pattern. When Scorpious takes a hit, he splits out. Fine. Let’s try and make it work against him...

- I count the range to the stairs. - He’s too far away from my current position for any type of my ranged weapons.
- Step towards the stairs.
- Apply unicorn horn.
- One of the monsters amidst the throng in the room, a bugbear I believe it was, starts zapping some kind of wand.
- Wonderful! Let’s throw that on top of my current worries while were at it (laugh!).
- Fire to my right.
- Fire to my right.
- Fire to my right.

Scorpious has been hanging around the stairs for quite a while (?). What’s he up to?
-Oops! Here he is again! More insults. His stinger missed!
- Throw BDDD’s at Scorpious.
- Looks like he can take some punishment. And he’s still here!? He didn’t teleport away this time!
A thought invades my good judgement. I have to try something. I have to know if it works... - Exchange ("x").
- Scorpious hits. Scorpious stings. I’m sick. Other monster hits. I’m getting low on hit points.
- Quaffe potion of healing.
- Take some more hits from both sides.
Okay! It’s now or never! Will it work? ...
- Thrust with "Sting"!
- "You hit Scorpious."
- That’s it!? (laugh!) Now I know.
- Take more hits from Scorpious.
- Throw BDDD’s at Scorpious. I’m now out of BDDD ammo. - Scorpious teleports away to the stairs again.
- Apply unicorn horn.
- Exchange.
- Quiver poisoned arrows.
- Fire into mob of monsters.
- Fire into mob of monsters.
- Fire into mob of monsters.
- Scorpious is back. He hits and stings. I’m sick.
- Quiver +2 runed arrows.
- Fire at Scorpious.
Scorpious tells me that he curses me with his dying breadth, and that I will never leave his palace alive. Good. He’s dead.
I looked at my inventory screen. I could not see anything that was cursed. Could he have the same power as a titan? Good thing I had blessed the unicorn horn a while back. At worse it should only be uncursed now. I had another potion on me, and hadn’t asked Mars for any help in a long time. So I was safe to try it. I applied the unicorn horn. It worked fine. Good. Now I just had to mop up the rest of the bad guys around me...
I eventually finished off the rest of the monsters in the hallway and the room. Applied the unicorn horn till all my strength was back. Forget what that wand was. It wasn’t any kind of ranged attack. Nothing ever bounced off my amulet of reflection. Maybe it was invisibility or monster ceation. There were a lot of corpses after that battle subsided. Seemed to recall somekind of orc being invisible also. But that could have been from a potion. Who knows. Didn’t matter. I was very powerful compared to what I had faced.
Started sifting through all the booty. I discovered the bow of Diana where Scorpious had fallen. As soon as I picked it up, I got a message:
"You have recovered the Bow of Diana. Orion needs this to stem the onslaught of the mountain centars. You must return to Orion and give it to him immediately."
1.18. THE TREES

Okay. But can’t it wait a few minutes? Can I at least check what else is around first? Like what’s in the chest at least? That word; "immediately" sounded pretty definite in that message. But heah. If he could wait this long for me, he can wait just a few more turns till I see what’s in the chest. There was a whole bunch of booty lying all over the place too... Anyways. Risking the wrath of Orion, I picked up all my; BDDB’s, +2 runed arrows, and poison tipped arrows. Then, I checked the chest for traps 10 times in a row. I think there was one. I failed trying to disarm it, but wasn’t affected by whatever it was. There was a silver bell in the chest (?), amongst other things. This was something I’d never seen before. I grabbed it and, leaving everything else as is, hurried off to go see Orion with the Bow of Diana.

Soon enough, along the way, something weird had developed. I could see monsters...?! It was like when I had quaffed a potion of monster detection in a previous game. Only, it applied outwards to a range of about 8 - 12 from my position on the screen. And it stayed with me all the time. In other words; when I moved, they also moved with me...!?

I looked at my status. Everything looked normal. Wasn’t sick, ill, stunned, hallucinating, or confused...

I did a look (;) on a monster that was on the other side of a wall. It said: "Seen with telepathy." !? I dropped the bell. Nothing changed.

I dropped the Bow of Diana. No more monster detection.

I picked up the Bow of Diana. Monster detection was back.

Wow!

I took a chance: I wielded the Bow of Diana. Didn’t notice anything. It did not weld itself to my hands (not that I would really have minded at this point - laugh!).

While wielding the Bow of Diana, I fired all the different kinds of arrows I had available. Everything seemed normal.

I invoked (#invoke command) the Bow of Diana. Arrows appeared in my inventory!

Wow Wow!

I tried to invoke again. "The Bow of Diana seems to be ignoring you." Oups (!?). Could this thing be intelligent? How come it just didn’t say; "Nothing happens." ? Hmm...

I tried chatting (#chat) with the Bow of Diana. Nope.

I tried #apply, etc. None of that worked.

I tried all these commands with the arrows that the Bow of Diana gave me. Nothing came of that either.

This thing is super neat! I could really use something like this...

I headed back towards Orions’ location again. I was moving my character mechanically on the screen. All I had on my mind was the Bow of Diana.

Do I have to give it back? I tried to remember what the messages had said exactly. Also the whole story I got when trying to prove my heroism in order to qualify for the entrance to this area. Yeah. I think I have to. Damn. Like this telepathy monster detection thing would be super handy. Upon that thought I stopped again...

I put on the blindfold. I could still detect monsters.

I dropped the Bow of Diana. Monster detection ceased.

Oh man. This thing is truly amazing.
I picked up the bow of Diana. With the blindfold still on, I made my way back through the cavern of the wumpus (!!!). I was even able to tell what was friendly or hostile! I killed monsters blindfolded on purpose! I did not even have to wield it! I could use other weapons and still have this ability!!

This is beyond anything that I ever had or experienced. My Oracle notes talked about stories of mortals seeing what their eyes cannot see. But that was referring to an amulet, the one of ancient Yendor. Could this be similar? If so, then this bow was one heck of a powerful artifact!

As I made my way back to Orions’ location, I kept on thinking about how I could somehow keep this thing. Only way that seemed plausible was that I’d have to kill Orion!

Geez... I already knew that Diana is gonna kill him later on in life. Poor Orion. His fate is decided any which way you look at it. That’s probably why the 'Seven Sisters of Fate’ (The Pleiades) reside within his constellation in the sky. Man. What a dilemma I was in.

Well. Here I am. Back at Home level 1. I’m approaching Orion. The Bow of Diana is clutched in my hands. I can see everybody in an 8 square radius around me.

Whadya think Mars? Think it’s okay if I kill Orion?

At home at the computer, I’m starting to sweat.

I can’t decide which way to go.

Do I give it to him? Or do I kill him?

The hunters are all glad to see me. They keep on saying; "Ellora!" "It’s so great to see you!!" "How have you fared?"

I have to remember that this is my home forest. I embarked on this mission in order to save these people.

These are my freinds...

I’m their Hero...

...

Oh fine... Fine. Fine. Fine.

Here. Take the stupid bow. I’ll be content with what I already have: "Dragonbane", 'Orcrist", and (cough) "Sting".

I step up to Orion and give him the Bow of Diana.

Orion is so happy that I made it back. He thought he’d sent me to my death. I’ve not only survived, but killed Scorpious and brought back the Bow of Diana. The forest and it’s inhabitants are saved!

Yeah. Well. All in a days work. I say.

Orion considers a few things. He knows that my main mission is to recover the amulet of Yendor. "Here Ellora." "Take the Bow of Diana with you." "It may well help you on your journey to recover the amulet of Yendor."

!!!!!!

*Without a moment of hesitation my fingers dash amongst the keys. I immediately save the game and exit.*

**ORION GAVE ME THE BOW OF DIANA!!**

**YIPEEE!!**

I fire the game back up. I’m all excited!
I look at the inventory screen. There it is. But it has changed! It is now called the: "Blessed Longbow of Diana!"

This thing is blessed! What a bonus! I can also use it to kill ghosts, undeads and such.

I think the silver bell may have also been revealed at this time. It changed to 'The Bell of Opening', I think. If not, then it happened shortly afterwards when I had a whole bunch of stuff identified all at once.

Okay. Now back down to level 6 and finish clearing out Scorpious’ palace of some remaining monsters. Sift through all the booty and start hauling it all back to the cache on level 1. Many, many trips required. I had brought the other chest up from his palace as well. Now I had two in the cache room.

I was using the Longbow of Diana to kill almost everything. Wanted to see if anything else was special about it. Didn’t notice anything. It seemed to behave as a normal bow for shooting arrows. But from time to time, I was able to invoke some arrows out of it. These came out blessed as well!

Finally, I had assembled all the booty in the cache room. Loaded up with what I thought would be interesting and read a scroll of identify. The Longbow of Diana turned out to be +0. Good enough. I never missed anything with it, as it was.

Read another scroll of identify. I wanted to see if I had a scroll of charm monster to get back Grunt.

Everything got identified in one shot! Didn’t have to pick any one object. Just like what happened to me back in Marsville.

No scroll for Grunt. But a cloak turned out to be one of displacement. Never had one of these in Nethack. Wondered if it worked the same as the ones in the game that Nethack is not? Wearing it meant losing 4 to my armor class. I’ll test it out later and opted to keep my Elven one instead.

Tried to teleport with both a wand and a scroll. I used a charge on the wand, and the scroll dissapeared when I read it. Besides that, nothing changed. I was still in the same spot. So this area is the same as the boulders then... Yepper. Looks like the long way is the only option... (sigh)

Okay, load up with all the stuff I can carry and start negotiating the maze of steel trees. Almost all the way near the end, some giants showed up. I didn’t feel like dropping everything, so just threw BDDD’s at them from a distance. They fell easily of course. Except I had an unforeseen complication develope.

When they died, they dropped their boulders. Problem was that two of them died one behind the other. So two boulders were now side by side in the path. Couldn’t push them out of the way. No problem, I thought, I’ll just use my pick-axe to bust them apart. But wait! I didn’t have it on me. I had left it behind in order to save on weight and an inventory slot for booty (gaaan).

Had to walk all the way back through the maze of steel trees, and all the peaceful creatures that were in my way. Grab the pick-axe. Then go through the same exercise on the way back. No, I did not have a wand of striking. Believe me, I would have used it.

That maze of steel trees does not bring anything to the game except to excercise my patience. After editing the previous sentence many times; that is the nicest way I can put it (leer).

Passed by and chated with Grunt. Promised him that before embarking on any other missions; I would get him back. In fact, that was my next mission plan: Finding a scroll of charm monster.

Down to base camp on level 24 in the Mazes of Menace. Said high and chit-chated with the preistess of Mars, Jubilex, and both Elven kings. Sorted out my booty and rumbled through the chest for a scroll for Grunt. No luck. Left just about everything behind except for what I needed to do booty retrieval
trips. There was piles on the Home level. Wanted to travel as light as possible. I exchanged my elven cloak for the one of displacement. This would be a good time to start testing it. Experience told me that booty retrieval trips give lots of opportunities with wandering monsters to test new equipment - excluding snow boots (laugh!). Said goodbye to everyone and headed back up to the portal on level 16.

Back in the home area. Stood at the entrance to the maze of steel trees. Started to think how I could do this without taking a week in real life. Hmm...

Only way that would speed things up would be to kill all my freinds in the forest. The centaurs, hunters, and Orion. That way, they wouldn’t be blocking my paths anymore. Then I would not have to wait for them to finally decide which way they would go. Hmm...

That would not be very nice. I just recently saved them all from Scorpious and the mountain centaurs. Orion even gave me the Longbow of Diana (which belonged to his girlfriend). To kill them all now, after what I had done to help them, was just something I could not have on my conscious.

Okay, I’ll just do it the long way. But I put a time limit on how much I would bring out: 3 days with an option to 4, depending on how well my patience was holding. No more. The rest would have to wait for another time. So off to the task at hand...

Many trips of hauling booty ensued between; the cache on Home level 1, and base camp on dungeon level 24 of the Mazes of Menace.

1.19 Revelations

One thing that kept on bothering me about the fight with Scorpious was that death curse he put on me. What was that all about? I never noticed anything that had been cursed in my inventory. I had verified everything on my first trip to base camp level 24 in the Mazes of Menace. I dumped everything I had on the altar in the Temple to Mars. Everything was fine.? In fact, even my unicorn horn was still blessed. (shrug) Dunno what, if anything, will be eventually revealed about this.

That other sentence from him; the one about never leaving his palace alive, didn’t make any sense either... Since I’m thinking about it now, it obviously didn’t work out the way he told me (laugh). Could I have missed something on that level? The last trip I had made there, I looked all over the place. Even checked around for hidden big monsters with the Longbow of Diana’s monster detection ability. No dragons, titans or anything else that might be able to stop me where discovered... Another mystery that probably won’t reveal itself either...

The chest near Orion was eventually brought out to near the portal that lead back to the Mazes of Menace. I already had two in the cache room. Another would have just made things to crowded in there. In fact having it beyond the maze of steel trees was handy. I could then make a booty trip from the cache room, through the maze of steel trees, levitate over the pit, and then deposit the booty into the chest near the portal. Then I would go back and levitate over the pit, through the maze of steel trees, and into the cache room.

After a while (and a while is quite a while), monsters had spread out throughout the whole area. Most got killed by me sooner or later - whenever I had to absolutely move through them in order to continue. But the next generation that would crop up, would have some freindly types amongst them. the more time wore on, the more peaceful monsters were abundant. By the time of my last few trips, the whole area was rife with this type of infestation. Things in the maze of steel trees was really crowded. traffic
jams of friendly monsters just slowed the whole process like you would not believe. Even distinguishing Grunt from the rest was not as easy as it once had been. There were that many!

When I got tired of that monotany; I would make a trip down through the Mazes of Menace to base camp level 24 from the chest near the portal. Just encountering different wandering monsters was a relief (laugh). I've pretty well had my fill of centaurs now!

Eventually, somewhere along the multitude of booty trips, I acquired two scrolls of charm monster. Upon coming back to the portal to the Mazes of Menace on my last trip out of the steel forest, I charmed Grunt. He was back to being my pet again.

Finally, all the scrolls, rings, wands and such were out of there. Still had piles of weapons, armor, gems, food, and miscellaneous stuff that I left behind, including both beartraps. It will have to wait for another time. I was fed up (laugh!).

We proceeded down to base camp on dungeon level 24. Chated with our freinds; the priestess of Mars, Jubilee, and two Elven kings. Then I sorted and organised all the stuff. There was a lot to go through!

I had acquired two towels from the home levels. Time to run some tests on a dungeon feature...

I proceeded to the sink that was located on this level. Tried all kinds of different commands with the towel welded while in the same square as the sink. Couldn’t figure anything. The Oracle talked about rings and the reflection from them. So tried a few things with a looking glass and some rings around it also. Nothing came out of that either. Finally, I kicked it out of frustration and hurt my foot (laugh!). So, I left a looking glass and a towel in the same square as the sink. These may eventually reveal something in the future. If not, then at least we had a proper washroom (wink).

A glance at my notes said that there was another sink on level 1 of the Mazes of Menace. I had a spare towel, and multiple looking glasses to try there also. I now also remembered that I never went back to check what was in that chest from the first room when I entered this game (see part: 1 (I.3 on page 9)). I could also bring down some more junk and such from the base on level 4. Since it was just 3 levels away, I’d do a quick run there while I was at it.

I had figured out, or should I say assumed, that that silver bell the Oracle had talked about was the Bell of Opening I now had. I tried putting it in the chest for safe keeping. "The Bell refuses to be constrained in such a container." Or something like that. Okay. But I wasn’t going to be carrying it around. From what the Oracle had said, I had no use for it for quite a while. Not till I needed to go to Moloch’s sanctuary - where ever that is. Since it didn’t want to go inside the chest, I left it next to it. It was in the temple of Mars with the priestess and Jubilee anyways. Should be safe for whenever I need it. I can’t imagin that I have to carry this thing with me for the rest of the game, do I? (shrug)

We’ll see...

Packed up, bid goodbye to everybody here, and with Grunt in tow, headed up through the Mazes yet again...

I’ve tried not to mention the Longbow of Diana too much, cause I didn’t want to bore you with constantly repeating how I felt about this. But...

The Longbow of Diana was absolutely amazing. Not so much as a weapon, but for it’s permanent monster detection ability. Unless a monster was generated right next to me (hardly never happened), I would always have warning of it’s intentions and/or whereabouts. It also helped find/locate previously unknown rooms throughout the Mazes of menace. All I had to do was watch how the monster reacted to my movements. I learned a lot on how monsters tracked and converged on your position from it.

With the Longbow of Diana, I tried to find my other baby gargoyle, from that time we all got seperated. But to no avail. It would then seem, that I had unknowingly killed it when I was attacked that other
time...

One monster that was now fun to play with was the ol’ stalker. I got to see how they behaved and it was fun to play with them. The stalker slowly sneaks up on you cause he thinks you can’t see him. Then he stops when you start to get near him. He waits for YOU to step next to him. HE won’t step next to you. I have stopped at range two from a stalker and waited (",".) for many turns. He refused to come next to me. Then when you are next to him, and he attacks, he will stay there until you hit him. As long as you don’t hit him, he’ll stay next to you. As soon as you land a hit on him, he steps away. Probably thinks that you now don’t know where he is. Pretty smart monster. That’s why they had always hit me by surprise, I now see (laugh!).

Had figured that the Longbow of Diana didn’t like being bothered too often for arrows. So I kept notes on it and discovered that 860 turns between invocations was good. Never failed at that number of turns. Of course, the next thing was to remember to invoke it all the time (laugh!).

To me, the blessed arrows it would chunk out; did not seem to get mulched as often as other arrows. Not too sure yet about this. It is still under investigation. But the guide says that blessed objects work better. I was able to see that with them BDDD’s - that was for sure! And that blessed battle-axe I sometimes tooted around with, sure seemed to attest to that also. Cursed stuff works backwards - look at the unicorn horn + titan incident. Big time revelation, that was. Anyways... More may well be revealed on this when I start playing again.

The cloak of displacement had become a regular piece of my wardrobe by now. I had found that it was pretty good as long as I moved (changed squares) after a monster would actually land a blow on me. As long as I was moving through a cleared area/path of the dungeon, I kept it. When I would venture into an unexplored section - and even if just one square - I took it off and substituted my elven cloak for it. Can’t take chances with polymorph traps.

 Took a while to find the sink again. It had been such a long time ago since I had been here on dungeon level 1. Went through all the motions, as I had on level 24. Nothing. Oh well, must not be too important. But it bothered me that the Oracle would mention something if it wasn’t... Left the towel here with a looking glass. Maybe it’s just some kind of joke in the game or something (shrug).

Found the first room to the Mazes of Menace again. The chest was still there. Checked it for traps 10 times, just as I had done way in the beginning. None were to be found. Picked it’s lock with the lockpick. Looted it, but as much as I would like to tell you what was in it; I just can’t remember. Obviously it was nothing special considering the point I was now at. But even a food ration in the first room when starting a game is what I consider "treasure". Oh well. At least I had survived long enough to have finally done this...

On the way back to the downstairs, I took a different path. Was just re-exploring a little bit due to having forgotten everything cause of that mindflayer. (Even though that maze of steel trees on Home level 1 is a big bummer in this game - the mindflayer is still at the top of my "Things I hate in Nethack list"). Coming along a darkened corridor, I came upon a sword called "Snickersnee". My mind was immediately filled with the memories of when I first started this game (see part 1 (1.3 on page 9)).

I smiled as I recalled how Sirius had picked up that sword and I had chased him. I never knew what had eventually become of it. So this is where he finally dropped it. I shook my head as I picked it up. I had come and progressed a long way since those days. The things I feared then, pale in comparison to now. I was afraid of even touching this sword. Now I thought nothing of it (laugh). I had wanted to either sell it or offer it to Mars. But I found out that Mars only accepted corpses. And zorkminds have now become the least of my worries.
1.19. REVELATIONS

Out of curiosity, I wielded the blade. Tried all of my normal routine of invoking, etc. Nothing came from it. But I was not really expecting anything would. Then the Longbow of Diana told me that some Uruk-hai had just materialised not too far away from me. Oh yeah. Good ol’ Uruk-hai, we’ll get some poisoned tipped crude arrows again. Our stock was getting to be quite diminished. I’ll just relax and let Grunt do some work here. As it was, I was in a relaxed mood, due to the nostalgia with finding "Snickersnee" again.

After taking a few steps and maneuvering for position, I saw that this was quite a mob of Uruk-hai. They were spreading out throughout the passages to get at me. This real time monster detection was great.

Sometimes the game tells me what a monster is wielding before it comes range with me. Those that had bows, I would leave for Grunt. Even though I was far superiore to these Uruk-hai, I still didn’t take the chance of getting killed from a poisoned arrow! Grunt never, ever got hit by any monster. Only once, when a leperchaun tagged him for some zorkminds. Being also made of stone, made him impervious to poison, I was sure.

Those that had a melee weapon, I took on myself, when ever convenient. I was kind of curious what this "Snickersnee" was like. I know that I had no ability with it, but I was able to hit monsters with other weapons that I had no ability with either. Also Uruk-hai are just about the best type of unit that the orc hordes can feld. So chances are that they won’t go down in just one strike. As long as I did not use daggers, arrows, or a killer weapon - like a blessed battle axe - I could then maybe gauge how many swipes it would take per Uruk-hai, per weapon utilised.

So with "Snickersnee", I needed from 1 to 2 smacks per Uruk-hai. Most of the time it was 2 smacks. Lucky that most didn’t have bows in one sense, in order to be able to try it out on a few. Okay, only a few Uruk-hai left. Let’s try another weapon before they’re all dead: I wield "Orcrist".

"The Uruk-hai turns to flee!"

Heah... That’s strange. I didn’t even hit him yet (?). How come his morale broke so readily?

I waited for another to come around a corner. When he saw me, he fled also. Hmm...

Last time I saw something similar, was when I was chasing monsters around with Jubilex next to me all the time. I closed my eyes and tried to remember some of the details... (See Part 11: Dark Rituals (1.19 on page 54))...

Okay... It wasn’t Jubilex. It was "Orcrist" that the orcs were fleeing from. Uruk-hai are orcs as well. All orc-type monsters have the letter "o" associated with them. So then; this sword has a ‘cause fear’ effect with orcs. Jubilex was merely a coincidence and happenstance. Besides, the fleeing monster problem hasn’t reappeared since I figured out that he couldn’t leave the level he was on. I was so concentrated about his presence at the time, that I didn’t consider all the circumstances. "Orc-rist".

I get it! (laugh!)

It’s funny now. But at the time I did not think so. I had thought that the game had been ruined (laugh!).

Now. How about "Sting"...? Nope. Can’t make a correlation. Oh well. Let’s go smack some Uruk-hai while they have their backs turned (laugh)!...

Stopped and did my normal routine with booty and such on level 4. The chest contained a few of those grey stones. Since they were in here, none were cursed obviously. Those that hadn’t been tested for cursedness, I dropped on the altar to Mars that was here. None turned out to be blessed. So it was kind of hard to figure if any were able to increase my load bearing capacity. I tried them all with just being over the line of being burdened. No effect was detected. Well, if I ever come accross one that’s
blessed, I'll see how it affects things. One more time, I made my way back down to base camp level 24.

Next mission was to fully explore level 26. Since that encounter with the titan on level 27, and the subsequent chain of events that followed it, it was never explored properly...

**Dungeon Level 26:**

- polymorph trap (?)
- troll room + chest

That polymorph trap that got me last time I was here, was no where to be found (?). Funny, cause I knew exactly where it had been. Other such traps in previous games always stuck around. This time it was gone. I searched from every square that was adjacent to it - many times. I wanted it to become visible again. It never did. I did not dare step back into that square, though. I engraved "poly trap" in all adjacent squares to it and then moved on...

The Longbow of Diana told me about the blue dragon soon enough. What an indispensable ability that is. So I was able to be in an advantageous position when it came around a corner. I was careful to leave Grunt in a safe place beforehand, lest he get killed from the lightning breadth attack. As it turned out, it didn't matter. The blue dragon never got a breadth attack off. I started chucking BDDD's from a range of 8 and it died before it got close enough to be able to breathe on me. So now I knew that it could not breathe beyond range 6.

Yeah, I know what your thinking: Why didn't I use "Dragonbane"?

I forgot all about it (laugh)! I'm just so used to these BDDD's and dropping things from a distance with them. As you can see, it worked quite well. It died and I never got hit or hurt. "Dragonbane" would require me to stand next to it. I don't like standing next to something that is actively trying to kill me. Just have the "Ranger" mentality so well engrained in me, I guess (shrug).

Last thing uncovered that held interest, was a room with 10 monsters (2 horizontal rows of 5) and a chest in it. It was a real mix of monsters, but 5 were trolls. All kinds of different ones; rock, ice, and regular trolls.

I left Grunt outside the room while I went in to check things out. None of them were moving again. I was starting to become familiar with this pattern. As long as no elephants were around, and you killed a monster in one shot/salvo, the rest don't budge.

I killed one or two of the non-troll monsters, but was getting constantly interrupted by the door to the room opening. I had to go back and actually lock the door from the inside. Grunt is able to open doors, and does so in order to stick near me (laugh!).

I killed all the five non-troll monsters individually. All fell in one salvo of BDDD's. I didn't take the chance of firing on a troll. As I figured it might just take more than one salvo to fell one. Also, they tend to regenerate and I didn't feel like fighting so many at one time. I collected the booty, and the chest, then let the 5 trolls be. I closed and locked the door, of course.

I'll come back to finish them off when I'll do the barracks on the level above also. I'll save those for a special mission. I was equiped for exploration, not special area clearing.

So back up two levels to base camp level 24 we went. Said hi and chatted with everybody there. The priestess of Mars was getting all my zorkminds that I collected from now on. Mars must have been happy.
1.20  "BURRRP!"

Sorted and played with all my stuff in the booty piles and chest. I had by now expanded my area in
the temple of Mars a bit. I had dug three alcoves in the back wall for piles of booty. I was getting to
be pretty organised there (laugh!).

Hokay... Now what to do?

Four options: 1. Clear the two remaining monster areas; 2. Go get the titan blocking my way down
into the Mazes of Menace; 3. Go get the ice box from Marsville for here. 4. Re-explore all the forgotten
areas in the Mazes of Menace.

Hmm...

Well, after what I had been doing for nearly a week in Nethack, I opted for a little excitement. I'll kill
the titan, and on my way back up, we'll clear those monsters out. Then, we'll see about the rest.

Great. My mind set to the task of forming a plan...

Next mission would be to go clock that titan!

1.20  "Burrrp!"

Last time I went down the stairs to level 27, I only got a glimpse of the titan. From what I remembered,
there must be some kind of giant around as well. They were the only monsters I knew that threw
boulders. There was something that made me blind also. It could have been the titan, but it's best to
figure that there may also be a raven there. No use in underestimating things. I also took a few hits
in quick succession from whatever. So I'll again assume another monster was doing that.

Hmm... So then I'm looking at 4 monsters in the room with the stairs as soon as I descend. Not good.
I don't like being surrounded. Since those two really big fights where I almost died (parts 5 and 7),
I've been pretty good at trying to avoid another repeat of those situations.

What I'll do is stay on the stairs, once I've descended from level 26. The Longbow of Diana will tell
me what's there with it's monster detection ability. I'll then gauge what exactly I'm up against. Then
try and kill a monster or two, while keeping an eye on my status and hit points. Thanks again to the
Longbow of Diana's monster detection ability; even if I'm blinded immediately again, I'll still be able
to fight. As soon as I'm starting to feel uncomfortable - I'll go straight back up and recuperate. Then
I'll repeat the procedure. That way I'll face less and less monsters each time until I'm fully confident
that I can handle what's left.

I had decided to bring Grunt down to the upcoming battle with me. Though, he didn't engage anything
unless it was wimpy, he would still occupy a space next to me once downstairs. At least it would be
one less space for a monster to occupy next to me! I'll bring that left over scroll of charm monster.
Maybe I can get another pet - like that titan!

Yes. That's an all round excellent plan, if I do say so myself (laugh!).

Alright. Let's equipe ourselves properly: Bring an extra unicorn horn. The extra leash. A few potions
of healing. Make sure I have both a wand and a scroll of teleportation. All the different types of arrows.
And my best shield. Even though it's heavy, I'll come back here and re-equipe for exploration later
on. It's a dark room, I'm bringing a brass lantern as well.

Well, with my baby Grunt in tow, we bid goodbye to our freinds at base camp level 24, and made our
way to the downstairs of dungeon level 26.
One more look at the inventory screen. Better to make sure that everything is equiped properly, and that the proper weapons are wielded. Lit the lantern, and... Assured that all was well, and confident in my brilliant plan of action, we went down the stairs...

The whole screen went black except for one spot where my picture was. I was surrounded by that red perimeter; which could only mean one thing - I have been engulfed by something! "You have been engulfed!!" "Your brass lantern goes out." "The leash goes slack (or broke)." "The purple worm is digesting you!"

My mind explodes with one thought: PURPLE WORM! They have this in Nethack!? Oh my GOD! Okay... Relax. I told myself. Part of me was trying to, but another part of me was beginning to panic!! I’ve been engulfed before. Air elementals being the worst. But I’m able to kill them if I can get a decent salvo with BDDB’s off. Question is; how many hit points does a purple worm have compared to an air elemental? From the game that Nethack is not, purple worms had a ton (!). How many turns before one was digested again? That I used to know... I think it was 4...

Look at hit points. I’m hardly hurt.

Okay. I’ll make an educated guess that a purple worm has 2.5 times the hit points of an air elemental. That means I’ll need around 10 BDDB’s to bring it down. Three salvos minimum. Boy, that’s a lot considering I’ll have just one turn left to kill it after that... Okay, let’s see how the first one does.

Fire BDDB’s. Three launched.

"The purple worm is digesting you!"

That message gave me a feeling that things were getting pretty urgent. Mmm... Not good. Now I need seven BDDB’s in two salvos... What if I guessed wrong? What if it has more hit points than what I assumed? Aw man. That was kind of stupid in wasting a turn then. My mind is now racing to consider other options...

Look at inventory. Look at everything at my disposal real hard.

Another thought enterst my mind. What if it isn’t four turns to digestion? What if it’s three? What if it’s less!? Panic is starting to take over again. Not a good time for clear thinking. At least I’m man enough to admit this to myself...

Time out!

*Go for smoke + coffee.*

I have to get out of this purple worms’ digestive tract ASAP. That is the first thing I now conclude. The second thing is to kill it before I get engulfed again. So it will be my number one target when I have a chance to shoot something. I don’t want to be coming back down these stairs into this things mouth again...!

Fine. Then, I’ll zap this wand of teleportation at myself. Never tried it while engulfed before, but it sure made sense to me...

When I hit "." for the direction, nothing happened. I don’t remember anything here. Only that it didn’t work.

Oh no. Should I try again? Did I hit the key hard enough? Did it register in the computer? What now?

Let’s read the scroll of teleportation. At least it will tell me that the scroll disappears, wether I get teleported or not...

"You are ejected!!"
1.20. "BURRRP!"

Yipee!
And the screen came back to normal. I could now see everything with the Longbow of Diana. I’m in a dark room with grunt and several monsters; a titan, a zruty, a mindflayer, a baculathrium, a lich, and a purple worm. There are other monsters a little further out; jellyfish, and eels.

!!!!
Oh man. Look at these monster types! I don’t want to be here (panic)!
I’m also no where near the stairs anymore.
I start taking a careful look at everything.
The purple worm has a little heart next to it’s picture!
I look at my inventory.
The scroll of teleportation is still there. I read the scroll of charm monster by mistake! The purple worm is now a pet of mine!

(laugh!) I’m in quite a predicament though. I still want out of here.
The titan is quite a formidable opponent, from what little I know from it already. I never met a lich in Nethack either, but from that game that Nethack is not; I know these monsters very well. They are deadly with a capital D! The baculathrium, I’m hoping is just as slow as what I remember about them. But that mindflayer, from what I know it can do, is a very big concern!
The titan is the farthest away. The mindflayer is the next furthest. At least Grunt is still nearby. He will serve as a blocker. I’m going to try and make my way towards them stairs...

I take a step. Some monsters moved, some did not. Notably the eels were the ones that seemed to change spots the most. Nothing is next to me except for the purple worm. Although he’s tame, I still feel kind of scared being next to it (laugh!). The mindflayer has stepped towards me. It is below the purple worm. I’m going to drop this thing so hard if it ends up in my line of fire next turn...

Okay... Let’s try taking another step towards the stairs. I hate this. I don’t know if any traps are around either...

Lots of stuff moved. But most notably, the purple worm ate the mindflayer! "Burrrp!" Is what I remember seeing in the messages. Amazing... (laugh!)

That was one huge worry taken care of (big grin)!

For some reason that is beyond me at this time; I wanted to see with normal vision as well. I turned the brass lantern back on. A whole bunch of messages followed. What they were is now beyond my ability to recollect. But I do remember, that I was not yet seriously hurt. However - something happened to my shield! It got disintegrated!

The purple worm ate something else. Think it was the zruty. Something summoned some extra monsters. There was a pudding and/or jelly. Some kind of shaman. And what I thought was another zruty. It got crowded. Wasn’t sure who was summoning, maybe both the titan and lich were. I now really wanted out.

The room was rectangular, as far as I could tell. No doors and obviously surrounded by water. This was noticed due to the sea monsters movements.

Started fighting towards the stairs. Launched some BDDD’s at the lich. Took a step and spent a turn chucking BDDD’s at whatever was standing on the stairs. Grunt was like two squares away from me. Next to that lich. The titan stayed further out, but directly north of the location of the stairs.
Figured that I wasn’t going to get a chance at picking up any spent ammunition. Made a big decision: No more BDDD chucking for now. I didn’t know if I was going to be able to eliminate everything, and wanted to have my best weapons available after escaping from here! Let’s live and fight another day. Let’s be able to also have the capability to fight well when we do!

The lich got next to me and touched me. Gawd - I hate being touched! It had some kind of cold touch. The game told me I wasn’t affected by it. Same way that that wand of frost didn’t affect me back at the big battle of the boulders.

Quivered the +2 runed arrows and let the lich have a salvo. I know that these things are already dead. So poisoned tipped arrows would be worthless. I wanted this thing dropped also. The lich moved away and cast something. Don’t remember what it was, but it didn’t affect me personally, as far as I could tell.

Lich was now out of the direct line of fire, so switched to poisoned arrows and shot at the titan. It was still lined up to me.

A xan came around and pricked through my boots. Okay. It was a xan - NOT another zruty, I now realised. Great, my feet were hurt. I knew I would be slower now. The monsters will start getting extra moves on me. I got onto the stairs and fired poisoned arrows at the titan. Figured the xan couldn’t hurt me anymore. I was already slow. The few hit points it got me for were not a worry. The lich was hiding behind some other lesser monsters. Whatever was next to me, was not as worrisome as that lich, titan, or badalithium.

I fired another salvo at something. Come on Grunt! Get next to me. Grunt had finally gotten next to me on the stairs. Got the leash around his neck, then turned my attention to try and lasso the new purple worm pet. I was taking hits again without dishing back any damage. Attached the leash to the purple worm, and tried to go upstairs.

"The purple worm is still eating." Was the response I recived trying that maneuver. Fine. One at a time then...

I went up and unleashed Grunt. Rested a little while and regained some hit points. Wait a few minutes, Grunt. I’ll be back. "Grunt grunts."

Back down the stairs. The xan pricked through my boots again (groan). Them snow boots won’t be waterproof anymore. Quickly, put the leash around the purple worm before he swallows anything else. Please, Lord. Let me get up before this thing eats again!

Something cast a spell. I reeled from something. Think I was stunned. Took a round of hits. That hurt. No time to lose...

I went up the stairs and the purple worm appeared beside my picture when we changed levels.

Well (pant, pant). Finally got out of there. There I was, having just escaped with Grunt and a new pet - a purple worm! Titans and liches are tough! Have to recuperate some hit points. So much for my initial brilliant plan (lots of laughs)! I leaned back in my chair. While waiting for my heartbeat to slow back down, I reviewed that last engagement...

Obviously I wasn’t calm enough after having taken that break earlier.
- I had punched the wrong letter when reading the scroll.
- I lost my best, although heaviest, shield.
- I wasted two turns relashing my pets at the stairs. As long as they’re next to me, they will follow me up. I knew that.
- I left some of my valuable BDDD’s, as well as, some non-replenishable +2 arrows behind.

(Shake head)

I better smarten up. Else I may well lose this character and this game, if I keep up this type of behaviore...

Thanks Mars, for looking out for me back there. Guess I owe you one.

We’ll leave the titan and company alone for a little while yet. This left a somewhat sour taste in my mouth. This was now my second encounter with it. Only thing that I was learning; was that it was getting tougher and harder to get by it...

Okay... Let’s run a few tests with this new pet. Maybe it can be used to advantage in some particular situations? This ‘eat anything whole’ attack it possesed, sure was intriguing!

I applied the blessed unicorn horn. Everything seemed okay with it. Good. Only thing was to wait for my feet to get better. But that would come eventually, soon enough.

Started heading back towards the upstairs of level 26. Ran into something. Grunt and I just stood around while we watched the purple worm swallow the thing whole and; "Burrrp!" After a few more encounters on our way up, I got the hang of a few things about this purple worm and how it acted:

- It was slow. Very slow.
- It swallowed anything. Wasn’t afraid of any wandering monster.
- The victims possessions were left behind once the purple worm moved away from that spot.
- It took a while to eat; depending on how big the victim was.

Okay... Then. Let’s see how it does in a multiple target enviroment.

We went to the barracks on level 25. I opened the door and pushed the purple worm into the room. It swallowed the first soldier there. I also pushed Grunt into the room, then stood at the door. I wanted the soldiers to head towards me. None seemed to inclined to do so (laugh!).

I stepped in, then down. Fired a volley of arrows down the line. That got them all moving, throwing, and performing all kinds of actions. I took some steps back which eventually put me into the hall. The soldiers were trying to get to me, but had to step around the purple worm and Grunt...

"Burrrp!" "Burrrp!" "Burrrp!" "Burrrp!" "Burrrp!" etc.

After I had stopped laughing, went in and started collecting all the booty. Made several trips up to base camp, one level above. In order to save on time; I would leave my two pets unleashed on the level below when going up the stairs. I was confident that they could handle anything that they came accross.

During these trips, I sometimes heard "Burrrp!" in the distance. Eventually, I would come across some stuff that had been dropped to the floor by some hapless victim. (shrug) More booty to add to my piles (laugh!).

Okay great. After finishing off the soldiers in the barracks and then organising all the booty. I releashed my two pets and went back down to level 26. I had an idea concerning what to do with those 5 trolls remaining in that room...

Got to the room where they were, unlocked and opened the door. Unleashed the purple worm, and shoved it into the room. Closed and locked the door. I then waited and counted each belch...

"Burrrp!" "Burrrp!" "Burrrp!" "Burrrp!" "Burrrp!"

Went back in and saw stuff was strewn all over the place. The purple worm was all alone - no troll corpses! Yes. That worked out just fine (laugh!).
I now named my newest pet "Burp". No explanation required, I'm sure (grin). Only thing disappointing about him was that; he said nothing whenever I chatted with him... (sad face)

Next, we proceeded up through the levels of the Mazes of Menace - with Burp eating all the monsters along the way. I had discovered that naming the individual leashes, made it easier when trying to figure which one belonged to which. Thus they were named "Burp" and "Grunt" for lack of a better system.

There were quite a bit of freindlies along the levels. Notably; ogres, ogre lords, all different kinds of elves (I know, but heah - it wasn't me. It was Burp!), some giants, and bugbears. These monsters yielded a whole bunch of loot. Notable amongst this, were some neat Elven mithral, weapons, miscellaneous objects and such.

After considering my experiences with how booty is cursed or not; I started testing all the armor and weapons that the elves would drop - on the spot (!). Nothing from them ever welded itself to me. I tried lots of different kinds, not just a few. One suit of elven mithril turned out to be +2! I exchanged it with the dwarven one I had. Since Grunt was wearing the best one we had (dwarven mithril +2), this improved my armor class by 1 immediately. So my theory had now been confirmed...

Elven booty is never cursed.

So we continued on up through the Mazes of Menace. Burp was eating all kinds of monsters, both peaceful and aggressive. Up to an including, the Ghost level (dungeon level 17). Here we turned back around, and started back down towards base camp level 24. I would ferry my pets to the lower level, then go back up to bring down the amassed booty.

Burp, and neither Grunt for that matter, grew into another type of monster. Grunt I had given up on already a while ago. But for Burp, I was holding out some hope. He ate all the time. I mean; all the time. I really mean; all the time! (lots of laughs!)

Okay... So now we've made it back to base camp level 24. I unleashed Burp and Grunt in the room with the upstairs, then scooted back up to start ferrying the piles of booty towards my cache in the Temple of Mars.

By the time I had finished, must have been at least 6 trips, Grunt had managed to find his way around to me. I had given all my zorkminds to the priestess of Mars as expected. Had said hi to Jubilex and the Elven kings, and was busy sorting out all my booty, as per usual.

All the while, I had in the back of my mind, been forming another plan on how to take out that titan on level 27. Boy, was it proving to be tough or what? Perhaps Burp could help out, if I could get him in just the right position...?

While this was going on; Jubilex was standing right behind me, as usual, as always. He liked hanging right next to me. Strangely enough, I felt secure about this. I would often chat with him during these periodes. It was like being at home with your family members around you. Him, the priestess of Mars, and occasionaly the two Elven kings. Like, we had been together for quite a while now (laugh!)...

"Burp swallows Jubilex!" "Jubilex is killed!" "Burrp!"

OH MY GOD!

Burp just killed Jubilex!

He must have slunked over while I was busy and not paying attention. I was stuned!

There I was standing right near him. A space between us, where Jubilex had been. He had that big stupid grin on his face with the little red heart next to his picture.
1.20. "BURRRP!"

My mind was racing. What’s Mars going to say about this? What are the demons from the abyss going to say? How am I going to explain this to any one!? Oh my Gawd... Oh my Gawd... Oh my Gawd...

I have to get a leash on him! Drag him away from the temple!

I took a step towards him. The priestess of Mars did so also. As did an Elven king. There were now three of us right next to him...

Oh... No... I had a real sick feeling starting to develop in my stomach...

I put a leash on him.

"Burp swallows the elven king!" "Burrrp!"

Oh geez... Go away Priestess of Mars. Now’s your chance. He’ll be eating for a round.

I tugged on the leash. Was trying to pull Burp away. It wouldn’t budge. The priestess held her position...

"Burp swallows the priestess of Mars!" "Burrrp!" NOOO!

Cough her up! You big overgrown purple pupae! I ran into Burp with the "in" prefix. Hoping it would somehow expel her.

I tried it again. Burp moved down a space. I then knew nothing could be done. She had been digested...

Oh Burp! What have you done? What shall we do now? What shall become of all this?

I’m sorry Mars! I’m truly sorry... sorry... sorry... (sad, sad face)...

"Burp swallows the elven king!" "Burrrp!"

Sure... Why not...? Make it a clean sweep while your at it...

...

Time passed...

My mind was numb...

... Sullenly, I gathered the booty. Tested for cursedness then sorted and stored it away...

Never once, did I look up while in the now ex-temple to Mars...

I feared Mars’ gaze of discontent all about me...

I did not want to meet his gaze in the form of his wrath...

All was silent, as I went through my motions. Thoughts were kept to oneself...

No use trying to explain, nor offer amends...

Nothing to be said would ever right what had just transpired...

...

Sadly, I reflected on what this place had meant and been for me...

The ice box would no longer be required...

All my freinds, my family has vanished. No more laughter and gay cheer would this place know. No more comraderie over some beers. This place was now dead and but a place to store my things...

Having now finished, I gathered my battle apparel. No use being overly loaded with extra things. Weapons were prime, above all else. A couple of very special objects I had been saving, were also added to the arsenal in my pack...
Words could not fix what had been done. Deeds could now only suffice. Action would now be my only salvation.

Checking my inventory to make sure all was there. I now had but only one mission to pursue: The titan and his cronies will fall.

Now only that was blocking my path in retrieving the amulet of Yendor.

One last look over my shoulder as I left this place...

Darkness, silence, and emptiness is all I was leaving behind...

With both pets in tow; forward and down, now we would go...

1.21 The Battle — Engagement

Normally I would had spent some time mulling through a plan, but this titan sure seemed to put a kink in any I had made so far. Also the repercussions of meeting it, would draw me into other adventures as well. This time I was sure that things would be different. Though I took no real length of time in devising anything - I had come up with something that would surely force the issue.

The debacle with Burp at base camp level 24, had created a situation which gripped me with sheer determination...

I stood at the downstairs to level 26 in the Mazes of Menace, and paused for a minute...

A glance into Grunts long stoned face. This told me he was as ready as always.

I turned and faced Burp.

Okay... I have high expectations of you.

I lit the brass lantern, then went for my special objects...

Pulled out a wand and zapped both Burp and Grunt. They both started to move faster.

Held the wand and turned it towards my chest. Upon trying to zap it, it refused to unleash it’s magic.

Fine. I dropped it to the ground.

Quaffed a potion of speed. Then down we went...

Chaos and mahem were the immediate greetings. Unsurprisingly yet strangely, this was what I was fully expecting. A smile formed upon my face; lets roll!

Battle was engaged at close quarters. Burp lost no time in devouring a creature. The xan, was my first personal opponent to fall. Otherwise, it would ruin what effect that potion of speed would benefit me.

I circled around Burp, felling easier monsters with bow. Leaving the larger and more fearsome ones for him to swallow whole. Grunt was hovering around near by. Never too far, could he stray on his own, thanks to the leash.

I wanted to drag Burp towards the titan. It was hanging out in the top right hand corner of the room. But every time Burp ate something, he would stay in place till he finished digesting. Then...

The lich! I have a clear line of sight to the lich! I pulled out another wand and zapped towards it. The lich was now slowed.

Occasionally BDDD’s would be thrown. But only if I felt that the target would fall in a slavo. For the rest; my poisoned tipped arrows, and the +2 runed ones would be used.
"Burrp!" I glanced back towards my pet purple worm. The baculathrium had been swallowed whole! Great, but at the same time bad! This creature would take some time to digest. Of this I was sure. This would take Burp out of action for some time to come.

This dancing around Burp, continued for quite a while. To the point even where I thought that we may prevail completely without having to scurry back up the stairs. The cloak of displacement was fantastic. I was hardly taking any hits. Up till the point where the lich had interposed itself between me and the path unto the stairs...

Something would summon monsters constantly. It was a battle of attrition. No question about it. But as I had just said, though ammunition was getting low, I felt we were gaining the upperhand.

Verifying my ammunition, I had but 8 BDDD’s left available in my inventory. These I would save for now. Can’t take a turn off to pick up some more. Must keep dropping monsters. Must keep dancing... Must keep my distance from that lich. Desperately I maneuvered about Burp. Absolutely did not want to feel it’s touch of cold. Come on Burp! Finish eating already. Take a bite out of this thing, would ya?!

Burp did swallow something, but it was not the lich. Great. Now he would be busy digesting something for a while again. Another creature had come up on my other side. I had to step out and away from my current location around Burp. No choice, risking the lich’s touch was too much of a chance I was willing to take.

I stepped up and away from them. Grunt screamed as I tugged upon the leash. Sorry ol’ buddie, but too much is at stake. Come on. Keep along with me. I need you as a blocker...

The titan had finally started to venture from the top of the room and towards me. Great. I was not yet finished with the lich. Will the lich move towards me? If not I’ll concentrate on it, till it falls. The lich stayed put as something else came up to interpose between me and it.

I zapped that wand at the titan this time. No effect (!). Great, is there a magic resistance saving throw accorded to some monsters in nethack as well? I wondered...

Zap the wand again. And again. Finally, the titan was slowed.

Fine. This blasted titan, will now be mine...

Stop. Plant my feet. Hold myself straight and erect. I aimed the Longbow of Diana and let fly salvo after salvo of poisoned tipped arrows. Round after round of arrows found their way into the titan. Never once did it seem affected by their poison...

The lich is closing again. Damn. I must move still again. Back and left one step I took. The titan followed suit and obliged. He stepped into my line of fire again. Fine. Taunt me some more. Again I let fly a volley of poisoned arrows. As I went and drew back upon the string of my bow, my quiver signaled an end to the reserve of poisoned arrows. No...

A round was required to invoke. A few blessed arrows came fro like magic. One or two more salvos is surely all it can take. This titan had absorbed so much already. But wait! That lich is here again! Has the effect from the wand worn off...?

A step back again I took, and my back was now against the wall. My Elf secret door detection ability kicked in and a door was revealed. But where could it possibly lead? Sea creatures were detected just on the other side...

I must know and see for myself. Upon opening it, water was there. No solid ground. What a useless exit this was. Could it be the only one...?

My attention must return to the battle at hand. The titan had moved out of my line of sight. Damn.
I used some of my meager supply of arrows upon another creature. Once it had fallen, I searched for the titan. There it was, I can step up and right to close and be in line. Hopefully the lich will stay put for just a round or two more.

Something happened. I was spelled or had a potion thrown at me. Blind I now was!

No problem. The Longbow of Diana's Monster detection ability would carry me through. The titan was in line. Fire!

It's still standing! Amazing! How much punishment can these things take. The Lich has come up behind me again. The effect of slowness has surely worn off then. I step forward and towards the titan. I shall finish it with my remaining BDDD's. Then I shall move forward and pick them up. Then turn on this infernal lich.

Okay, take a step...

I fell through a hole! The leashes both broke!

NOO!! The titan was almost finished. I could almost taste it!

ARRGH!

Okay where am I? This may all yet be salvaged. If I can find the stairs up quickly enough, I may be able to finish it off before it recuperates too many hit points. Can't I...?

The Longbow of Diana tells me of quite a few monsters in my vicinity. One of these is an other lich!

Another lich? It seems to be quite close, yet too far to have fallen through with me (?). Or has it?

Could it have voluntarily stepped into the same hole or trap?

The lich has made monsters aware of my presence!? What is this? My eyes narrow as I stare upon its picture on the screen. You will be turned to dust. Just get in my sights...

Something has touched me! Ack! I hate being touched!

How come it had not been detected? Of course. I am still blind! Whatever it is, it has no mind. I must get my sight back. I apply the unicorn horn. I can now see...

A jelly of some sort. Step back and away. I need some distance between it and me. It is now obscured in the dark. Many monsters are around as well. Crap to it all! I have no ammunition. Just 8 BDDD's is all I possess presently as missile weapons!

I'm in unfamiliar, unexplored, and uncleared territory. I can very well step unto another trap! I need that lantern back on as well...

I'm now able to make out my immediate surroundings. I am in some kind of maze. Only single lane paths exist. On one side this is a good thing. With my limited amount of ammunition, at least all these monsters cannot converge on me at the same time.

The lich has summoned monsters! Vampires! Decisions concerning the tactical situation have to be made. The jelly will stay for now. It moves slow. It will serve as a blocker for those monsters behind it. I turn, but dare not to take a step. Lest I should trigger another trap. But what to do? I have no ammo, yet don't wish any of these vampires to get near me...

I know! Fire BDDD's at the vampires. Fire again! And again. They have been dispatched. Now put on the ring of levitation and move back. Stop over the largest stack. Take a chance and drop to the floor. Pick up the BDDD's that are here.

The lich has summoned more monsters and made them aware of my presence! I study every one that moves. Yes every monster. I also check every single message. Each and every turn. Taking notes on
wether they triggered a trap in the square they have just entered. Eventually I will be able to discern which squares are safe...
I fight the impulse to bash through a wall with the pick-axe. I don’t want to create another point of entry for all these monsters around me.
The lich has appeared next to me! It can teleport as well?! It touched me! Argh... I hate that! Eat BDDD’s lich! At point blank range! It teleported away again. Step forward and pick up my BDDD’s.
The jelly is upon me. A weak monster is coming up from behind. I’ll let the thing behind me take swipes. This jelly must now go. Wield the silver dagger. My bow is now useless as I have no arrows. It will be many turns before I can invoke some again...
Stab. Stab. Stab. Step back. Now I am sandwiched. Stab. Stab. Stab and it melts into its death throws. Phew... No damage done to my armor or weapons at least...
The lich is next to me suddenly again! My shield has now been disintegrated! Curse you. You vile creature. I fire BDDD’s at it yet once more. Then it is gone. Back to it’s favorite place beyond the wall. Monsters are aware of my presence, I am told. Like how can that not be? I mockingly ask myself...
Step forward and pick up BDDD’s. Strong monster coming down the corridor. I do not want to allow it to close... Fire BDDD’s. I have but one left now. Can I pick any up? No... My ammunition is strewn about in too many different places...
My hopes to finish the titan above, are quickly being dashed. I am embroiled in another fight. This one will take too long to conclude. I never finished the one on the level above. I look up at the ceiling. Anger wells inside me. Curses upon you titan above! If I can but survive this - I will be back and make you suffer like this world has never known!
That strong monster coming down the corridor will close. I will soon be fighting hand to hand, this I know.
Wield remaining BDDD. Exchange. Wield blessed battle-axe. No more shield. I will use whatever I have to advantage...
Wait for it to be one square away and hold my ground. I draw the battle-axe back and above my head. Come on you big galoot! I haven’t got all day. There’s more coming up behind me! Prompted or taunted; it steps up to me...
Hack. Hack. I’m Hit. I’m hit. Hack. Hack. It goes down. Think it was an ettin or something...
Turn on my heels. It’s a mob of Uruk-hai that has just recently appeared. Hope I’m still lucky... There will be saving throws versus poison coming up...
Figures. Orcs you know (wink). Hack. Hack. The lich is behind me again! My gloves have been disintegrated!

Turn and swing with all my might at the lich with the blessed battle-axe! It took a full blow! It teleported away. But wait! It has gone to the end of the hall, just before the bend. It is still in my line of fire!
Fire remaining BDDD! "You kill the lich!" How that can be (?), I dunno. It’s already dead. But as long as I don’t see it’s picture no more, I’ll accept it as it being gone for good (laugh!).
No time to relish that victory. Still much that demands my immediate attention...
"The arrow missed you." "The arrow missed you." Pick up poisoned arrows. Take a hit. Hack. Hack. Minotaur now coming up from behind...


Lots of gremlins around. I count at least six. Good. They’re freindly. They will at least hamper the rest of the monsters ability to come around through the maze...

Eventually the horde of assorted monsters within the maze started to abate. Desperate fighting at close quarters was shifting towards; selection of targets which were destroyed in my more traditional way - from a distance.

I travelled to all the spots were my BDDD’s had landed in order to collect them all. They were, after all, my only real weapon for ranged attack. The few arrows I had just recently acquired, were quickly all mulched during the fighting. Yes every last one was gone!

That lich had done a good job. For all the monsters that it summoned, this ability at drawing whatever else was close by, sure made for a long fight!

But what is this? Only 6 BDDD’s was all I could find!! I retraced my steps several times. Going back over the areas that I knew they could only be. Still the other 2 never did come into view... Could they have been disintegrated as well somehow? This was something that never happened to me before. Believe me: As you have surely noticed by now - my BDDD’s were always kept well track of.

Smart fighting, and taking my time during every move, allowed me to progress through the maze. Never did I step on a trap, though I discovered a few.

Beyond, and to my right, there was a lot of activity and movement. Sharks and eels were moving through water. A wall with a drawbridge (?), lay just beyond the water. No solid path led to the monsters beyond these walls and within...

Both up and down next to the maze I ventured. Still water would block the path. Occasional monsters had to be dispatched from this area. But the mob of gremlins made it difficult to line them up.

Within the walls were quite an assortment of monsters for sure! Liches (again!), giants, nags, xorns, and many soldiers were detected. These are to name but a few. Yuch... I don’t have the ranged weaponry to handle this mob. I don’t even know how to reach them anyways...

Back into the maze I went. Let’s see if there are any stairs within. Though, I had already searched for some... The entire maze was thuroughly explored and searched. All booty had been collected and put in a pile in one of the dead ends. Still, my other 2 BDDD’s had not been discovered, I’m now reduced to 6. Of this I must now make do. But also, and worse still... No stairs were to be discovered either...

I was begining to worry. If things lasted much longer without me finding a way up... My pets would become peaceful. Concern at this possibility started to weigh on my mind...

Allright. I guess the stairs must be somewhere over to my right. Just to make things worse. They were probably within this fortress of some sort. (Groan) Could there be a way for me to enter and avoid all these creatures to escape on up the stairs? I must look at the surrounding area a little more...

Back into the open area I ventured. Going near the water, but staying one square away. I wanted to uncover as much of the area as possible, before venturing too close to danger. Nothing. No way to go anywhere beyond here unless it’s over water. Boy. Looks like I’ll have to depend on that ring of levitation again. Lucky I’ve found that, this game. It has come in handy on a few occasions.

Beyond the barrier of water and within the walls. Xorns were phasing in and out. Monsters were also crowding up from within the fortress. Pressing into a congested mob, wherever I moved along it’s perimeter...
This is undoubtably some sort of special area. I hope that this fortress is not too large. Hopefully there will be stairs on the other side of the map beyond it... Hopefully, I won’t have to fight all those monsters within...

1.22 The Battle — Maneuvers

Fine then. There seems no other way. I’ll levitate around this structure. But first I must rid the waters of their creatures.

I stay in place and count how fast they move compared to me. Wield a BDDD in hand and step forward to the waters edge. Stab for as much as I dare. Then step back when I figure it’s their turn to attack. Wait and count again. Then step back forward to repeat the stabbing. Too bad I don’t have a pole-arm handy. It would have saved me a little trouble here...

I stay at a juncture where ground and water meet. But at such a place where only one shark, or eel can reach me. Gremlins are hopping all about. They seem to be becoming more numerous...?

Finally, after many turns have passed. I have rid the waters of all the creatures that the Longbow of Diana has told me about. I stand at the waters edge. Just to the left of the top left corner of a tower from that fortress. Xorns are constantly phasing within the walls of this structure. Must I eventually have to enter this place? Wish I had some arrows in order to dispatch them...

I put on the ring of levitation. Hover over the water tentatively. I’ll go around the top and North. For some reason I feel more secure than the South...

Up and around to my right I go. Along the top of the screen. The xorns are keeping pace with me all along the structure. I can see the open mouthed gaps at the top of their bodies. Yes, I convince myself. I must acquire some arrows. Else it will be impossible should I need to enter this place.

A long strip of land comes into view. I float gently to the ground. Some monsters are here. Nothing to threatening as long as we’re both on these land squares. Some sort of troll stays a little ways away. I chuck BDDD’s at them and they fall. Then I walk over to pick up my weapons. Must be careful at retrieving these. These are all I have left. Booty is sifted through but not carried aloft with me. I don’t know where this will all lead. I will only keep what I think may help me in the very near future. I kick the trolls body into the water. Hope this water is as deep as the swamps located back up in the Mazes of Menance...

As I venture along this thin strip of land. Many a monster from within the fortress keep pace with me. But what was that? Could it be? Did I see correctly for a moment back there? Was that some sort of a dragon? Perhaps a chameleon...

The liches, yes I could now see two for sure (!). Were calling upon monsters and making them aware of my presence. Yes, they were. Even though I was out here. Gawd.... This will indeed be a monstrous fight

- should I have to engage them all...

Eventually I come to the end of dry land. The water is again before me. My, my... This is quite a citadel. It nearly spans the whole of the map!

I wait to see if more sea creatures come along here. Nope. There do not seem to be any. Perhaps liches cannot summon these types? At least we’ll take advantage of this...
I levitate again and see a jut of land similar to the other side of the fortress. Yes. It is the exact same as the other side of the map. Good. Perhaps then, within this maze there will be some stairs. A sense of hope comes up inside of me...

More fighting ensues. Long and careful I am with every turn. I am in a place that I now sense is special. The Mazes of Menace have never looked like this before. Just as the Ghost one was, and is. This is indeed a unique level...

Slowly and methodically I make my way through this other maze. Thankfully there is no lich here, on this side. I explored the maze fully and completely. Unfortunately no stairs were found. Neither up. Nor down...

Of all the monsters that were here, and of which I had fought. Only one type is all I can recall. Some type of Elves. Yes they were freundly (peaceful). But I knew that they would certainly have some arrows. In all likeliness some armor as well. Perhaps a shield or some gloves...

Hmmm...

Nonchalantly. With smile upon my face. I appproached then stopped before them. I chated, and we all cursed orcs. Took a few steps away, as we parted. Then when their backs had turned; I swung around and flung BDDD's!

Remorse at such vile a deed, I did feel. However much was at stake. With no way either up or down. I now knew that I would have to enter the fortress. Without arrows I could not eliminate the orcs from across the water. These Elves' lives would be taken for the sake of insuring my own survival. After all... There was something much more important than all of our lives: The amulet of Yendor must be retrieved for Mars...

Arrows and an elven shield were found and quickly equiped. The rest of their booty was added to a pile I had made on this side of the area. From all of the botch found along my travels through this level, thus far. I had the foresight of retaining the missile weapons on me. Daggers, knives, and even axes. These I felt would soon be required...

I went and stood at the jetty of land. The orcs were phasing in and out in the walls immediately across the water from me. I wielded the Longbow of Diana and let fly all the arrows I possessed. Of these, enough I had, for dispatching two of the orcs. I let fly the one or two remaining at the last ocrn. Then I began to throw the daggers at it. Next came the axes. Finally with the last of the knives I threw; that last ocrn had perished! Phew...

Strange thing though. My projectiles showed on the screen where the wall had been. Could I have somehow created an opening...? I did the look, then the question commands. Embebed arrows and the other weapons as well; was the response. Can I somehow extricate them, I wondered? Eventually, I may very well see...

No drawbridge on this side. But I strongly suspected that a secret entrance would exist. I levitated again over the water. Approached that area of the wall I was sure of, and began searching. After a short while a door appeared. Ten rounds of searching, detected no traps. Without trying to open it, I applied the lockpick. Yes. I was correct in my assumption. The door was indeed locked. Ha!

Once open I floated within. There was some sort of creature in the hallway a short distance away. I floated to the ground immediately on the first square inside the door. Threw a salvo of BDDD's and slew the creature. Great. That was easy. And at least the door did not open up into one big huge room. Though I could see some other creatures milling about. These were on the other side of walls. I felt safe for a little while inside this area. Okay. Now let's pick up those BDDD's and see exactly how this place is laid out...
1.22. **THE BATTLE — MANEUVERS**

I took a step forward and fell through a trap door! My mind was racing immediately again! Wonderful. I have not finished with the level above. Nor with the level above that (!), for that matter. And now I am projected into yet another place?! I may very well have had just two BDDD’s on me, at this time as well...

Some kind of message said something about a place of death. There were mummies, vampires, and a wight all around me. I dared not move. Fearing stepping unto a trap. I lit my brass lantern. I did not want to miss anything with any of my different sight senses...

Could this be the place that Izhak had told me about? Is this where the gateway to another plane is to be found? If I were better equipped I may have considered looking more into this. But as it was, I just wanted to get back up. Back up two levels even. Hell! Three levels to level 26 would be ideal (lots of laughs!).

So here I was. Dungeon level 29 was what the status area told me. Creatures of death closing in from all sides. I took a break and consulted my notes. After which I went to the guide, yet once more...

This is from the section with stairs:

"In general, each level in the dungeon will have a staircase going up (‘<’) to the previous level and another going down (‘>’) to the next level. There are some exceptions though... ... When you traverse a set of stairs, or trigger a trap which sends you to another level, the level you’re leaving will be de-activated and stored in a file on disk."

Okay. two things here...

- Maybe I’m in a part of the Mazes of Menace that falls in the exception category. Though I hope not. I may have to prepare myself to continue the game with only what I have in my backpack. That would be a challenge! Not one I relished at all, though...

- The other thing comes in the second line above. So the previous level is deactivated... Then all levels must be deactivated except for the level I am presently on. Then I don’t have to worry about monsters moving all over the place on these other levels. Then caches must be safe when left somewhere else. This may well reduce the time I spend trying to secure everything. Again I see something that has made my mind click. Yet another example of discovering something new, no matter how many times I’ve read it already!

I make a note to test this once, and if, I make it out of here alive. Hopefully in the near future...

Alright. Let’s hope there are stairs on this level. Start searching while fighting off these monsters...

The wight, and both vampires were dispatched. My remaining BDDD’s and that blessed battle-axe coming in extremely handy. The mummies were slow, so I had time to search while recovering my cherished few BDDD’s.

What’s this? Are those stairs I see!? Do they go up? Yes they do! Lucky. They were but a few squares away from where I was. Great! Do a quick mimic check before the mummie is on top of me... They’re real. Up I go...

I appear in the maze on the right of the screen on level 28. I move off the square but the stairs do not show up...? I just came up them. What gives? I go back and step on the square. No indication that I’m on the top of the stairway... I do the look. Nothing. I try to go down. I can’t. It’s as if they have vanished...

(groan) Are there teleportating stairs in this area? This will make things hard indeed!

Oh well. I’m back up to the fortress. Let’s finish what I had started. Surely then, there will be stairs up within it (hopefully...).
I go back into the hall with the secret door. This time I stay levitated until I have cleared that pit. I descend to the floor right after it. The Longbow of Diana tells me of 4 dragons nearby. As well as the rest of that mob of monsters and soldiers. I take another two steps towards my left...

I fell through another trap door! I'm in about the same spot I was just before on level 29! (major groan) Fine. When I get back up there, I'll start checking for traps quite consistently. (mutter, mutter)

At least the mummies are near the stairs. Considering what I had just realised from reading the guide before. Ha! So I start slowly heading back towards them. Ever so careful to search here and there before taking a step. Lest I should trigger another trap on this level also.

Had to fight two mummies. Blessed battle-axe combined with their slowness works great. I'm starting to consider checking the box next to it on the "enhance" screen. But I hold off for now. I may need something else once I'm inside that fortress above...

Back up the stairs. Exact same situation again with the vanishing stars on level 28 from before... Hmm... Okay. Now I know that they are there. Thing is that these are one-way stairs. Only can come up from level 29 to here. Can't use them to go back down. I engrave "up only" on the square.

Back through the secret door again. I stay levitated till I have cleared the second trap door. Upon landing, I start to search. Square by square. Sure enough, I have detected another trap door next to me. Hmmmm... I count the number of squares. Could there be trap doors at every other two intervals that there are here? I levitate beyond the third one, which I have just discovered. At least I have not fallen through again (laugh!).

Now I have retrieved my BDDD's from before. Good, back up to six. I feel much more secure. Levitation and searching has proved my suspicions correct. A pattern has emerged. There are 5 trap doors to be had in the corridor. Hmmmm... Why so many traps just here? Why would they want to guard this area so well?...

The door at the other end of the corridor is mercifully closed. It is locked I am sure. There are too many monsters on the other side of it that can open doors. Still, I go and make sure that it is indeed locked. The liches are summoning and making monsters aware of my presence. Okay stop it already, I say. The intruder alarm has been going on non-stop from the time I fell into here from the titans level above. Stop the claxons. Stop the wailing. The whole level knows where I am. My sensitive elven ears are beginning to smart...

I noted all the different types of monsters around me. Man... There sure were a lot. More than I had ever, ever seen in one spot before! I wish I had some arrows... I started making my way back to the rear exit again. Keeping track of how all these monsters were moving, as well as, their speed. I had hardly any ranged weapons. I would have to fight everything using tactics. But beforehand; I was going to collect all the intel I possibly could on them.

Understand something; I was not afraid. Concerned and concentrating; yes. Fear; no. Let's just fight smart. Let's make it through this in relative good shape. I have a titan upstairs which must eventually meet it's fate...

After doing this assessment, I noticed that the dragons were not part of the general pack. They must be limited by space constraints somehow. Also, they were seperated into two groups of two. One on top. The other below. Fine. I'll handle them first. Maybe find out what these things were guarding. Perhaps a dragons' horde awaited me...? Dragons always have a ton of stuff in their lairs (!).

So, I went for the top two first. A grey and a blue. What could a grey possibly breathe? Never knew of their existence in that game that Nethack is not... Opened the door. Started chucking BDDD's. Took a lightning breadth attack that reflected off the Longbow of Diana - another new discovery, by
the way...! The lightning bolt ricocheted all over the place! An idea had just formed in my head. The other door to the two bottom dragons was in direct line of sight...

Closed the top door and waited for all four dragons to be placed one space away from both doors. The bottom two were a blue and a red. Opened the bottom and then the top door. Braced myself for what would surely be: An undoubtedly super laser light show!

Lightning bolts flashed all about! Ricochets and bounces from my position, as well as from the back walls, just extended all their paths. Two rounds later, the red dragon from below would fall. It never breathed nor had a chance to move. The blue from above and below, had unwittingly been it’s demise...

Chucked another round of BDDD’s - killing the first dragon. Steped up. Picked up the BDDD’s and chucked them at the next one in line, the grey this time, and it fell too. I was quite amazed with the little amount of force I had used...

Turn around and fire two salvos before the bottom blue can move up. An anguish cry filled the hallways as it fell. All four dragons gone in but 8 rounds! Satisfaction filled my essence.

Six BDDD’s to kill a blue dragon. These were truly wonderous weapons. Or these dragons were not fully matured. Either or. I’ll see if I run across any more with this character. But that’s five dragons I’ve killed now, using no more than this amount of force.

The Longbow of Diana also gave me reflection like the amulet of reflection! This too is truly a wonderous weapon / artifact.

Well. Four dragons out of the way. I was just about to start checking out those rooms they were gaurding when I got hungry. I never tasted dragon meat before, so decided to give one a try.

I went for the last blue I killed. As it was the nearest, after picking up my BDDD’s. I also figured that drinking dragons blood confered special properties. So was eager to see if this was part of Nethack also. Only message I remember getting about the whole thing was that I had a hard time getting it all down. I was also satiated. Just as well. I figured there would be a long fight ahead of me, if the stairs were located in the room, beyond the door were the big mob of monsters and soldiers were hanging around...

The four rooms turned out to be; a weapons locker, an armory, food storage, and... I forget what the other was (laugh!). But I went and stepped on every square, in all these rooms. Did the look here command (":")! Hoping there might be some stairs. No such luck... (sigh)

Things I can remember that I would find useful were; a silver sheild, a silver spear, some throwing spears, and an angled pole-axe. I say "were" cause I hadn’t picked them up yet. I just made note of them for now.

Well. Not much left to do... No stairs around these parts. Guess I have to go beyond that door at the western end of the hallway with all the trap doors in it.

I levitated towards it and stood there for a while. Gauging which would be the most likely opponents to step through it first. After having figured I was ready, I unlocked the door and opened it. The horde, which was gathered on the other side, now had a way through...

1.23 The Battle — Clash Of Arms

First one through was a soldier. I wasn’t going to start chucking my valuable, yet very limited supply of BDDD’s out into that crowd. So I started hacking with the ol’ blessed battle-axe. A few swipes...
later and he went down. But not before everybody and their sister that were behind him had thrown daggers, knives, spears, javelins, and potions my way. Most of these projectiles landed / hit the others that were in line. By the time that anything got through to me, it would invariably miss any ways. Another faceless soldier stepped up to take his place. Same thing happened with this guy as the first. Then the same for the next guy as had happened to the first two...

Then something else stepped in. It was a big thing. Was able to land a few blows on me. Hmm... This is no good. I don’t have enough potions of healing to duke it out like this. I remember having but one. This is going to be a loooong fight. At least I was faster than it. Put on the ring of levitation. And hovered back over the trap door that was immediately behind me. I landed and turned to see its reaction. Ha ha! You can’t reach me. What are you going to do now? The big slow thing just kept walking up to me till it fell into the pit! Big on size and damage. Slow on movement and ability to think (laugh!).

I was going to levitate back over to the other side again. But the rest of the mob had filled in behind it too quick. There was no room for me to get a foothold again on the other side. (shrug). Can they all be stupid enough to just all fall through the pit? Let’s see...

Yup. The next three monsters just walked towards me and fell into the pit (laugh).

Then I started thinking... The level below is going to get crowded if this keeps up... I’ll have to clear that level eventually. With all these numbskulls, just gathering down there, due to falling through here, will make whatever it’s like below - a real pain when I go to clean them out!

Pause. More thinking...

At least up here I have the terrain to my advantage. They are all required to funnel towards me one at a time. It would be better, in a strategic sense, just to kill them all off here. Yep. Decision made. That’s the best course to take. Considering everything about this game, and its future...

Okay, let’s get a weapon better suited to the task at least. I went into the armory and got the angled pole-axe. Came back to where I had left the crowd. This took a few turns. I imagin another 6 or so monsters, must have fallen through the hole again, already...

Well. Here goes... I took a chance; I wielded the angled pole-axe. It did not weld itself to my hands. Good. I let out a sigh of relief. Not cause if it was cursed I would be stuck with it. It was instead because; since it was not cursed, then it did not have a negative enchantment!

Even with the blessed battle-axe, it took more than one swipe to bring these guys down. At least two and more than likely, it was mostly three. I don’t know of too many weapons that can do so much damage as it (a battle-axe) can. Certainly, an angled pole-axe is okay. But not as good I’m sure. Also I did not know if it was blessed or not. So chances were that it would not work as well.

Anyhoo... The big thing with the angled pole-axe is that it can be used at a range of two. So standing on one side of the pit and thrusting/chopping with this thing; I could hit them and they couldn’t hit me. Which, by the way; is one of my favorite ways of fighting (big grin)! After trying to fight this way, I soon discovered that I was correct in my earlier assumption. With the angled pole-axe, it took even more hits than the battle-axe. This weapon required; three and more often than not, four hits to kill a soldier. Too long, as it turned out. For often before I could finish one off, it would fall down through the pit, as it stepped forward to get next to me...

Hmm... I am no better off than before. This is with regards to what I was hoping to avoid. Alright. I have to get back over there. Too bad. This way of doing things, though I had thought ingenious, was obviously flawed...
1.23. THE BATTLE — CLASH OF ARMS

Throw BDDD’s! And down the soldier went. Throw BDDD’s at the next in line. I needed to cause a gap of two within the line. Then the soldier stoped to pick up some booty instead of stepping forward. My opening was now at hand. I put on the ring of levitation and floated across the pit. No time to exchange to another weapon, nor do anything else. Time was of the essence. I had to get across in the least amount of turns possible. Else I would lose my chance.

Made it! I now occupied the square on the other side of the pit. Remove the ring and float back to the ground. The amount of objects thrown at me from along the line was relentless. Too bad none were arrows...

I’m hit by the soldier in front of me. I look at my hit points. Nothing too damaging. I pick up the BDDD’s that are here on the ground. I’m missed. Good. At least my armor class is still decent enough. I know that my cloak of displacement will not be able to help me much here. Due to the nature of the restricted terrain; I do not have the luxury of being able to dance.

I’m missed again. Fine. I’ll continue to use the angled pole-axe. I will strike at the soldier beyond. As long as the one in front of me is not too skilled; I’ll use him as a buffer from the mob behind him.

Apply the angled pole-axe. Pick target. Hit the "." button.
Apply the angled pole-axe. Pick target. Hit the "." button.
Apply the angled pole-axe. Pick target. Hit the "." button.
Soldier is killed.

This pattern would go on and on. Always keeping a watchful eye on my hit points.

Never once did I miss in landing a blow. Though I was unskilled in pole arms, I was impressed with my ability to always hit with them. Come to think of it. I never missed with the battle-axe either...

I was doing pretty good. But slowly losing the battle of hit point regeneration, to the one of, hit point loss. I must find a way to either speed things up, else I’ll have to retreat to regenerate some hit points...

I know! I reach for my wand of slow monster. Point and zap directly to my left. Nothing! The wand is empty... I mentally struggle with the idea of trying to force the last charge out of it. Just as the Oracle had informed me.

No. That is what I decide for now. I cannot take so many rounds off. I’ll just get hit more often than not. Keep fighting for now...

Apply the angled pole-axe. Pick target. Hit the "." button.
Apply the angled pole-axe. Pick target. Hit the "." button.
Apply the angled pole-axe. Pick target. Hit the "." button.
Soldier is killed.

Many rounds of this never ending pattern; has brought me to one third of my hit point reserve. I glance at the amount of monsters that still are crowding in my view. There are still way, way too many monsters in the room beyond. I cannot continue as I have been doing.

Fine. A tactical redeployment is now the smart thing to do. I levitate back over the pit behind me. Upon landing again, I go to the enhance screen. I check the box next to pole-arms. Now I am at basic skill. There, hopefully I will be able to do a little more damage per hit...
While being relatively out of harms way. I restart my familiar pattern with the angled pole-axe. Carefully I keep track of the number of hits required, on average, for a soldier to fall.

No real difference. Is what I can make out. Though a lieutenant and some other type of monsters have also stepped up. So I did not have enough of a pool to test everything as well as I had wanted. Unless they stopped for a while to pick up some objects. I did not have enough rounds to kill them before they would fall through the pit. But I must wait for my hit points to go back up. Before I will venture again beyond the other side of the pit...

Fine then. Back to the armory I go for now. I pick up the throwing spears and the silver shield. I will hope that it improves my armor class better than the elven shield I have presently. Although it is not elven armor, I equip it while taking another chance it is not cursed... Lucky! It is not. I believe it did improve my armor class by one. For I remember having it with me from this point on, up to now...

Good. Now my hit points are getting back up to near full. On my way back to the front, I wonder if I should try going through one of these walls with the pick-axe... Nah. I’m doing fine as it is. No use letting them in from another angle. I’m doing okay. When I need a rest, I can take one. Such as I am doing now. Just have to be patient that is all...

Back at the front. Next to the pit. How many have fallen through in my absence, I do not know. I’ll count the amount of soldiers there are on level 29. Once, and if, I ever get there (laugh!).

Oh! I’m fighting with two-handed weapons. Why did I try that shield? Stupid move. Wasn’t thinking. Or I should say, I was thinking, but thinking along crooked lines. Come on - I tell myself. Concentrate on the task at hand. A mistake like that can very well set me back, quite a bit... Take off shield. Weld blessed battle-axe.

Okay. Have to clear some of these guys out so that I can get back across...

Throw BDDD’s! Throw BDDD’s! Two whatever type of monsters have fallen. Now to create a little pile for them to stop and pick up... Throw spears! Throw knives! Levitate across the pit. Touch down on other side. Pick up my BDDD’s that are here. Hit soldier in front of me with blessed battle-axe till he falls. Another immediately takes his place before I can step forward. I want those extra BDDD’s that are there... Swing with the blessed battle-axe once more. Keep it up till he falls. Still yet another steps in front of me. Damn. Do I use another box on the enhance screen for the battle-axe...? Ponder... I decide against it. But just for now...

Swing with the blessed battle-axe till the soldier falls before me. Nothing has stepped forward this time! Good. I have my chance to get at my remaining BDDD’s. Let’s see how this goes though...

Step forward (now into doorway). Massive amount of messages coming in. Many line of sights I am now exposed to. Something reflects off of my amulet and goes careening back into the crowd. The ray was purple - whatever that signifies. Many objects thrown. Many monsters hit by these. Few even make it to my position. Those that do; none hit. Several swipes taken at me. I’m now exposed to three opponents. Cloak of displacement is working like a charm here. I have just changed positions from one square to another.

Pick up remaining BDDD’s. Another round of many messages to sift through. One said that I was missed by a lance (!?). It was not thrown. So then lances are range two? Same as a pole-arm...? A hit from something adjacent has landed on me. Dammage is minor. But can I stay here for long? Do I dare stay this exposed? No... I will step back again. I have what I wanted - my remaining BDDD’s. Let us just be patient and do what works best...

Step back. Exchange. And re-assume my previous pattern...

Apply the angled pole-axe. Pick target. Hit the "," button.
Apply the angled pole-axe. Pick target. Hit the "." button.
Apply the angled pole-axe. Pick target. Hit the "." button.
Apply the angled pole-axe. Pick target. Hit the "." button.
Soldier (or whatever) is killed.
I again resume counting the number of turns required to fall a soldier. That is when one has appeared behind the one that is in front of me. Many different monster types were present. But soldiers, by far, outnumbered all the rest.
Still not enough damage is being dished out. In order for me to bring the rounds required to kill a soldier, down to three. I toy with the idea, to enhance pole-arms to skilled. It may be enough to gain that edge in damage. However the best benefit; being able to swing to any target at range two, would be negated as long as I stayed within the corridor. I’ll hold off for now. I’ll have to see how long I can last in the exposed position of the doorway, before I commit to checking another box with pole-arms. I feared that I was now running out of boxes (see Part 2 (page 13) for why I thought so), and was still considering the battle-axe for enhancement...
Back to the routine for now... Apply the angled pole-axe. Pick target. Hit the "." button.
Apply the angled pole-axe. Pick target. Hit the "." button.
Apply the angled pole-axe. Pick target. Hit the "." button.
Soldier (or whatever) is killed.
In order to make the monotony of it all go by a little faster; I started to associate the commands with how it would translate into a more realistic battle...
Stick ‘em with the angled pole-axe. Twist the blade in the wound. Withdraw blade and stand ready.
Stick ‘em with the angled pole-axe. Twist the blade in the wound. Withdraw blade and stand ready.
Stick ‘em with the angled pole-axe. Twist the blade in the wound. Withdraw blade and stand ready.
Stick ‘em with the angled pole-axe. Twist the blade in the wound. Withdraw blade and stand ready.
Soldier is killed and falls to the ground.
There! That makes it more interesting (grin)!
If you have ever fought a long battle with a pole-arm; you know what I mean (laugh!). A lot of fun comes from what you yourself can put into the game. The mind and imagination is what makes it all worth while. To me any ways... (wink)
So. This went on for a while longer. Then somebody threw something and it hit the black naga that was just outside the doorway. It shattered on its head and broke into pieces. I thought nothing of it at the time. Just another failed attempt, like so many others, at trying to get me. But then after a few turns; I noticed that the naga was attacking soldiers around it (!). I looked at it. It was not peaceful. It must be confused. Hmm...
This may be an opportunity that I can take advantage of...
No use for me to keep hitting it. I can use it as some kind of blocker. Nobody can step into the doorway as long as it’s going outside the door.
Threw BDDDD’s at soldier in front of me. But I was careful. I hit "n2td". Did not want to over send any BDDDD’s and hit the naga. Exchange. Chop with blessed battle-axe. He died. I stepped forward. Picked up weapons. Everything missed me. Cloak of displacement and all, you know. Exchange. Then started using the angled pole-axe on whatever was behind the naga...
Stick ’em with the angled pole-axe. Twist the blade in the wound. Withdraw blade and stand ready.
Stick ’em with the angled pole-axe. Twist the blade in the wound. Withdraw blade and stand ready.
Stick ’em with the angled pole-axe. Twist the blade in the wound. Withdraw blade and stand ready.
Stick ’em with the angled pole-axe. Twist the blade in the wound. Withdraw blade and stand ready.

Soldier is killed and falls to the ground.

After a few soldiers had fallen, I thought that it would be nice if I could kill some other monsters that
were not directly lined up at range of two from me. In other words, something else that wasn’t right
behind the naga. Like the mumak. Or an other naga. Or that wight. Or that funny looking blue
monster. Or one of them liches, if they ever got close enough. Hmm...

Took a little time out at this point. This was going to be a big decision...

Yep. I figured that this was the best course of action. I went to the enhance screen. Now I checked
the box next to pole-arms. I was now skilled in them. All the boxes that were next to other choices
disseapeared. I nodded my head. I was right. My enhancement capabilities were falling within the
parameters I had just about figured. (See part 2 (1.4 on page 15) again for how I figure the boxes.)

Okay. I’m now commited to these weapons skills. For better or worse. Let’s make them count!

Since I’m skilled with pole-arms. I can now swing to any target at a range of two from my position.
Not just the 4 major compass points. I will now be able to pick targets that I do not want to ever get
beside me. The confused black naga and the other two soldiers will serve as blockers. The cloak of
displacement will help as long as I can dance back and forth from time to time. What I have to try
and do also, is protect this black naga as long as possible. Have to try and hit the guys with wands
and/or that are throwing spears. So I was basically doing just about all that I had just described.

The battle got a little more interesting. Most times I only needed three hits with the angled pole-axe
to bring a soldier down. That was great! The confused black naga lasted for a very long time. It
absorbed many errant spears and knives. Occassionally a blast from that wand of purple beams as
well.

I was able to dispatch all the big mean monsters at a range of two quite effectively. Albeit, it took a
while. But I don’t remember any big meanies getting next to me. The liches had summoned quite a
variety of monsters: Ettins, ettin zombies or mummies, cockatrices, wights, mumaks, stalkers, different
elementals, yetis, ogre types, some kind of big cat, and a disenchanter (whatever that is), are what I
can remember.

Eventually the black naga fell. After trying to hold my position in the doorway for a while, my hit
points had gotten low. I retreated a step and fought the mob where just one soldier would now face
me. I went back to killing whatever was staying just outside the door. For within a constrained space;
the angled pole-axe can’t span out.

When I got really low. I quaffed that potion of healing I had. That was the only time I needed it for
the whole battle. So all in all, I held up pretty darn good. Or, I should say, the tactic employed to
fight this huge battle, required it only once.

I eventually got back into the doorway. And having dispatched the liches, the battle started to wind
down. As no more monsters were getting added to the mob. Other things I did, but won’t go in detail
about were:

- I chucked all the cursed weapons that came my way back into the mob. Often these would be picked
  up and subsequently be welded to my opponents hands (laugh).
- Any of them that I noticed was wielding a lance (yes, after the battle I had found five strewn about), I let them get next to me. I knew that they could cause hardly any damage. After all, that’s what happens when I try to hit something at range of one myself. But the damage I would take confirmed this. Most of the time either zero or one hit point.
- Dancing back and forth so that my cloak of displacement’s properties would kick in. This required very careful planning as to when to do this. As I did not want a soldier to step into the doorway when I stepped back.
- I threw a lot of spears, and throwing spears. I was able to get an asterix "*" next to them both in the enhance box.
- Was able to figure out a pair of gloves that were not cursed. After I threw them into the crowd and whatever monster put them on, didn’t have them welded to its hands.
This part of the battle took two sessions for me to conclude. Yes. It was that long and there were that many monsters...
So after the last monster had fallen in front of the door to that big room, it was now time to explore the rest of the fortress and mop-up the stragglers...

1.24 Enlightenment

Time to finish the exploring and cleaning this place out...

Dungeon Level 28

- Fortress with drawbridge.
- chest X2
- large box
- throne
- fountain
- trap doors only way down
- one way stairs up from level 29

Note: I know I haven’t given you what’s on dungeon level 27. I can’t give it to you, as I don’t know what’s in it yet. To those that have followed the whole story - I haven’t been able to clear it. Hopefully that will be soon when I start playing the game again... (!)

The large box was empty. Don’t remember what was in the chest in the big room. There was a chest in the South-East tower. "Elbereth" was engraved in the floor on the same square as it. Inside was a wand. When I zapped it at the next monster I saw, it asked me what I wanted to wish for! Oh boy! A wand of wishes! Never had one. Another big discovery! After a little thought...
I asked it for; "death to mindflayers". The game told me it could not find that or something. Not knowing how to ask for a wish, I pressed "escape" till I was out of it. I’ll figure something out later. Once I find the stairs and can get back to base camp...
CHAPTER 1. BOOK 1

Having now finished completely exploring the interiore... I had not found any stairs! (big long sigh) Perhaps I’m in that special level with no stairs the guide talks about...

I tried to liberate the arrows and other weapons that were enbeded into the walls with the pick-axe. The game told me that I could not dig there, or something (shrug). Okay, they will stay inbeded then...

I approached the drawbridge and started chopping with the battle-axe. It’s made of wood, right? The game said the same thing as with the inbeded arrows, I think. (shrug) Looks like I’ll just have to use that back door.

Well then... I collected all the booty from within the fortress. Brought it to that central room. Then started sorting it out and classifying it within the chest and large box. Of which I had transported nearby to the throne.

Man-oh-man... Was there ever a lot! So much that I have big humongous piles of it (laugh). Don’t know how I will ever be able to bring it to a base camp. We’ll worry about that another time as well. I have to find a way up and out of here...

Some other kind of monster materialised. Think it was an Olog-hai. Yeah, that was it.

I pointed another newly found wand from the pile of booty towards it. When I zapped...

"This is a wand of enlightenment." And then followed a screen. I will try and remember some of the stuff for you and how it was displayed...

- You are piously aligned. - You are cold resistant. - You are infravisioned. - You are shock resistant.
- You are poison resistant. - You are automatic searching. - You are sleep resistant.

And there were a few others I now forget...

Now this was truly amazing as well as revealing. I sat there and looked at this screen for a long time. Oh yeah. A lot longer than you could imagin (laugh). My intuition told me that this was a big thing here. I was on the threshold of another big discovery...

I went through my Oracle sheets. There was something that had clicked in my brain... "The meat of enchanted creatures often times convey magical properties unto the consumer."

I consistently make certain saving throws; versus poison, and versus frost. So then I must have eaten some type of magical creature that enhances my resistance to these. This wand gives me the results!

I have never fallen asleep. I discover secret doors without searching sometimes. I have infravision. These are all due to me being Elf. So if I were to be polymorphed into another creature - I would lose that. Just like when I was a winged gargoyle, for a while back there.

Mars has been pretty happy with me all this game. Since I’m so pious... That’s probably why I have gotten so many gifts from him (3 so far). And the reason why he has come through when I have been in great need a few times (when I’ve prayed).

It was all starting to come together... (!).

This is a very powerful wand to have at my disposal. I will keep it on me and use it when I’m in big trouble, therefore I’ll have a better idea as to why!

Okay. Now I killed this Olog-hai. Then went off to see if I can find some stairs...

Back out through the back door. Only one place on the map still uncovered: the lower part of the map over the water South of the fortress. I assumed it would look the same as the top part of the map. Sure enough it turned out that way exactly.
1.24. ENLIGHTENMENT

There was an eel that came around. Obviously never showed itself when I was killing them all a few
days ago. I tried to croak it while still levitating. That didn’t work too well. Floated back to dry
land. Finished it off the same way as I had got all the other sea creatures before.

Back to uncovering the bottom of the map. What is this? Do I see some weapons over there? I landed
on the long strip of land. And there were my two other BDDD’s! I thought they were lost. From
when I first fell through here and had that initial engagement with the lich in the maze (see part 19
(1.21 on page 102)). So then liches’ can also teleport stuff away (!).

Wow... These are formidable monsters. I wonder what else they can do that I have not yet discovered...
(?)

Great! Now I have 8 BDDD’s. And the Longbow of Diana has given me a few arrows as well. Could
have come in handy earlier - like during that humongous battle! Ah well... I got through it just fine
any ways. Just had to do a little more thinking, that was all (grin).

Now then... Let’s keep looking for stairs...

Nothing. No stairs. I have checked the whole level (28). I am certain. Now I’m stuck...

I want to get my pets back. Grunt, and especially Burp; would have been super handy with my
situation down here.

I want to make that titan on level 27 suffer for all the grief it’s caused me. I’ve ran into it three times
now. It’s still alive... It’s the first and only thing, that has given me such a hard time to get past it.
(Mindflayers are still my most despised monster, though...)

My remaining BDDD’s (those super weapons) are still on level 27 with that titan. All my poisoned
tipped arrows as well. It would be nice to get those back again.

I really don’t want to continue with just what I have on me. Although I have just acquired quite a
number of things from the fortress also; I have quite a cache on level 24 as well as some others. I would
like to have access to them again.

Have to find a way up...

Ponder and think...

Nope. I’m really stuck. Okay... Let’s see what the website that I downloaded this game from has
anything to say or add... I find nothing that I think applies to my situation.

There were a few links for further information. One of them was here (Google). Also had a FAQ under
the same link. Section 3.4 of this FAQ was the closest that applied to me. So after reading that part...

I went through the motions of looking for stairs - again! Did not want to look stupid by asking a
stupid question then finding out I was too stupid to do a proper search... (roll eyes)

Met another mindflayer while doing this. I knew about it through it’s psionic residual emanations.
A little bit of hunting - and it was careful hunting, believe me - brought it into my sights. BDDD’s
away! When it died, I kicked it’s corpse into the water. If pirahnas ever materialise here, they’ll have
something to munch on (big grin).

There are now a veritable horde of gremlins. All mostly on the left side of the map.

Coming back across the map, I ran into an incubus. He wanted to get it on, and was presumptuous
enough to think I’d fall into his arms!

Get real. I told him. I’m the female here. Not you. Since when do you think you get to make those
decisions? Especially on; where, when, and whether it’s yes or no? Go away before I clobber you. I
have other things more important on my mind for now.
He was persistent. Thought I would eventually fold. Well okay. Here’s my number: "4 t d 6 t d 6". And that was that... (hrumph!)

So finally... Didn’t find any stairs yet again...

Registered with Google and posted my question. I’ll see if I can find the original thread and post a link...

*(removed link because of the length)*

Well. There it is. You can refer to that thread now to see how I found the stairs. Not much of a story really. Just ended up looking stupid like I didn’t want to (laugh!). But that’s where I’m at now...

So then Ladies and Gentleman; that concludes the story on how I got here.

The prologue in my first post of this thread explains the reason for having started this thread.

I have gone back and re-read all the chapters. I find that they are easier to understand if one reads through them slow. It makes assimilating the information easier - well, to me anyways (laugh!).

I also noticed that I was able to convey, through my writing, how insecure I was when starting this game. Then how my confidence grew as I progressed throughout. Especially after that part on consolidating my character, followed by the breaching of the ghost level. At the point I’m at now, I just can’t wait to get my hands around that titans neck (grin)!

I think I’ve tied up any loose ends that were left hanging. If not, or for any other questions, I’ll be happy to reply to any queries. I’ll check back here from time to time.

Thanks again to those of you, from the other thread, that helped me find the stairs. Thanks to those of you, from this thread, for your help and suggestions with the game. (I’ve learnt a lot more than what I could have figured out on my own. I may have to give myself a handicap to compensate...)

To everybody; hope you had a few chuckles at my adventure (laugh)! 

Regards,

Krysia’s Krusader
Chapter 2

Book 2

2.1 Ellora’s Basecamp

Main Base Camp  dungeon level 24

[Diagram of Ellora’s Basecamp with labels such as Garbage, Missiles, Ordnance, The Cache, Bell, Tools, Cursed Stuff, Fridge, Misc piles of weapons / armor, altar, garage, to the monster generator, to the downstairs, boulders blocking the door, rocks from shattered status, to the upstairs]
2.2 Back In The Game

Allright! After some help from the r.g.r.n. deities... I found some stairs up (finally), of which I am standing on when I restarted the game.

Okay, then. Let's get organised. Have to get the feel on how to play again. It's been a long absence...

One month and eight days... Yeesh (roll eyes)...

How do all these commands go again...?

Oh yeah. It's starting to come back to me... A little...

Better to just take it slow for now. Don't wanna do somethin' stupid after all this effort and trouble (laugh)!

I'll go back into this fortress and start sorting through all my booty. I've almost completely forgotten what I have - besides what I've told you about during the story already.

There's a veritable mob of gremlins all over this side of the map. Good thing I've chopped away a lot of the walls here. Still, they get in my way a lot.

Levitate back around to the back door... Oh! Look at that! There's a land square to it! I thought it was over water (laugh!). I've been away too long...

Look at all the piles of junk in here! Gotta clean this up. Make everything more tidy. It's not like me to be this messy...

There now. All the neat stuff in the chest next to the throne. The less inerestin' stuff in the large box next to that. And three piles on the floor next to the containers; weapons (but not projectiles!), armor, and pole arms.

Lots of neat stuff here. My all time favorite pole-arm is amongst the booty: The forked pole-arm (A spetum; if I ever get it identified). It's really great in the game that Nethack is not. It can disarm opponents. It's what it was designed to do in real life. It also looks cool, if you know what the different pole-arms look like. Hope it's not cursed... Wield forked pole-arm. Its not! Great. I'll use it as my pole-arm of choice.

I see there's a blue dragon in one of the four rooms. He must have materialised in there. I sure get lot's of blue dragons. Maybe it's a sign... (shrug). I'll save him for later. Next time I get hungry. Test out this enlightenment discovery I made last time I played (see Part: 22 (I.2f on page [117]).

Dragons must qualify as "enchanted creatures", no?

Now... After looking over everything; I'll equipe all my best armor. Make sure I've got the proper weapons wielded. Let's try invoking the Longbow of Diana... 11 blessed arrows! Great! I have 23 now. Let's write down the turn number. In 860 more, we can invoke again.

Look at inventory.

Marvel at the blessed +0 Longbow of Diana... The best peice of equipement I have ever had... Gaze upon its beauty... Feel the smoothness of the wood... Listen to the harmonic twang of the draw string... A true artifact... Remember all the wonderful things it can do...

Look (";") at gremlin in the water outside of the fortress. How can I do this? Why, by telepathy of course! Keep it wielded. It also works like my amulet of reflection. Oh! Let's type in it's name with the "/n" command...

"This legendary bow grants ESP when carried and can reflect magical attacks when wielded. When invoked it provides a supply of arrows."
ESP? The game tells me seen with 'telpathy' (?). Bah. Who cares. As long as I get real time monster
detection. That's what counts.

Now let's switch our attention to the blessed +6 daggers named BDDD... Yes. The true wonder
weapons: Blessed Death Dealing Daggers. Feel their weight in my hands... Hold them by their blade
tips... Sense how well they're balanced... The weapons that allowed me to breach the ghost level. Able
to fall dragons with but 6 of them. General all purpose monster droppers. Covet these. In them, I
depend on, with my life.

Try typing in a few other things with the "/" command...

Geeez... Look at what it says for "pyrolisk"! Look at how he describes his battle with it. I close my
eyes and go back over my own encounter with it myself (See Part: I Journey to the Oracle. (see [I.3'on
page 9]) from so long ago. It's almost as if they are the same (laugh)! There are very striking
similarities. That's so wierd...

'Orion' and 'Sirus' give me the same response. 'Scorpious' is the same as 'scorpion'... (Those of you
who were commenting on it; take a look at what the game says about them...)

Ah-ha! Here's "Orcrist"...

The Great Goblin gave a truly awful howl of rage when he looked at it, and all his soldiers gnashed
their teeth, clashed their shields, and stamped. They knew the sword at once. It had killed hundreds
of goblins in its time, when the fair elves of Gondolin hunted them in the hills or did battle before
their walls. They had called it Orcrist, Goblin-cleaver, but the goblins called it simply Biter. They
hated it and hated worse any one that carried it. | The Hobbit, by J.R.R. Tolkien |

So goblins are afraid of it too. I'll have to see about that. Too bad I'm no longer afraid of goblins
(laugh)! It should be in my cache at base camp level 24 with the other gifts from Mars (I think. Cause
they're not here...).

And here is (drum roll, please)... "Sting"!

There was the usual dim grey light of the forest-day about him when he came to his senses. The spider
lay dead beside him, and his sword-blade was stained black. Somehow the killing of the giant spider,
all alone and by himself in the dark without the help of the wizard or the dwarves or of anyone else,
made a great difference to Mr. Baggins. He felt a different person, and much fiercer and bolder in
spite of an empty stomach, as he wiped his sword on the grass and put it back into its sheath. "I will
give you a name," he said to it, "and I shall call you Sting." | The Hobbit, by J.R.R. Tolkien |

So "Sting" is for sticking spiders with, eh? (laugh!) I never would have figured it! I'll test it later on
too... (chuckle)

Note: If you don't know what I'm talking about, or why we're all laughing, that's cause you haven't
read all the previous parts of the story...!

Ooookay. Let's see if there's any wandering monsters around. Gotta do a little battle sequence. Just
to make sure I'm punching properly on the keyboard...

Ah ha! There's a succubus. (crack knuckles) Poise my fingers over the keyboard. Start tracking my
prey...

Come on babe... Walk on over into my sights... Let me side step along with you... Count the number
of squares... Range is at 8! Fire! Four launched! She died on the second one shot. Muhahaha! They
still work like I always remembered them (grin of satisfaction)...
Apply battle-axe. It’s too hard to chop through... (hurumph). Apply pick-axe. Same story as before. Same as it was 5 weeks ago...

Trudge back to cache. Drop battle-axe in weapons pile. Rummage through chest and pull out the only wand of striking.

Bolts from this wand can bust apart stone statues. Blow reinforced dungeon doors clear off their hinges. Kill mighty kobold lords with but one zap. This should be a cinch...

March back to drawbridge. Zap. Nothing. Ah no...
(groan) Throw wand of striking at drawbridge.
Fine. I’ll use the back door. I could use exercise... (mutter, mutter)
Back at cache near the throne. Sit on the chest a minute and do some thinking...
Need a mission. Nothing too complicated. Have to ease back into things...
I know! Let’s go clock the titan!
No no no... Remember. We’ve tried that three times already.
Okay... Well. I don’t want to go any further down. I want to go up! Have to get at our old cache on level 24. Have to get my BDDD’s and poisoned arrows from the titans’ room. Have to get my pets again; Burp and Grunt. They’re both still up there with the titan. I’ll have to charm them again, no doubt. I don’t think I have any more charm monster scrolls though. I’ll have to find some. Only way for all of this; is through the titan...
Hmm...
I know! Let’s go clock the titan!
No no no... Come on. There’s a lich with him. As well as some other nasties. We need to take things slow.
Okay... Let’s see...
Going down is definitely out. Been there twice already. No fun. Not ready yet. Need some stuff from my cache on level 24. Need my other BDDD’s from the titan. Need poisoned arrows from the same place too. Stairs back up to level 26 are from the titans room. It’s surrounded by water. So I’ll probably have to go through like part of the level just to get to him anyways...
I know! Let’s go clock the titan! Sheesh. Looks like I’ll have to get him sooner than I would like to. My immediate needs are going to outweigh my desire to start off slow again...
Well. Let’s see what’s upstairs. Let’s see what we’re up against. Then we’ll make a mission plan as we go along. The titan has to be dealt with sooner or later. No way around it. Besides..., I hate him!
I’ve been tipped off, by the deities, that the medusa is upstairs. I’ve been informed about her from the Oracle many times in the past. I also know her a bit from mythology. Good thing I’m poison resistant. Won’t have to worry about all the snakes in her hair! Grab a looking glass to reflect her gaze. Make sure I have the blindfold. The titans room is surrounded by water. Probably lots of water up there. Means lots of sea creatures. I’ll have to clear them before trying to levitate around the area. I’ll make sure to bring the forked pole-arm too.
After much consideration; I decided to leave the wand of wishing here. It will be my handicap for all
the extra knowledge I gained from the dieties at r.g.r.n. As long as a mindfayer does not materialise
next to me, I should be safe for now. With my telepathy, I can now see the invisible ones as well...
Now levitate over the pits. Out through the back door. And around the fortress to the stairs on the
left side of the map.
make sure of everything. Can’t be too careful...! Okay. Now up we go...
"You feel around with your hands." "There is a statue of Persus here." "You kill medusa."
Wow (laugh!). That was quick! I never saw her with telepathy even? Guess I don’t need the looking
glass after all... (!).
Look around with telepathy. A few monsters here and there. Cobras and eels mostly. Keep blindfold
on. In case Medusa has a twin sister, or if she has a boyfriend hanging around...
Do a search. Nothing. Do a few more. Might be some traps right next to me. An eel is swimming
around nearby. Cobras and other monsters are not closing. Must be all restricted due to the terrain.
Good.
"Burrrrp!!"
I know that sound! That’s Burp! He’s still alive and still tame. Else he wouldn’t have swallowed
something. Yippee! I thought for sure he would have become peaceful by now (?!).
I shout out: Hang on burp! I’m comming!
Take a step up. Do some more searching. Walk around a bit while searching. Medusa is a statue (!).
She must have caught her reflection in something. I was wielding the looking glass. But I would have
thought that applying it towards her would be the way? That’s what the Oracle said. Oh well. If
not... Maybe it was my amulet then... (?)
Well. Feels safe. Remove blindfold...
I’m in a small room. Two statues. The one of Persus is on the stairs. I have to move it. Don’t like
stuff on stairs. Persus is too heavy. Have to drop some stuff. I move it up one square. Urgh. That
was super hard. I was ovetaxed!
Put blindfold back on. No use taking a chance. Read my previous chapters on how; statues sometimes
come to life on you when you move them. Move Medusa statue over one square. She’s not as heavy
as Persus was. Step up two squares. Take off blindfold. Nothing was under Medusa, and I can now
see the stairs where Persus was.
Persus...? That’s odd? I thought he was a hero of some kind? How come he’s a statue? Check the
"/" command... Oups. It’s "Perseus" (laugh). The game has no information on such things. Oh well.
"Burrrrp!!"
I’m coming burp! Just have to figure a way out of here...
I can see that the titan room is way over on the left hand side of the map. I’m on the opposite. Way
over on the right. I was correct in my assumptions. Gonna take a while I’m afraid...
"Burrrrp!!"
Let’s see if there’s a door now...
It leads into a room full of statues. Two cobras and a python are quickly dispatched.
My my. There's a lot of statues here... Ack! One is a lich! Hope that none come to life. I'll try to just scoot past them all quickly. Better put the blindfold back on...

"The stone golem misses you."

Stone golem? Never met one in Nethack. Hmm... Makes sense. All these statues that are here, and all... Can't see it with telepathy. Let's try and step around it. Don't want to fight in this statue room. Lest one comes to life (cringe)!

"Burrp!"

I'm feeling statue after statue here. What was Medusa doing? Putting a collection together? Must be like a trophy room or something...


"Burrp!"

Burps' having a good time I hear...

Another stone golem bearing in from my right! These must be her strong arm thugs. It's BDDD time! Both stone golems got killed. Or should I say - they turned into statues. Fine. I'll move them later. Let's look for a way outa here towards my left...

Xorn coming! Phasing through wall. Step away so that if I kill it; my arrows aren't inbeded. Fire! Fire! Xorn ate my arrows (sad face)! Fire! Xorn coming my way. Fire!

"You kill the xorn!" "You've gained a level," "Welcome to experience level 15." "You feel (something to do with the enhance screen)."

Oooo... Lessee how I've changed... Hmmm...

Still a Scout. So Nethack doesn't differentiate levels with titles too much...

Hit points at 95 now.

Power at 104. Which is turning out to be pretty useless anyways...

Everything else looks the same.

Okay. Keep going around in here. My brass lantern keeps going out... (?)

Lizard coming from the darkness. Easy kill. But Instead of eating it... I'll keep it on me. Just like that guy in the pyrolsk story.

Door to my left leads to a small strip of land. Yep. It's an island. There's a lot of water between me and the room with my pets.

There's a master mind flyer out in the water!!! Yuch. These must be worse than regular mindflyers. It has to be dropped. But first I have to dispatch these eels and jellyfish. I start by using the same system as on the level below for sea creatures...

The eels have all just missed me thanks to my cloak of displacement! What went wrong? I had counted the number of turns properly, no? There are too many all at once out here. Better not take chances. I step back into the doorway. Take off the shield. Exchange. Wield the forked polearm. Kill them from here.

Wraith coming from behind! Throw BDDD's. Wraith gets dispatched to the ethereal plane. Go pick up BDDD's. Back to finishing off these eels.
Boy... There’s a lot of gremlins in the distance. Maybe more than there are on the level below... Looks like these guys like swimming. I like gremlins. They’re a blast. Here’s a description of them from the game:
"The gremlin is a highly intelligent and completely evil creature. It lives to torment other creatures and will go to great lengths to inflict pain or cause injury."
See! They sure sound great. I’ll try and get one as a pet some time. See how intelligent they are, and I want to know their methods of inflicting pain on other monsters...
Eels and jellyfish from around here are all dead now. That done; I step out and head down the narrow strip of land. I’m going to plunk arrows in this master mind flayer from accross the water. It’s standing on just a one square island. Water is all around it, therby it’s stuck there.
Heh he he. This is going to be easy...

2.3 Reunited

I have him just about lined up. A wraith materialises in the room behind me. Another wraith? Again? It starts to head my way. No problem. I have lots of time before it can get near me. I wanna drop this octopus face first. Then I’ll turn and handle the wraith. Just two more steps down...
"A beartrap closes on your leg!" "You are caught in a beartrap!"

AH SHOOT!
Try to step out. Try to step out. Try to step out. Try to step out. Wraith is closing in.
Try to step out. Try to step out. Try to step out. Try to step out. The master mind flayer is moving!? THESE THINGS CAN WALK ON WATER!??!! Aaaaahh!!
Try to step out. Try to step out. Try to step out. Try to step out. Wraith is now through the door. I’m still trapped. Have to fight here. Have to fight now!
Fire at wraith. Only one arrow launched. Damn. Fire again. Only one again! What’s wrong...?
Look at inventory. I still have the forked polearm wielded! Oups. Exchange.
Fire at wraith. Four arrows launched. Good. It should be almost dead. Octopus face is closing.
"Burrrp!"
Glad your having a good time Burp! Boy, could I ever use you here next to me...
Wraith is now too close. Have to drop it now. Throw BDD’s (n2td). Two launched. What’s this? It’s still standing!? How? Look at wraith (";?").
It’s not a wraith. It’s a nazgul. It has the same picture as a wraith. Oh. Just beautiful. What the heck is a nazgul? I do the "/" command. Then type in "nazgul". It gives me the same story as a wraith (?). Wonderful. Okay... So it must be an overgrown wraith then...? It’s also invisible. But I can see it (?). How come I can see invisible?
Water walking master mind flayer now at range four (!!). Crap! Crap! Crap!
Fire BDD’s at the nazgul (td). No more holding back! Four launched. Second one killed it. Phew! But the next two BDDs traveled off the map - into the water! (boo hoo hoo + very sad face)... Try to step out of the trap. Master mind flayer at range three (!!!!). But not lined up for missile attack...
Eel coming around from the bottom of the map!
Can’t get out of the beartrap. I keep failing. Have to fool the computer. Gotta do something different. I’m desperate!
Try to step out of the trap - this time in the down (2) direction! IT WORKED! I’M FREE!
Let’s split the hell-outa here!
Zap wand of teleportation. Direction? "." Nothing happens! Uh no... Same thing as the boulders level!
I think of wielding the pick-axe and digging a hole through the wall. But it will take 5 turns to do that. Plus 2 turns to exchange and wield. Tentacles’ will be on top of me by then. I must blow through now!
Zap wand of digging. Direction? "6"
"The wall glows then fades." Aww... Come on! What is this?!?
Octopus face at range two!! It attacks me! How (??), I ask before looking at all the messages... My cloak of displacement! It went after my displaced images!
Step down. We’re now lined up. Fire arrows! Four launched! Fire again. Another four are away! Master mind flayer moved down and right. Now at range one!!!!
Gawd. My mind is racing. My heart is thumping. It should be almost dead. No? If this thing lands a hit on me; am I going to forget everything again?!?
Fire! Three more arrows thump into it. Oh no! It’s still standing! Here comes the retal hits! My body stiffens in a spasm of fear. I cringe at the keyboard while reading the results...
It missed me 6 times! Cloak of displacement! Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
I must move again. Have to change squares. The cloak will be reactivated. I step up. It stayed in place!
Look at ammo situation. Two BDDD’s. Four arrows. Will it be enough? Do I switch to the forked pole-arm? If I do, will it move next to me? Thereby making my wielded weapon pointless? Do I take a chance that it strikes at my displaced images again?
I’m going to hold my position. If it moves onto a land square; I’ll throw my remaining BDDD’s. If it comes up by water; I will fire arrows. My cloak is reactivated. It will take it at least a turn to get next to me. I’ll get a free shot. Hope this all works...
It swipes at my displaced image from where it is. Great my cloak’s advantage is used up. The eel is stuck behind the master mind flayer. I want to step up. But the beartrap is next to me. Do I have time to levitate and clear it?
I decide against it. Can’t fire or fight properly while floating in the air. It should now move a square. It has 11 arrows sticking into it! It must be on it’s last breadth..., no?
Come on. You ugly puss! Step up to me!
It stepped to the right. Onto the land square. Death to you! BDDD’s away! Both lauched. It’s still standing! I can’t believe it!
I’m staring at the screen in a state of awe... My mind is rolling around with the same thoughts continously. I can’t stop the cycle...
It’s still standing! I can’t believe it! It’s still standing! I can’t believe it! It’s still standing! I can’t believe it!
Put on ring of levitation. Master mind flayer has moved up. Float over bear trap and land on the other side. Please ease Lord. Let it step into the beartrap...

It moved up and over by the water. Damn.

Fire! All my remaining arrows fly! The first one felled it. The rest sailing on into the water...

It’s gone. Pheeeew! I’m saved from forgetting everything (again). Master mind flayers are tough! They can sure absorb heaps of damage...

"Burrp!!"

Eel is here. Flailing at my displaced image. Move up into the doorway again. Kill it with the forked pole arm.

Pick up remaining BDDD’s and arrows. The nazgul left a wooden ring, a spellbook, and a long sword. Gee. These guys leave nice loot.

Untrap beartrap. Re-arm it in the doorway. If something wants to get me from inside again, it will get stuck here for sure.

No more sea creatures around. Some bigger islands are over in the distance. Time to float over there. Kill off the monsters in the way, and head for that titans room where my pets are.

There’s a strip of land on the East side of the titans’ room. I’ll land there and check out what’s happening in the room with my monster detection ability. What a lumongous mob of gremlins are here! It’s absolutely incredible. Way bigger than the one below. I have to count how many there is. Just so that you have an idea...

49 gremlins! Just from what I can see with normal vision and Longbow of Diana telepathy. Movement is difficult out here. They keep getting in the way.

I can see all the monsters inside the titans room now. Well... All the one monster. I only see Burp! Where is Grunt? Where is the titan? Where is the lich? Where are all the other monsters from last time I was here? Could Burp have eaten them all...?

Elf secret door detection ability has kicked in again. There’s a door on this side. Check for traps. Open and look inside. There’s water inside here? Don’t remember that from before. My reporting in the story will be more accurate from now on (laugh). Writing while being in the game will greatly enhance this (wink).

Put on ring of levitation. Float into the room. Light my lantern. It flickered again. There’s something wierd with it...? Could it’s polarity have been messed around with? Suspicion starts to set in. I have been exposed to the titan and at least four liches since last time I’ve played. Hmmm...

Drop down on the upstairs. I know there are no traps on this square. Burp comes over and nestles next to me. Awww. Poor Burp. He missed his mistress! Glad to have you back! I give him a big hug.

Where is Grunt? I start giving the room a thorough search...

I detect a magic trap in the room. And a gapping hole. That’s what I fell through when I was last here. It wasn’t a trap door. That mystery is now solved.

There’s a few items strewn about in here. But no BDDD’s!! And no poison tipped arrows!! Damn. That’s a big let down. Where did they go? Lich disintegration? Rust monster? Gelatinous cube? Picked up and carried off by something? Damn. After the close encounter with the nazgul / master mind flayer, I have but 6 BDDD’s... Damn. Damn. Damn.

One of the piles turns out to contain; a +2 dwarven mithril coat, a +2 orcish helm, and an elven shield. My stomach sinks... That stuff belonged to Grunt. No way he dropped it and then went somewhere
else. I knew him too well. Grunt is gone for good. I suspect he became peaceful and Burp ate him... He must have picked up that shield from somewhere. I never knew he had one. Neither wonder he never got hit by anything. Where is that expensive morning star he also had...?

Well... Looks like I’ll never be able to choke that titan with my bare hands! Burp got to him eventually, I guess. Same went for everything else that was here. Unless... Some of them fell through that hole in here (?). Just like I did last time I was here...? I’ll have to remember that for the next time I go down to the next level. I make a note of this in my notes.

There are some rocks in the room. I collect them and make a pile where I found Grunts’ stuff. "Good-Bye Grunt. You Were Great!" That’s what I engraved for him. Levitated off the square and moved away, so that Burp would not go near it.

Okay. I leash-up Burp with his leash. Let’s head back to base camp dungeon level 24. From there, I’ll figure out what to do from now on. We’ll come back to this level later. I’ll explore it thoroughly then. For now; I just want to be back at that cache with all my stuff. Need to know what I have available again.

Damn. Down to only 6 BDD’s...

Well. Still got Burp! Dunno how I’ll get him across all the water here and the level below (?)... Ah well. I’ll figure something out later.

Gotta remember my greatest assets: I’m a Ranger, I’m an Elf. Those two combined means: I’m smart, I’m wise, I’m resourceful. I’ll figure something out. Not only for Burp, but for what to do in the near future. First thing is to get back up to the ex-temple of Mars.

Damn. Down to only 6 BDD’s...

2.4 Hauntings

Up the stairs. Heah! Feels good climbing these at my leisure, while not in a desperate situation (grin). Not like the first and second encounter with the titan, the third and last one, I fell through the hole here... (laugh)

I’m now keeping an open text document (MS notepad), while going through the Mazes of Menace. Just like one of the r.g.r.n. deities had suggested to me a while back. I’m keeping track of how many BDD’s it takes to drop certain monsters.

Oh my... There’s a baculathrium. Wonder if it will take more than six of them (that’s all I have left)... Fire one salvo. Fire another. Just about to fire my last one when all of a sudden...

"Burrrp!"

Oh well. I’ll have to wait for another to show up. Or keep Burp on a tighter leash (laugh).

Lot’s of heavy duty wondering monsters appearing now. Tougher ones than I remember from when I was playing over a month ago. Wonder if my recent increase in experience level has anything to do with it...

I’m also keeping track of how many of my blessed arrows from the Longbow of Diana get mulched versus the number I fire from it. Yes siree... These are definitely more resistant to getting scragged compared to non-blessed arrows. I was suspecting that a while back. Now that I’m keeping notes, it’s starting to come to light statistically.
Blessing objects, like the guide says, does seem to make them better. If I can get a few more open boxes, I might check the one next to "axe" in the enhance screen. This being for that blessed battle-axe I keep lugging around from time to time.

If I can find another vial of a blessed clear potion; I may very well dip my forked pole-arm in it. Then it would be one mean weapon also, eh? It's the only weapon that I have skills in that is not blessed. Come to think of it... I wonder if Burp's teeth would work better if I were to shove such a vial in his mouth...? I know that a wand of speed works on him. Maybe blessed clear potions would too... Hmm...

Okay. Now approaching the ex-temple of Mars on dungeon level 24. I'm going through my light passage at the perimeter, just about to open one of the doors into it when...

"A shiver runs down your spine."

Woah... How come? Is Mars upset?

I pause at the open door to the dark interior of the room. I better light my brass lantern. It flickered again. Again. I have to test this thing on the altar.

Light from the lantern breaks the darkness in the room. I see nothing moving around in here. I displace Burp inside the room and unleash him. Go see what's there Burp...

Nothing. Burp is milling around about my cache. Funny. Grunt never did that. I dropped cursed mummy wrappings on all the squares with my piles and the chest. Burp must not be phased by such things...

Hokay. Must have been a message signifying that Jubilex is waiting for me on his plane in the Abyss. Ha!

I go straight to the altar, but Burp beats me to it. Get outa my way Burp. I need access to this thing. Burp is unperturbed and drops some rocks on the altar. I patiently wait for him to move away. Finally he decides to. I step up to it. There are 80 rocks here! (laugh) He sure can carry around some weight! I take the rocks away from the altar of Mars. Sorry Mars, Burp's not too smart. He meant no disrespect.

Now I strip everything off my body. Everything. Can't take any chances. One titan, and at least four liches since last time I did this, I'm starting to get to know some of these guys...

Just as I suspected. The brass lantern is cursed. Lucky though. Polarity reversal would have logically been darkness instead of light being shed from it. Instead it looks like it just has a hard time staying lit. I have another in the cache here. I'll just exchange it for the uncursed one.

Rest of my inventory looks okay. Thought my snowboots were blessed at one time. But it's been so long since I've played that I kind of forget now... The forked pole-arm is uncursed. Too bad. It would have been a real bonus if it would have been blessed.

Start rooting through all the stuff in my cache here. My my. I sure have a lot of junk. Some things I had completely forgotten about. There is a blessed glass orb here. Also some kind of horn. Not a musical one it seems... Wonder what it does... Nothing that I can tell... Lot's of potions here too... In fact lots of unknown objects. I'll have to get some scrolls of identify for all this loot eventually. Wonder if I can learn the spell from a book...

Hokay. I have 140 blessed arrows in my cache. Goodie, goodie, good, good (laug). I grab 20 to bolster my missile weaponry. There is also one poisoned arrow here. I will keep it also. Never know when I can run into something that may need one shot to bring it down - like a master mind flayer! Fix up my inventory and go back downstairs with Burp to finish clearing out level 27.
2.4. **HAUNTINGS**

**Dungeon Level 27 (The Titan’s Level):**

- islands between staircases
- beartrap
- magic trap
- statue of a giant ant
- statue of a stone golem (x4)
- statue of a soldier (x2)
- statue of a rust monster
- statue of a leperchaun
- statue of a red dragon
- statue of a lich
- statue of a Green-elf
- statue of a giant mimic
- statue of an orc captain
- statue of Perseus
- statue of Medusa

Took about three trips back and forth. Clearing out the titan’s level was longer than harder. Mainly due to all the water on and around the islands. Must be very careful to make sure I have the ring of levitation on before moving over any water. Monsters are randomly generated, but never any sea creatures. Tons of gremilns are all about here. They go into the water as easily as walking over land. I leave the doors to the titans room open. That way Burp can reduce their numbers somewhat. Funny, though. Although he swallows many monsters whole; he never does so to gremilns (?). Instead he just kills them with one mighty crunch from his jaw. Hmmm... Wonder why that is...

A few monsters around the islands. Some random wandering monsters also. But none posed any problem: A countal, a mindflayer (yuch!), a green dragon, a xan, a baby blue dragon, a kobold shaman, a dwarf lord.

Nothing revealed themselves from underneath all the statues after I had moved them. None came to life either - good!

The trips ferrying booty from level 27 up to level 24 turned out more exciting than actually discovering what was left on the titans level. Burp and eating different corpses was what made it fun (laugh). Took some psyching up before being able to bring myself to eating certain corpses; but all in all, it wasn’t too bad. Just had to get to them before Burp did (laugh). I was burdened, of course, at one point when I got hammered by a flesh golem. But just before I could throw BDDD's... "Burrrp!"

A jabberwocky!? Where did I here of those before... Monty Python and the Holy Grail (?)... Yeah... I think that was it (!). These things are dangerous then. They are fast and can swallow something
whole. I better keep Burp away from this thing. Don’t want to lose him. Drop all my extra weight. Count the range. It is six. Too close. Better keep some distance. These things were extremely fast in the movie. Range is now nine. Fire! All arrows hit. But what is this? it just sat there...? Fire again. No movement. Could it be impervious to arrows? Hmmm... They had to use a 'Holy Hand Grenade' to get rid of it, if I recall correctly... Yeah, that was it. Oh well. I’ll leave it be for now then. I’ll grab a wand of striking at the cache and nail it with that next time I pass by here.

Other wandering monsters included a platoon of soldier ants. "Burrrp!" A zruty ... "Burrrrp!" An ice troll... "Burrrrp!" A gold golem... "Burrrrp!" A fire giant... "Burrrrp!"

Whenever I saw something get too close to me; just had to displace Burp tactically. How a little female Elf like me, can move a huge purple worm around like Burp, is a little beyond my comprehension of the physical sciences (lots of laughs). No need to even drop stuff in order to become unencumbered. Let me tell you; Burp is one handy pet!

Every trip back to the ex-temple of Mars greeted me with some kind of message. Usually this one: "A shiver runs down your spine. On the last trip back, it was the same except for...

"A shiver runs down your spine. An enourmous ghost appears next to you! You are frightened to death and unable to move. Burp swallows Heather’s ghost. Burrrrrp! Heather’s ghost is destroyed! You regain your composure."

Wow! Ghosts are extremely dangerous. Seems like I was correct in my previous assumptions about them (See Part 8 ([J.JO on page 33]). Who is Heather? Could it have been the priestess of Mars? Was that her real name? (shrug) I’ll have to keep note of all the ghost’s names now as well. Maybe there is some kind of pattern. Then. All of a sudden:

"A shiver runs down your spine. An enourmous ghost appears next to you! You are frightened to death and unable to move. Burp swallows Adri’s ghost. Burrrrrp! Adri’s ghost is destroyed! You regain your composure."

Holy freakole! What’s happening here? This old temple is becoming a ghost magnet! Who is Adri? Oh man. This is no good. I have a huge cache here. Can’t be having all these ghosts scaring the bejesus out of me all the time!

I better fix things up in here. It’s no longer a temple. So I figure Mars won’t mind if I shed some light in here now. I go to the chest and pull out a few scrolls of light. Two of them were sufficient to light the whole interiore of the room. There now. Ghost’s can’t stand light. That should take care of the problem.

There also someone counting money somewhere on this level...? Could it be an undiscovered shop? Never heard that kind of message before - or I should say - I’ve never paid too much attention to all the random dungeon sounds as I do now. Could it be related to the hauntings at the ex-temple of Mars? Could these be the ghosts like in the story with 'Scrooge'? I go around the level with the monster detection ability supplied by the Longbow of Diana. Nothing. Hmmm... I go and verify that monster generating room on this level also. The one with the unknown shattered statue. Nothing again...

Heading back to the old temple, a bacalathrium is generated from that room! Yes there is definitly something strange about that room. I have not been able to put my finger on it yet. I’ll have to try and dig around here some time in the future.

I shove Burp out the door and wait for the dinosaur to approach me. No way I’ll ever be able to lift this thing onto the altar should it leave a corpse. Once it is on the same square as the altar, I kill it with BDDD’s and arrows. The cloak of displacement has saved me from taking a hit. I knew it would. These things are slow also. So I again knew that I was relatively safe in this tactic. I offered
2.4. **HAUNTINGS**

it to Mars. He took it in a burst of flame. Great! Now he has some "Bronto Burgers" for a barbecue in the sky (grin).

On the way back down, I was still mulling over these ghostly encounters in my mind. So wasn’t paying too much attention to my path through the lower level... "Burrrp!" Oh well. There went the jabberwock (laugh)!

Ogre lord. "Burrrp!"

Mindflayer. I fired the poisoned arrow. It failed it’s saving throw. Ha! Ha! (big grin)!

I was about to try and psych myself up to try and eat the corpse, but Burp swallowed it before I could bring myself to it. Phew... No more problem trying to get the courage up. Thanks Burp. Last booty trip completed. I outfit myself with 40+ blessed arrows. Also bring along two wands of striking. Everything else that is superfluous will be left behind. I want to get Burp down to the level of the fortress. From there, I may either take a look at level 29, if it’s possible to get Burp down there, or start ferrying booty up to here again.

Although I should really be consolidating my character, being a Ranger makes me feel itchy about doing something exciting. Although I’m not sure how yet; I think I’ll try to get Burp down to level 29. Yeah. I’ll really try to do that. Still wish I had more than just 6 BDDD’s, though...

Okay, big buddie. Let’s get you down there. On the titan’s level; I tried to lure him into the hole I had fallen through once before. Nope. He didn’t want to go there. Hmmmm...

Alright, I levitated over the hole. Unleashed him. Then moved away, directly opposite of him. Burp disappeared! Okay. Got him down one level. Now I levitated across the water and went down the stairs. I didn’t want to jump down the hole, in case the titan, lich, and company, had fallen through from the time I climbed up here before.

Got down, and my monster detection revealed, only Burp and the mob of gremlins that also inhabit this side of this level also. Okay. So that titan is really gone. Now it’s confirmed. Burp had him for a snack when Medusa got stoned. Also ate all the other monsters from above. What a veritable boon ol’ Burp was (laugh)!

Next trick was how to get him across the water to enter the fortress. But first: If I can blow through this drawbridge, it will shorten the path of entry quite considerably compared to going all around the map to the back door...

While Burp was crunching up some gremlins, I pulled out a wand of striking and zapped it at the drawbridge. There was a thundering crashing sound.

"The portcullis falls into the moat."

A portcullis? Never saw it indicated. That’s an iron grate. But there was now an opening where the drawbridge once was. (shrug) Whatever. It will do. This is what I had wanted any ways.

Okay Burp let’s go. I tug on the leash and levitate over the water and hover in the newly made entranceway. Burp is still snapping at whatever gremlin gets too close to him. I pull out the wand of teleportation. I’ve been tipped off by the r.g.r.n. dieties that although my wand won’t work on me, it may work on others in place like the boulders level. Such as this level is.

Zap. Which direction? I’m just about to hit key "4" when...

My cat, Mademoiselle, jumps into my lamp! Then, in a seemingly effortless movement, she bounds onto the key board! Things flash all over the computer screen! She then starts waving her tail back and forth, rubbing it all over my face. Windows are opening and closing! I grab the cat, as gingerly as possible, and shoo her out of the room. Back at the computer, I try and figure what damage has
been done. My text document, in MS notepad, has disappeared! I was keeping notes and statistics on blessed arrows, monsters, how many BDDD’s it took for them to fall, etc. It is gone - gone - gone! (groan). Almost as effective as a mindflayer attack (!). (laugh - but not really)

Somehow, I get the window with the game back up. The writing in the message area is all funny. Some sentences are now gone. I can’t make out what had happened. But on the map, I’m still where I was, however, Burp is now next to me - over the water! How that happened, I have no idea! Oh my God! He may drown in the next move! I dare not save the game as is. Else it may save all the garbled stuff. Have to somehow get it going normal again before saving. I have experienced stuff like this in other games before.

I still have the ring of levitation on. I move straight left. Hoping to displace Burp over to where I was... IT WORKED! Phew... He’s saved from drowning! I wait till he steps further into the fortress. I then levitate inside and float to the floor. Now I lead him to the cache where the throne is located. I move around a bit, and check if all the various screens are working properly. Everything seems to be acting normal. Okay. Now I save the game and reboot the computer...

I walk around till I find another monster, this time a lizard. Have to see if I’m working normally also. Fire arrows. Fire BDDD’s (only one: n1td). Walk up to it and punch and kick it. It died. Good. Things seem okay. I pick it up and put it into the chest before Burp gets to it.

Hokay then. Let’s see if I can get you down to level 29 now, Burp. We go to the trap doors. I unleash him and levitate over one and come down the other side. There, I wait and look at Burp, who waits and looks at me. I look at Burp. Burp looks at me. Hmmmm... Need to do something else.

I float back over to him, hovering over the trapdoor. I leash him up again. Now I displace him over the trapdoor. Burp just stays there. Like in suspended animation. Just hovering over the opening. I look at Burp. Burp looks at me. Until something comes along and he eats it (laugh)!

Okay. I have another idea. I wait till he finishes eating - signaled to me by; him moving off the trapdoor onto a land square. Now then... Wonder if this will work...

With the leash still on; I move over the trapdoor and remove the ring of levitation.

"You float gently to the ground." "There is a trapdoor here." "You fall through the trapdoor!"

No message about the leash snapping or breaking. Good. Although I can’t see how it is physically possible, due to Burp being so much more massive than I; I know that Burp will be dragged down through the trapdoor with me...

2.5 Escape From The Valley Of The Dead

Burp and I landed just next to the upstairs on level 29.

"You have entered the Valley of the Dead." "Burnt flesh and decay pervades the air." "You hear moans and groans everywhere."

Okay... Now I’m sure of it. This is the place that Izchak has told me about. This is supposed to be somekind of gateway to another place, or plane, or something. So he said to me any ways. Wonder if the gateway is going to be a portal, like the one that goes to the Home levels... (?)
2.5. *ESCAPE FROM THE VALLEY OF THE DEAD*

The level is colored red here. What does that signify? Blood? Fire? I better be careful of traps. I'll light the brass lantern while I'm at it. Never can have too many types of 'visions' when in an unfamiliar place...

My my... Are there ever an assortment of monsters here. Looks like the monsters from the level above that fell through the trapdoor, have indeed assembled down here... I can see at least 6 soldier types; some mummy types; a rust monster type; a wraith type - better be careful in case it's a nazgul; a vampire; a kobold shaman - must be lost (laugh); and some other assorted big things.

Alright then. Burp; you start gobbling anything that gets too close. I'll dance around you near the stairs here. This looks like it's gonna be fun (grin).

Throw some BDDD's at a soldier. Aw darn. He stepped out of firing line of sight. No problem. Exchange. Wield forked pole-arm. Oops. That mummy is too close. Dance around Burp a bit. Thrust with forked pole-arm. Thrust with forked pole-arm. Monsters are closing in from around. Seem to be funneling in from the left and upper right of the map, though. Must be due to terrain... Exchange. Fire some blessed arrows. Fire some blessed arrows. I want those BDDD's I threw away earlier. Should have held onto them a little longer. Rust monster breaking through the pack! This is starting to get exciting (laugh)!

Dance around Burp. Try to line up rust monster for arrow firing. Don't want to risk my BDDD's or pole-arm on it... Come on Burp! Eat something, will ya?!

Fire some blessed arrows. Rust monster is too cagey. Forcing me to fire on other things for the time being... "Burrrp!" Wow! Them soldier types sure are throwing a lot of garbage at me. I want my BDDD's back! Fire some blessed arrows. Oups! Vampire next to me. Cloak of displacement came through. BDDD's away! Fire blessed arrows. "Burrrp!"

Geeze. One more shot of arrows would have finished him off! Why didn't you swallow something unscathed?! (mumble, grumble)

Ouf! That mummy landed a blow on me. Have to step away... Step away. Exchange. Thrust with forked pole-arm. Thrust with forked pole-arm. Rust monster at range two!

Heah Burp! I could use some help. They're starting to crowd in a bit here (!!).

Step away. Burp now at range three from me. Decision time... Which weapon to use? Hang on. Starting to get a small crowd around me. Step away first. Pull on leash. Burp is still eating. We'll go to the bow. Exchange.

Rust monster is now lined up. Fire blessed arrows. They rust. Fire blessed arrows. They rust. Rust monster swiping at me! It hit twice! Nothing affected - snow boots did not rust (See Part 10 (1.12 on page 147) - laugh!). Where was my cloak?!

Heah! I'm getting too crowded here. Yank on leash again. Burp won't budge. Path to the stairs is now blocked. Gawd. Fire blessed arrows at rust monster. They rust. I'm losing too much ammo!

Things are starting to get tense here...!

"Burrrp!"


Other monsters have stepped forward. Just took three hits! Ouch. Yank on leash. Burp won't budge - still! Untie leash. Step to my left. Fire blessed arrows. Fire blessed arrows. Step to my left. This is too dangerous. I may step on a polymorph trap...
Alert! Lich! Lich alert! Lich on the move! Ghost! Ghost! Two ghosts coming! Gawd. Search. Cloak of displacement has saved me from some swipes. Step to my left. Five monsters crowding me in. I want to get my BDDE's that are just a little ways away. Search. Fire blessed arrows.

You know... This is starting to be 'not' fun.

Aloof to my left. I'll try and make a stand in there. Lots of monsters all around. Where are they all coming from? Soldier in front of me. I'll take the hits from him. Search. Cloak is working great. Search. Step back and down.

Crash. Something has broken on me. I can't move! Took eight hits! I can move again. No place to go. Monsters are two ranks deep. Can I break through to the stairs?

The fun has now ceased.

Lich at range two! Ghosts at range three! Throw last BDDE. Exchange. Thrust with forked pole-arm. Thrust with forked pole-arm. Wish it were blessed. It will be blessed next time I get a blessed clear potion (!).

Cloak of displacement has come through. Somehow. I hadn't moved a square in order to reactivate it. Could it be per monster per activation...? I forget. Can't stop to consider it now. Have to fight my way out of here.

Lich next to me. Exchange. Fire arrows. No more ammo. Lich making monsters aware of my presence. Smack lich in the face with Blessed Longbow of Diana. Smack lich in the face with Blessed Longbow of Diana. Lich touches me. Eek! I make my saving throw. Think it was against the ice touch. Kick lich in the nuts. Lich has moved back a square. Exchange. Stick forked pole-arm into lich. I have to get this thing (the pole-arm) blessed...

Vampire next to me! Ghost next to me. Coming through the walls. Lich has summoned some nastie monsters. I have no ammo.

What ever made me think this was going to be fun?

Burp! Where are you? What are you doing?!

"Burrrrrp!"

Oh good. Eat your way towards me! And... HURRY UP!!

Man. There sure are a lot of monsters here. Is that a wraith over there? Better look... It's a nazgul - the super wraiths. It's invisible. But the r.g.r.n. deities have informed me that I can see invisible at level 15 of Rangerhood. That explains how come I saw one on the Titan's Level (27). Better keep my eye on it...

Thrust with forked pole arm. Heah... What's this!? MIND FLAYER AT RANGE TWO! Where did it come from!? Arghhh!

Look at inventory. Okay... Time to split. Zap wand of teleportation. Direction? "." Nothing happens (!). (major groan + long moan) How come all these tense levels are like the one at the boulders??

Exchange. Wield silver dagger. Thrust at vampire. Vampire touches me! I hate being touched! Ghost touches me. Ack! I hate being touched!

Desperation starting to set in. Time for one of my emergency secret weapons (!).

Pull out the silver wand. Aim at a corner angle in the alcove behind me. Close eyes. Zap the wand...

Zing! Zing! Zing! Zing! Zing! Zing! Lightning flashes ricochet all over the place!

"Burrrrrp!!"
2.5. *ESCAPE FROM THE VALLEY OF THE DEAD*

Look around. Everybody is still standing? Okay then...
Close eyes. Zap the wand...
Zing! Zing! Zing! Zing (that was from my amulet)! Zing! Zing! Zing! Lightning flashes ricochet all over the place!
Scan immediate surrounding area. Lich is gone. Mindflayer is gone. Vampire is gone. All monsters are stopped dead in their tracks. No monster wants to get next to me. Ha! Let’s take advantage of the momentary shock effect...
Step up. Pick up some arrows. Stab at soldier. Stab at soldier. Cloak of displacement working like a charm.
Can it be getting fun again...?

Ghost are back. Nope. Fun is quickly dashed away. Step to the right.
"Burrrp!"

Nazgul bearing down from 2 o’clock! Step away - down and left. Hopefully it will try and come across Burps jaws. Hurry up and digest Burp! I want you to try nazgul fillet (!).

Leutenant has stabbed me with a BDDD! Owwww! That hurt! She’s stabbing me again! OUCH! Stab her back. Stab her back. "Burrrp!"

Thanks Burp! Now I have to step on the square where she was. If only there weren’t so many other monsters around...

Exchange. Search. Step up. Pick up BDDD’s. Cloak has offered displacement to one of the ghosts. Great. Step up and right. Burp now next to me. Good. Still many monsters around and close. Too close. This is bad. Nazgul almost here!

Pick up BDDD’s and some blessed arrows. Lich at range three! Is it the same one as before? They teleport. Monsters are summoned. Monsters are aware of my presence. Monsters are all around again. Need to force a path to those stairs. Need it desperately.

Too many around me. Can’t decide which one to stab. Nothing will go down in one round any ways. Have to hope that they move in such a way that a path will open. Stay and do nothing for a turn: Apply leash to Burp.

Lizard next to me? What’s this? Monsters are transposing themselves in place?
"Burrrp!"

Burp ate it. Burp got transformed into a spider!!! AH NO! It must have been a chameleon... Yuch (digt)!!! I hate spiders!! Step to the right. Unleash this thing from me. Burp has poisoned something? Opening to my right. I step in that direction. Monsters filling the void I left behind...

There are way too many here. This level must be open. No rooms. Everything is able to get here eventually - and too soon.


Thrust with BDDD. Cloak of displacement working sometimes. Sometimes not. Nazgul next to me. Thrust with BDDD. Thrust with BDDD. Opening up and right. I step there. Need the cloak reactivated. Nazgul missed thanks to the cloak. Thrust with BDDD. Thrust with BDDD. It’s destroyed. Lich is here! Two ghosts on my right and behind. Can’t get to the stairs. Only way open is up and
right. Where two vampires are. Zap wand of teleportation at lich. No effect! (groan). Ghost touched me! Ack! Other ghost touched me! ACK!

Run! Up and right. Stop. Look all around. Assess. Run. Up and right. Cloak working well. I'm moving constantly. Can't stop to pick up weapons though. Wish I knew how to work the autopick-up options properly (!!).

Vampires have missed. Ghosts are too slow. Mummies are slow also. I can avoid them thanks to the cloak of displacement and constantly changing squares. But some other monsters are fast and accurate. I'm no longer killing anything. This is going to get worse - AS IF IT ISN'T ALREADY (forced laugh)!

Step up. Step up. Turn around and take a few swipes at something. Wraith I think. If I lose any levels. Things will get even more tense. Too far from the stairs. Too many monsters there any ways, I'm beginning to think I'm going to get killed sooner or later now. I have been engulfed in an endless mob of monsters. How many charges on my wands do I have left?

Step up and right... BAMF! Teleportation trap! I've been moved several squares up and several more to the left! A small breather is allowed. Most monsters were going the wrong way. Quickly I assess the new situation...

Maybe if I could find some stairs down? Run to a lower level. That would be great now. Re-assess from there. But where could they be. I have explored hardly anything on this level! Is my lantern still lit? Yes. Okay... Make an educated guess. Maybe this way...

Something has just blinded me! Can't see no bats next to me? What caused it? Too many messages. Some kind of trap...? Something exploded...? And what is this?! I can now see all the monsters on the entire level?!

Ghosts, liches, vampires, wraiths. The whole place is rife with them! There must be at least 20 ghosts! Many, many other monsters as well! I count roughly 72! Gawd! Gawd! Gawd!

Eee-gads...

Not good. I will never be able to kill off enough of these monsters with what I have available in my arsenal...

I try and figure out the general lay out of this level with how all these monsters are placed all about...

Yes... It seems like it is an open level. Similar to the caverns levels...

Ponder... (sigh) Think...

*Step away from the computer. Go have coffee + smoke.*

I'm going to make a run for it. Gonna try and get back to the upstairs. I'll use whatever I have left of the charges in my wands to force away and/or kill whatever is in my way...

Nope I won't die. I count the number of squares to the stairs. Must go around three bends that the walls have formed. That I'm sure of. That the path will be elongated. Nope. I won't die. I'll lose some levels, perhaps. Maybe get a few things disintegrated. Hope it's not the Longbow of Diana. Gawd. I hope it won't be that...

I'll stay blind for now. Won't apply the unicorn horn. Want to see how everything is moving - as I move. Step right. Step right. Something here...? I feel around. A potion. Some BDDD's (!). How did they get here? Pick them up. Move. Move. Move. Burp is making his way towards me. Gross. He's moving faster than when he was a purple worm though...

Monsters from the entire level are converging on me. Yes. Every single one on the whole friggin' entire
level! Every last one of them. I can’t fight. Have to keep moving. Cloak is working like a charm... For now.

Solid wall of monsters in my way. One is a wraith. It will be the fastest for me to be able to drop. Throw BDDD’s. I’m touched by several things. ACK! ACK! Saving throws are made though. Thrust at wraith with BDDD. It’s down. Auto pick-up is now on. Step to where it was. Pick up everything there in one tick of the clock. Monsters crowding in. Many have missed. An opening down and right. Move there. Move again. Four squares of clear space in front of me! Run! RUN!

Monsters have been summoned. Damn. Blocked again. Many misses. Some hits. I haven’t lost a level - amazing. Vampire lord and vampires touching me. A wraith - perhaps a nazgul also. Gawd... Damn this. Damn yours all!

Zap wand of lightning! Zap wand of lightning! An opening again. Things swipe and touch me. Run! RUN!


Stop! I can see the stairs. Range eight. Full of monsters. Almost in every square. I’m no longer blind. But I know all too well what everything is lurking just beyond the shadows of my lantern. Zap wand of lightning! Zap wand of lightning! Zap wand of lightning! Zap wand of lightning! Zap again. It’s empty!

Move. RUN. Must close off all the squares I can before they fill back up. Endless messages at results of monster swipes. I don’t look anymore. Just keeping an eye on my hit points and my level.

Solid wall of monsters again. Four rows deep. But the stairs are two (or is it three) squares away. Exchange. Throw BDDD’s Thrust with silver dagger. Monster dies. Take swipes. Dodge many blows. Make saving throws. Step forward. Take all the hits. Throw BDDD’s. Thrust with silver dagger in hand. Go down - God damn it! Take more swipes. Dodging blows. Thanks to the cloak. Make saving throws. Think my cloak resisted getting disintegrated. PHEW! Hit points at 40%. Thrust. It went down. I think no corpse was left... Auto pick-up back on. Move forward.

The stairs! I’m next to the stairs! Throw BDDD’s. Thrust. Thrust. Flurry of messages. Auto pick-up on. Move forward. Picked up a corpse as well as my BDDD’s. I’m burdened. Took a good hit. 16 hit points in one shot. But it will be over soon.

SHIFT + <

I’m out of it...
I’m exhausted...

Haven’t lost a level. Hit points will regenerate soon enough. No more pet with me. Must have a few items cursed. I’ll find out when I get back to base camp level 24.

What’s left in my missile weapons? 3 blessed rusty arrows, and 3 BDDD’s. (shake head) Oh well. But...

I got of it! Wow...!

I head back to the throne room of the fortress, where my cache is located. The forked pole arm is held but in one hand. I have no strength. The point is dragging on the ground behind me. My armor is
full of claw, scratch and bite marks. My cape (cloak) must be quite tattered also. Blood, sweat, and
the filth from the Valley of the Dead cover my form. I’m dead tired (faint snicker)
Ice vortex. I really don’t want to fight... n2td. It died.
Once there: I pull out a potion of booze from the chest. I need a good drink. Then I collapse in a
sitting position next to the throne. Using it as a rest for my back to be propped against. I pull hard on
the vial. The liquid burns as it flows down my throat. Good. Now my insides are suffering from the
same sensation as the wounds make me feel on the outside. Body will stabilise soon enough. For now,
I’m going to get drunk. Then, once the headache has gone; I’ll have to re-assess everything.
The road to retrieving the amulet is getting filled with increasing harder obstacles. Going is definately
getting tougher. I’m spending a lot of time just on these levels (27, 28, and now 29). They are
very hard to breach. Wonder if this portal on the level below will be bringing me to similar difficult
situations...?
I no longer have Burp to aid me... Poor Burp... I’ve abandoned him. I can’t have that thing as a pet
though (shudder)... I sit back and close my eyes. Have to rethink how I am going to progress from here on end...
I need to make a list of things I need. It’s time to reconsolidate my character again... Time to bolster
my equiment... Time to maybe consolidate all my belongings in one place... Yeah. I’ve been away
too long. Have to see what I have in all my caches again...
I start to make a mental list... A wish list.

- Blessed clear potion for the forked pole-arm.
- Runed arrows. A whole bunch of them. I want to be able to fire five again.
- Blessed clear potion to bless the runed arrows. Else they will get mulched.
- Many scrolls of identify.
- A spellbook of identify.
- Boots of speed.
- Blessed clear potion to bless my runed bow.
- Scrolls of enchant weapon. For more BDDD’s.
- Blessed clear potion to bless the newly enchanted daggers.
- Blessed clear potion to bless my cloak of displacement.
- A stack of wands; lightning, slow monster, death.
- A lamp. The kind with the eternal flame.
- A crate full of blessed clear potions. I can then bless all my armor. Heck! I’ll bless everything.
  Wands, weapons, rings, tools...

Har! Better make that ’three’ crates of blessed clear potions... Time to rest and dream for a while...
Time to let my intuition dance, and subconscious mind wander, to the symphony provided by this vial
of booze...
2.6 Jungle Boots And Fencing Gloves

After taking a couple days off, and considering a few things, I have come to the conclusion that I need some better stuff - within my inventory - in order to be able to progress more effectively on the road to retrieving the Amulet of Yendor - for Mars. Especially after that last experience within The Valley of the Dead!

Went to the chest, and pulled out the wand of wishing. I know what I had said about it earlier, but I have changed my mind. No, I’m not playing out of character. My character is female. Changing their mind is, entirely, a female prerogative (wink)!

Now then. With that justified... Let’s try getting something real nifty (big grin).

I’ve narrowed it down to a few things: A spellbook of identify, a blessed clear potion (for the forked pole-arm), some runed arrows, speed boots, and a bag of holding.

I wonder how many wishes this wand will provide? Better start with the most important items first...

Zap. "You can wish for an object." "What do you wish for?"

"Speed Boots" (Puh-leeze!)

"A pair of jungle boots."

Okay... Now let’s try them on... Yes! Boots of speed! Allright! This will help greatly with just about everything I encounter now (dance, dance)!

Zap. "You can wish for an object." "What do you wish for?"

"Bag of Holding" (Pleaze!)

"A bag."

Hmm... Hope it’s the right one... Pick up a pile of stuff till I’m burdened. Apply the bag. Put all the junk in. I’m now unburdened! Yes! YES! This will make all the booty ferrying so much the more pleasant! Hoo-ray (dance some more)! I adjust the inventory letter to "b".

Zap. "Nothing happens."

Ohh... Well... Maybe it can be recharged. Hopefully I’ll be able to force another charge out of it too - at some point.

Hopefully with these two new items; I’ll be able to find the other objects on my ‘wish list’ once I start collecting all the stuff from all my caches. This is great. I’m really satisfied for now. Really happy. Feel very confident. Yes indeed (big smile!).

Allrighty then. Let’s get to work. Collect all the junk here that looks interesting. Bring it to the altar of Mars on level 24 and test for cursedness. We’ll see from there. I’m kind of excited. Some potentially interesting stuff is here.

Have to be a little careful about letting things get next to me, though. My snowboots gave me four points towards the armor class. Not so with the speed boots. But, then again, I can move twice as fast now. Give and take. Compensate in other ways (wink).

Dunno why. But there’s something gnawing in my mind continually: I may should have gotten a blessed clear potion for the forked pole-arm... I’ll try and get rid of that thought. But maybe my intuition is really trying to tell me something... I’ll see. Maybe force that last zap out of the wand sooner than I think...

Fighting wandering monsters is all different now. My boots of speed really played havoc with the number of ticks (on the clock) that I was used to before a monster moved. Now, I often found myself
moving before I had to. As now I had a few, but not always, more than before to spare. Just have to re-adjust and get used to it. Have to adapt to the change.

Woah! Talk about luck! An air elemental has appeared on level 26. These things are fast. Wonder if they’re as fast as a jabberwock? This is a wonderful opportunity to test my jungle boots. Range to the air elemental is 12. I drop the bag and take off in the opposite direction from the whirlwind. Now I start counting the ticks on the clock... It took six ticks before it was able to engulf me! Now remember; I sometimes get to move and no ticks are used. So actual moves were greater than that even. These jungle boots are going to be just absolutely fantastic from here on end!

Throw BDDD’s (all three launched). Fire blessed arrows. Fire blessed arrows. Air elemental is sent to the plane of air. Elementals, just like demons, devils, daemons, et al, can only be killed on their own plane. Here, I can only banish them to theirs.

I got hurt a little more than what I remember from before. Must be my reduced armor class. (sigh) Those were good days when I had an armor class of -22 (see Parts 10 - 12)... Ah well. Things will get better again. I can sense it!

Three trips of booty from the fortress to base camp has ensued. Having cast light in the room here, sure has helped (See Part 25 (p. 241 on page 197)). Now I get the message: "You feel like your being watched." He he. I was right. Ghosts can’t enter an area with light. All they can do is watch me from beyond the scope of illumination. I kind of like this - in some sort of strange way. It’s kind of eerie, yet chaotic. Being surrounded by spirits that can’t reach you. Ha!

Big time discoveries with some of the initial booty.

Fencing gloves have revealed themselves as gauntlets of power (!). When I wear them, my strength goes up to TWENTY FIVE! That’s god-like strength! That’s way beyond gauntlets of ogre power (18/** strength)! Absolutely incredible. These, combined with the bag of holding, allow me to carry massive amounts of loot (!). Also makes my ring of +2 strength kind of useless when I have it on.

I got hit by something that was carrying a wand of magic missiles. So the polished silver shield has revealed itself as a shield of reflection. Also: A large shield has turned out to be +1 AND blessed! I’ll replace the polished silver shield with it.

Oh. While talking about that; I’ve discovered something when I get targeted by a reflectable attack. The shield reflects first. If I’m not wearing it, then the Longbow of Diana will reflect. If I’m not wielding that, then my amulet will take over the reflection duties. So I’m not too, too worried about not having the shield anymore (wink). I may just carry it in the bag when I’m exploring though. Never know when a lich can disintegrate something...

A pair of +2 leather gloves (riding gloves) also turned up. I’ll keep them in the bag also when exploring. A +2 crested helmet has also been revealed. It was also blessed. Wonderful. I’m liking this blessed stuff more and more. It must be resistant to disintegration too, I betcha.

Okay... This is is wonderful. With all this new found / discovered / acquired booty; I quickly head back down to the fortress for some more hauling...

Back on level 28. I got here by dropping down the hole from the titan’s level. Makes traveling faster, instead of having to levitate across all that water. Hmmm... Maybe that’s an idea. Dig a hole near the downstairs of difficult and/or time consuming levels. I may implement this in other areas... Hmmm...

Waded through the gremlin horde and loaded up with weapons for the next trip back up to base camp.

While thinking about weapons...

Before going back up, I think I have figured out how to get those inbedded projectile weapons out of the fortress walls from having killed them xorns (see Part: 20 (p. 241 on page 107)). One of the r.g.r.n
deities gave me a clue... I went up to the area in question - from within the fortress. Next I tried to untrap them ("hu"). No no. Try again. No no. Try another square. No no. Try the third square. No no. Awww... This ain’t working! Out of frustration I kicked the wall...

I kicked loose some arrows (!). They fell in the square I was standing in! Oh great! That’s the ticket (laugh!). I then proceeded to kick them all loose and picked them up. Not as many survived all of this, as I had originally launched when killing the xorns, but, better than not being able to retrieve them at all. Anyways. Another discovery for me in Nethack (smile). On the way out of the fortress, I saw a really odd picture of a monster. Looked like the ball at the end of the chain on a morning star.

Range to target was a whopping 24! It was colored black also. Hmmm... Better do the look ("hu")... A black light! Wow! So that’s what they look like, eh? This 'see invisible' vision is pretty nifty (grin).

Now then: I will take this opportunity to observe how these creatures behave. I can’t do this with, the Longbow of Diana’s, real time monster detection ability. As black lights have no brain waves to lock onto, like I was able to do for the stalker for instance (see Part 17 (L19 on page 90)).

Hmmm... Black lights sure wander around pretty aimlessly. Yellow lights are very good at zeroing in on you. Not so is the case for these things. More like passive mines - definitely not torpedoes. Okay, I’ll walk up to it and have it commit suicide... It did so at range three. Cloak of displacement, you know (grin).

Okay, Back up I go... Level 27. Levitating across the water. Levitating somehow increases my carrying capacity. Not too sure yet by how much. But by a good 1,600 zswt (zorkmind standard weight) with strength of 25. More on this later when, and if, I can figure it out for sure. Still need more data for a proper standard that I can base this all on.

What’s over there? A captain. And on one square island. Ooooo! Big juicy target for archery practice - not that "I of all people" need any (big grin). I land on an adjoining island. Move into line of fire at range of nine. Let fly with blessed arrows. Captain just stands there and catches them all in her chest (laugh). Captain falls over. I float over to collect her loot. Lot’s of loot. Amongst it all; a wand, and a silver saber. It will be added to my silver collection. Starting to get quite an assortment of silverware (laugh)!

Only thing that I’m skilled in is the dagger, concerning all the silver weapons I have. All the other silver things could maybe be melted down. Make some candelabras perhaps? They would go well on the altar to Mars...

2.7 Behold The Black Battle-Blade!

Dungeon Level 24. Base camp

"You hear the footsteps of a gaud on patrol."

Hmmm... Patrolling what? I dump the bag of holding on the altar to Mars. Then I make a survey around the level with the Longbow of Diana - again. I’m doing this often on this level. Many strange things, and sounds, have happened here. And still are!

One day: I’ll dig out the whole level. But first, I have to figure out how the monster generator functions in that room with the unknown shattered statue...

Nothing turned up. Couldn’t detect the gaud.

Back to the altar. Testing for cursedness on some interesting weapons; throwing spears, elven broadswords, elven shortswords, throwing stars, the silver saber, the long sword from the nazgul, some flails, etc.
There’s an ogre lord hanging out with me. He’s peaceful, of course. The latest denizen that wants to hang around the ex-temple to Mars nightclub (it was a real happening place a while back - see various later parts to book 1).

I pick up each weapon and hold it aloft, towards the ceiling to the light (I’ve cast it twice in here from scrolls earlier - Part 25 (2.4 on page 131), perhaps?), checking for any defects in the workmanship and so on. The ogre lord either; grunts approval or grunts disapproval, along each one examined with me. Then a tengu materialises in that room with the hidden monster generator. I gaze upon it, in the distance, through the open doorway. Yep. Looks like an offering to Mars is in the making pretty soon (grin). I pick up the throwing spears and stars from the altar. I got a feeling that I’m going to get some practice in...

Sure enough, sooner than later, it moves / teleports over to me. I try some throwing stars. Don’t get to try this weapon type too often. Only the second or third time in 120 characters actually. Once I’m out of them. I switch to the throwing spears. First one kills it. It left a corpse. But I got a little mixed up, and over-enthusiastic, and threw an extra one. It hit the ogre lord. Oups. The ogre lord got mad. He picked up the throwing spear and chuckled it back at me. Oh yeah? I threw it back at him. Then I threw another one. He threw it back at me again. Ha ha! This is fun. The ogre lord can’t hit the blind side of a barn. We continue this till the ogre lord keeled over - on top of the altar to Mars. Good. I won’t have to carry him there.

Picked up the tengu and offered it to Mars. Consumed in a burst of flame. Okay. The ogre lords’ turn. I offered it next...

Your sacrifice is consumed in a burst of flame! An object appears at your feet! The voice of Mars booms out: "Use my gift wisely!"

Oh Boy! Another gift from Mars!

In great excitement; I do the look here (".").

There is an altar to Mars (chaotic) here. You see here a runed broadsword named "Stormbringer".

WOW! Mars gave me "Stormbringer"!

Another broadsword. A runed one too. Don’t see these too often.

I pick it up and drop it on the altar. Pick it up once more. Exchange. Wield it. Adjust its letter to "S". Now I look at it in the inventory...

An uncursed runed broadsword named "Stormbringer".

Ooooooo... That has a real ominous ring to it. I like it (sinister grin).

I’ve had it in prior games. Even though I’ve tried all of this many, many, many times in other games... I try to; invoke, apply, and all other different commands with it (laugh!). Same result as all the times before - nothin’ (shrug).

Oh! Oh! Let’s do the ‘encyclopedia thing ("/")...

"There were sounds in the distance, incongruent with the sounds of even this nameless, timeless sea; thin sounds, agonized and terrible, for all that they remained remote - yet the ship followed them, as if drawn by them; they grew louder - pain and despair were there, but terror was predominant. Elric had heard such sounds echoing from his cousin Yyrkoon’s sardonically named ‘Pleasure Chambers’ in the days before he had fled the responsibilities of ruling all that remained of the old Melnibonean Empire. These were the voices of men whose very souls were under siege; men to whom death meant not mere extinction, but a continuation of existence, forever in thrall to some cruel and supernatural
2.7. **BEHOLD THE BLACK BATTLE-BLADE!**

master. He had heard men cry so when his salvation and his nemesis, his great black battle-blade Stormbringer, drank their souls." [The Lands Beyond the World, by Michael Moorcock]

Mmm... Hmm... (rub chin) I’ve heard of that name, Elric, somewhere before... Can’t put a finger on it though... Perhaps if I let it mull over in the back of my mind, it’ll come to me, somehow. I like the way this Michael Moorcock uses punctuation in his story telling. Gives it a real "outlandish" feel to it.

So then. This "Stormbringer is a real bad / evil artifact, eh? I like that. Fits in well with Mars being the chaotic 'God of War' and all... Allright. I can dig this.

Thanks Mars (big smile + thumbs up)! I’ll put it to good use. You know you can count on me (big wide grin)! Now I need a test subject...

"You see a door open."

Right on cue: Here comes a quantum mechanic.

Ha ha! What a befitting monster to pop by at a time like this. The scientist is about to become a lab rat for an experiment (laugh)!

Is it not just amazing how certain things just seem to turn out in Nethack, eh? That reminds me... I ran across some engraving in the dirt, earlier this game, somewhere after the Ghost Level. It said something like: "You should really learn about quantum mechanics." Well. I dunno about that. But I’ll tell you something now: A certain quantum mechanic is sure gonna learn something from me - how it feels to have your soul sucked away! I yell out: Quantify this egghead!

"The black blade draws the life from the quantum mechanic!"

"The black blade draws the life from the quantum mechanic!"

"The quantum mechanic strikes at your displaced image."

"The black blade draws the life from the quantum mechanic!"

"The quantum mechanic is killed."

Boy... Do I ever like seeing a group of messages like that (HAR HAR)!

I like this thing (muffled snicker). I’ll keep it wielded whenever possible. Maybe it has monster detection ability. From it’s description in the ‘cyclopedia; looks like it’s good at detecting stuff that’s ghostly / haunted / anguished.

Okay then. Back to verifying this booty...

One thing that helps with doing massive amounts of booty verifying is; "SHIFT + D" and then "X". Sure speeds things up. Wish there was a faster, dare I say better way, for doing the #loot commands when going in and out of my chest all the time though. Also for trying on all the armor. Takes a long time to take off, then wear, then take off, then wear, etc. Always have to do "SHIFT + *" too. Long time required going through all the motions...

Throwing stars get mulched (sad face). Throwing spears don’t. Too bad about them shuriken (identified throwing stars). They are very rare weapons. Maybe if I could get them blessed. Have to add them to the ‘things to be blessed list’. Although, to tell the truth, I doubt they will. That list is getting to be quite long... (concern).

"You hear a slow drip."

That means there’s a sink on this level. I’m getting better at the recognition of random dungeon sounds, eh? Remember how I was before breaching the Ghost Level...? Ha!
"You hear someone counting money."

Okay. Now that one has me perplexed. I've heard it here before (Think I mentioned it in a previous part in book 2 already.). I better take a meander around the dungeon level with real time monster detection ability - yet again. While the sound is still fresh. Before this person that's counting money disappears on me...

(grumble, mumble) I just went around all the edges of the rooms and the corridors again. Nothing. Back to the altar...

"You feel you are being watched."

That's the ghosts that are afraid to enter the light in the ex-temple to Mars. Ignore it and get back to work sorting this booty...

"You hear the footsteps of a gaurd on patrol."

(sigh). Okay. Let's get this figured out once and for all. I grab a wand of digging. I'd do it with the pick-axe, but I'm feeling to "royal" for hard physical work right now. Mars just gave me a super weapon. Not a digging implement. Plus I'm in a hurry. Wanna get to the bottom of this - like now!

I look at the map and count how far from the edge, all around, that all my access points are to it, from what has been revealed through my explorations, thus far, in number of squares (Long sentence, I know. But read it again in your mind. It works - wink!). That done, and figured, I then go search for secret doors along the walls of every likely spot per room. Search 12 times each spot (2d6 die 6 from the game that Nethack is not - being my reasoning.). As suspected: Nothing revealed. Fine. I'm not finished yet...

Then go to three different points on the level. Again figured from the initial long sentence in the previous paragraph. Point wand. Zap. Ten to sixteen square deep corridors are now dug where I want. Now the Longbow of Diana can reach the entire level. Yes the whole map is within it's range of; monster with brains detection. Now then... Where are you mister money counter and/or gaurd on patrol? I do a sweep...

Aha! I've discovered a lich! It's in the bottom left corner of the map. It has a jaguar and a centipede with it. They can't move too much. Looks like a 2x2 square room. I go to a perpendicular angle from the room in the corridor I'm in. Count the range. It is 8 for a straight dig with the wand. I wait for the lich to be just 'off-square' before zapping the wand.

Zap! Pathway is now open to the money counting lich room. Exchange. Quiver blessed arrows. Wait. Lich steps sideways. Fire! Fire! Lich is doing nothing (?). No; monster summoning, or making aware of my presence. It's too far too disintegrate my stuff. (he he) Couldn't have happened to a nicer lich (grin). No pity! Fire! Fire! Lich is destroyed. Jaguar coming next...

Exchange. I want to read more messages about "the black blade drawing the life from something" (grin). I like reading that (grin and, grin again). I step towards it in order to hasten up on the killing range. Two messages about drawing the life from it. Jaguar is killed. I put it (the corpse) in the bag of holding. Next is the centipede, which is trying to surprise me by hiding under some booty in the room. (he he) That trick has ceased to work on me since I acquired the Longbow of Diana...

Centipede never knew what hit it (Yes, only one hit from the great black life sucking battle-blade was required.). I do a few quick searches, in case there's any traps. I pick up everything in the room and stuff it into the bag. I'll be back here in a few minutes to do a secret door search. First, I'll go offer these corpses to Mars...

Okay. I'm back in this little room. But something kind of strange happened back at the altar. I got a hopeful feeling for some reason or other... (scratch head). I remember something like that when I
played one of my Priestesses... When I was experimenting with temples, altars, and praying, and what not. Thought I was okay with Mars this game. Thought I had things figured out since the beginning (?). Hmmmm... I'll offer more stuff to him when I get a chance. But for now; let's give this room a thorough search for secret doors...

Nothing. How did the lich and company get in here? Was it him counting the money? He sure had a lot. There was 6,926 zorkminds in this room! That's a lot! I've killed a few dragons and they didn't even have 2 cents! Strange... Very strange... Found a spellbook and a pair of lenses in here too. Both uncursed. Wonder if he was doing any accounting...? Maybe it's like in the story from Dickens - A Christmas Carol. The lich is Ebenezer Scrooge. Counting the money. And the ghosts that are now roaming the level here, are from the story also? (shrug) Seems to make a lot of sense to me (little snicker!).

Ho well... Let's get back to work at the cache. I'll load up with some intriguing stuff and go get it appraised at the general store on level 21, in the Mazes of Menace.

Climb up the stairs to level 23. Oh yeah. It's full of dark rooms on all these levels. I forgot about that - but remember it now. Better light the lantern...

Heah! Where's my brass lantern? Try to remeber if I deposited it anywhere. When I was verifying booty below...? Perhaps...

Go back down to the cache. Rummage around. It's not here. And why would I have stowed it any ways? I keep certain things on me at all times. This being one of them. My mind narrows to the last time I remember having it. It was after I got teleportated on level 29, in the Valley of the Dead.

Okay... One of the liches from the Valley of the Dead must have disintegrated it during my desperate dash to the stairs. How nice - not (Grrrr)! All I have left is a cursed one in the chest here. And come to think of it... My wand of teleportation didn't work on me when I was there. So how come a teleportation trap did? If that level is the same as the boulders level...? I'm going to have to go and test a few things out at the boulders concerning teleportation. I make a mental note of this for the time being.

Okay. I'll just try and be careful not to walk into anything with no discernable brain activity in the dark. My boots of speed should help out here. Avoiding simultaneous movement by me and a monster into the same square, in the dark. Made two trips to the general store. Both for weapon and some armor appraisals. The shopkeeper's name is "Chibougamau". I like that name. It's the same as a town in the province I live in real life. I'll make an effort not to kill him (wink).

Oh yeah. There's a small mimic here. I'll kill it. If it leaves a corpse, I'll eat it. I'm testing eating different corpses lately. Mimic looks like a giant marshmallow. Not revolting to my senses. Mimic killed. No corpse. Oh well.

For the armor, I have two funny things; A robe and a cursed tattered cape. Both are worth 25 zorkminds. The robe doesn't seem to do anything, and I don't dare try on the cape. Need scrolls of identify...

The weapons were very revealing. I had whole bunches appraised. I'll give you a list of the interesting ones and their prices...

- blessed arrow = 1
- blessed rusty arrow = 1
- blessed very corroded arrow = 1
• blessed rusty very corroded arrow = 1
• blessed rusty totally corroded arrow = 1
• throwing star = 2
• forked pole-arm = 2
• beaked polearm = 4
• elven broadsword = 10
• blessed hilted polearm = 13
• blessed long sword named nazgul = 17
• silver spear = 20
• silver dagger = 20
• BBDD = 32
• silver saber = 37
• Dragonbane = 62
• Sting = 75
• Orcrist = 250
• Longbow of Diana = 500
• Stormbringer = 1,000

Remember. These are merchant buying prices. For the cost of me to buy; you have to multiply by two. Merchants buy for half price, then sell for double. No way to make any profits, by buying and selling yourself, in this game.

As you can see, certain things came to light...

- Arrows, no matter how dammaged, retain the same price. I carry those arrows for ochre jellies and such - as you have surely guessed (laugh!).

- Well. That idea about blessing the forked pole-arm is now firmly driven out of my head, for now. I had two forked pole-arms appraised here, by the way. They are my favorite pole weapons. Reasons have been given earlier. Don’t want (actually, feel like) to check in which chapter it was. I also see I’ve been spelling pole-arm incorrectly in my story (laugh!). I’ll try and use 'polearm' from now on (roll eyes). - I'll use this hilted polearm as my pole weapon of choice, or at least till I get the forked one blessed. The hilted one is pretty expensive. More so then an angled poleaxe even. Fine by me. The hilted polearm is a "ransceur" and/or a "ronca", I believe. It accords the same disarming properties as a spetum (forked polearm) in the game that Nethack is not. Too bad the forked ones aren’t enchanted. They cause more dammage in the game that Nethack is not. Just like the guidebook to Nethack says in section 7.2.

- That nazgul carried a nice long sword.
- Looks like my silver dagger is just as good as that spear. Have to add that to the 'things to be blessed list'.
- That price for a BDDDD is very misleading. I would pay ten times double that price for each one. Or kill the shopkeeper if I couldn’t afford it (evil grin).
- I’m quite impressed with the price that "Sting" commands. More than "Dragonbane" even. Hmmm...
- The Longbow of Diana is worth twenty times more than that - at the very least! And surely, being twice as expensive as "Orcrist", is terribly missrepresentative.
- "Stormbringer" has an impressive price. But if I were to lose it, I wouldn’t be that bad off. The Longbow of Diana, on the other hand, is virtually priceless!

Okay. Pick up the stuff and go back to base camp, on dungeon level 24. Lock the door on the way back out of Chibougamau’s general store. Have to protect him. Wandering monsters are getting tougher now, compared to what they were in book one. Wonder why? I only went up one expereince level since then...? So that’s not causing it. Must be because I’ve tripped a switch in the game somewhere. Have opened a gate to a tougher class of randomly generated monsters. But what, where, and how? Killing the titan on level 27? Clearing the fortress on level 28? Entering the Valley of the Dead on level 29? I’ll have to keep my eyes open. Have to see if I can pick up the next time I trip such a switch...

Let’s get on our way. Have lots and lots of stuff to have appraised, still...

Down the stairs...
"It explodes!! "You can’t see." "You are blinded."

(laugh!) That’s really ‘relative’. In fact, I can see all the monsters on the whole level! Forgot about that. I somehow have acquired real time monster detection, at unlimited range, while blinded. Noticed that back at the Valley of the Dead. Hmmm... I have an idea.

Aply unicorn horn. I can see again. Put on blindfold. Yep. That works too. Vision is by ’telepathy’. Same thing as what the Longbow of Diana accords me. Okay. Handy to know. I’m sure I’ll put this to good use, now that I know I have it, and can control it (wink + laugh).

Discovered a jabberwock on level 23. It is not moving at all. Just stays in a corner to a darkened room. Good. I make a note of it’s location. I’ll run a few tests with this type of monster later on...

Back at base camp level 24. Approaching the ex-temple to Mars...
"You hear someone searching."

Oh yeah...? What is this? This level is rife with strange happenings. (grumble) Things were a lot more stable when Jubilex was hanging out here. Let me tell you (hrumph).

Okay. Where? Who is it this time? I put on the blindfold to see...

An angel! It’s in the room with the upstairs. I just came from there a few steps / moves ago. It must have materialised and the game has warned me upon it’s arrival. This may be a major discovery. I might be on the threshold of figuring out certain random sounds...

I check what it’s about in the encyclopedia... ("/"):

"He answered and said unto them, he that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the weeds are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the weeds are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. [...] So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." [ The Gospel According to Matthew, 13:37-42, 49-50 ]
Oh yeah... So this angel has come to put me in my place, eh.? How so very presumptuous of this angel! The gall it has! My eyes narrow in anger as I gaze upon it’s picture on the screen. We’ll just see who puts who where. I start stalking this angel...

I’m coming down and expose myself from around a corner. The angel is in the doorway, at the end of the hall. It’s radiant halo filling the entrance with it’s light. Range to my target is eight...

I draw back on the Longbow of Diana. Blessed rusty thoroughly corroded arrows in my quiver. These will burn more than regular arrows. I want it to feel the corenness and scraping when they pierce it’s skin. I shall inflict hideous wounds upon this being of light...

Fire. Three arrows find their mark. The angel steps forward.

Fire. Two more arrows hit home. The angel closes the distance again.

Ha! Too easy, I muse to myself. Switch the quiver to blessed rusty corroded arrows. Fire. And two more arrows launch from the bow to find their target.

The angel steps forward and shoots magic missiles! My eyes widen in surprise. Thought these guys carried harps. Not wands. The missiles wizzed by me, any ways. Angels can’t shoot straight, or the rust and corrosion from my arrows is causing it pain. Yes. That must be it. My lips curl in satisfaction...

I let fly another volley. I hit, of course, I never miss. Still this angel wants to close with me. It does so and shoots more magic missiles. Ka-zot! The projectiles have bounced off the Longbow of Diana and reflected back upon the angel. It absorbed it’s own attack! He he. I’m enjoying this. Hope Mars is getting a good laugh from all of this too. Let the angel taste more rust and corrosion...

I’m just about to quiver another set of rusted arrows when the angel draws a long sword. I hesitate at shooting it again.

So then... Mano on mano, eh.? Fine. I’ll put on a real show for Mars. Hope Mercury is watching too... I sling the Longbow of Diana accross my shoulder. My right hand reaches for "Stormbringer". Okay Mars. Just you watch how wisely I’m going to use your gift. My hand clasps the hilt firmly: Exchange!

The angel draws closer - as do I. We both step to adjoining squares in the same move. Now we square off at melee range. Gazing into each others eyes. The angel, looking oh so divine, with my rusty corroded arrows sticking out of it’s chest, seems unsure of itself. Out of utter contempt, I give it a chance at striking me first...

The angels long sword strikes downwards, just off to my right. It has struck at one of my displaced images. The angel has missed his mark. Now my turn...

The great black battle-blade, Stormbringer, digs deep into the mid section of the being of light. A muted gasp screams throughout the dungeon. Then it, is no more... Darn. It left no corpse. Mars would have been very happy to get his hands on this angel, I’m sure. Would have made a good victim for his chamber of torture in the sky...

Hokay (yawn). Where was I? Oh yeah. Back to figuring out stuff at the cache...

2.8 A Plain Spellbook?

Back in the altar room, I’m rooting through my chest. Gonna start to figure out which of all these pile of arrows, daggers, knives, etc, are enchanted at Chibougamau’s shop. I have like 36 different piles of
these things. Only two small stacks are runed arrows though (sad face). Wish I were able to make some out of tree branches, or wooden staves that are left on the ground when I kill a wood golem...

Soldier ant horde has just been detected. They’re ammassing just outside the room. I go and open the door, then start walking back towards the altar. Want them to be able to swarm me in here. I’ll offer whichever ones leave a corpse to Mars...

Two of them did. I offered them. Got this hopeful feeling as a message again (?). I’m concerned. Something’s not right. I have to see if I can figure out something here...

I put on the blindfold. Need another monster to kill and offer... Something that demands a little more heroism of me... Nothing is here except for a peaceful Grey-elf. Way over in the room with the downstairs. Hmmm... Naaaw. I’ll keep him around for now. Maybe there’s something else on another level...

I wonder if I can lift that jabberwock on the level above? Let’s go see. Up the stairs. Put on blindfold. Oh good. There’s a cockatrice not too far away. Goodie, goodie, gumdrops! That will do for now - I’m sure!

Remove blindfold. Check to make sure weapons and everything is properly all in their places. As you’ve noticed, the last little while, I’m in the midst of booty identification, classification, and stashing. Not in battle / explore mode. So this is a good time for an inadvertant accident to happen. Can never be too sure of everything when in the Mazes of Menace (!!).

Okay. I’m all set. Stalk my prey...

Here chicky chicky chicky... Have a need for you... It has noticed me and is now angling to my location. Fine. I’ll lead it to the downstairs. Wait for it there. I count the ticks, and compare its movements vis-a-vis the clock. Range three. I move towards it. Wait two moves. It steps forward...

"The black blade draws the life from the cockatrice!"

"The black blade draws the life from the cockatrice!"

"You kill the cockatrice."

Boy. Do I ever looove reading what this "Stormbringer" does when it hits (wink).

It left a corpse. Great! Grab it. Stuff it in the bag. Scurrie off to the altar of Mars on the level below.

Once there I offer it. I got a feeling of reconciliation...?

Something is wrong. I haven’t gotten anything like that the whole game. Ponder... Can’t think of it at this moment. Something from my previouse games... (?) I need to find my Elven Preistess notes.

Rummage through my piles of papers on and around my desk. Can’t find them. Look in the drawers of my desk. Look in the closet. Go look in the garage. Urrhhh... Go for smoke + coffee + other smoke.

Hmmmm... Need to think this out... I start typing in different things with the "/" command: Gods, temple, pray, altar, reconciliation, sacrifice, corpse, blood, omen, and sign.

This is for "altar"...

Altars are of three types: 1. In Temples. These are for Sacrifices [...]. The stone top will have grooves for blood, and the whole will be covered with dry brown stains of a troubling kind from former Sacrifices. [ The Tough Guide to Fantasyland, by Diana Wynne Jones ]

To every man upon this earth Death cometh soon or late; And how can man die better Than facing fearful odds For the ashes of his fathers And the temples of his gods? [ Lays of Ancient Rome, by Thomas B. Macaulay ]
I should have been using this 'in game' encyclopedia a long time ago. I surely would have figured out many things sooner than where I’m at now. Probably could have saved many prior characters from dying needless deaths... (shake head)

This is for "God"...

Goddesses and Gods operate in ones, threesomes, or whole pantheons of nine or more (see Religion). Most of them claim to have made the world, and this is indeed a likely claim in the case of threesomes or pantheons: Fantasyland does have the air of having been made by a committee. But all Goddesses and Gods, whether they say they made the world or not, have very detailed short-term plans for it which they are determined to carry out. Consequently they tend to push people into the required actions by the use of coincidence or Prophecy, or just by narrowing down your available choices of what to do next: if a deity is pushing you, things will go miserably badly until there is only one choice left to you. [ The Tough Guide to Fantasyland, by Diana Wynne Jones ]

"Religion" gives nothing. The game has no information on that. Not everything is totally accurate here.

I looked up "reconciliation" in the dictionary: A coming together in love, freindship, and harmony.

(scratch head). Well. Maybe Mars wants me to do something...? Is he forcing me in a certain direction / action...? Will things be miserable for me soon? Should I communicate with him? Did the recent killing of the angel send a signal or throw a switch within the game?

On a whim, and with a "hopeful feeling", although I’m not currently in a time of great need, I prayed (#pray)...

Got somekind of glow. I felt that Mars was well pleased. And an object appeared at my feet!

A plain spellbook!

Now I’m more confused than ever...? What does this mean? I’m not a wizard? Must be some kind of message he’s giving me (?)...

I want to pray again. I want to communicate with him. I want him to explain some things. But I do know that he will not be happy with that. Doesn’t like getting disturbed too often. This is really weird though. Thought that prayer was just for emergencies. That’s what I had thought I had "finally" figured out from my past experiences with Nethack gods...

Pick up spellbook. Drop on altar. It’s blessed! Could he have read my mind? Is this a spellbook of identify...?

I’ll put this perplexing riddle of these past sequences with praying / offering on the back burner in my mind. Let it simmer for a while...

I have a new immediate mission. Have to get this book appraised. I go and root through the chest. I’ll get the whole stack of spellbooks here appraised. Missile weapon appraisal will wait for another trip. I pull them all out. I have ten of them plus the one from Mars. Wow! They’re so heavy that I’m encumbered. Put them all in the bag. Now let’s run up and see Chibougamau...

I dropped all the spellbooks in the store. Chibougamau gave me a price on all of them, except for the plain spellbook I got from Mars!? He was uninterested! Can you imagin that!?

Oooh... Chibougamau. You better hope Mars isn’t watching. That might get him upset at you (!). Alright. Now I head back up to the ex-temple of Mars. As soon as I enter...

"You feel like your being watched." Good. That’s what I fully expect (wink).

Okay... Let’s curl up in a corner here. I pull out all the books that are 150 zorkminds or less.
2.8. A PLAIN SPELLBOOK?

I've figured out the spellbook price - to - spell level ratio: You read a book that has been appraised, if you can memorise the runes, you then look at the spell you learnt in the spell screen ("Z"). After a few, you'll notice that each spell level is equivalent to 50 zorkminds - as a 'sell' price. It's double that for a 'buy' price. Only thing that is sometimes funny, is when you get a book priced at something like 113 zorkminds (like the red one I have here). Then you have to take a chance at it being a 2nd or 3rd level one. When playing safe, always assume it's the highest. The higher the spell level, the tougher it is to read. Play a few Wizards and carefully test all this. It really helps, trust me.

Now, I'll start by all the cheapest one's first. If I can get them all memorised, I'll go to the second level one's. Then the third. I'll stop there, cause if I remeber correctly, "identify" is a third level spell.

Here I go...

Wizard look, detect food, magic missile, haste self, detect unseen, and cure sickness. No headaches and no teleportating somewhere else! That went well (grin). No luck with a book of identify... (sad face).

But wait! I have saved the best for last: The plain spellbook from Mars...

It's blank!

!?!?! (slap forehead)

LAUGH!

How could I be so naive? It's like the blank scrolls. I've had these in other games. I got so caught up in the fact that I got it from my god, that I completely forgot about this (chuckle). Ho Boy... How embarrassing (blush).

Don't you get all discouraged. I can see you all rolling your eyes! This doesn't happen to me too (too) often. I'll get better. Have a little patience and confidence (wink). My character, Ellora, is just getting warmed up with the game again... (whistle)... Now then. Why would Mars give me a blank spellbook?

So that I could fill it with what I want! Geeze. What a thoughtful god he is.

Hmmm...

What happens exactly when you try to cast a spell with an "*" next to it again...?

"Your knowledge of this spell is twisted." "It invokes nightmarish images in your mind."

Confused + Stun

(laugh!). Oh yeah. Now I remember.

Apply unicorn horn.

Then third level spells are tough. When I strip off all my armor, they're only at a 2% success rate (98% fail). So looks like it was a good thing I didn't wish for one a while ago. Good thing I put the speed boots and the bag of holding as higher priorities. I would not have been able to cast it any ways (sad face).

Okay, Stowe all these heavy spellbooks away. Now pull out this virtual multitude of missile weapons. Put all in the bag. And off to see our freind Chibougamau...

Missile weaponry appraisal turned out to be mostly unintersting. A few daggers were going for about 6 to 7 zorkminds, but most were valued at 2. Back at base camp, I sorted them all out and chose two stacks to carry with me; one of 5 uncursed runed daggers and the second of 2 blessed slightly more expensive daggers. Now then, this will bolster my unmunchable missile arsenal.
I sorely miss not having a stack of BDDD's at my disposal anymore... (very sad face).
I hope that a few scrolls of enchant weapon will turn up. Blessed clear potions will be a greater challenge to come by. For this, I'm going to try some experiments with these fountains scattered throughout the Mazes of Menace. I think some might turn out to be magic fountains. Seemed to be what I remember in previous games...
Okay. Next on my list of many things to do, is to go see what I have in various caches. I know that I have two other large ones; on dungeon level 4, and one back at Marsville. I make sure that I'm carrying just what is necessary, I don't want to be overly encumbered. Being encumbered will come soon enough, once I start hauling stuff back down to here. The only real superfluous things I decide to bring along are the three other gifts I've received from Mars; "Sting", "Orcrist", and "Dragonbane." I'll test them out further at my leisure, and when opportunity presents itself...
Now back up in the Mazes of Menace I go...

2.9 The Sanguinary Sanction...

Some happy discoveries where found on the way. Remember some of my old "BDD's" (Not to be confused with the "BDDD"). The ones that got corroded and rusted? I have relocated two of them (grin). I have also found a rusted corroded BDDD in a an old cache! This is wonderful. Although the wandering monsters are getting easier as I ascend the Mazes of Menace, it still makes me feel more confident to have this extra punch in my thrown weaponry arsenal.

I stopped and verified the chest just inside the portal to the Home level. Still a ton of objects in there. There should also be many objects in the little room at the center of the steel tree maze. Forgot about the caches on this plane (I should maybe re-read Ellora's story myself - laugh!). But I did not feel like negotiating the maze at this time (it is a very annoying feature on Home level 1.). I'll give it all a big 'once over' on my way back down.

Throughout this phase, I am mentally preparing myself to start re-mapping the Mazes of Menace once more. There are many caches that have been lost - from the incident with the mindflayer when I was a winged gargoyle. So I'll have to go through all the levels again... (mutter) But for now, I'm just kind of skimming by everything, while excercising my memory about the game, on my way back to the top of the dungeon.

The cache, at base camp level 4, had many forgotten objects; scrolls, potions, wands, rings, spellbooks, a magic flute, and some nice projectiles. Amongst them, eleven silver arrows, six runed arrows, and twenty-two +2 runed arrows. I dare not try them. For they may get melted when fired. These will also be added to the now long 'list of things to be blessed'. That list is way long, and getting longer... (concern).

No blessed vials of clear potions have been located, nor re-located... (added concern). Not that I had thought they would be, or turn up... This (blessed clear potions) is turning out to be an extremely rare commodity. Since they're so rare, I find it difficult to comprehend why the guide suggests using them as projectiles against undead monsters...?

I have been practicing with many different weapons on my way up through the levels. Many boxes are now available to be checked in the enhance screen. Nearly all in fact! My current two practice weapons are a morning star (I like the way they look. They're so cool.), and a sling. The sling is interesting, mainly due to the available ammunition.
2.9. THE SANGUINARY SANCTION...

I have tried to fire many weird things - including various potions (paralysis, et cetera) with the sling (laugh!)! But on the serious side...

Rocks are not very good. They get mulched a whopping 65% of the time! And no: Rocks have not been added to my 'things to be blessed' list (wink). Plus they are quite heavy to be carrying around. The multitudes of gems, scattered in all my caches, are perplexing. Yellow, red, and green get mulched nearly 100% of the time. I'll stop using gems as ammunition now. I have found what they are for, through the guide; to be added to my score at the end of the game. The best, what seems to be working well, are five gray stones - they do not get mulched when fired.

I'll keep climbing. There may be some additional caches in the above levels. May as well be thorough, while I'm at it. I have firmly decided not to attempt the Valley of the Dead again, until I am certain that I'm ready and properly equipped - or as much as can be.

You'll have to excuse me for a few minutes. I've made it all the way back up to dungeon level one. Put on the blindfold, and see a throng of Uruk-hai and a solitary goblin. Time to have a little fun... (grin)

Many, many; moves, monsters, and experimentations later...

Hmm... That was somewhat interesting. I've discovered a few things. I'd love to describe everything, but if I do, I'll never get the game finished. Writing about the adventure while playing is tough - for me any ways. I am now playing a little, then I save the game in an appropriate place. Here's what has transpired since then:

- "Orcrist" does not automatically make orc-type monsters ("o") run away. Though I had previously concluded this (See Part 17 (I.19 on page 90).) They now seem to run away only half the time. Must be dependant on weather they fail their saving throw versus fear or not. Though not terribly important, nor threatening to me at this point, it just goes to show that I'm not fully understanding everything as it develops in front of me. Best to keep this in mind...

- "Sting", while wielded, gives 'warning vision' against; hill orcs, Uruk-hai, and goblins. When I do the look (","), I get "warned against goblins", as an example. Now I'm starting to wonder if it's because I'm an Elf that I get this, or if it is naturally occurring all the time? The (","/) command on "Sting" makes no mention of this (?). Instead it talks about spiders. I am still waiting for a spider to come along in order to test "Sting" on it...

- "Stormbringer" does not always 'drain the life' from every creature! I think I see a pattern emerging here. But due to my experience on reporting things with "Orcrist", I'll hold off for now. Need more monsters for the great black battle-blade to taste...

Although I have it nearly always in hand (wielded); it has not given me any monster detection abilities either. This is dissapointing from the description I recieved of it (sad face).

- I have just been able to witness first hand, thus am now able to accurately report to you all, one of my favorite messages in Nethack:

"Your sacrifice is consumed in a burst of flame!" "You sense a conflict between Mars and Mercury."
"You feel the power of Mars increase." "The altar glows black."

Yes. That is very satisfying. I'm doing better in this game than all my others concerning my interaction with the Gods (big smile). Mars now has four, out of the five, altars in the Mazes of Menace!

- I've experimented with what the guide and the Oracle have mentioned about "Elbereth". Funny... Monsters that cannot read - nor have eyes; turn to flee. Those that are intelligent, can read, and/or have eyes; ignore the engraving. Much more work needs to be done here, but preliminary results are quite astounding (laugh)!
Okay, now I'll fully rediscover the layout of this level (dungeon level 1), and then move back downwards in the Mazes of Menace...

On level two, the one with the three stairs, there is a good area in a central room for ranged weapon combat. There, I made another major discovery about being a Ranger. Some rothes, ants, and a dwarf showed up... Arrows, fired with a bow; have a range of 13 squares! Daggers, including BDDD’s, have a range of 12 squares! Wow -wee! My killing range is vastly increased from what I remember in book 1! Also; I, very often, fire four projectiles in a single salvo. Must be something to do with being a level 15 scout Ranger...

I am now venturing back and forth from my cache in Marsville to base camp on level 4 in the Mazes of Menace. There were an additional 8 spellbooks there. I have also been doing some appraisals between the general store in Marsville and, the antique weapons shop on level 5 in the Mazes. Have been able to add some more neat weapons and armor to my arsenal. If only I could come across some blessed clear potions...

All the books accumulated from both of these caches have given me some extra spells in my repertoire. Unfortunately, none have been identify. Little matter though, I have at best a 2% success rate with 3rd level spells. I have an "*" next to the spell of light. But can’t rediscover that book. It must be in another forgotten cache somewhere - I hate mindlayers...

While in Marsville, I consider on where to relocalse the ice box. Won’t need it here - like I never did. But since I now have a strength of 25, I can carry it and be only burdened. I load up the bag of holding and go test if I can still carry the ice box. Yes - I did try to fit it into the bag - didn’t fit.

Okay... Have to make some minor adjustments with the weight distribution... Put down ice box. Take some stuff out of the bag. Pick up ice box. Still too much. Redo this process. Okay. There. Now I have the proportions correct. I have to do this, cause I want to be able to descend the stairs, once I’m back in the Mazes of Menace, unburdened. You all remember how I feel about falling down stairs, now don’t you! It’s so unlady-like, as well as unElf-like! Now I can put the bag down, and descend stairs with the ice box unburdened. Drop the ice box. Go back up, and pick up the bag. Repeat till I have arrived at base camp level 4.

Once arrived, I ponder wether I should keep descending the Mazes of Menace with the ice box. Should I bring it to level 16 with the Home portal? Or level 24 with the deep base camp? Maybe even to the Oracle level...? Hmmm... I'll hold off for now. Store all the extra food in here. I'm still shuttling stuff from the caverns. I'll decide on this later...

Back in Marsville again. A real neat-o wandering monster has been generated - a panther!

Ooohoooh... I like panthers (in real life). They look so cool. So sinister. So slick. So stealthy. So swift. So smooth.

I want it as a pet! I'll add it to my 'next pet I wanna have’ list. Along with a gremlin. But till I get all the loot organised, and the trips settled, I'll lock her (Yes. She's a she.) in one of these old abandoned shops here. Keep her safe from any accidents. (This turned out to be a good thing, excellent forethought on my part, as we shall eventually discover...)

She’s fast! Faster than Missy Prissy, my old pet cat, from what I remember of her. This is good. Burp the purple worm, as well as Grunt the gargoyele, were kinda slow. Now that I have speed boots, I’m even faster than what I was back then. She’s also pretty vicious. Has three attacks per round of movement. Must be two claw and a bite attack. Wonder if she gets a rake with her hind paws - just like in the game that Nethack is not - if she connects with both front ones? I'll find out eventually, hopefully...
Hmmm... Wonder if a horseie would be fun too? There's one prancing around on the level above. They seem pretty fast. Tough to keep alive with respect to the food resources though... Bah. I'll think of all this later...

Back at base camp level 4, in the Mazes of Menace. I'm rooting through the chest when a troll (an ordinary one) materialises just two squares from me (!).

Alright! A test subject (big grin). These guys regenerate continuously. Lot's of stuff to try on this thing (laugh!).

I turn my back to it, and eagerly start pulling out different things from the chest... I turn around and zap it with a couple of mystery wands. I know... Some of you had told me to try other stuff with wands. But I'll do that later. I have LOTS of things on my list of; 'things to do before I go back to the Valley of the Dead'. I'll get to 'wand identification by other means', at a latter time. For now, I'm taking "opportunity fire (zaps)" with them (wink + lots of laughs!). Any ways, no new discoveries with these wands were found...

Next was to try this magic flute. I improvised and made beautiful music. The troll was not cultured enough to appreciate it, obviously.

"The troll wields a forked polearm!"

My eyes lit up! A forked polearm! My favorite polearm weapon! I want it!

I pull out the blessed hilted polearm from the bag of holding. We'll have a polearm fighting contest. Let's see who fights with these things better...


Hmmm... Obviously I'm better. Like I "really" was surprised at this - not.

Okay then. I step forward. Now we're both inside each other's weapons effectiveness range.

I look at him ("."). He looks at me. What are you going to do now, oh mister troll (#chat)? He looks at me all dumbfounded. (sigh) Your pretty stupid too, I see...

I got tired of looking at his face. So I punched it ("w" then "." then "7"). He fell flat on his back.

Okay, I step forward and pick up his loot. Forget what else he had, but I got the forked polearm from him. Walked over to the altar and dropped it. It flashed amber (big thumbs up)! I'll have it appraised as soon as I'm finished with him...

I walk over to my weapons pile. He raises from the dead. He's looking around. Wondering where his weapon went. I pick up a few cursed weapons and throw them at him. He fell down again.

I wield the morning star and go to wait for him to get back up. He soon does and equips a cursed mace (laugh!). I bonk him on the head with my weapon a couple of times. I got the message saying I could check the box in the enhance screen. He falls back to the floor.

I pick him up and throw him. He flew one square distance. I stepped forward and kicked him. Again, he travelled one square.

I wielded the sling and waited. He never got back up. Hmmm... Guess I was too rough (shrug).

I almost was going to eat his corpse. Just before tapping the command, I decided against it. I pulled out my timing kit and caned him instead. I'll save him for later - maybe. Depending on how gutsy I feel...

Now then. I'll hop down to the antique weapons shop on the level below and see how much this blessed forked polearm is worth...
Twelve zorkminds as a sell price! That’s two and a half times the price of an angled poleaxe, the pole-weapon that does the most damage, according to the AD&D Players Handbook!

Wonderful! Now I’m really glad I didn’t wish for a blessed clear potion a while ago. Not only is this forked polearm blessed - it is also enchanted (big huge grin) What phenomenal luck! I’m nearly ecstatic!

I replaced the blessed enchanted hilted polearm, with the blessed enchanted forked polearm from the troll, as my pole weapon of choice. I’ll try and get it identified later on...

By the way, I had "Snickersnee" appraised at one point. It went for a paltry 150 zorkminds. Curious, I wielded it again. I then proceeded to butcher quite a few creatures with it. Did not discover anything out of the ordinary with it. I stowed it back in the chest at base camp. Somewhere, and somehow, along the way, I acquired a spellbook of detect monster. I mention it now, as I discovered that the detect monster spell, allows me to see monsters that have no brain waves. It also, allows me to see more monsters than when I’m blinded, or with the Longbow of Diana’s telepathic vision. This is handy. I now have many different kinds of monster detection vision types. This would come in handy soon. I would be using it to localise appropriate subjects. When I started doing much offering / sacrificing...

The trips back and forth, in order to centralise all my booty, brings me along a well travelled route. This route contains three altars to Mars now, with the recent conversion of Mercury’s altar on level 1 (big grin).

Running from the Mazes of Menace to Marsville: Base camp level 4 - level 3 - level 2 - caverns level 3 - caverns level 4 - caverns level 5 - Marsville base camp caverns level 6.

The stairs to the altar to Mars on level 1, is inbetween the other two stairs on level 2. The stairs in the caverns are very close to one another, except for the ones on caverns level 4. So, when I get a corpse, and it’s not to heavy, I can usually get it to one of the three altars.

Ever since I have received the perplexing messages from Mars with the plain spellbook incident (see part 29 (2.8 on page 132)), I am now taking this opportunity to run some "sacred experiments" with altars, sacrificing, and praying. I am keeping notes on all of this, but keeping notes on everything I’m doing, is now slowing down the game very much. I have since stopped using MS notepad and now back to pen and paper. My cat, Mademoiselle, my slow typing skills, and unfamiliarity with how computers work, have made me reach the conclusion that this is all for the better...

We’ll save some time, and I’ll just bring up some interesting messages I’ve encountered with this: - You begin praying to Mars. You are surrounded by a shimmering light. You finish your prayer. You feel that Mars is well-pleased. The voice of Mars booms out: "Thou hast pleased me with thy progress," "and thus I grant thee the gift of my protection!" "Use it wisely in my name!"

- "You begin praying to Mars." "You are surrounded by a shimmering light." "You feel that Mars is well-pleased." "Your runed dagger named Sting softly glows with a light blue aura."

- "You begin praying to Mars." "You are surrounded by a shimmering light." "You feel that Mars is well-pleased." "You are surrounded by a golden glow."

- "You begin praying to Mars." "You are surrounded by a shimmering light." "You finish your prayer." "You feel that Mars is well-pleased." "(Various things in your inventory - but not in the bag of holding) glows amber."

- "You begin praying to Mars." "You are surrounded by a shimmering light." "You finish your prayer." "You feel that Mars is well-pleased." "An object appears at your feet!" (A wrinkled spellbook, this particular time.)
2.9. *THE SANGUINARY SANCTION...*

There were a few others, but these will do for now. I’ll explain some things first. This is now my way of offering (sacrificing) and then communicating (reconciling) with Mars...

1. You have to go through some leperchaun requests - but not always. Offer a leperchaun if Mars sends a four leaf clover. If no leperchauns are available, then try; nymphs, jackals, lizards, gnomes, ants (but not giant ones), acid blobs, and/or various jellies. Or whatever you feel is lucky, and/or you killed by lucky means.

2. I then offer corpses untill I start getting a "hopeful feeling." Any kind of corpse seems to work here.

3. Repeat untill; "You get a feeling of reconciliation." Again - any kind of corpse seems to work here. But the best are; gelatins cubes, black puddings, yetis, jaguars, and owl bears (Owl bears are very good. Never fail at anything.).

4. Now Mars wants to communicate (come together in warmth, freindship, and love) to you. (Look up what reconcile says in the dictionary. Like I did when I recieved the plain spellbook in part 29 (see 2.8 on page 152)) Now you pray.

I have re-read the guide to Nethack. Yes! Yet again (laugh!) I’m still looking for something to tie all of this god/sacrificing/praying stuff together. Though this hasn’t become all clear to me; I have discovered another thing that had escaped me till now: The amulet of Yendor is to be found somewhere below level 20 of the dungeon.

This is great! The valley of the Dead is on level 29. This is 50% farther than what the guide says. Izhak says that this is a gateway somewhere else. Must be to this Molch’s sanctuary that the Oracle talks about. So I’m very, very close. Probably only one level left to clear after finding the portal on level 29. That’s why the wandering monsters around levels 27, 28 and 29 have greatly increased in strength. I bury the desire to go back there right away. I will finish my efforts at fortifying my character first. Best not to take any chances since I’m so close... Back to interacting with the gods...

- Seems that communicating with them is no longer what I had thought: Only in times of great need. That’s what the Oracle had said. Hmmmm... Now I am begining to wnder if the Oracle is 100% accurate... (concern).

- Do not disturb them (gods) through prayer until having done my 4 point methode above. I haven’t angered Mars in this game - yet, nor at all. I have done that too much in prior ones. Even though, I may not have interaction with Mars (gods) all completely correct: Trust me on this one.

- Gods will uncurse things if cursed.
- Gods will fill your stomach when weak - not hungry.
- Gods will give you spellbooks if your not in a time of great need. And, so far, they are blessed spellbooks.
- Gods will improve your armor class (somehow), again when not in times of great need.
- Gods will improve prior gifts by blessing them. Look at what Mars did to "Sting" in the above messages.

Now for some exceptions...
At base camp, dungeon level 4

A different message while sacrificing a white unicorn:
"You feel you are thoroughly on the right path."
This was a surprise. I have always gotten something about "being appropriately chaotic". I was beginning to think that I may have had done something wrong. But no. I had done exactly the same thing as all previous white unicorn sacrifices...
Hmm... Maybe this is even better than the other message. It sure sounds good. Alright. I'll keep things up, concerning my new current pattern...

At the new altar to Mars, dungeon level 1

I sacrificed a Grey-elf (Don't ask me how he got killed... It was an accident - I swear!)...
The blood covers the altar! You have summoned Yeenoghu! You are terrified, and unable to move.
Okay. Last time I got a demon lord (Jubilex) was when I sacrificed an elven king (another accident).
So then...
Mars likes elves, and sends me someone to talk to (laugh?)?
Yeenoghu... eh? I also remember this name, from the game that Nethack is not. This is the demon lord of gnolls. Since he's a demon, that means he's chaotic/evil. He's friendly. Well - he should be. I better check...
Yep. Peaceful. Lucky for me that Nethack only considers the horizontal axis of alignments (roll eyes + laugh!)
He carries a three-pronged flail. Said to be a very mean weapon. Hmm... I can use flails...
Naaaah. I'll let ol' Yeenoghu live for now. Don't figure he'd part with his weapon willingly. Besides: I kinda like chit-chating with demon lords!
I'd better see what the game has to say about him.
From the 'cyclopedia on Yeenoghu...
Yeenoghu, the demon lord of gnolls, still exists although all his followers have been wiped off the face of the earth. He casts magic projectiles at those close to him, and a mere gaze into his piercing eyes may hopelessly confuse the battle-weary adventurer.
Yeeper... Looks like I can kick his big gnoll butt at my pleasure. Magic missiles and confusion don't scare me. Not as long as I have my current inventory as is! I no longer fear Nethack monsters as much. Don't confuse this with "not respecting" their capabilities at killing me. Just that they are no where near as terrifying as I had thought they were. Certainly not as scary as, the ones in the game that Nethack is not.
Awww... Poor Yeenoghu. There aren't any gnolls any more (Must have been genocidied by a god you pissed off, eh?). No probs, Yeenoghu. Since you have no one else, you can be my buddie (smile)!
I can handle it. I even once had Jubilex as my buddie. You'll be easy to handle, compared to what it was like with "Jubi-baby" (snicker).
But I don't want to use that name. It's too hard to roll around with my elven tongue. Hmm... I know!
Your nick name will now be: "You-know-who". That sounds a lot better (and easier), considering you have no worshipers, and all..., no? Whadyasay?
Chat with Yeengoju. Yeengoju grunts.

Yea. Glad you approve.

At least he's more comprehendable than what Jubilex was (wink).

I brought over a couple of statues to the altar room. Makes the place look more appropriately chaotic like. Gives it the semblance of a shrine. I also brought a chest over and placed it next to the altar. Don't need it now, but it may serve some use in the future. And who is going to try and loot my chest with a demon lord around, eh?! Yeengoju is also faster than what Jubilex was. He teleports more often. Gets in my face, and way, way too much. Blocks up the corridor(s) on me. Can't get corpses to the altar in time...

Hmmm... I pulled out the pick-axe from the bag of holding. Dug out a two square wide corridor between the altar and the downstairs. That problem is now (mostly) solved. I went to base camp dungeon level 4. Picked up the figurines that I left there (see Part 8 (I.10 on page 35)), and brought them back here, for Yeengoju. Now he can play with them and pretend to be tormenting those creatures. Just like when modern humans play games with "Barbie" and/or "G.I. Joe" dolls. It will give him something to do while I'm away. I take care of my freinds (wink)...

- At the altar in Marsville, caverns level 6:

I sacrificed (in order); a leperchaun, two wolves, and an owl bear...

You begin praying to Mars. You are surrounded by a shimmering light. You finish your prayer. You feel that Mars is well-pleased. The voice of Mars thunders: "thou art chosen to take lives for My Glory!"

See what I mean, when I previously mentioned owl bears? They never miss.

This was a momentous declaration! Mars has now given me "carte blanche" on killing anything. In fact, if I understand it correctly, it is an order - not a request!

Simultaneously: "Stormbringer" has been blessed! Not only that, but it has been rust-proofed!? AND "Sting" has now been fire-proofed!?

Hokay...

This now involves troubling decisions for me (sad face). Certain monsters / people I wish to keep around - at least for the time being - are now under the gun. The Oracle, Yeengoju, Izchak, Chibougamau, and two other shopkeepers (general store in Marsville, and the antique weapons shop on level 5) are amongst these. I still feel that they are useful to me. They are still giving me hints to certain things, which means that retrieving the amulet for Mars, will be easier to do. Here now..., I'm not sure how to proceed with regards to this...

What is this with blessing and rustproofing? Does Mars want "Stormbringer" to be my new weapon of choice? Is "Sting" now also included in this? Will it be my secondary weapon?

Rustproof? That reminds me of something the Oracle has said... "If thou hast had trouble with rust on thine armor or weapons, thou shouldst know that thou canst prevent this by..." Mmm, hmm...

Okay... That will be amongst something else to experiment with in the future. I add this to my 'things to do before going to the Valley of the Dead' list.

Fireproof? "Sting" is made of flammable materials? This is one weird artifact. Yes, I now consider it an artifact. Look under the 'artifacts' section of the discoveries menu. Though "Sting" is not there (cause of the mindflayer - obviously), all the rest of my weaponry gifts from Mars are there.

Back to the omen... So then Mars wants "Stormbringer" to be good against anything!? Even rust monsters and ochre jellies? (shrug) Okay.
I'd better test if he really wants me to offer him peaceful creatures. There is a bugbear, just 2 squares away from me. I was using him as a companion in the ex-temple to Venus here.

Hey! Bugbear buddie! Come over here a minute, will ya?

You have an eerie feeling... Your bloodthirsty blade attacks! The bugbear gets angry! The black blade draws the life from the bugbear! You kill the bugbear!

Mmm... Interesting... I better go offer the corpse to Mars right away...

Now then. Let me see about some of these peaceful gremlins that I left in charge here.

Hi gremlin. Nice haircut you have there...

Your bloodthirsty blade attacks! The gremlin gets angry! The black blade draws the life from the gremlin! You kill the gremlin!

Hey gremlin. Want to see my new chaotic runed broadsword...?

Your bloodthirsty blade attacks! The gremlin gets angry! The black blade draws the life from the gremlin! You kill the gremlin!

Psssst! Gremlin dude. I have a message from Mars...

Your bloodthirsty blade attacks! The gremlin gets angry! The black blade draws the life from the gremlin! You kill the gremlin! (scratch head...) Hmm... I can see a definite pattern emerging. Let me just check something else. I walk over to a peaceful ogre...

Good day mister ogre. I have a question to ask you. Which way is it to...?

Your bloodthirsty blade attacks! The ogre gets angry! The black blade draws the life from the ogre! The black blade draws the life from the ogre! You kill the ogre!

Oh boy... No more warnings about wether I really want to attack peaceful monsters or not... Hmmm...

Okay. Now I see how fortunate I was in having locked up the panther up earlier. I won't go to see her, just yet. In case Mars is watching. I still want her as a pet. She's black. Same color as his altars, after all. Maybe I can work out a deal with him. But before I do, I better kill a skew of things in the meantime. Best to keep the ball rolling. Don't want to dissapoint / upset him - just yet!

Another fortunate thing; I have done most of the weapon appraisals in the nearby shops. Now then, if I don't go near any of these guys, maybe Mars won't get upset if I don't kill them outright. The guy in the humongous potion shop on dungeon level two now has his days numbered, though (evil grin). I have plans for all them potions...

I ponder upon all that has happened lately...

Mars has turned "Stormbringer" into a sanguinary blade! I was correct in my previous assumption. It has been ordained from Mars. I have been sanctioned to take lives for the glory of Mars!

A new found drive wells up from within me!

I am now surging with power!

Basking in righteous energy: I thrust, then hold, the great black bloodthirsty battle-blade "Stormbringer" above my head!

NEW MISSION: Death and destruction to all before me! Glory to Mars!

Hmmm... Wonder if this takes precedence over retrieving the amulet of Yendor...?
2.10 My Ghost!?  

I better start on the killing spree. Mustn’t disappoint ol’ Mars...!

I put on the blindfold, then did my detect monsters spell. A few creatures made themselves known. I then proceeded in slaughtering them. All the ones that left a corpse were offered to Mars. Soon enough, I’m out of sacrificial corpses. Well the ones that I want to, any ways. I’m deliberately not going to the two remaining shopkeepers, and the panther, that are left in Marsville...

Down to the next level in the caverns. Ugh... It has been forgotten. Damn you mindflayer!

Repeat my different monster detection abilities. More have been revealed. Great! The slaughter continues. Corpses are added to the bag of holding. Then quickly brought up for more offerings.

I have to wander around cautiously here. I have forgotten where all the traps are... Curses upon the mindflayer species! I also have no light source. My good brass lantern had been disintegrated last time I was in the Valley of the Dead... Curses upon the lich species! Search. Step. Search. Step. Search. Step. Search. Step. Search. Step. Search.

On and on. At least this time consuming process allows for wandering monster generation. More have materialized behind me. Go back and slaughter. Whether they be innocent (peaceful), or not. Mars must be satisfied!

After a while; I’m now too far to get a corpse back to the altar on time. I have made engravings in the dirt on this level for two ranges; maximum range to offer while burdened, and maximum range to offer while not burdened. Fine then. I’ll go to caverns level 5 and renew my efforts there...

Then up to caverns level 4... Then to cavern levels 3 and 2... Now I’m back in the Mazes of Menace. The altar on dungeon level 1 is my new central sacrificing center...

Once the supply of monsters is exhausted; I then do a run of the dungeon levels above. With base camp level 4 as my altar of choice...

Once this has been done; I then work my way back towards the altar at Marsville...

Now then. Something new (again) has cropped up: It seems to be that Mars demands many more sacrifices before he’s ready to communicate with me again...? Or... Maybe I have approached this wrong...? Perhaps it is per sacrifice per altar!? Yes. That must be it. Now I keep notes on each individual altar...

Many turns go by...

Yep. Although not entirely sure, but... That altar in Marsville seems to demand the least amount of sacrifices until Mars is ready to communicate with me. I have an idea (grin)!

I head back to base camp level 4. There I grab all the scrolls and wands of create monster that are in the chest. Scurry back to Marsville. Now a veritable orgy of; summoning - slaughtering - sacrificing ensues... (lots of laughs!). This has generated more booty as well. But I dare not go have it appraised at the general store. Not till I have talked with Mars again. Must get the message that he is well pleased first...

Sadly, my wands and scrolls are now exhausted. But I have managed to communicate with Mars three more times! He is soooo happy with me. I have impressed him, time and time again, with my progress (big grin). I am quite satisfied serving Mars. Things have worked just so great between us! I go back and read the pact I made with him, when I started this game (see prologue book 1). He he. Seems like things have turned out very well...
Some weird things happened during my sojourn here, though... Had 4 ghosts appear (!). That I can handle, except that one was Adri’s ghost - again! Adri had already appeared, and been dispatched (see Part 25 ([Z4 on page 191]), back at base camp level 24... The other, most disturbing, apparition was of a ghost called: Ellora!

!!?!!

Took me quite a while to get over that, not that I’m totally over it, though. For the longest time, I tried to ignore it. Did not want to ‘send on’ my own spirit. I even LET IT TOUCH ME at one point!!!!! Eventually, Ellora’s ghost was just too annoying. Kept on getting in my way. So... Got my courage up, and destroyed it...

Worried, that I may have done something to my character, I looked at all the screens. Looked at all of them real good. Everything seemed to be normal. Only thing that looks out of place, is on the 'base attributes' screen ("CTRL" + "x"). There, under "Deities", next to "Chaotic: Mars", are two letters in brackets: (s,c). Dunno if I somehow have affected things there with destroying my own ghost...? Besides that, the game plays like before - well, as far as I can tell...

I’m just kind of hoping that the game had run out of names for ghosts. Lord, I know that there are over 20 waiting down below in the Valley of the Dead. Plus the about 10 I’ve surely killed so far. So the game probably has only 24 names in a data base somewhere. And is recycling old ones, and using some of my previous character names... I hope.

As soon as I can find that spellbook of light again; I’m going to cast it here. That trick has worked on level 24 already.

Okay Mars. Time to get back to my other mission - retrieving the amulet of Yendor. I still have a few things to do. I’ll get back to killing in your name a little later on, okay?

Must be okay. I have given him many creatures. I have also slaughtered / murdered many more than that. He’s satisfied, I’m sure. I never got any follow-up messages from him saying that; I must stay on this killing spree in his name. I’ll check up on him later. Any way...

Back at the antique weapons shop, dungeon level 5. Yeah - I’m taking a chance that Mars will be pissed that I don’t kill the shopkeeper outright. I was curious about what my two artifacts, "Sting" and "Stormbringer", were worth now. They have just been recently altered by Mars, after all. Well...

Sting had increased in value! It was now worth 105 zorkminds, as a sell price. A 40% increase. I was impressed. Blessing, or cursing, has never affected prices. So this "fireproofing" sure has helped it out, I suppose...

Curious. Although "Stormbringer" has been rust proofed and made bloodthirsty, it’s price is still a stable 1,000 zorkminds. Again, this is a sell price. Maybe 1,000 zorkminds is a cap within the game. Come to think of it; I’ve never seen anything worth more...

Back to booty hauling. I’m now bringing some armor back from the caverns. Mostly dwarven and even mithril-coats. I have six eggs laid by me, down on level 24. I may outfit a personal guard from all of this, sometime in the future... Maybe, and somehow, bring them all with me to the Valley of the Dead. Although gargoyles don’t attack too many things; it will make it harder for the creatures there to all swarm me at once.

I had an inadvertent test concerning; missile firing range. I had taken off my gauntlets of power in order to cast a spell. When something that has the same picture as a wumpus showed up, Forget what it was, but it wasn’t a wumpus. Any way, I didn’t want to be disturbed during my spell casting attempts. Even though I have no armor on, it is still at 42% failure rate. Sometimes takes a few tries, you know (laugh!). So I fired off a volley of arrows. They fell short of their mark (!). They
only traveled 9 squares. Oh! Okay. I get it now. Twenty-five strength adds to my firing / throwing distance, perhaps? I go to consult the guide... Yep. It’s in there. Weapon throwing range, amongst other factors, is affected by current strength. Good thing to know. Boy... There sure are many things to be constantly aware of. Easy to miss, or not remember, something (wink).

Finally. I’m finished with what I want to bring back to the Mazes of Menace from, the caverns and, Marsville. Now then... What should I concentrate on next? Ponder...

Blessed clear potions. Those I really need...

Okay, I have an idea that I’ve been mulling around in my head for a while... I rummage through the chest, and pull out all the uncursed potions that I really have little use for; sleeping, paralysis, hallucination, see invisible, something I called "Yuch!", something I called "no clue?", and something I called "feel good". Nine vials in total.

I consult my notes. Closest fountain is on level 6 of the Mazes of Menace. Great. Not too far. Let’s go check it out. Maybe it’s magical. Down I go...

### 2.11 The Blessed Fountain of Cursing

After having descended the stairs from level five, I immediately scanned the room for any creature within my normal visual range. The room, proving to be empty, allowed me to immediately put on the blindfold. Ah-ha! Telepathy revealed that there was a small mimic and a raven lurking here. But neither were close to my position. Good. I had time to disrobe.

Removing the blindfold, I then set to the task of removing some apparel. Blessed +2 Elven mithril-coat, blessed +2 crested helmet, blessed +1 large shield, and the gauntlets of power (fencing gloves), were now neatly stashed within my pack. The cloak of displacement and the speed boots, do not interfere with the art of spell casting.

Now I attempted the divination spell of "detect monster"... I failed to cast it correctly. Swaying my head in mocked disbelief, I tried again... Success! My mind locked onto the two previous monsters, and one that had no mental energy waves - a gas spore. This floating ball was lurking in a long corridor. Directly onto, and eventual, path I wished to take. Whether it was left over since I first ventured here, oh so long ago now, or just wandering around, I knew not. Monster detection was a relatively new spell in my repertoire. I had not, as of yet, scanned all the levels with it.

Fine. I’ll be able to get to where I want, easily enough. None of these denizens posed any serious threat to me. Just have to be cautious - nothing more.

I redressed. My latest prayers to Mars have begotten some of his protection; significantly improving my armor class. Once I have finished a few more tasks, I may very well renew my communications with him. I am curious by how much more protection he would be willing to bestow...

I make my way towards the eastern most room on this level. Longbow of Diana is constantly talking to me, telling me of the movements of that raven. It is tracking me on a parallel path. Just south of my current one. It will surely be turning up, in order to intercept me. There is a junction just 60 paces ahead.

I stop and wait a few moments. The raven flies on, then hooks north. Just as I had anticipated. I crouch on one knee and ready my weapon, the Longbow of Diana. Blessed arrows are quivered. I will wait for it here. At 30 paces from the junction. More than enough time, I shall have, in order to fall it.
Suddenly the raven has turned the corner! It is bearing down towards me - no doubt it will be aiming for my eyes. Not a chance, I shall give it. Three arrows spring from my bow. The raven has fallen.

Normally: I would still be honing my skills with the sling. Mars had recently revealed two of the gray stones to be luckstones. I have been trying these on various creatures. Besides never missing their mark; so far, no discernible effect has been revealed. Though, they are excellent for monsters which edged or pointed weapons have little power against. But I wish to get this mission over quickly. Practice will wait for when I have accomplished what I want from here.

Now on towards my destination again...

I pass the door to the room of the small mimic. It is masquerading as a vial filled with a pink fluid. I snicker at this attempted deception. So does the Longbow of Diana. We are both chattering on how this frail looking vial can contain the full form of a mimic (!).

On a whim, I decide to test eating its corpse - should it leave enough of one. I keep on thinking that they must taste like unsweetened marshmallows. I exchange weapons between my hands. "Stormbringer" has now been drawn. The longbow of Diana has suddenly grown quite. No more chattering is forthcoming, from it, into my head. It knows, all too well, not to interfere with my concentration, when the dreaded black battle-blade has been drawn... I step up towards the vial. The small mimic is completely unawares. If the mimic had any idea what was about to beset it, surely it would be in full flight by now. I swing the sword. I sense life energy being drained from my target. The mimic immediately transforms. Too late, I am way too fast compared to it. Two more slashes and the mimic is no more. It never was able to react further.

No corpse was left. At least nothing that proved to be anywhere near edible. I shrug my shoulders. Mimic tasting will have to wait for another time. Back to my task. Off to the nearby room to the east...

I turn a corner. Stop. Plant. Fire off an arrow. I hear it thwack against the distant wall. Hmm... It has not yet had time to get this far. Fine then: I proceed and stop at the angle. Aim the bow along the new direction. Salvo fire. A thud! Followed by a distant muted explosion. Satisfied, I continue on. Picking up arrows along the way.

A little while later, I enter a long rectangular room. There, against the southern wall, lays a fountain. Quickly I approach it. Don the blindfold momentarily. No monsters are detected. Good. I shall require a few moments...

I toss two zorkminds into the fountain. I have heard of tales, describing "wishing wells", from the humans. The coins have had no result, save getting wet. If they (the human stories) are to be proven true - it will not be here. And not today...

My experience in the swamps on a deep level below (see Part:10 Snow Boots (1.12 on page 47)), has given me an idea. Vials can be diluted when exposed to water. If I can only fill a few vials from an enchanted and/or blessed fountain...

From my belt, I draw a cursed crude dagger. My lips curl, and I snicker. Orc weaponry has far more valuable uses, than their intended offensive ones. I gently lower the dagger to the waters surface. Hesitate for a moment to reconsider the potential danger. What could be the worst thing that can take offense to my intended action(s)?

A water elemental. Nothing more fearsome comes to my mind. This will be completely fine by me. "Stormbringer" has just recently been rust proofed, granted by Mars. It will more than suffice against any watery creature that should spring forth from these fountains' depths. I shall exchange it to my
2.11. THE BLESSED FOUNTAIN OF CURSING

weapon hand, in place of the Longbow of Diana. Don’t want to lose any time wielding it properly, should such a monster spring up, whilst I’m down on one knee.

Now, then. Let’s perform a test. I dip the dagger into the water...

It has become uncursed! The gods are smiling. Well. At least the god of luck is. This fountain contains blessed water!

I pull the flasks from the bag of holding. It’s magical properties reduce the weight of objects quite drastically. Combined with my gauntlets of power, massive amounts of booty can now be easily carried about. If all goes well, I shall return here in the future. With the bag bulging to its brim. Filled with many assorted vials, to be purified at this fountain.

I know of no liquid more valuable than blessed water. I have to dip each flask several times. I want to ensure that the old liquid has been emptied. That it now contains only the water from the fountain. Cool tingling sensations from the pure water, adorns the process. Constant gazing at the fountains geysering streams, begins to mesmerize me. All my flasks have now been filled. But I do not wish to get back up.

A feeling of loss has just come over me. Why? How? I do not understand the reasoning for such an emotion...? Can I have become disfavored in the eyes of the gods, somehow? If so. Then I must redeem myself. The blessed water from the fountain will, most certainly, alleviate this. Surely, it can not hurt to try...

A desire to savor the water washes over me. I must taste the water. I need to know the sensation of being blessed from within. I lower my head to the radiant pool. My lips touch the surface and I draw a mouthful of water. I lift my head back up, to ease my swallowing the liquid. Closing my eyes, as it begins to descend my throat...

Petou! This water is no good!

Simultaneously: My body slumps, as though from a heavy load. I feel encumbered. I am burdened!! Also; I am suddenly hungry. My stomach feels empty (?).

I look down at my belt, to see what can have so suddenly increased in weight. The bag of holding has a black aura about it - it has become cursed! Quickly, I glance through my possessions for any other malignant auras. Several other items have also suddenly become cursed!

My trusty BDDD’s. The marvelous Longbow of Diana. The battle-blade "Stormbringer". My enchanted elven mithril-coat. The enchanted large shield. The indispensable ring of levitation. The voluminous bag of holding. One of the luckstones for the sling. All have been cursed!

Thank Mars, at least, the unicorn horn has not been affected. I have a spare, but it is in the bag. Along with many other valuable objects. I know not to dare in trying to retrieve anything from it, as is. Items will be obliterated, should I try.

Dumbfounded, I’m trying to absorb this all in. Most items affected were blessed to begin with. These have gone to an outright cursed state! How can so much have been cursed all at once? And so quickly? I am aware of no liches!? No titans!? Not in the whereabouts. Even if they were to be invisible; I would have detected them. I am alone in this room with the fountain. Could it be the fountains’ waters? But it is blessed water!? I had just verified it with the crude dagger...?

I hear the echoes of a werewolf howling through the corridors. I let out a sigh. It will be heading for me soon, if it has not already. I have no desire for a fight. Not until I have redressed the cursed objects in my inventory. I must be off...

My stomach growls, as I make my way back to the upstairs. Progress has been slowed. The bag of holding must be functioning in reverse. In fact, I know it is. It is weighing me down...
A humanoid has appeared in the distance. I try to discern it’s specific species telepathically. Yes. I have seen this creature before. It is a werewolf: In human form.

It shall soon fall where it stands. Unthinkingly; I attempt to unsling the Longbow of Diana from my shoulders. I can not! The runed broadsword named "Stormbringer" is welded to my hand!

Just as well. The bow is also cursed. I just remembered. It too would have welded itself to my hands. And besides, the large shield is welded to my left arm. I must get back to my base camp, two levels above this one. There I have some scrolls of curse removal.

Much concern now plagues me though. I have lost the blessings on too many items. I feel quite disheartened...

I try to slip past the werewolf. Thank Mars my speed boots are unaffected. Even though I am burdened from my load; I will scoot on by. But before being able to do so; I had to backtrack through a room. No way I was able to get by him in the narrow corridor. The cloak of displacement has saved me, yet again; from taking any hits. The lycanthrope has lashed at some of my displaced images. But. Before I could make a complete escape: He summoned some help!

Four wolves, two winter wolves, and the werewolf now surround me! There is no escape! A wall to the room completes the encirclement. I have absolutely no desire to stand and fight. Even with all my items unsathed by the recent events, would I not wish to do so.

I pull an aluminum wand from my pack. Point it towards my own chest: Zap! I have been instantaneously transported to another location within the dungeon level. Further from the upstairs from where I just was. But at the least: Now free to move about!

I don the blindfold and mentally memorize an alternate route to the stairs. One that is, for the time being, devoid of any monsters. My speed boots will have to carry me swiftly. The werewolf and his cronies will soon be filling the passages. Also, my stomach keeps gnawing from within me...

I have managed to get to the stairs. I have, also, eluded most of my pursuers. The winter wolves, in vain, tried to reach me with their frost breadths. But these were reflected from the amulet. The one around my neck. The one I retrieved back at the 'boulders'. Some of the reflected blasts had even managed to find a mark: On one, or two, of the wolves. I ascend up the stairs. I will not be pursued. However, I make a note that these creatures are now lurking here. Best to be forewarned. Someday; I shall have to come by this way, again...

Now I hurry to the upstairs on this dungeon level. Much concern accompanies me. This mission has turned out - not very well. Not very well - at all...

I have reached level four: One of my major base camps. I proceed to the altar of Mars. I must make certain of my entire inventory of possessions. Somehow, back at the fountain, I have been exposed to a cursing field. I drop all that I am able to, all that can be removed, all that can be taken off; from my body. Everything falls: Onto the black altar...

Amber, black, and no - flashes spring from the various objects. Apart from what I had already found; both lizzard corpses, two potions, a wand, the looking glass, and two black gems - have also been cursed! I had wanted to retrieve blessed water, to bless some of my items. Instead; I have managed to curse my items, most importantly, some of the essential ones...

Sadly; I shake my head... Not only have I failed in my mission. But: The mission to the fountain has utterly; backfired...

As much as; I presently wish to dwell upon the subject, hunger presses me to action. I step to the ice box. I need to satisfy my stomach. I will be able to think more clearly once my physical needs have been taken care of...
2.12 Starving & Ravenous

Oh! But what is this? How am I to open the cover to the ice box? Both my hands have items welded to them. I cannot access, let alone reach the contents of, this container... (!)

Although, I know that it will prove to be impossible, I attempt to access the nearby chest. It too cannot be utilized. The scrolls of "remove curse" are in there. And I cannot get at them...

Hmm... I can pray to Mars. He can remove the curses for me. I have satisfied him well, of late. However, I must first assure myself of his willingness to be immediately receptive to my needs. I need a sacrifice...

I am hungry. I also need food...

Telepathy shows only a gnewt. Quickly I journey to its location. It is killed with but one blow. It has left enough of a corpse. Not much of a sacrifice, but I am beginning to be quite anxious. I must know of the availability of Mars. I hasten back towards the altar. On the way; I have grown weak. My even form needs food badly...

I eat the gnewt. Little sustenance it offers. But enough to hold me for a little while longer. I no longer feel weak - but am still ravenously hungry...

Up a level I go. An acid blob is nearby. I dare not risk my welded - and welded - weapon. I instead slay it by throwing some of the gray stones at it. The corpse is not what I will eat. Too dangerous to harm me. But it will suffice as an offering to Mars. Quickly - I go down and sacrifice it to my god. I have fallen weak again...

Mars has signaled me with a four leaf clover. No. Oh no. Oh no no no... He is not ready for me! Not for a long time will he be. Of this I now know. My hopes at removing the curse(s) are quickly dashed. It will take many offerings before any hope at reconciliation. I will starve before then!

Food. I must find food.

Food is in the ice box here. So close - yet beyond my reach! The two lizard corpses I had been carrying - are cursed (...!). They may work backwards. Increase my hunger. I have to search elsewhere - but in haste (!). If I grow weak enough: I shall be soon fainting!

Back up the stairs. Put on the blindfold. Nothing. No monsters. No food. I hurry towards the upstairs. The blindfold is still covering my eyes. I have to know when a possible food source should wander in. Time is now critical (!).

I have bumped into something! A creature with no real mind. How else would I not know about it? I remove the blindfold. A yellow mold blocks my path. Instinctively - I swing "Stormbringer". The mold's life comes to an incredibly swift end. I grab it as best I can - considering both my hands are already occupied with something. I know I will be poisoned by it's hallucinatory narcotics. But I need to eat now. I tear at it with my teeth, and swallow the mold. The weakness has gone. But I know, oh do I ever know, not for long. Must find more food. I apply the blessed unicorn horn to my forehead. And off to those stairs: Post haste - I go.

I am on level two of the Mazes of Menace. I try to take off all the armor that I can - save for the speed boots. Maybe, just maybe, I will be able to get a spell of "detect food" or "detect monsters" off...

I struggle. But in complete vain. Although my gauntlets of power are not cursed; "Stormbringer", now welded to my hand, prevents me from removing them. All hope is lost at spell casting attempts. This combined with the shield and even mithril-coat has made it impossible. Failure is 100% certain...

I am now in great danger. Ironically: Not by a creature from the Dungeons of Doom. Instead: I will starve to death.
CHAPTER 2. BOOK 2

I fight an impulse to panic. If I do - and do not think clearly - I will die. My thoughts. They are in conflict. This is incredible! After all I have accomplished, encountered, and overcome - since I first set foot in the Mazes of Menace. Is this how I shall meet my fate?!

My mind screams: NO! Not by determination. But - through utter disbelief!

Only monsters detected here are the shopkeeper. He is very far though. At the western most edge of the level. Will I cover the distance in time? Will I be able to kill him in time? Will he leave a corpse?

None of the others, that I have murdered, have... This I do now remember. Time is too critical. I cannot chance it. Even should I be recollecting wrongly, if he does not - I will be too far gone.

Up the stairs to level one? Will Yeengooh leave a corpse? Do I even dare eat it, if he does? Will I be capable of killing him? I must consider my state and equipment carefully here...

No! I have suddenly remembered: Demons are dispatched back to their planes of existence from this one, when slain. He will not leave a corpse. Not here.

To the stairs that lead to the caverns...

A white unicorn is here. It is close! Please. Let it not teleport to a further location. I observe its movements. I must let it think that it has a chance against me. I let it approach, as well as, slowly approach it...

The beast is now upon me. Swiftly, it strikes several times. The unicorn butts. The unicorn kicks. I absorb the blows, which have not gone to a displaced image, willingly, I merely stand my ground. I do not take any offensive action towards it. I am much closer to death through starvation, than by physical trauma.

Good: Now; the unicorn has been lulled into believing it is advantaged. Now - I can fell this creature quickly: Salvo fire BDDD’s! All three launched. In spite of their cursedness; their flight paths were true. The unicorns’ eyes suddenly grow wide. It has just realized the imminent danger to it’s life. As it prepares to flee... Now - I will strike to kill: The black blade, "Stormbringer", draws the life from the white unicorn! The white unicorn falls.

I descend upon its still writhing form. I feed upon one of Mercury’s creatures, before its heart has beat its last...

That will hold me over for a little while. Not much, but enough to rekindle some hope within me, towards my situation.

Up two flights of stairs.

Level one: A lynx; cursed BDDD salvo, plus a swipe from "Stormbringer". More sustenance for me, from its corpse. But also - an abandoned food ration! I grab it and descend. I’m still in a struggle to find enough food in order to start working on removing these curses...

The unicorn, lynx, and the food ration have allowed me some time to; find, kill, and offer three more sacrifices to Mars. The altar at base camp level four being the one I have concentrated on. A mountain nymph, yields a four leafed clover. A wood nymph, yields a four leafed clover. A leperchaun, yields a hopeful feeling. I have passed ‘phase 2’ of my method for praying to Mars. Alas, ‘phase 3’ will certainly require more sacrifices. Too many. More than I will be able to go, without more food...

I am found on level three. I have just fallen weak again. I need food badly. Shan’t be long, till I start fainting, I must make up my mind. Another terribly important decision, concerning my survival is to be made...

If there is nothing on the level above. If I do not find an immediate food source. Then: I will turn around, and smash the ice box, with the welded runed broadsword, back at base camp level four. It
will be close. Whether I will make it back in time. But I have just, yes just, exhausted all food sources on the levels below...

I am in fear for my life. Have been for quite some time now. I don't think that I will be able to maintain this dance between; fainting (leading to death) and feeding myself. The monsters are just not wandering in (replenishing) quickly enough to sustain me. The attrition upon the Mazes' denizens is just too great! I am terribly scared. I feel the impending doom of my fate: Death by starvation...

Up the stairs. Dungeon level two. Blindfold is covering my eyes. Telepathy reveals; the far away shopkeeper, a water nymph within the same shop, a cockatrice far to the north-east, AND THREE HILL GIANTS FROM 120 PACES DUE WEST! Enough to feed me. More than enough to feed me. As long as I don't faint...

Immediately: I rush towards them. It is a mad headlong rush. I am nearly crazed with hunger. Besides; I have no time to wait. Suddenly: But 20 paces I have taken!

A boulder, thrown by the first hill giant in line, has nearly crushed me. I had just managed to throw myself to the ground. In the space next to the wall, towards my right. The spherical shape of the boulder, could not fill this gap. As I lift myself unto my feet, I see that my way is now blocked. Pushing the boulder will be of little use. It's progress would be held, when I should reach the form of the giant. Damn. Now I have to wait for them to come at me. This will take longer...

I fall back to the room. I place my back against the western wall. The entrance from the passageway, is just to my right. I hold the battle-blade "Stormbringer", cursed and welded to my right hand, onto my chest. The Longbow of Diana, informs me of the hill giants’ approach... 30 paces... 20 paces... It has picked up its boulder again... 10 paces... It is now parallel to me (!): Filling the entranceway...

The Longbow of Diana screams into my mind: NOW!

In a flash: My arm sweeps out to the right! The runed broadsword being its extension. The added momentum from the sweeping arc; buries the black blade deep within the hill giants abdomen. Life is drained. The hill giant yells in pain. I draw the blade from the wound. Simultaneously; trying to twist it upon its pommel. I wish to expand the wound. The giant must go down - as quickly as possible.

Again and again. I repeat the same motions. The hill giant has doubled over. Now fallen to its knees, I can now reach the base of it’s neck. The boulder has dropped and rolled a few paces. The hill giants’ hands are trying to hold its innards, from spilling onto the floor. Now I have turned to face the giant:

One-quarter turn, to my right. I sense death for my victim soon. I bring "Stormbringer" from above and slice downwards this time. Neatly cutting into the giants’ vertebrae. It has fallen.

I need to feed. But one of his friends is too close behind. I step to my left. 20 paces over. Now 10 paces down. Another boulder has come my way. But in the expanse of the room, I am able to judge its oncoming trajectory - thus easily avoiding it. It crashes to a stop, against the wall behind me. No time to lose. I may faint at any moment. Salvo throw BDDD’s! They have just been recently cursed. Two have found their mark, one has slipped from my grasp and gone errant. Not waiting for any assessment to the giants’ wounds; I charge it. "Stormbringer" flashes above my head. The blade glisters from new blood which now covering it, from the incessant, and successive, blows I land onto the giant. The second hill giant has fallen.

I am just about to step forward; to feed - when the Longbow of Diana shouts a warning. The third, and last hill giant, has taken an alternate route. It has just appeared in the doorway to the north from where I am. I step up and towards it, then to my right.

Dread wells up from within me. All this fighting is surely sapping my body’s severely diminished reserves of energy. It is only through, the pulsing emotion of sheer savagery, that I have not yet
fainted... If I should, I may be able to still salvage my life. Upon regaining consciousness, I may have
time to feed. But not whilst this giant should be thumping on my body, whilst I be under...
If I but had a wand of death: I would not hesitate for a moment - on using it on this giant. Alas; I do
not. And my other wands of destruction are either in the chest, or the cursed bag of holding. In either
case; both of these containers are back at base camp level four. Too far away now. I have utilized too
much energy in this fight. My options are now down to but one: Kill the remaining hill giant, and
feed - POST HASTE! The glare of swift death beams from my eyes. The giant has caught my gaze. It
has stepped towards it’s right - now caught in a corner. Abject fear has taken over its ability to make
rational decisions, concerning its plight. I approach. "Stormbringer" drips with blood. I slash out,
but in low cutting arcs. I have been possessed with an idea. I will try to cut the tendons within its
legs. Three more slashes - totaling two per leg; both right, and left. Wretched lines have been drawn
in the folds of skin upon the giants face. It has suddenly realized that; It can no longer uphold its
weight and that of the boulder! He collapses under the combined mass. The boulder, he was holding
aloft, finishing him off as it crushes his skull.
I find myself in a crouching position. The best reflexive one, concerning my last tactic. Without even
bothering to get back to my feet; I scurry on hands and knees, to the closest giant!
Now I feed. I gorge myself. Like an elf gone mad, I just keep tearing away pieces of flesh and swallow
them nearly whole... With blood and gore all over my visage, I get up and make my way to the second
corpse. Although I am no longer weak - nor hungry for that matter (!); I dig into the cadaver of this
other giant to feed once more! I will not go hungry - not for a long time - I need extra sustenance to
carry me for a while! I stuff my stomach till satiated...
Once finished, and after having taken time to clean my face; I gaze upon the last giants corpse - covered
by, and beneath, the boulder. I can’t get at it. Even if I had a pick-axe to smash the boulder to rock; I
have no two free hands, which are required, for which to apply the tool... Well... I should have enough
in me now. Enough for my next plan. Enough to give me time to implement it. I gather my cursed
BDDD’s and head to that humongous potion shop. Way, and over, to the west...
I could care less for what the shopkeepers’ name is. I have already slated him to be murdered. Firstly:
For the glory of Mars. Secondly: For his remaining inventory. But as of right now; I have much more
pressing concerns. I shall rediscover his name, but a few moments ’fore I have decided to end his life.
Not now, though: But later... (!).
Upon entering it (the potion shop), the shopkeeper gives me greeting. I ignore him completely. I
don’t even meet his eyes with mine. I do not even bother in closing the door. My eyes, and total
concentration, are on the sleeping creature, in the far reaches of the room...
30 paces from the sleeping nymph, I stop. Quietly; do I drop all that, I am able to from what, I have
been carrying on me. All that has fallen freely, ‘cept for the blindfold - of which I don. No monsters in
the immediate vicinity - but for "what is his face" the shopkeeper. Good. I will need some time. How
much? I am uncertain myself. I have never attempted the following before... Cursed elven mithril-coat,
cursed large shield, gauntlets of power, and cursed runed broadsword named "Stormbringer"; are my
only current possessions on my body. I close the distance to the water nymph. Not wishing to startle
her, I lean and whisper, as serenly as possible, into her ear...
- Hi dear. Would you like to chat with me? Just for a while?
The water nymph pretends to be friendly.
- No pretense is necessary. I am open to your advances.
The water nymph pretends to be friendly.
2.13. A REVIEW

- Yes. Yes. Although I am also female, I shall gladly swing with you.
  The water nymph pretends to be friendly.
- Come on. Please. Get closer. I want you to touch me...
  The water nymph stole the cursed rustproof runed broadsword named "Stormbringer". Then imme-
  diately vanished into thin air!
  I let out a long sigh of relief...
  Finally... The nightmare is over. My hand is no longer welded to that cursed artifact. I can now access
  the ice box and/or chest at my base camp. I will not die by starvation. My stomach is currently full. I
  have ample time to find, or acquire, more food, by any which means. I can even remove the gauntlets
  now; should I wish to attempt a magical spell.
  Warily, I step over and pick up my pile of objects. I don what I feel is appropriate for now - not
  welding or wearing anything cursed - of course! I am completely exhausted. Since my jaunt to that
  blessed fountain of curses, I have had no rest. The stress and anxiety of nearly starving to death has
  sapped much of my reserves also...
  I need some rest. Just a little. Here: In the far corner of the shop. This will do. I lay my pack down
  against the wall. It will serve as a pillow. I curl up and wrap the cloak of displacement about my
  form. It will serve as a blanket. I'm exhausted. I close my eyes and immediately fall to sleep...

2.13  A Review

Okay. Time to fire up the game...

Hello Ellora, the elven Ranger, welcome back to Nethack! You are lucky! Full moon tonight.

Well. I can sure use some luck. And hmmm... The guide talks about luck in a few spots. Wonder if
these newly discovered luckstones have anything to do with it? How about them leperchauns? And
nymphs? And the wand of enlightenment has mentioned something with that too... Somewhere, if I
remember correctly...? Yep. Gonna have to put that on the; 'list of things to watch out for'. (groan)
I've got too many lists, with too many things on them (laugh!).

But 'fore all that, or those, of entwihich these, er, before bly; be ruhj, blah - urgh...
I can't talk! (laugh!)

I'm half thinking / writing like me. And the other half like, my character, Ellora.

(chuckle some more)

I'll take it a little easy. I'll write like me for now. If I can't understand what I'm reading... How are
the rest of you going to be able to, eh? (wink)

The last two adventures (parts 32 and 33), written from Ellora's perspective, were quite a learning
experience. I almost got killed while trying to improve my characters possessions. That scared the
heck outta me. Scared me real good. Am now going to give certain things - like fountains - a whole lot
more consideration before toying around with them. Okay... Let's try and get the rest of these curses
removed.

Leave the shop. Sneer at the shopkeeper. Close the door. Head towards base camp level four...

Oops! Where is that little darling water nymph? Put on blindfold. Okay. I see her. She's hanging out
near the cockatrice. Good. I'll be back for her (and "Stormbringer") later. Now, I head towards base
camp level four...
I'm here. First things first. Loot the ice box. Alright! I can do it again.

Pull out more food than what I really need. But heah - I'm a little paranoid now (laugh!).

Eat a candy bar. I have never eaten one before. Was saving it in case I ascend. But since my last adventure, I want to try it now. Never know when death is just around the corner. May as well as enjoy / experience things while I can. While I'm alive...

Okay... Now I will eat a banana and an apple. After all the meat I ate recently, I had better "balance" my diet... Now... I better find me some sacrificial corpses till Mars want's to talk. Then I'm gonna see how he feels about uncursing my stuff...

Okay. That worked - kind of. He (big guy Mars) uncursed the stuff that was welded to me. All the rest is still cursed. Hmm... Kind of disappointing. Was hoping for a little more. Oh well. I better be thankful for what I got...

I exchanged (the now) uncursed +1 large shield, for another blessed one I had. Good thing I've adopted that "clean dungeon" attitude since the beginning of the game. That combined with centralizing most of the booty here, sure makes times like these easier.

I'll see if he (ol' Mars) may reconsider and help me out some more in the future. Meantime, I need more corpses. While I'm at it, may as well go upstairs and get back the cursed life sucking blade. Wandering monsters around here have become scarce...

Was a little cautious around the water nymph. She was trying to run from me. But I got her lined up, and a few cursed BDDD's knocked her down. I looked at all the messages. Never saw one which said she was wielding it, or that it got welded to her hand. The cockatrice went down with my new melee weapon - a blessed morning star. Best weapon I had available that's one handed. Couldn't get the corpses to an altar in time. No bag of holding limits my 'range to altar'...

I need to get that bag and all my weapons uncursed. I feel kind of vulnerable without them. Especially if I should run into anything dangerous. Lucky I'm hanging around the upper levels. Can you imagin' what it would be like if I were around levels 27 - 29?? Things would surely be more tense than now (roll eyes).

**Back at base camp dungeon level 4**

What's this...? A red devil? I had better do the old look (";";)

An incubus! Those are demons. But the picture looks like a devil. Kind of misleading, to me any way. Betcha he wants to do me (wink). I hate that. These guys are so full of themselves. Besides; I have a headache in real life - no joke. How I feel: Is how my character feels. Now is not the time. Let's see if I can avoid him...

Geeeee... He's coming straight for me. Hmmm... I have an idea...

Round 1: You have a little trouble lifting i - a beartrap. Your movements are slowed slightly because of your load. The incubus smiles seductively at your displaced image... The incubus strikes at your displaced image and misses you! The incubus strikes at your displaced image and misses you!

Round 2: I step one square to my left.

Round 3: You begin setting your beartrap. The incubus smiles seductively at your displaced image... The incubus strikes at your displaced image and misses you! The incubus strikes at your displaced image and misses you! You finish arming the beartrap. Your movements are now unencumbered.
Round 4: The dagger named BDD hits the ice vortex! The ice vortex engulfs you! You feel mildly chilly.
Round 5: You throw 3 daggers named BDDD. The 1st dagger named BDDD hits the ice vortex! You destroy the ice vortex! The 2nd dagger named BDDD hits the incubus! The 3rd dagger named BDDD hits the incubus! You kill the incubus!
(chuckle) Didn't "quite" turn out as I had planned (lots of laughs!)... Nethack can be so funny at times!

*If anybody can't figure out what happened (I made great effort to copy everything exactly), in those last five turns; ask me in the thread.*

And come to think of it... Anyone (or the first) who can guess why I wanted (or was going to do with) a captive incubus; will get something named after them in the game with Ellora here. Let's see how close everyone has been paying attention...

As we can all see, though: Them BDDD's are just fantastic. And they are presently cursed. Now imagin’ when they’re blessed. Dunno how I would have gotten this far without them... My old BDD’s aren’t bad either. Those are corroded too, by the way.
Hey... You know what? I just thought of something...

Lemme grab some stuff from the chest and run down to the antique weapons shop for just a few minutes...

OKAY! Another big discovery!

Here’s how I figured it:

BDDD (+6 dagger) = 32 zorkminds BDD (+4 dagger) = 22 zorkminds ordinary dagger (+0) = 2 zorkminds +1 runed dagger = 7 zorkminds ordinary runed dagger (+0) = 2 zorkminds

Therefore: Each +1 = 5 zorkminds on the sell price. That should be 10 zorkminds on the buy price. Well, for daggers anyway. But, judging from my notes; I strongly suspect the same for the rest of the weapons and/or projectile weaponry...

Yep. A +1 elven bow goes for 35 zorkminds, and an ordinary one is at 30 zorkminds. A +2 runed arrow is 11 zorkminds. Pattern. We have a pattern!

I’ve named a few weapons with "+" for each level that I’m sure of. For those that I’m not certain, I have added a "?". So, for instance, a curved sword that sells for 17 zorkminds; gets named "++?". I’m sure that it is +1, and probably +2. Anyhow, just to let you know - I have devised a system (laugh!).

I’d explore this further. But I have a headache still (It’s getting worse.). I’ll save and come back tomorrow...

...

Tomorrow now being today...

Blech. I feel like my brain cells are cemented together. Having a hard time to think / concentrate. Must be coming down with something...

I’ll take it easy for now. Let’s see what the r.g.r.n deities have been up too...

One of them suggests a review of my chronicled adventure so far. Good advice. I had previously mentioned that to myself in an earlier part, or parts. Too lazy (and sick) to look for the specific reference, from which chapter it was (wink).
CHAPTER 2. BOOK 2

Another has suggested that the amulet of Yendor is far beyond the Valley of the Dead... (sad face). The guide may be misleading, again...

Seems like I'm also near, or not so near, to discovering something about blessed water. But gazing down upon the altar, where I've been verifying various things lately, I see that I have seven vials of the liquid. Funny... I swear I had nine (!?). I didn't put any in the bag, and can't check now cause it's cursed. Maybe some got disintegrated back at the fountain? It (the fountain) may have latent lich/titan abilities. Oh well, at least 2 have survived their blessed state. Now big decision coming up in the near future will be: What do I bless (again)...

Anyhoo... Time to go over Ellora's story. See if there are any loose ends to tie up, before continuing on...

... The day after tomorrow now being today...

Things learned, relearned, brought to light, from the review: - He he. The 'clean dungeon campaign' sure changes how the game flows. No way I'd be this well off, if I hadn't adopted that. Makes for a longer game though. But a well worthwhile trade off concerning: Surviving and progressing deeper into the game...

- Yes sir. I have come to the conclusion that blessed arrows do not get mulched, as often as unblessed ones. In fact; hardly at all. They are definitely more resistant. Same probably holds true to other blessed weapons/projectiles/objects. Just like the guide suggests...

- Ah yes. My favorite scroll in Nethack, FOOBIE BLETCH. What is it this game...? From the discoveries screen; scroll of amnesia (FOOBIE BLETCH). (laugh!) Now would that not have deflated my balloon! Too bad. Now my favorite scroll name has finally proven to be a detrimental one (sad face - but not too sad)...

- Now then. How about my favorite potion; effervescent...? Again from the discoveries screen; potion of speed (effervescent). Well that one turned out okay (wink)...

- Yep. I still fear (respect) their capability at zapping me with wands. I still drop gnome lords on sight...

- Hmm... I'd like to see how it really handles one day. I may pick the boomerang as the next weapon to check in the enhance screen. Maybe it has an added application? Like when you get to "skilled" with polearms. Then again, maybe divination spells would be a better idea? I presently have; light, detect food, detect unseen, detect monsters, and clairvoyance. Identify is in that category also. Hmm... Well. I'll look at it again when I next go up a level. See how long it takes for that to happen....

- Trying to throw a pick-axe into a shop doesn't work. Forgot to mention that in the story, in book 1. But, I can hide several in the bag of holding, and then pull them out once inside. As long as I don't actually use it, the shopkeeper just mouths off at me. In fact, I can even sell them (laugh!).

- I have a ring of sustain ability. That may very well protect me against losing any points of charisma. Then, I might consider checking out some of these thrones...

- I really have to check out; teleportating monsters, wands and scrolls of teleportation, and their various effects on me at the boulders level. I've been caught by surprise a few times this game, on different levels. Mostly when I did not want to (laugh)!

- Ah yes. Do I still have that wand I named "Lizard Lifesaver"? Or did the mindflayer make me forget? Hmm... It's not in the discoveries screen. I'll go and check the chest when I'm finished doing the review...
2.13. A REVIEW

- He he. I nearly have all of the "altar situation" in the Mazes of Menace rectified. Four of the five known altars now belong to Mars (grin). Mercury being the big loser (big grin)...
- Some saving throws are always made - cold and poison. Saving throws should probably be now regarded as resistance. The wand of enlightenment, the Oracle, one of the r.g.r.n. dieties, and my experiences now suggest so. Still, it’s kind of hard to let go of certain conceptions that I’ve clutched to, during my whole Nethack career...
- Still have to completely familiarize myself with the auto pickup options. Have to absolutely get that one down pat, before entering the Valley of the Dead again...
- Wow! I had, originally assembled / conjured, a whopping 18 BDD’s! Where did they all go? (shake head)...
- Okay. The (non rusting) snow boots were uncursed all along. That’s solved. Couldn’t remember, if they were or not, a few chapters back...
- Have to test some mithril mail in water. See if it rusts or not. That’s still not answered conclusively. I say it does (or maybe corrodes). The r.g.r.n. dieties say no. I better make a sticky note: "Don’t kill the next ochre jelly! Need it for an experiment." Plaster it on the computer screen...
- That was a good idea I had. When Jubilex first came around. Engraving "No BDD’s" on the stairs. In fact, I better do the same for, "You-Know-Who"...
- Dwarven mithril, any mithril for that matter, is the best. Still haven’t found anything better. But what is this dragon scale mail I see in the guide? I have never come across any. It’s supposed to offer the best reduction in armor class. Come to think of it, the Oracle has talked about fashioning armor from the scales of a dragon’s hide. Hmm... Okay. I’ll see what I can do with some of those dragon scale thingies I have accumulated deeper down, at base camp level 24...
- Oh boy. Do I now find one of my old parts of the story funny.

From part 16: The Trees... (chapter 1.18 on page 81)

At the last part I laughed! Don’t worry - It won’t be a problem. I don’t hardly ever use arrows! I’ve discovered that daggers is the most intelligent way to play a Ranger. I used to try and play them with bow and arrow. Believe me. I did this lots and lots of times. But besides poisoned tipped crude arrows, and some of the +2 ones in the begging of the game; they just can’t compare to dagger chucking. Especially once they have been blessed and enchanted up a bit.

He he. Other solution: Blessed arrows. Maybe enchanted also. But, all in all, that statement is still kind of true. Especially before getting the Longbow of Diana...
- I still dunno what’s so scary about a wumpus? If your not 14th level, don’t worry about it. They’re slow and stupid. I think Orion should review his concerns about them. The 'vampire bat + vampire + ochre jelly combination', I encountered in the cave, was a lot worse.
- Hmm... I wonder if Scorpious’ death curse, that he bestowed on me, is finally kicking in...? Can it have been a time delayed curse? Or only pertaining to leaving his place alive, or not? Hmm...
- I have to zap that wand of enlightenment on me again. Think I left it behind at base camp level 24. Or is it in the cursed bag of holding? In either case: I should check that out. Maybe it’ll tell me if I’m under an "evil eye..."
- Gremlin is going to be my next pet. Can’t wait! But I’ll hold off till I’ve completed some other tasks. After that, I’ll get the panther I locked up in Marsville...

Now accepting suggestions on appropriate names. Gremlin is male. Panther is female. Send by e-mail. Don’t clog the thread for this.
- Digging a hole near the downstairs, at least on the levels where the stairs are far between, may be an idea. Like what I discovered about that hole on the titan’s level. Where the stairs are separated by water. Have to run a few experiments on where I continuously end up though...

- Gonna have to get my courage up. Still have to re-map all them forgotten levels. I’ll need to find all them fountains, and probably thrones, again. Not to mention, and most importantly, the forgotten caches...

- The more I think of it, the more I like that idea. The one on getting a personal guard composed of gargoyles. From the remaining eggs I laid a while back. Have to uncurse the bag of holding. I’ll need it to haul all that (mithril) armor down to base camp level 24...

- This one, perhaps being the most important: When faced with emergency situations; it’s best to just take things slow. Do stuff (commands) that take no time on the clock. Look at the different screens (inventory, status, etc.) Do lots of look commands (","), Also the "?" command. And/or the "/" command. All of these don’t count against an action. May very well give you an idea to something you haven’t thought of already - or stimulate an innovative idea. At worst: Take a break! Let your intuition work a while.

Now then. Let’s put some of this wisdom to use...

I gazed upon the sorry state of most of my valued objects on the altar. Many of my favorite, and essential, ones were still cursed (sad face). I picked up a few, that would still bring me some use - such as; the BDDD’s and the Longbow of Diana. As long as I do not actually wield them, I’ll be fine. For now... I’ll get to all of this cursed stuff later. I feel like a little cheering up. I’ll go visit my buddy; "You-Know-Who"

I grabbed an uncursed staff from the "appraised weapons pile". Yes. I now have three different piles of weapons and two of armor here. Plus a pile of tools. Plus the chest. Plus the ice box. Plus the pile of unsorted / unclassified stuff on the altar. (laugh!) The altar room (base camp level four), is a veritable depot! I’ll use the staff as my new melee practice weapon. It shouldn’t get rusted or corroded. Well. I’ll see. If it does; no big loss (wink).

Let’s head up...

2.14 Experiments

- First thing, of many, on the "things to do" list...

I tried to call ("SHIFT + c") him by his nickname...

Yeenoghu doesn’t like being called names!

Okay. So that kills that. I am massively disappointed (sulk). Now I have to "actually" call him Yeenoghu. Yuch!

Now see that: Yeenoghu, is nothin’ but one big grouchy demon lord. Must still feel kind of touchy, about having all the gnomes genocided from underneath him a while back...

- Next thing on the list...

Well - I won’t change my engravings on the stairs till they wear out; "You-Know-Who! Don’t do - you know what!!". That’s what I wrote on both; the downstairs on level 1, and the upstairs on level 2. May as well be safe.

Okay buddy, nice chattin’ with you - not.
2.14. EXPERIMENTS

Yennoghu grunts.
I muttered a few choice words about his attitude, underneath my breadth, going back down the stairs...
- A new observation... On my way back down to base camp, I ran into a few monsters and had a little scrap. I saw something interesting...

I saw an orc (a hill orc) pick up an acid blob corpse! Hmmm... Now why would he do that? I stepped up to him, and bashed his face in with the blessed morning star. Then I offered both of them to Mars. But still... Why would he actually want to pick up that? What was he going to use it for, if anything? Hmmm... That gives me an idea about something. I’ll make a note of this. Maybe we can have some chuckles in the future (wink).

- Next!
I rooted through the chest and saw the old wand named "Lizard Lifesaver" (See Part 3 (/1.5 on page [19])). It’s still here! And hey - it’s blessed! Wow. Now to try something with it...

I picked up those two cursed lizard corpses, from the fountain incident (Parts 32 and 33), and placed them on the ground. Took a few steps back and zapped them. Sure enough, a lizard sprang up. While it was trying to bite me, I walked back to where both corpses had been. I saw that there was now only one. Hmmm...

I turned around and bashed the live lizard with the blessed morning star, till it was just a blotch on the ground.

Now I stepped over to a spot where I was in direct line of sight to both corpses, that were now on individual squares. Zap. Lo and behold! Both corpses came to life! I did the look. Nothing was said about them being cursed. Hmmm...

Exchange. Beat them both until dead with the staff. I got the message saying I could check the box. Oh good. Threw the stuff back on the pile. I don’t like it. Even if it doesn’t rust. It takes two hands.
I’d rather use a battle-axe, or a forked polearm for that matter.

I picked up their carcasses and dropped them on the altar. They were now uncursed. Aaa-ha! Here’s another way to uncurse stuff (grin). Zap cured objects with a blessed wand that affects them.

I go back to the chest and root through it some more. Nope. No other blessed wands here. But I’ll keep all this in mind... I stowed the wand in the chest, and threw the lizards in the ice box.

- Next!
Mars isn’t ready for a reconciliation. Gonna take too long till he is. I need my stuff now. At least get that bag of holding going again. I really need it.

Root through the chest. How many scrolls of remove curse I got? Three. Well, I’ll use one now... Wait! I have an idea...

I dip the three scrolls, all simultaneously, in a blessed potion of water. They glowed blue. Verify on the altar... Yep. They’re now blessed. Okay... Pick up all the cursed stuff I can possibly hold. It was everything except for some weapons, and the two black gems. I didn’t even bother with any of the armor from the piles.

I grit my teeth and held my breadth. As I read a scroll, I was thinking: Hope this (blessing the scrolls) was all worth it...

Yippee! Got the bag - and all the stuff I had picked up, uncursed! Great! Yepper. Blessed stuff is just wonderful (laugh)!
I better drop everything back on the altar. Just to make sure... Wonderful! Everything is a-okay. I got a lot of mileage out of that potion. Got a multitude of objects uncursed in one shot. I'll try and keep that in mind: Do mass blessings, whenever possible.

Okay. I'll stow the last one (blessed water potion) in the chest. Keep it for another emergency. Hopefully, I'll be able to get some more soon. I'm gonna need at least five more. For some other ideas I have kicking around in my head. I'm working on some other ways, or variations there of, on getting more...

- Next!

Went back to that fountain. Tried a few things. BUT NOT BEFORE; leaving some of my stuff in a pile outside the room. Most of my attempted actions were; inconclusive, disappointing, or confusing. Got some weird messages (scratch head). Then the fountain broke and formed some pools of water. Didn't get any vials filled, only diluted some...

There's another on level 8. Had to explore a bit to find it again. Good thing I took notes of the different things on the levels. Or else, that most despicable of all species - the mindflayer - would have... Hrumph. Best not to think about that. You all know how I feel about them now. I'm sure...

Any way, got two more vials of water from that one. Then two snakes came out and the fountain dried up (sad face). But! I got an idea...

Ran back up to base camp. Made a kit expressly for fountain dipping. It contains second rate; armor, weapons, and other extra stuff. I'll be wearing / carrying that when I actually go through the motions. I'll change into it just after I'm certain that no wandering monsters are around. Leave all my good stuff a little ways further. Notably; a blessed scroll of remove curse (!). I'll also see if any of these cursed useless potions, that I've ear marked as such, will go straight to being blessed. Also again; I'm bringing a cursed dwarven, and a cursed elven, mithril-coat with me...

All the fountains up to, and including, the Oracle level are gone (sad face). They either dried up, or broke apart. But I have 11 vials of uncursed water now (grin)! Just have to figure out how to get them blessed.

I'm going to stop using cursed daggers as testing tools. I have 53 cursed darts. More than enough. I doubt there are more than 20 fountains in the whole Mazes of Menace...

- Next!

Mithril mail gets wet - it does not rust (!). But, I'll now save this experiment for the next water trap I (re)discover. I lost a fountain containing blessed water doing this. The dwarven coat became uncursed when I dipped it.

- Next!

Acid / corrosion test...

Took off my gauntlets of power. I didn't want to kill this monster too quick...

Y - an uncursed dwarvish mithril-coat (weapon in hand).

You begin bashing monsters with your dwarvish mithril-coat. You hit the spotted jelly.

You hit the spotted jelly. You are splashed by the spotted jelly's acid! Your dwarvish mithril-coat is not affected.

Okay. I believe you now. I was wrong. Mithril doesn't rust or corrode. But acid splashes hurt! I took three splashes. Knocked me for 42 hit points! I then stepped back a few squares, and let it have it with; blessed rusty thoroughly corroded arrows (thumbs up!).
- Next! Some puzzling encounters... Saw an imp, on dungeon level 5. It was friendly (peaceful). Strange? I thought imps were lawful? I'm chaotic? (scratch head) Maybe I'm just not remembering well...

**Dungeon level 10**

... You hear a chugging sound.

Uh - oh. That means something has just quaffed a potion. Better do a monster check...

A quasit. But it's not friendly (peaceful)? They're supposed to be chaotic!? Unless I have imps and quasits confused...?

Woah! The quasit just attacked me three times! Impressive for such a little tike (laugh)! Must have drunk a potion of speed. Well. Since it's bent on being so persnickety... BDDD's away!

Ughh... This quasit corpse tastes terrible!

Better check my status line to see if I'm sick...

Heal! I have 105 hit points! When did that change?! I haven't changed levels since... Uhm...

*Quickly scan through Ellora's story again...*

Since just after I turned Medusa to a statue (Part 23). Okay... (scratch head). How, and when, did this happen? Boy. Sure is strange. And I'm paying pretty close attention to stuff. Well, I dunno. No other message about the quasit. Other than how it tasted. I just dunno... I'll see if it ever happens again. Next time I eat one...

Found someone counting money on level 12. I immediately went into lich alert! But monster detection revealed it was a Grey-elf (?). Sure enough though, he was in a little room with 1,827 zorkminds. Hmmm... I think I know of some other places (levels) where that sound is happening...

- Next!

Eating... Ech - that must have been poisonous! You seem unaffected by the poison. The snake corpse tastes terrible.

Ech - that must have been poisonous! You seem unaffected by the poison. The scorpion corpse tastes terrible.

Hmm... Poison resistance. Yep. Must be that.

This carrot is delicious! You can see again!

The Oracle was right! But don't tell me it's the old; "rabbit and glasses" joke. Hmmm... I have a pair of lenses somewhere. I wonder...

- Next!

Some fun...

I killed a wraith. This is an excellent corpse for me to try something with. This idea came from that orc that picked up the acid blob...

Oh good. Here comes a gray unicorn. Make sure I have the wraith corpse wielded...

Hmmm... Took me 4 hits to kill it. Dunno if it drained any levels or not (?). I tinned the unicorn. Have another idea. But in the meanwhile: I need another lab rat. Put on blindfold. A piercer. Let's go see...

Two hits. No funny messages when I connect with my target either. What else is hanging around? A cockatrice. Okay. Let's see how that works...
Three hits. Hmmm... That wasn’t many. It left a corpse, though. After the wraith corpse rots away, I’ll try that one next. What else is around…?

He he. A cockatrice corpse sure gets someone out of your face in no time at all! Made six statues. Got another idea while I was doing this. Pulled out the pick-axe and broke them apart. Puzzling observation(s) here…

A little leperchaun statue made 45 rocks. A giant statue made only 22 rocks (?). You’d think it would be reversed, eh?

All this made me think of something else: I’ll bust apart Medusa’s statue with the pick-axe next time I get there. Just in case she comes back to life. Like it sometimes happens with statues. In fact, I’ll now bust apart statues of dangerous monsters.

Hmmm… Wonder if all the rocks would come back together, if a troll statue would be busted and then come back to life?

Saw some Uruk-hai. Well a whole throng of them. There were at least ten! Oh boy! I like playing with orcs (big grin).

I waited for the first one around a corner. When he got there, I jumped him with my bare, gauntleted hands. Had a wrestling match. Gave some of them body slams. I also tried throwing one of their corpses at the whole line - didn’t work. Then I wielded a corpse and bashed the others with it. It was hilarious! They were even shooting each other in the back with poisoned tipped arrows (laugh!).

Got 45 uncursed poison tipped crude arrows, and 6 cursed ones. (big thumbs up!)

- Next!

A new revelation from the Oracle!

True to her word, the Oracle offhandedly says: "They say that a summoned demon could improve your game."

He he he. I guess Yeenoghu is a good luck charm then. I’ll go visit him again. Bring a looking glass with me. Also: If he should get killed accidentally..., I’ll summon another - now that I think I know how.

- Next!

Other stuff…

Saw an iguana. On a whim; took "Dragonbane" out of the bag. Didn’t (again) notice nothin’ special…

More appraising with weapons; since my discovery on their price versus the amount of +’s they are. Blessed, cursed, rusty, corroded (all levels), poisoned, or any combination of these; does not affect the price of the object in any way - what so ever. That, has now been thoroughly investigated by me.

Having a calculator on hand is a must. Well for my brain (laugh!). When you get something like; 156 gold pieces for 26 blessed arrows. How am I gonna know what that means? I have only 10 fingers (wink)! But with a calculator: That translates to: 6 gold pieces per arrow. Which = +1 blessed arrows.

Some weird prices came up. Like; 32 gold pieces for 7 uncursed crude arrows (?). That doesn’t come out to a whole number per unit. Must be some kind of rounding factor for certain items. Well. Perhaps it’s caused by how incompetent orcs are. Like the guide says; "The armor and weapons fashioned by the Orcs are typically of inferior quality." (laugh!)

Found a blessed dagger that was going for 22 gold pieces. I named it: BDD.
2.15. MORE EXPERIMENTS

And; how come money is called "zorkminds" and shopkeepers give the prices in "gold pieces"? Good thing I'm an intelligent Elf. Else I may get confused (wink).

Lynx’s leave all kinds of stuff behind. Anywhere from; food rations, to gems, to tinning kits, and gray (or grey) stones.

Tried to sacrifice the tined gray unicorn: You can’t sacrifice that!

I seem to have a hard time hitting things when "throwing" corpses. In fact, I haven’t hit anything yet! I’ve tried it with; Uruk-hai, hill orc, cockatrice, wraith, bugbear, gnome lord, and dwarf king corpses. Guess it doesn’t work...

I pummeled an acid blob with one of the luckstones. But there weren’t any other monsters around to throw it at them. So I gave it to Mars.

Fought a dwarf somethin’ or other dude. When things got two hot for him, he zapped a wand of digging and fell down a hole. I immediately followed then promptly dropped him, of course.

But I took advantage of the opportunity to try something else on my list. I ran back up and dropped myself through the hole a few times. In order to test that idea I had. Don’t look like it’s so great. I keep dropping in different places. I’ll hold off for now. Just use that on certain levels.

- Big mistake stuff...

You make a motion towards the altar with your carrot. The voice of Mars booms out: "How darest thou desecrate my altar!" You feel foolish!

(sad face)

Okay. Running low on food in the ice box. Have most of the levels between 1 and 10 mapped out again. Gonna make a trip down the Mazes of Menace with some loot to base camp level 24. I’ll come back with some food. And maybe a scroll or two of charm monster...

2.15 More Experiments

Well, lots has happened since the last installment...

I went back to base camp level 24 to get some extra food. Was running low with all the stuff I was doing around the upper area to the Mazes of Menace, as well as the caverns.

Proceeded to shuttle booty down and continue to re-map the forgotten levels from the incident with the m-niff-r. All the while, I was trying out a few things on my list of things to do’.

Here are but just a few of all the things I either; did, try, found, discover, etc.

- Darn it.

I don’t have any scrolls of charm monster left (sad face). Hopefully a lynx will be carrying around a magic marker...

- A pointy hat.

The conical hat I got, from the previous mass uncursing (see part 35 ([2.14 on page 180]), became a big disappointment.

I thought it was a magic user hat, thus it would improve my spell casting. No way. It didn’t do nothin’ to help that. To boot; it was -2. Adding to instead of, subtracting from my armor class. And to crown the whole affair; it dropped 1 off of my charisma (roll eyes).

I threw it on my garbage pile...
- The following happened when I ate something:

Blech! Rotten food! The world spins and goes dark. You are conscious again.

You resume eating your meal. You finish eating the food ration.

(laugh!) You'd think that my character would have stopped eating, no?...

- The lich lenses.

Remember the lenses I found when I killed the lich that was counting money (see Part 28 (2.7 on page 145))? Well... I still have no clue what they're supposed to be for (laugh!)!

Thought that the whole thing with the carrot and blindness from the Oracle (see Part 35 (2.14 on page 180)) gave me an idea. I saw a bat and let it blind me. I put on the lenses to see if it would cure me. Nope.

Maybe they increase my intelligence? Nope.

I thought that they might help in my accuracy when thrown / fired weapons. But then I realized that:

It didn’t matter - I never miss any way!

Thought it may help me when I'm dealing with shopkeepers. Counting the money, you know. Maybe I could short-change him or something. Nope.

I'll put them on the 'things to be blessed list'. But there pretty far down (lots of laughs). Maybe they’ll show something when they do - like other stuff sometimes does.

They also get in the way of the blindfold.

Oh well, I carry them with me in the bag. Sometimes I wear them. Sometimes I don’t. (shrug)

- Finally, I found a cave spider!

"Sting" killed it in one shot. Hmmm... Not bad.

So then this is what "Sting" was designed to do (?). Kill spiders in one shot and warn me of orcs (?).

(shrug) At least Mars fire proofed it. Won’t burn up next time I meet a pyrolisk...

- Tried to call something in the same square as me:

This ugly creature is called Ellora and cannot be renamed.

Okay. Remind me, and then rub it in (see prologue to book 1). Although I’m female AND Elf, the game won’t generate a pretty one...

- A new message from the Oracle:

"Affairs with nymphs are often very expensive."

(laugh!) Well, maybe so. But the little darling that stole "Stormbringer" from me - saved my life (wink).

- More has been revealed about my amazing cloak of displacement.

It seems that my images are displaced up to a range of three. I had previously thought that it was up to a range of two. But recent observations from flailing, and failing, monster attacks say otherwise. I’ve even had non-cursed missile weapons, that were thrown at me, miss me by two squares!

That’s great. Spheres explode away from me. Monsters swing, as well as, throw things that have zero chance of connecting with my little Elf body (big grin).

- I got a spellbook of "stone to flesh".

That gives me an idea...
2.15. **MORE EXPERIMENTS**

Some statues are heavier than others. Even though they are of the same monster type. I’m going to try something next time I’m at the Oracle level...

- I found this engraved in the dust somewhere...
  Why do you think they call them mercenaries? I have no clue who "they" are. Till I do, I’ll reserve my answer...
- Throwing "Stormbringer"!
  This also drains the life from certain monsters. Doesn’t really serve me all "that" much, but handy to know and keep in mind...
- Killed a rust monster that left a corpse:
  Took off my gauntlets of power. I don’t know if they’re made of metal or not. Well, I didn’t at the time (wink).
  Picked up the corpse and walked around till I found a monster that was wearing armor. Turned out to be some kind of elf. Tried to make his stuff rust by bashing him to death with the corpse.
  But once I was rooting through his objects; I suddenly realized that since he’s an elf - he’s wearing mithril (slap forehead)! Not only that, but his boots and helm aren’t made of metal either.
  The corpse rotted away before I could find another test subject. Where are a mob of orcs when you need ‘em, eh?
  Oh well. At least it confirmed that mithril is rust proof, again.
- Throwing the corpse still doesn’t work. I kept missing...
  - Boulders level and teleportation.
    Did some experiments at the 'boulders’ levels with scrolls of teleportation, and wands of teleportation. Been meaning to do that for a while now.
  - Lots of experiments. Burned a wand completely and 2 scrolls. I think I know everything about that (or this) now...
    Gonna come in handy when I need to do an "emergency quick exit" from the levels where the natural laws of teleportation do not apply (!).
    Only thing that I didn’t get to do, that I wanted to try, was; to get engulfed and try teleportating myself (or the monster). This idea came from when I got swallowed by Burp back in Part 18 (see [1.20 on page 95](#)). But no such monster showed up. Not even a dust vortex... (disappointed face)
    - Some words from the hunters in the maze of steel trees on Home level 1:
      "Birdsong has returned to the grove, surely this means you have defeated Scorpious."
      I’m glad that the birdies are chirpin’ for them all. But I have a nagging feeling that Scorpious’ death curse, that he put on me, keeps coming back to haunt me. I keep discovering cursed items on me, from time to time...
      "Is that truly the Longbow of Diana that I see you carrying?"
      Yea. That’s truly the Longbow of Diana. Don’t touch it. Only a 14th level Ranger scout, or above, can wield it (wink)...
      And the only thing Orion wants to know; is how I’m doin’ with retrieving the amulet of Yendor.
      I’ll let you know, Orion. But, I’m still organizing for an assault on the Valley of the Dead. Still have a bunch of things to do first. Like get my stuff outa your damn maze of steel trees (!).
- Something weird on Home level 1:
  There’s a gnome lord on the west side of the maze of steel trees. I can’t get at him, or
  shoot him. And, it seems, so is the case for him... (?)
- Another ingenious idea that worked!
  I was in the little room, in the middle of the steel tree maze. Contemplating on how I could
  reduce the amount of time it would take me to get all the loot out of here. Then I got a
  flash of light:
  This is the same type of area as the boulders level!
  I put all the remaining booty in the two chests. There was still a lot, and most of it was real
  heavy stuff.
  I then took a step back and zapped each chest with a wand of teleportation. They disappeared.
  Where to? Who cares. Anywhere but here would be that much closer to exiting with them (laugh!).
  Turned out they had both gone to the big open area. So only one trip within the maze of steel
  trees was required! It is too bad that I didn’t know about this trick, when I was here before (see
  various parts in book 1).
  This was a huge accomplishment. I feel extremely proud of myself. Felt better about this than
  many of my other accomplishments in the game so far (smile of satisfaction).
  This part of the game, the steel tree maze, has got to be one of the worst. But thanks to it being
  so annoying; it got me really thinking on how to work around it. At least, as long as, if I have a
  wand of teleportation...
- "Stormbringer" life draining to nothin’:
  While I was sorting through my booty on Home level 1, an ice troll kept on hassling me. I had my
  arms full of stuff, thus being strained or stressed. I knew that if I killed him quick, BDDD’s you
  know, that he’d be back up in no time. So then I...
  Told him to hang on a few minutes. That I was kinda busy. I had all these things to sort through and
classify. My mind was really occupied with what has to go where, etc. I’d be with him soon. We’d
have a little scrap then. But: He kept on. I kicked him a few times, but he just didn’t get the message.
Well. Then I got pissed...
  (In case you haven’t noticed by now - my mind really focuses when I’m upset!)
  I dropped all the extra stuff I was carrying in one fell swoop. Took off my gauntlets of power.
  Exchanged. Drained the life from him with a hit from the black blade. Stepped away, and stayed
  away from him, for eight ticks on the clock. Repeated the process for a total of 6 times. When he fell...
  He never ever got back up (!).
  I know. Cause, I spent a lot of time after that sorting through all my junk. And his corpse was on
  the square right next to me the whole time.
  "Stormbringer" was uncursed, not blessed, at the time. So it wasn’t working at optimal
effectiveness. Else this may not have worked out as well. Blessed stuff works wonderfully, I have
now discovered.
- Base camp level 24.
  I had started writing the story about how I brought the ice box down to here. I have lots of food, you
  know. But after a while, it was turning out just to be a long boring story - even to me (laugh!).
  However, this place is now starting to really shape up, and it will save me from having to describe
  what’s been happening here. So, I’ll just skip ahead in time a little bit, and describe what this area
  is like now. Base camp here, has become more like a general headquarters than a base camp (laugh!).
Carved out some more alcoves with the pick-axe in the ex-temple to Mars. Have; four chests (some came from as far away as Home level 1), two large boxes, the ice box (Yes. I lugged it all the way down to here now. But that's a story I'll spare you from.), and three piles of stuff on the floor.

The six boxes and chests, and the Bell of Opening, are all in their own individual alcoves. In all my Nethack experience, monsters have never materialized in a doorway. Just like traps never appear in a corridor. So then, I know that no monster will appear and start messing with my stuff, like a gelatinous cube or storm giant, as long as its placed in one of these what I call "alcove", but the game calls "doorway" with the "/" command. The Bell of Opening refuses to go into any container (I tried lots of times). So it gets its own spot (shrug).

I tried toying with an idea (Yes, I'm full of ideas - laugh!) I had.
I kept a chest full of cursed stuff in the same square as the altar. For when I pray to Mars. In case he felt like uncursing all my stuff. But after a while, I moved it out of the way. Just was more of a hassle going through; the loot commands between it and the bag of holding, and dropping / picking up stuff onto / from the altar, etc. Just became a big headache (roll eyes). Oh well. Another idea that didn't work. But I got more ideas coming all the time...

So any ways. I named the ice box "Fridge". The large boxes are named; "Garbage", and "Cursed Stuff". The chests are named; "Missiles", "Ordnance", "The Cache", and "Tools". The three piles on the floor are; identified sundry weapons, identified sundry armor, and unidentified sundry weapons and armor combined.

Everything is at least three squares and more from the altar. Except for the "Fridge", which is at range two. I placed it there when I was still in the renovations phase of reorganizing the place. It's now full, and I don't feel like emptying it just to move it back a square. It still kind of gets in my way, but it'll likely stay where it is...

I mention the above, cause I found out I need room to maneuver around the altar when big heavy monsters show up. I have to try and lure them close, if not onto, the altar. That's so that I can have time to offer them to Mars when I kill them. And some of them would pick up a whole bunch of my junk before croaking. Just made me sort through and pile all my stuff again. I hated that.

So... Besides the "Fridge", I have a real neat - while extremely functional - base to work from (big grin).

Now I'm really, really, really hoping that the information in the Guide and from Izchack, are what they are. Else I'll have to move all this stuff further down in the future. But hey. If I have to - I have to. At least I have now learned how to properly organize a base camp, from which to stage missions from.

- Met an Aleax:
The "/" command told me the following; Said to be a doppelganger sent to inflict divine punishment for alignment violations.

Oh man (roll eyes). Get real. Mercury already sent an angel to harass me (see Part 28 (27 on page 145)). Is this Aleax thing going to fair any better...? Salvo throw BDDD's...

Nope. It went down to BDDD salvo fire just like anything, and everything, else does.

Guess ol' Mercury must be gettin' pretty upset with losing all his alters (wink).

- More from the Oracle:
Sinks and armor do not mix. Take off your cloak.
(scratch head). Okay... Just can’t figure how that will change things? But I gave it a try. I took off my cloak and then tried another slew of commands around some sinks...

Nothin’ came from it.
- Money counter...

Found somebody doing that again. Can’t remember where, but it was around base camp level four. This time it was a wight. He had 750 zorkminds in another little 2 square by 2 square room.

Hmmm... That’s now at least 3 I’ve found...
- Elbereth

Lot’s of experiments on different monsters done around this time. I was near the top eight levels. Works well when both; a monster that it affects, and when I levitate above the same square.

Does not work on; Elves (all kinds), gremlins, shopkeepers, incubuses, and Yeenooghu.
- Scrolls of scare monster:

Careful! These crumble to dust when you pick them up. I keep one - the only one I have - in my bag of holding. This may very well come in handy for the future. I know it would have, at the really bad fight I had on level 10 (see Part 7 (1.9 on page 31)). Back when I first had Missy Prissy. Or, my recent one at, the Valley of the Dead (see Part 26 (2.5 on page 136)).

- Oups! I hit the wrong key...

What are you looking for? The exit? The air around you crackles with electricity. You seem unhurt. The first two in that message sequence are funny (laugh!)
- Thrones.

Tried a few. But not before putting on my fountain dipping kit!

Any ways, to make things short; most disappeared on me. Got some out of place messages and something or other. Haven’t noticed any changes in my stats. But I had the ring of sustain ability on, in order to protect my charisma from dropping.

But two thrones brought a surprise. I summoned an audience, of which I subsequently butchered. And I got to wish for an item!

On this I pondered for over an hour, while the computer stayed on. I didn’t dare to try and save the game (don’t think its possible), and I didn’t want to take the chance of "escaping" from it like I did with the wand at the fortress. So I went for some coffee and a few smokes. Took a trip to the mall and bought a carton of cigarettes. Just needed my brain to experience a different environment, and let it stir on some ideas.

Well. I finally decided on asking for a: "scroll of charging".

Here were my reasons: I had the wand of wishing from the "Elbereth" chest from the fortress. But it was drained. I still had a potion of blessed water. This would be used to bless the scroll. I am now depending on the "blessed is best" school of thought. I then could (hopefully) recharge the wand. Thus getting, at the very least, another wish. If worse came to worse; I would have the charging scroll identified for the cost of a blessed water potion. But if I got two wishes instead of one from the wand; I could get the potion of blessed water back, identify the scroll of charging, and have a wish in hand. Anything more than two extra wishes would be pure bonuses (!!).

If worst came absolutely to worst; I would try and wrest the last charge from it. Therefore it was almost guaranteed that I’d get two wishes.
2.15. MORE EXPERIMENTS

So the scroll of charging turned out to be "XIXAXA XOXAXA XUXAXA". Fine. I had no idea what it was. And nothing close to it appeared in my scroll notes or appraisals. So I also got it appraised at Chibogamau’s shop. Another thing accomplished.

- I told you so...

On level 21, the statue of an ettin zombie came to life! Stupid me. And I had already mentioned this several times in the story so far. That statues will sometimes come to life when your near them.

That statue, as well as all the other ones I’ve reported, have all been moved. This is to see what’s underneath them. So this was really a statue at some point. Not something pretending to be. Though...

Now It’s a rotting corpse (wink).

Any way. This just re-affirms my plan to shatter all dangerous statues...

- Blessed water brain storm.

Got a big idea. Actually. I’ve been mulling this one through my head for a while now... Basing this from what the guide, the Oracle, and my intuition says:

There are five altars and/or places of worship of the gods, in the game.

I brought one uncursed potion called water to the altar; on level 1 with Yeengo, at base camp level 4, and at Marsville. I dropped them on the same square with the altars. Maybe it just takes a little time, and/or sacrificing with them present for something to happen. (shrug) Can’t hurt. And as long as I wear the blindfold before leaving the level, I’m sure that no monster is gonna pick them up (This is from my discovery about this in the guide. See Part 20 (I.22 on page 107)).

Next. I brought two potions to the priestess of Venus on level fourteen.

Yea. I know. I have to kill her for Mars. But I want to make sure that she has no use to me first...

I dropped the potions on the altar to Venus and stepped away. I waited till she had moved to the same square as the potions and the altar. That done; I chatted with her.

She asked for a donation. That’s what I was expecting, and hoping, she would say. I gave her 1,002 zorkminds. Here was my reasoning...

The most expensive potion in the game was 444 zorkminds. Whatever that is, I could care less, I just know it wasn’t blessed water. So then if that’s the most expensive, two of those would be 888 zorkminds. So I figured that I’d give a little more. I figured an extra 10% for a total of 977 zorkminds.

Then an extra zorkmind on top of that, in case the computer calculated that it has to be more than the 'price + 10%', for a total of 978 zorkminds. Then I figured that I’d better give an extra zorkmind "per" potion that I wanted converted, for a new total of 979 zorkminds. Then I thought that the computer might not like that. Because that new total number would not divide evenly into a whole number. (groan) Okay fine. I’ll give her 500 zorkminds per potion. I’ll pay that. After all; If I ever really need to buy something from a shop - I’ll just murder the shopkeeper. So besides for blessed water - I have no need for zorkminds. And if I do - I’ll just kill stuff (like a shopkeeper) till I got enough. Okay. So finally... I got scared that the computer might not like this new total cause the last number was a zero. If you ever got a message on your home computer saying: "Error. Division by zero." You know what I mean. So 1,002 zorkminds was my final amount.

The priestess thanked me for my contribution. I waited for her to move away from the altar. The potions were still there. I picked them up and dropped them. They were still uncursed!!

Hey! I just paid you over a thousand smacks to bless these things. What gives?

The priestess wanted more money.
It was very difficult..., but through great mental self-discipline...; I managed to resist the impulse of SLAYING HER WHERE SHE STOOD.

Keeping my composure, I told her she’d better have those potions blessed, by the time I passed through here next!

(mumble, grumble)
- Newest addition to the list of 'things to do'.
- If I ever find some coffee in the game, I'll bring it to Izchack...
- Leperchauns only carry gold.
I have, as of yet, never found anything else on them.
- Speaking of leperchauns...
- If I don’t have any number showing next to the "$" on the status line; the leperchauns don’t pop out of sight. They just try to flee when I bop them.
- Current favorite leperchaun thumping device:
A blessed +1 morning star.
Works real well. Especially when bringing the spiked ball down along a vertical arc. Meets the top of their noggin real good, without me having to bend down.
- Sleeping?
# chat
The leperchaun seems not to notice you.
(You have one guess as to what happened next...)  
- No idea what this means (?).
You hear snoring snakes.
I searched the whole level with the Longbow of Diana’s real time monster detection ability. Nothin'.
No snakes. No types of snake. No lizards at all, even... (?)
You hear a strange wind.
Same thing again. I searched all over. Didn’t come across any dust vortices, nor air elementals... (?)
- Confused...
I was at base camp level 24. Doing what else? None other than; rootin’ through my stuff (laugh!).
When an umber hulk came round and confused me with his gaze.
Well. That gave me an idea. Why don’t I take this opportunity to test something from the Oracle?
I was standing on the same square as the chest named "The Cache". Lucky. That meant that I didn’t have to try and move to the right one (laugh!). I pulled out a scroll, made sure I had the Longbow of Diana wielded, and read it. My gauntlets of power became rust proof!
Looks like I was also confused in real life (laugh!).
Okay... My gauntlets are made of metal. So then that solves that. I can now safely pick up rust monster corpses.
Also, reading a scroll of enchantment while confused, rust proofs objects. The Oracle was right on there.
The umber hulk was getting closer, so had to hurry and try something else the Oracle had suggested...
2.16. IDENTIFY!

I ate one of my lizard corpses.
Nothin’. I was still confused. Hmm... That didn’t work. Now I’m starting to question whether the Oracle is 100% accurate. Again...
Oh well. Apply unicorn horn.
Now then. I applied a looking glass towards the umber hulk. It got confused from it’s own reflection. Great! The looking glass doesn’t work on too many monsters. But It sure is funny on this thing (laugh!). Combined with it trying to find me with the cloak of displacement on, it sure looked drunk (!).
Next. I wielded a lizard corpse and proceeded to pound the umber hulk. I don’t think it ever got confused. No message came up saying so any way...
Well. That wasn’t bad. Got to try quite a few things on my 'list of things to do’ - all in one encounter (big grin)!
Now then. I wonder how Mars likes these things? Let’s see. I drag this corpse with the big mandibles towards the altar...

2.16 Identify!

I dumped the umber hulk’s body on the altar to Mars. Offered it and got the reconciliation message.
Okay. Time to maybe get a pile of stuff uncurse.
I dropped all non-essential items. Then went to the large box named "Cursed Stuff" and pulled out all the cursed stuff that my backpack could accommodate. Now I prayed...
Mars gave me a dusty spellbook.
I was somewhat disappointed. Mars hadn’t uncursed my stuff in a long time. Oh well. I put all the cursed items back in the box and dropped the dusty spellbook on the altar.
It was blessed, of course. So, I blew the dust off the cover, and read it...
IDENTIFY!
Oh boy! I go to the spell screen. Yep. I was correct all along. It’s a third level spell. Quickly, I got out of my armor and looked again...
98% fail. Hmm... Not too good (sad face).
Ponder...
Well. Now is the time - if it was any...
I went to the "enhance" screen and checked the box next to divination spells.
Back to the spells screen. It was down to 38% fail! Good enough!
Now I started the long - yet exciting - process of identifying; chests, boxes, and piles, all full of loot and booty...
Well. I ran out of power pretty quick (sad face). Now I learned another lesson:
Identify stuff that’s really hard to identify first!
So, I filled up the time required for my power to get back up several ways...
- With trips down to Chibougamau’s shop, in order to verify how close I was with the appraisals I had previously done. Turned out that I was almost perfect with the price to "+" ratio I had uncovered
previously. Was only off by a + on some polearms and a few swords. But for all the rest of the weapons
- I was bang on (!). Great. I'll hold off on identifying weapons till I get some of these amulets, rings,
and tools figured out.
- With the ongoing process of re-mapping the lost levels. This was taking longer than expected. Mainly
due to me constantly getting sidetracked with all the things on my 'to do' list (laugh!).
- With shuttling booty from the upper levels down to the big base camp here, on level 24. I was
rediscovering, as well as, discovering forgotten caches and new areas on the different levels of the
Mazes of Menace.
- With occasional experiments when opportunities presented themselves.
- New items!
I had, and still am, amassed quite a horde of booty. A lot of it was unknown. Like; rings, potions,
amulets, tools, and some wands, etc. To cut down on some story telling; here's some of the stuff, to
me, that got identified and helped me out, and/or strengthened Ellora during this time:
- A ring of warning.
This thing works to a range of 8 squares. Just one beyond the Longbow of Diana's real time monster
detection ability. It also works in real time. If that weren't enough; it also detects non-telepathetic
monsters. Such as ochre jellies, brown mold, elf zombies, etc.
This ring, combined with the occasional use of the blindfold, and simply carrying the Longbow of
Diana; really reduces surprise monster encounters. Also, when I'm trying to avoid a monster, I can
choose a path through the dungeon that isn't blocked by a another one that normally was tough for
me to detect, unless I was on top of it - like spotted jellies.
This ring is, now, nearly always on one of my hands.
- A ring of slow digestion.
What can I say...? No more food problems, really. But I still keep a few food items in the bag of
holding. One centaur corpse keeps me going for a very long time. A dragon corpse even longer. And
even jackals seem to sustain me longer.
Best move I made, concerning this new discovery, was to have brought the ice box to the big base
camp on level 24. At least I know that all my food isn't going to rot!
This ring is, also, nearly always on one of my hands.
- A ring of teleport control.
This was very handy while all the level teleportation traps lasted. I was using it to quickly move from,
wherever I was, to base camp level 24, and vice versa.
- A ring of regeneration.
I don't need it for what I've been doing lately. My own hit points come back fast enough on their own.
But handy in case I get in another huge fight. I'll use it to heal up faster.
- Potions of gain ability.
These are fun to quaff. Charisma is now at 12 (big grin)!
- Number of charges on various wands.
The identify spell gave me the number of charges on all my wands. Now I know how many zaps I
get with them. Real handy to know. Especially for the wand of teleportation. You don't want to be
cought with zero charges when surrounded by mindflayers!!!!!! - A blessed +2 spetum.
2.16. IDENTIFY!

This confirmed what I had devised due to having it appraised by a shopkeeper. This is a wonderful weapon. It’s lightweight, and can be used to pretty well swing at anything at range two. Real good against monsters that are caught; in a pit trap, in a beartrap, behind another monster or pet, and behind a boulder. Especially if you don’t want to let it touch you - like mindflayers.

I know. Stand off weaponry, like BDDD’s, is better. But there are situations where you either don’t have such missile weapons available, or you don’t want to risk losing them. Like when killing monsters in water, or that are stuck in a web.

- 22 blessed +3 arrows.

Enchanted nicely AND blessed. These became my new secondary super missile weapons (after the BDDD). Always good to have redundant ‘long range monster dropper’ capability. Just like how my old +2 runed arrows had served.

- A +0 robe.

Discovered this late. But when I put it on, identify fell to 0% fail. Made all future mass identifying attempts so much easier. Even with the gauntlets of power still being worn, fail rate was 3%. I carry it with me in my bag of holding.

It seems, but I’m not sure, that when I am burdened, more power is used per spell attempt than when I’m not encumbered. So wearing the robe with the gauntlets of power was wonderful. Came in handy when I was identifying massive weapons / armor piles.

Having stuff identified for real, was also great for figuring out their sell prices at Chibougaman’s shop. I made lots of notes. This will be handy for future games.

A few interesting discoveries here. Also food for thought...

Silver weapons (and armor) are horrendously expensive. Even with negative, or no enchantments!

All types of bows, are also very highly priced, compared to most other weapons.

My original elven cloak, is the most expensive one in my entire inventory!

- Other noteworthy discoveries from the spell of identify.

I have 6 swords that are rustproofed. They are all long swords, and 2 of these are also blessed. Some are as high as +2 even. Hmmm... Is the game biased to fighter classes...?

The wand of enlightenment is cursed. That’s too bad. I had wanted to zap myself with it.

A grey stone turned out to be a flint stone. Though, I have yet to succeed in figuring out how to start a fire with it.

Cursed -4 arrows; get mulched 90% of the time (!!!).

"Orcrist", and "Dragonbane", had also been rustproofed by Mars!

I have all kinds of weird tinned meat.

Even the type of eggs can be identified (!).

And the eggs I laid when I was a winged gargoyle, are gargoyle eggs. So now I finally know why my babies never grew up to be the same as their mother.

There are two types of candles; tallow, and wax.

Pick-axes are all at +0. So now I assume that they can be enchanted.

The same applies to unicorn horns, I assume.

The Bell of Opening is classified as a "Unique Item".
Remember my +3 snow boots (see Part 10 (*I.12* on page 47))? Well... They’re kicking boots (laugh)! Even though an object is identified, it doesn’t mean that it will appear in the "\" screen. So watch out...

- Stuff that I have no clue what they do, even though they’ve been identified...
  - amulet of unchanging eucalyptus leaf crystal ball (glass orb) tooled horn pair of lenses

I didn’t know it was at the time; but this gift from Mars, turned out to be another major breakthrough in the game. It sure turned things around!

Some highly enchanted daggers + some old BDD’s + a potion of oil + 2 (one was blessed) scrolls of enchant weapon; have brought my total BDDD count to nine (!). It sure feels good to have a few of these back in my arsenal (big grin).

Too bad I didn’t receive (or find) this spellbook earlier. Would have saved me much work - and guessing.

But then again; I also learned a lot by going through all the motions without having it.

My new system of communicating with Mars is also working out quite well. These two things, combined with my new experiences, have sure changed a lot.

Since the incident at the fountain (Part 32 (see *2.11* on page 167)); the Longbow of Diana, "Storm-bringer", and my BDDD’s, have been blessed by him again. That takes a lot of pressure off of my ’things to be blessed’ list.

One thing for sure; all my future games will now be played very much differently...

Oh yeah...

Here’s what "Lizard Lifesaver" turned out to be:

A blessed wand of undead turning named Lizard Lifesaver.

I’m confused (?). Thought I had it figured out. (shrug) Guess I’ll have to try it on the next undead monster I meet at base camp level 24...

I keep this wand in the "Fridge" (ice box).

### 2.17 Filling Water

With all the trips I’m making back and forth, I’ve shortened the routes between the stairs on certain levels. The pick-axe is pretty handy.

I can’t recall if I’ve mentioned this already or not. But, I also opened up a direct route to both the stairs, and the room where all the monsters get generated on level 24.

This is so that when I don the blindfold, just before exiting the level, and see a non friendly monster near my base - I can run back and off it before it starts to rummage through my stuff.

I now have a few more friends here. I’ll introduce them:

- Chuckles - the gremlin.
- Mort - the storm giant.
- Manfred - the red naga.
- Cuss - the Grey-elf.
- Cynthia - the wood nymph.
- Slinky - the lizard.

I’ve separated Cynthia from the rest, cause she just stays in a dark room by herself all the time. She’s kind of anti-social. Don’t like to interact with the rest of us.
2.17. FILLING WATER

Chuckles is always in a good mood. Though I'm starting to think he has a few screws loose. Laughs at anything I say - no matter what. A real frivolous type of guy.

Mort is a real serious giant. He's the complete opposite of Chuckles when it comes to personality. Likes discussing dungeon exploration. He's real good at science too. Something to do with electromagnetism.

Manfred... Well I'm just not too sure. He's kind of in his own world. Mumbles a lot, and talks to himself. But Mort likes him. I think their old buddies. They're often hanging together.

Cuss has a really foul temperament for an elf. I suspect something happened to him when he was young - about 400 years ago. I'm Elf too, but I'm not as intensely hostile towards orcs as he. But, he's okay when we discuss other matters.

We also have a mascot on the level, Slinky, just likes to run around between all our legs (Except for Manfred, of course. He has no legs,) and, occasionally takes a nip at me.

We've had a problem crop up here of late...

Seems like my light spells are no longer keeping the ghosts out of the old temple. It worked for quite a while. But not any more. Either that, or they're getting braver... (?)

Normally it's not a problem. I can dispatch them in 1 or 2 turns with salvo fire. But with my friends sometimes being around, it gets kinda tricky. You all know, how I sometimes have accidents, from my past experiences (wink).

We had a nurse here for a while. She kept on asking me to take off my clothes. (laugh!). There's a few denizens in the Mazes of Menace that are into kinky stuff, eh?

Met a demi lich. Don't tell me there are different kinds of liches now... (!?).

It came from the monster generator, somewhere in that room with the shattered statue. Figured it would be only half a lich. But it looked and acted just like a regular one. It got to within 6 squares of me before I could get a proper bead on it. Lucky it didn't teleport next to me. Think it was cause I had the cloak of displacement on at the time. Checked all my stuff and didn't notice anything that got cursed.

Speaking of my cloak of displacement; I figured that that's what caused this message:

The dust vortex lunges forward and recoils!

I'm still trying to disarm monsters with the spetum (not demi liches, by the way). It's the only function that doesn't seem to be working. Maybe it doesn't at all in Nethack (?)

From the same monster generator, later on, came another nazgul. That I tried to disarm with the spetum. Cause I know they carry long swords. Didn't work. Any way, he was carrying; a long sword, a knife, a potion of acid, and a wooden ring. I think I see a pattern...

I've tried real hard to start a fire with the flint stone. My best attempt was when:

I pilled some blank scrolls + a scroll of fire (figured it was extra combustible) with some stads (none were cursed, I even thought of that) from a wood golem on the ground. Now I sat, in order to be closer to the fuel. Next I rubbed "#rub" - NOT applied - the flint stone with a regular dagger (dagsgers rust, so I know they're made of metal). Nothing (shake head).

I've since stowed the flint stone. I have many more experiments to try on my 'things to do list', any way.
Oracle level 9

Two of the same type of centaur statues were at different weights. So I 'flesh to stone'ed the heavier one. Took a lot of tries. It’s at 70% fail. But I got it, and when it died, I found a spellbook! Hmmm... Spellbooks are heavy...

I got another idea (laugh!).

A blue jelly left a corpse. Since they’re cold creatures; I put it in the ice box, instead of offering it to Mars. It’s still there, even after 1,600 ticks on the clock!

That, with my new 'flesh to stone' spell, and bashing monsters with corpses, has led me to another idea. But I need a few more experiments first. I’ll let you know how it works out. Just want you all to know that I’m always thinking (wink)...

Besides the ones I’ve mentioned in other parts of the story, here are additional statues I’ve recently shattered; Medusa, lich, rust monster, trapper (level 20), ochre jelly, spotted jelly. I don’t want any of those to come to life when I’m around them.

As you can see from the previous, I’m at dungeon level 20 again. I’m going to now map it completely. It’s the only one I haven’t reported to you yet...

Dungeon Level 20

- swamp room (x2)
- unmarked grave
- statue of a trapper (shattered)
- sink
- fountain

Found a tombstone. It was unmarked. So pulled out the pick-axe and dug it up...

You start digging downward. You dig a pit in the grave. There is a pit here. The grave seems unused. Strange...

Donno what’s strange about it? But here was the contents; a scroll of magic mapping, a potion of confusion, and a worthless piece of yellowish brown glass.

The trapper statue was broken by a wand of striking at range 3. No use taking chances.

There was also a live trapper in one of the water rooms. He was in a tough spot to get at. I couldn’t get him lined up for arrow fire. So I chopped away a path through the level with the pick-axe. When I was one square away from digging out the wall, I stepped back two squares and, zapped it with a wand of digging. Chopping a square takes 5 ticks on the clock. Didn’t want to be next to it while taking so much time. It then died from blessed arrow salvos at range three. I think I ate it too. So, as it finally turned out, there were only two rooms with water puddles in them after all. I wasn’t sure before. The rooms were dark, but I didn’t have a light source. Mars still hasn’t uncursed my brass lantern. These rooms were mostly filled with pirahnas, eels, and jellies.

The spatum didn’t work cause, although I can detect them with monster detection and/or warning, the game won’t let me unless I can see them with normal vision (groan). So I fired arrows for a while till I ran out. Invoked the Longbow of Diana (risky, cause it wasn’t 860 turns yet) and finished off the monsters in the first room.
While I was running back down to base camp for more arrows; I was putting my brain and intuition to use once more (grin)...
I wonder what happens when I push a boulder in a water puddle?
When I got back, I chopped a path to a nearby boulder. Then pushed it into a puddle in the cleared room. It filled it up! And the game told me something about it being safe to walk there now (!?).
Hmmm...
So I did. Now I was wondering if I could dig in the same square? Would I strike water again? I’ll try. But not before taking precautions, of course! I put on the ring of levitation first. But the game told me I was too high to dig down. Okay. Fine then. All indications suggest it’s like an ordinary floor. If worse comes to worse, I’ll just zap myself with the wand of teleportation, should I fall in water.
I took off everything that might rust and piled it close by. Dug down and made an ordinary pit. Okay. Now that’s figured out. It is just like ordinary ground. But here’s the kicker: I found an eel corpse, some blessed arrows, a gem, and a kelp frond in the bottom of the pit I dug!!
Hmmm... Man. This game sure has a lot of thought put into it. How come it takes so little space on my hard drive?
Any way. That led to more ideas. See how when you discover something, it leads to other stuff, and yet to more discoveries? I won’t get back to the Valley of the Dead till July - if this keeps up (lots of laughs)!
So for the next water room, I refined my tactics so that I killed most of the monsters in the same water square. The electric eel was too stubborn. It was killed in another. I then dug my way to another boulder and pushed it into the square where most of them died. When I dug a pit in that same spot, I got a whole bunch of stuff again.
Don’t know what kelp fronds are. But they’re classified in the comestibles area in my inventory. I’ll try one later, when I’m not satiated. Still digesting the trapper.
The above experiences gave me another idea. I can push a boulder, on level 28 with the fortress, into the water. That way I won’t have to levitate to enter it through the front (western) entrance. It’s just too bad I busted the boulders that were there already. Did that looking for stairs when back when (laugh!).
Also... I think I remember which square my BDDD’s went to on the titans level (27). Back when I had met the nazgul, and the water walking master mindflayer (see Part 24 (2.3 on page 128)). Don’t remember if there are any boulders near by. Probably not. And I’m sure no where near enough either. Maybe a scroll of earth...
Another thing comes to mind, while speaking of water. Levitating and trying to dip potions doesn’t work. Your still to high off the ground. I tried that, when I was filling vials of water from fountains, not too long ago.
And speaking of water...
The priestess of Venus still hasn’t blessed my vials. I’ve since upped the ante. I gave her 2,002 zorkminds the last time I passed through her temple. I’m also giving her 1,000 clock ticks to get her act together...

2.18 Murder Under The New Moon

Hello Ellora, the elven Ranger, welcome back to Nethack! Be careful! New moon tonight.
CHAPTER 2. BOOK 2

Hmm... Okay I'll be careful...

Your bloodthirsty blade attacks! The imp screams! The black blade draws the life from the imp! You kill the imp!

Oops! Ah crap...

I felt kind of bad. This was the peaceful, yet strangely enough, lawful imp. Only such one that I'd found like this. I've since verified my sources: Imps are lawful, quasits are chaotic. I was correct. So he was kind of like an anomaly...

All right. What's next on the list of things to do'? Hmm...

Most of the stuff left, has to be done below the ghost level. But, there are still a few concerning the upper levels. Fine. I'll concentrate on that, this session. Maybe wrap up the upper levels. But, the way I keep getting sidetracked, something else will probably crop up any way!

Said good bye to my pals here, and headed up in the Mazes of Menace...

Passing through level 5; I took the opportunity to murder the shopkeeper in the antique weapons shop. Murder isn't really on my list. It's just a means to achieve certain goals on my list.

He had a few +1 weapons and missiles and, yet another, one of them silver sabers. Some I had sold to him on prior occasions. But what I'm really looking for is - a wand of death. Shopkeepers always have at least one type of wand on them. And I don't have one of these yet. Well, no luck here.

Okay. Stowed some stuff on level 4. Verified the water vial on the altar. Still uncursed. Hmm...

And headed up to that humongous potion shop on level 2...

There I picked up all the potions in the pile, there were still over 50 of them, and put them in the bag of holding. I was still stressed or strained. Forget which it was. It's the one that follows burdened, any way.

Ponder... Okay. I'll plan another mission, just for this guys' inventory. I still have lots of other things to do. I pulled the potions back out and left them there for now. I'll be back to murder him another time.

Off to Marsville...

The general store guy was in a tough spot for maximum range BDDD salvo throwing, which is range 12. I busted up some walls in the town, to clear a line of fire, with the pick-axe. Waited for him to step back into the doorway to his shop. Hit "." a few times...

BDDD's away!

His body made the sound of a muffled thud when he keeled over.

Great. Just like the other shopkeeper; he never had a chance to zap a wand at me. Thereby saving the charges on them for me (big grin)!

He had no wand of death. Darn...

Offered him to Mars, then checked the water vial on the altar. Still uncursed. Hmm...

Oh well. Since I'm here. I'll go see my buddy Izhack...

First words out of Izhacks mouth after his initial greeting:

"Don't steal from me. I have friends in high places."

Don't worry buddy, I told him, while I pulled out a couple potions of booze from the bag (You have no inventory left to steal any ways.). I haven't yet found any coffee for him, either.
We had the brews, and talked for while. I don’t plan on coming back here too much anymore. So wanted to make absolutely sure of a few things...
- You need to take things one at a time.
- Don’t steal from me. I have friends in high places.
- The Valley of the Dead is a gateway to somewhere else.
- You may very well need something from this shop in the future.
- I don’t like poopy coffee. Gimme some colombian expresso instead.
- Slow down. Think clearly.
- Those who serve their deity will prosper.
- Getting the Devteams agreement on anything is difficult.

Some great words of wisdom there, Izchack - if I do say so myself (!).

Okay. That confirmed everything I already new. I left him a potion of booze and went to my base.

Loaded up with all the stuff I wanted from here. Head to base camp level 4 in the Mazes of Menace.

Loaded up there and down to base camp level 24.

I killed some elves on the way down also. Elves have real good stuff. Elven mithril mail is always worth checking out. Elven shields are great. Both for their light weight, and they’re worth two off your armor class - even at +0 enchantment. I now have replaced the large shield with one of these. Elven daggers don’t rust. So they’re good on rust monsters, puddings, etc. And elven bows allow me to shoot five arrows, as long as they’re also elven.

But what I really am looking for are; elven arrows. Those are real hard to come by. But I’m getting a decent stock now. I have over 50 assorted elven arrows in "The Cache".

Okay, I’ve arrived. The Caverns, and the Boulders, are both finished. All the remaining things on my 'to do' list involve just the Mazes of Menace. Good, and... Phew!

So. Unload, test for cursedness, identify, sort, and store all this booty.

Hmmm... I made a startling discovery...

Eight of my newly acquired elven arrows are cursed! This is perplexing. I have never before run into something from an elf that has been cursed prior to this! I know. Cause those arrows came from the last elven king - I had just killed him a few levels above.

Hobbits sometimes have elven daggers that are cursed. But elves never do... Or did...?

I am somewhat concerned...

Oh well. I put those in the "Cursed Stuff" container. I’ll make sure I have them on me next time I reconcile with Mars.

That done. Now it’s time to go murder the shopkeeper on level 2, and acquire all his booty.

So I only brought what would be necessary. I dumped most of the contents from the bag of holding. In order to be able to come back here, not more encumbered than, burdened. Then down I went...

I’m in that humongous potion shop on level two. I’ve known about this place for such a long time. All the way back to the first day I started this game, I think (see Part 1 (1.3 on page 9))! Finally, I’m going to get all these potions.

If the remaining fountains in the Mazes of Menace can hold out, and combined with the ones in "The Cache", I have enough vials here for another 80 potions of water! The priestess of Venus will sure get
rich off of me - if she can ever get her act together! But I'm not worried. I'll get my money back. I'll murder her after she's done her work too (big grin).

Hey! Nothin' personal. It's not my fault. I'm just an instrument of Mars...

Anyhoo... Stop day dreaming. Gotta get to work!

I put all the potions in the bag. I'm only burdened. Good. Now I go and line up the shopkeeper, all the way at the other end of this huge shop, for a BDDD salvo. But first I drop the bag, so that I'm not burdened for the upcoming fire fight. I'm just about to hit the "t" key, when I get another idea... Don't you all start rolling your eyes (laugh)! You know? I never dug myself through a shop floor yet. I've teleported out in the past (prior games), but not zapped a wand of digging down... Hmm...

Did I bring the pick-axe with me? I look in the bag. Yep!

I have an even better idea. I'll use that and save a zap from the wand! I'm so thoughtful (big grin)!

The shopkeeper wasn't happy when he saw me pull out the pick-axe from the bag.

I ignored him, and gleefully started digging down with the pick-axe.

Careful Madame. You may fall through. (Or something like that).

I stuck my hand out of the pit, and waved bye-bye to him.

"a" then "p" then "SHIFT + >"

I fell through the hole I dug. The shopkeeper grabbed my backpack as I did!

Huh?? WHAT!!?

I think some alarm went off too, but that wasn't really what concerned me.

So there I am. Now on dungeon level 3. I have only the amulet of reflection (Thank Mars for that, at least.), my worn armor, the two rings I was wearing, the lich lenses, and the pick-axe. Everything else was gone!

To make matters worse; the shopkeeper I had just tried to shaft, was now standing right next to me!

Oh man... (hang head). I don't feel so smug now! You see, if he's now carrying all my stuff, that means he has; "Stormbringer", a +4 axe, a wand of lightning, a wand of frost, a wand of fire, and 9 BDDD's!! That's not all, he also has a whole slew of my other stuff, but those are what were worrying me the most at this instant in time! Plus, whatever he also had in his possession before he grabbed my backpack! I think I had great cause for worry here (urghh)...

Why didn't I just off him when I had the chance?

Or at the very least: I should have listened to the Oracle when she said; "digging wands to hasten exits"

But no... I had to try something stupid first (shake head).

*Isn't it just amazing how quickly your mood can swing in this game?*

Okay. Time to do some big time thinking. What to do? Hmm...

There's no way I'll be able to kill him with the pick-axe fast enough. That will require at least 6 hits - probably more. Lots of time for him to use all my stuff on me beforehand.

Should I run? How will I get my stuff back if I do? And will I get away, any way?

I sure wish there was a grappling option / command in Nethack. Same as the 'game that Nethack is not'. That would really be what I would do now, if faced with the same situation in real life
2.18. MURDER UNDER THE NEW MOON

(!). Especially since I'm wearing gauntlets of power. That gives me 25 strength! No way you can use melee, ranged, or wand weaponry when something has jumped you. Especially with such overpowering strength.

Hmm...

Maybe if I try to move into him. Like I did a few times in the past with other creatures? That might jostle him some, or at least throw him off balance. And if he's carrying all my stuff - I HOPE THE GAME CONSIDERS HIM TO BE STRESSED!

So I tried that: "m" and then "2"...

The shopkeeper zapped a wand of lightning. It bounced off of my amulet - went through him - bounced off the wall behind him - and nailed him again.

He died.

Pheeeew....

I guess that shopkeeper should have paid better attention to the new moon. See what happens when your not careful (wink)?

All my stuff was there with his corpse. Except my wand of lightning was missing a charge. Fine. Small price to pay. I got 53 potions totaling 8,100 zorkminds, plus the shopkeepers personal booty, plus a very big lesson learned. All for the paltry cost of a zap from a wand of lightning.

Luuuuuucky. I'll gladly pay that price!

Okay people. You've just seen what happens. If your gonna try this trick; at least do it in one shot - use a wand of digging!

Now then. Let's get all this booty back to the big base camp...

Didn't wind up doing all I wanted to do with the upper levels, but I accomplished a lot. I'm happy I got all the potions from that shop on level two. I had been wanting to do that for sooo long now. And I learned some new things while I was at it.

The shops were fine for a while. They served me well throughout the game. But I want all the booty from The Mazes of Menace in a central place now - my place (grin)! That way, I don't have to run all over the dungeon for something.

Chibougamanu, is still around on level 21. I'm going to leave him for now. I'm still using him to get sell prices after I have identified stuff.

Back at the big base camp level 24:
Check, verify, identify, sort, and store all my stuff.

Now I'm gonna have a party with all my friends! Got lots of booze now!

My favorite are the cursed ones. They pack a real wallop!

Make sure nothings around me with the blindfold...

All clear!

Now quaff the cursed potion of booze named XXX...

Ooph! This tastes like liquid fire! You pass out. You awake with a headache.

Okay. Save the game. That's enough for tonight's new moon...
2.19 Food Fight!

"Food fight."

John Belushi — National Lampoon’s Animal House (1978)

New Moon is gone (shrug).
What’s next (on my ‘things to do’ list)? Hmm...
I’ll go see Yeenoghu. He’s way at the top of the Mazes of Menace. Finish off a few things with him. Then work my way down the levels - and my list. That will lessen the amount of time I spend running back and forth.
I made sure I had the proper tools. And down I went.
Oh! Before I get too far into the story here. I’ll mention what Ellora’s attributes are like now. I quaffed a few more potions of gain ability:
Str 18, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 20, Cha 14
That’s when I have nothing on. The gauntletts of power increase my strength to 25. I still have the +2 ring of increase strength that puts it at 18/02, but I never use it anymore. And I have a +1 ring of adornment, that I only wear before chatting with someone or something.
My hit points are at 124 (!). Don’t ask me how that happened. I have no clue (laugh!). And neither have I eaten any more quasit corpses.
My power is at 114. That, I got from a blessed potion of gain energy. Since I have the identify spell, I never have enough energy. With all of my best armor (the ones with the most +’s) being worn; my armor class is at -21.
So I’m climbing the Mazes of Menace, and when I get to level two, a cream pie flew in my general direction. Oh yea... The fuzz. Forgot about them.
How many are there? The blindfold told me about eighteen.
Hmm...
I’ll handle them latter. I want to do other stuff first.
I have to stick to my missions. I keep getting sidetracked lately (laugh!).
I went up the stairs to see Yeenoghu.
Yeenoghu was more jumpy than usual today. He was teleporting at nearly every forth action (command) I undertook. I assume that the sirens from below were agitating him. Grating on his nerves, so to speak.
If that’s the case. I’ll put off the luck and mirror tests I wanted to perform around him (See Parts 34 and 35). This from; the ‘new moon’ and, what the Oracle had recently told me. Hokay. Let’s go clear the cops. Yeenoghu had teleportated next to me just before I went down the stairs...
HEY! What are YOU doing here?!
Yeenoghu was standing right next to me - on level three!
You can follow me down the stairs now?! That’s new... Jubilex never did that (!).
Hmm... Let’s run a few tests on this. I went back up. He was there next to me. I went down. So did Yeenoghu. I took a little walk - not too long, as the Kops were closing in. Yeenoghu followed me around.
2.19. FOOD FIGHT!

Wow. I think the Oracle was right. Summoning demons may be a good thing. They like being around you. Only problem is, that Yeenothe sticks to me so much, that he'll eventually get nailed by an errant arrow or BD&D, I don't know how well my luck will be holding out when that happens, but I didn't want to test THAT just yet (laugh!)!

Okay, let's get you back upstairs (to where you belong, and are out of the way).

Once there, it was very difficult for me to be at the stairs while he wasn't. But eventually I was able to give him the slip, and down I went to battle the bumble squad.

The fight was going well. The Keystone Kops, are just as organized as orcs. Just as accurate too. I never got hit by a cream pie in the whole engagement.

After a while, I got an idea. I fought in the room with the upstairs to level one. When I'd kill a Kop, I put him in the bag and ran to the altar upstairs to offer him to Mars. Even being burdened, I was in range to the altar.

Problem was though, that Yeenothe, being caught up in all the excitement of seeing all these sacrifices go up in flames (he is a demon after all), wanted to see all the action downstairs too.

I told him no. He was my lucky demon lord. I didn't want him to get hurt.

Yeenothe said that if I didn't include him, then he would break the fun for me too. He then teleportated to the altar and prevented me from offering the corpse I had.

Well. All right. You can come along.

I also didn't feel like going through all the motions of making sure he wasn't next to me. Maybe after the action is over, he'll calm down. So I rationalized it any way (laugh!).

So I'd go down and off a Kop. Yeenothe being right next to me. Cream pies whizzing all around. He was pretty good for such a big guy. He never got hit once either. Then we'd go up and offer the corpse to Mars. Yeenothe jumping all about me as I would walk to the altar.

What a big kid, he was (laugh!).

I must admit: It was kind of exciting. Had to be careful. I was using "Stormbringer" a lot. It was good practice for me in both; maintaining concentration to what was happening on the screen, while developing more discipline on the keyboard.

After a few Kops, Mars gave me the reconciliation message. I prayed and got another spellbook...

Magic mapping!

Quickly I got out of my armor to see what my chances were. I think it was 78% fail. Not too good. Fifth level spell and all.

I tried it a whole bunch of times. When I finally got it off, I discovered that I had done a real good job here already. Nothing new revealed itself. Good to know. I'll get to magic mapping the dungeon later on. Yet another thing that was added to my 'things to do list'...

Back to the fun with the Kops and Yeenothe...

After a few more sacrifices, I got another idea: Can I get more than one demon lord at the same altar? I asked Yeenothe what he thought. He approved. In fact he got even more excited! Well. There was an elf on this level. Let's give it a try...

Blood ran all over the altar. I got frozen in fear as another demon got summoned. But I was eagerly awaiting to see who (or what) else showed up...

An incubus.
What a let down. I’ve already seen enough of these guys. This wasn’t anything spectacular. Not to me any ways. Only thing different about him was that he was peaceful.

Well, since I summoned him, and he’s peaceful, let’s see what he has to say. I walked over to him and tried to initiate a conversation...

Oh Gawd,... The incubus charmed me, took off all my clothes, and made love to me right then and there (shake head). And after it all, he had the nerve to demand that I pay him! But, before I could reach for my BDDDs - he teleported away.

I was disgusted. Not cause Yenoghu was standing right there, watching the whole thing. He’s a demon lord after all, he’s seen it all. Of that I have no qualms. But the goblin statue was right next to us. And me having to stare into the face of a species that I loathe, just irked me to no end! And too make it all come together - I had lost 8 points off my power! It was now at 106. The unicorn horn didn’t fix it either.

Maybe now, you can see why my ire was up...

The blindfold revealed that the incubus was now clear on the other side of the level. I would have to go through a whole bunch of one square wide corridors in order to get at him. With Yenoghu around, that would take forever. So I called the incubus "Death Row". He’s been condemned to death. It’s just a matter of time before I execute him...

I put my clothes back on, and went back to getting Kop corpses for Mars.

Yenoghu seemed just as pleased - and excited.

Somewhere during the brawl. I picked up a few cream pies and got another idea: Let’s have a food fight!

I lobbed the pies back at the Kops. Cream pies were flying back and forth. Yenoghu standing amongst it all (laugh!).

I reached into the bag and pulled out a few more food items. Of these, I lobbed as well.

Splat! Splat! Splat! Splat! Lots of messages.

Back and forth, this went on till I got tired of it and went back to using selective; arrow firing, BDDD throwing, and "Stormbringer" slashing.

Once the fight ended and all corpses, that could be brought up, were offered; I started rooting through all the booty. Amongst it all; I found a statue of a Keystone Kop (?)

Hmmm... Guess I missed a message or two during the food fight...

There were a few funny messages that appeared in the multitude. I should have paid better attention. But after you see the same stuff so often, it just becomes a reflex to hit the "enter" key when you see "- more -" appear...

Great. Now I have something else to investigate (groan.)...

Finish up here. Collect the booty. Head to base camp level four to verify and sort through all these new items I have. I wanted to be alone while doing this. Yenoghu would just be getting in my way. He doesn’t like boring stuff like booty identification.

There; I identified a blessed +3 rubber hose. I never noticed this type of weapon before (?). Well, if I did, I don’t remember it any way. Can I use it? I look in the ‘enhance’ screen. It isn’t listed there (?).

Hmmm... I assume it is one handed. Yep. Okay. Let’s try it out for a while. After all, it IS blessed!

...

Well, I tried it on all the (non dangerous) monsters on the way back down to base camp level 24.
2.19. *FOOD FIGHT!*

It (the rubber hose), is a real killer weapon! It croaks everything so fast - for a melee weapon that is. It seems to work even better than the +4 axe I identified a while back - my melee weapon with the largest amount of +'s. And the whip weapon skill has been recently flagged with a "*". So it’s in that weapon class, eh? That’s funny (laugh!)

Okay. I need to test something just recently discovered.

I pulled out a few different identified eggs from the "Fridge", as well as, some other comestibles. Made sure I had some other important items, a few hundred zorkminds, and then headed up to Chibougaman’s general store on level 21. Besides Izchak, he’s the only other surviving shopkeeper...

Once inside, I picked up two cream pies and a pear. Forget what the value was, it was peanuts any way.

Removed the ring of slow digestion, and put on the one of teleport control. Pointed the wand of teleportation at my chest, and zapped it.

The spot I chose to go to was right next to a door in a huge central room. Good choice! Cause about 25 keystone Kops had materialized in the very same room!

Now I was able to retreat into the corridor, while being able to face the Kops one at a time, as they filed into the corridor. They eventually spread out throughout the entire dungeon level, trying to find alternate unblocked paths to me, but I wanted a few test subjects in a controlled environment.

As long as I could drop the few in front of me to clear a path to the gang in the room, where it was lit, I would be fine. On those I chucked various objects, and noted their affects on them. Mostly potions, some food items, a few tools, and what not. Finally I came to a very important item - an uncursed cockatrice egg. Now I watched carefully, this time, for what happened:

Splat! I hit him. He started to slow down. Then he turned into a statue!

Okay... Boy oh boy. It’s really a good thing that I stopped eating eggs a long time ago. Many games ago, actually. I can just imagine what would happen if I would have ate something like that!

I used to feed them to Sirius. Now I may very well not do so in the future either...

I have one uncursed cockatrice egg left. I’ll save it for an emergency. Next time I need to literally stop something in it’s tracks!

Only thing that bothers me about all my experiments with throwing stuff is; that I can’t seem to hit anything with corpses...

Next thing was to finish dispatching all these Kops, and face Chibougaman.

I knew that he’d be carrying at least one wand. I was kind of hoping that it wasn’t one of death. Cause I still liked having him around, and didn’t want to kill him yet. Got lucky - for him - he was using a wand of striking. So I maneuvered myself next to him and paid him off. He wasn’t looking for blood - too much, and went back to his shop.

I got a whole bunch more food. Namely; cream pies. I put them in the "Fridge", of course. And guess what? The blue jelly corpse is still there!

Okay. A few more things learned and accomplished today. Things are going well.

Next I’ll go see the priestess of Venus. I think I realized a flaw in my method with her...
2.20 Mary Jane

_Hmm... I made a mistake in reporting my characters constitution attribute in the previous chapter (Part 4 of 2.19 on page 204). That should have been Con 16, not 18. Since having acquired the identify spell; I went kind of crazy and played waaaay ahead (laugh!). I'm now in the process of trying to crank out all the chapters I can, so that I can get back to playing again. I haven't been proof reading the last few too well before publishing them. Sorry._

Here's what I've come up with in my quest to getting water blessed. Or, I should say; here's the flaw I think I found.

First some data:

In the game that Nethack is not; good clerics were able to cure wounds and bless water/food, while evil clerics were able to cause wounds and curse water/food. They couldn't do the opposite.

Since Nethack only recognizes the horizontal axis of alignments (no good-neutral-evil vertical axis); it would be logical to conclude that:
Mercury will bless. Venus will either unbless or uncurse, if even that should be possible.
Mars will curse.

Since Venus is a neutral god; then her priestesses will uncurse / unbless stuff.

If the altars themselves can convert water, then; a chaotic one will curse it, a neutral one will either unbless or uncurse it, and a lawful one will bless it.
Therefore, she (the priestess of Venus) can't bless my vials of uncursed water.

Now then, If I'm correct; I feel kind of stupid for having desecrated both lawful altars and converted them to the darkness of chaotica...

Any way. Nethack follows some of the stuff from the game that Nethack is not, but it always confused me how (or why) it doesn’t use the good/evil axis of things.

Well. Let's put the theory to test. I'll bring her the two vials of cursed water I have. I will NOT risk my only vial of blessed water on such a test. Just in case I am correct...

So I went up to level 14 and exchanged the two uncursed vials with two cursed ones on the altar. Waited for her to move onto the same square as the altar. When she did, I gave her another 2,002 zorkminds. Waited for her to move away again. And...

They were still cursed!

_Aaargh!
Okay priestess. You gets another 1,000 clock ticks to get your act together (mumble grumble).

I wonder if Mars will bless my armor if I wield it while I pray to him...? I'll put that on the 'things to do’ list too. Cause it looks like I'm not getting any closer to getting water blessed...

Next!

My knowledge of the identify spell is starting to grow faint. I have to hurry and find all my remaining caches in order to get every object I possibly can identified. I better put the top of the Mazes of Menace on hold, concentrate on finishing the re-exploration of the middle on down. Magic mapping will have to wait. I can only get one or two spells off, and I'm out of power with that spell any ways.
2.20. MARY JANE

Down at the fortress, level 28

I'm identifying some piles of armor and weapons. Forgot to bring a scroll of earth for the water outside the front door. But I did remember to bring "Dragonbane". Gonna test it on that blue dragon I left here in one of the back rooms...

Eight hits! It took eight hits to kill it! Yeach. I'm not impressed. I can kill them with 6 BDDD's. That's two rounds. Maybe that would be even less now. I didn't have gauntlets of power last time I was slaying dragons with BDDD's. But I had them just on while wielding "Dragonbane" (!). Unless gauntlets of power don't add anything to damage...

Even so. It still does not compare to BDDD's. Forget it. I'm stowing this thing in "The Cache". It will keep "Orcrist" company. I'll make do with "Sting" and "Stormbringer", as artifact melee weapons for now.

On the way back up...

I saw an incubus on the titan's level. It was walking on water. Just like the way the master mindflayer had done. I'll keep this discovery in mind...

Dungeon level 26

You hear a rushing noise nearby. You hear a rushing noise nearby. You hear someone counting money. Air elemental alert! Lich alert!

I found neither. But I did find something in a little two square by two square room again. Some kind of mummy. Yeah that was it. A gnome mummy I think it was. Cause when I looked into the room after I had pick-axed my way into it - there was no gold on the floor!

Then, before I could enter to check it out completely; a green dragon, some kind of jelly, and a cockatrice showed up on my radar screen. I figured I better handle these things right away. Don't want to be cornered here. As a Ranger, I like having options to maneuver around the place. The room will wait a few minutes. So while I went to dispatch these intruders, the gnome mummy slipped out of the room and wandered off somewhere.

By the way; I didn't use "Dragonbane" on the dragon. It went down in two rounds to BDDD salvos. I seem to remember that it took 5 (!), two went sailing on. I killed the other potential threats handily enough, and went back.

So I was in the little room, searching 12 times in each square for a secret door. When this mauve and blue thing appears in a wall!

Suddenly one of the Vault's guards enters! "Hello stranger, who are you?"

On this I put a lot of thought. The game was asking me to do something before anything else. I couldn't do the look, or check my inventory, or nothing. Not till I answered this question.

I hate that. Being forced into something where I have no control, or access to any of my resource screens.

So I typed in the following:

Mary Jane

"I don't know you." "Please follow me."

Okay... (shrug) I can now access the different screens.
I did the ";" AND then the "/" command(s).  

The thing was a vault guard. Combined with what he said above, I got to thinking that these little lich money rooms are probably called vaults. And when I see - You hear the footsteps of a Gaurd on patrol - that means it’s this guy that I’m now following.  

I just had a skirmish with some other creatures. So all my stuff was already set for battle mode. I waited for him to get a few steps ahead of me...  

BDDD’s away!  

He got angry. An alarm went off. And he disappeared.  

I thought to myself: Oh boy! Maybe these guys are like the Keystone Kops. I’ll have a whole bunch more booty to identify soon! How many are coming? I put on the blindfold...  

Only one. Looked like the same guy also (disappointment).  

Oh well. I picked my battle ground, and soon enough he came into range. Two rounds later he dropped. When I was rooting through his stuff, I discovered a wand (Don’t remember what kind. But it was one that I already had a whole bunch of.)!  

This is great! These guys carry wands. Next time I hear one of their footsteps, I’ll see if I can make them appear.  

And then the gnome mummy came sauntering on by.  

After I destroyed it, there was a pile of gold with the mummy wrapping (laugh!)! So it must have collected it. Only dwarves and gnomes do that. Their mummy forms as well, I see.  

**Base camp level 24**  

You hear the footsteps of a guard on patrol.  

Okay. Let’s see if I can get him to come out...  

I went to the little room. It had already been dug out (see Part 28 ( [2.7 on page 145] )) I started searching each square 12 times. Soon enough a vault guard showed up!  

He asked me for my name again. I told him "Mary Jane". He told me to follow him.  

I said: Sure!  

A few clock ticks later, I was rooting through his stuff. Yep. He was carrying a wand too!  

This is a great discovery. I know of at least five more levels where I hear these sounds. Even though I’m out of shopkeepers - I may very well get a wand of death yet (big grin)!  

And on...  

I’ve found three more rooms. Killed five more guards. Some in already discovered rooms. Alarms have been set off. But only one guard ever shows up. Some guards had accused me of stealing the money from the empty rooms. So I started keeping the zorkminds in the bag of holding. Then they even figured that out. (shrug) They all died the same.  

He he. Soon this "Mary Jane" person is going to be on the ‘Mazes of Menace most wanted list’ - HA!  

I’m heading back down to base camp level 24. My bag is heavy with loot and booty. I see that I’ve been sidetracked from my mission plan(s) again... (laugh!)  

Chuckles (the gremlin) is no longer here (?). I can’t see him on the level with the blindfold no more...
2.20. MARY JANE

After identifying, sorting, and stowing all the loot; I noticed that I had a BDDD missing! There was only eight in my inventory! Urgh...

Now where could I have failed to pick it up? I hate this, I've been playing this game for so long and, I hardly ever fail to account for my BDDD's after using them. Grrr...

Also: I've been putting off learning how to do the auto-pickup command properly. One of the r.g.r.n. deities has been very helpful here, but when I look at all the computer code stuff involved... Yuch. I'm going to have to learn soon, though. I go to my notes, and move that task several notches further up on my 'things to do' list...

Okay. Last time I remember having all nine on me for sure; was when I fought the green dragon, and company, back on level 26. I really don't feel like having to walk through all those entire levels looking for it again. And what if some cretin of a monster picked it up? If that's the case, it could be anywhere now. Hmmm...

I grabbed some potions of object detection from "The Cache", and then headed down. I have like over 20 of them! May as well put them to use, eh? No!? (laugh!) Well... I finally found it on level 21! The last level I had come back from since making the discovery of having lost it in the first place. I should have headed up. Then worked my way down. Would have saved me some potions. Ah well. But here's something that made it all worth while...

Four piles of zorkminds were found in a corner of the map. Now we all know what that means, eh? Another potential guard carrying a potential wand of death (grin)! Or so I thought...

Once having pick-axed my way to it, I stepped onto the first square and, my elf trap detection ability kicked in. I discovered one of those portal trap things (!). It looked the exact same as the one on level 16. The one that leads to the Home levels. Hmmm...

I picked up the gold that was on the other three squares, and started searching for secret doors. Your friendly neighborhood vault guard showed up, and started interrogating me (Mary Jane) again.

I was looking to see if he would say anything different. Since there was this portal present in the money room here. Nope, he didn't. So we went through the motions on haggling over whether the money I had was mine or not. He still had the same tune, as the other vault guards. So I offered him and collected his stuff. Hoping that other guards would show up, again cause of the portal thing being present. But none did.

Okay... Something new to figure out.

The only thing that came to mind, was this "magic memory vault" that the Oracle had mentioned. This being with these so called "vault" guards that kept on appearing. And they only came after I did some searching ("s" command). But there was no "ad aerium" markings anywhere on the floor here...?

Hmmm...

Well. I'll hold off for now. I won't step onto it. I've caught other "guard on patrol footsteps" on lower levels. There may very well be other such portals. I have the magic mapping spell now too. I'll be able to find any more of these money rooms, one way or the other, eventually. If there is another portal there; it should lead to an easier place than here. After all, they are on lower levels, no?

Let's heed Izchak's advice, and my general strategy. I just have to do some thinking, be patient, and play smart. I've been playing for a long time, and come a long way, so far this game. No use being hasty now...
I made a note of the portals location and started heading back. Just before the downstairs, I picked up a mimic on the radar. Great! Another opportunity to eliminate something on my ’to do list’. Hope it leaves a corpse... I couldn’t resist the temptation to mimic a pile of gold (?!)... (?!)
The next action I tried to do ("#monster"), got me back to normal form.
Oh well, I got the giant marshmallow eating experiment out of my system now (laugh!).
Few other things got done after this. Mostly; corpse, melee weapon, and missile firing / throwing tests.
Some auto-pickup tinkering, and a lot of guide reading (again).
The Mazes of Menace have now been mapped all the way to, and including, level 28 - but not magic mapped. That will be for another day. 95% (estimated) of all the stuff I want, is now concentrated at base camp level 24.
The identify spell is now twisted in my mind. I’ll hold off on rereading that spellbook for a little while. I’ll finish collecting some stuff, and do some other things with my power - like magic map (!).
The blue jelly corpse is still holding out in the "Fridge". I’ve since added a rothe corpse in there. I want to see how long that stays preserved. Being meat (I assume), and all. I got that idea from a meatball I made a while back.
I’ve brought some statues to base camp here (level 24), from the other levels. Have six now. The place is getting crowded (laugh!). All my figurines are here too. Yeenoghu is going to have to be a big boy. Any ways, he has that incubus called Death Row to keep him company while I’m not there.
I have a good feeling that another one of my ideas is going to eventually work out...
Oh yea. I met another wumpus. Orion should really reevaluate their dangerousness...

2.21 A Milestone Reached

The kelp frond is delicious!
Got that out of the way. Finally. Now I can take that off of the list...
That reminds me of how my lembas wafers tasted. I still have one of my original ones, by the way. It’s in the "Fridge". Along with all my other food items. Which have recently been bolstered by no less than - 50 cream pies (laugh!!!)
Have to remember that trick of generating Keystone Kops. They can provide me with extra food, should I "ever" run low. Hmmm... I wonder how many times I’ll be able to pay off ol’ Chibougamau...?
Baahh. I’ll save that for later. Much later. Too many things to do still.
Like...
I want to play with all my newly identified stuff!
I want to enchant my mithril to +10! I want to bless my elven arrows - so that I can start using them again. I want to try some of these potions and spellbooks. Just to name a few...
But I keep thinking that something else might become available from either; a newly discovered room, or a monster (which drops something after I off it). Then I’ll make another discovery, and that may affect my decision on what (and how), to use next.
Ah well. Let’s just keep plugging away at this ’things to do list’...
I’ve since stowed the blessed +3 rubber hose in the bag of holding. It’s neat. I think it works even better than the uncursed +4 ax. Probably cause of the blessing. And I kind of figure that it won’t rust. But I’ve basically gone back to using missiles to drop monsters.
2.21. A MILESTONE REACHED

Above the ghost level is one thing. The monsters are pretty wimpy up there. But around these parts, where I’ve been passing much time lately, they’re a little meaner. That should soothe some of you, that have been gasping, when I’ve been engaging ochre jellies up close.

- Next!

I want to try and see if I can fashion armor out of these dragon scale thingies.

Dragon scale mail takes 9 off of my armor class; so says the guide. And the Oracle has talked about "the resourceful fashioning armor from scales". So I’m gonna see which scales are worth the most. Cause I only have so many enchant armor scrolls - which is what I figure I should be using to fashion the scales.

Yea. I know what I just said about playing with stuff. But this has been on my 'things to do list' for a while. I want to cross it off (wink).

I figure that the different colors must mean something in the game. Or else they wouldn’t have gone through the trouble of classifying them separately. So basing on what I remember about dragons, from the game that Nethack is not and from what they’re breadth attacks are in this game...

Red = fire Green = poison gas blue = lightning

That’s all the different kinds I have. I think that I’m now resistant to all of these - or I have a damn good saving throw any ways. So that’s why I’m running the sell price test.

Well... Chibougamanu is willing to pay 250 zorkminds for all the different colors I have. So, as far as I can tell, they’re all about the same.

Saw something quite amusing coming back from the shop.

On the way back down, a succubus kept on zapping a wand of teleportation on herself.

I figure it was cause I hit her with 4 blessed arrows. When it was her turn to move... Zap! And whenever I got within range 8 of her... Zap!

Oh well. I don’t need another wand of teleportation. Hers must be nearly spent any ways. She’s zapped it at least 6 times (laugh!).

Okay then - as I sit on the chest named "The Cache" at base camp level 24 - think and:

Ponder...

My favorite color is blue. Ellora’s favorite color is green (Being a Ranger, and "Home" is the ancestral forest full of trees.). And Mars’ favorite color is red (God of war and all.)!

So, you see, we have a big dilemma. Who to satisfy?

Hmmm...

Turns out we had a second set of green dragon scales. So that decides it. Fate has chimed in. It shall be the green!

Just as well. If Ellora’s picture will be affected by wearing another color besides the one her picture currently is; I would be always looking for where she is on the screen.

Now let’s see if my assumptions were correct...

As you read the scroll it disappears. Your set of green dragon scales merges and hardens!

Yep. I figured correctly - this time. That was one of the easiest Oracle consultations to interpret and implement, for me any ways (laugh!). And it (dragon mail) does take 9 off of my armor class!

My picture on the screen is still green too (!).
Okay. That took care of a few things on the ol’ list (grin). We’ll be on the way to the Valley of the Dead by July for sure now (laugh!!)

- Next!
I tried wielding my new dragon armor when I prayed. Hoping that Mars might bless it. But I got his protection instead. That attempt, at blessing stuff, is still inconclusive... - Next!
Our mascot; Slinky the lizard, has also mysteriously disappeared...
First Chuckles, and now Slinky... (sad face)
I hope that there aren’t any mystery monsters roaming about. I took a walk around the level. Although there is a wandering purple worm on the loose; nothing out of the ordinary was picked up on the radar. And even though this level (24) has been magic mapped, as well as, object detected - I still haven’t figured out where that monster generator is at. Nor; how it gets activated.
On a whim, I collect all the rocks from that shattered mystery statue, from so long ago (see Part 9 (L.II on page 142)), and pile them in a corner of the ex-temple to Mars here. I’ll see if I can reconstruct it when I relearn the stone to flesh spell. Maybe that will give me a clue (shrug)...
- Next!
I’m going to magic map all the levels. Well I’ll try to before the spell grows faint. Want to see what booty I’ve missed. Also want to see if there’s another portal (or portals) on the lower levels in these vault / lich / money counting rooms. Besides, I’ll surely get more wands off of these vault guards...
But before doing so: I quaff my remaining potions of gain ability. The higher my intelligence attribute, the easier I can get that spell off. And at 78% fail - I can use all the help I can get (laugh!!)
Okay! I’m at 20 intelligence! Magic Mapping is at 49% fail with just my speed boots and robe on. Now I’ll have a chance to get it done before...
Well. Let’s see how it goes before I make a prediction, eh? I’ll probably get sidetracked again (laugh!!)
I said bye to my friends here. This is going to take me a while. Of this: I’m sure of!
...
Okay. While Ellora is off magic mapping the dungeon: I’m going to explain a few things, that you might be asking yourselves, or wondering about...
First thing to consider is; how to best protect my character and what she is about to accomplish. Well, actually... The first thing, amongst everything - is not to die (laugh!!) But what I’m trying to say is: Since I’m now so smart (IN: 20), and about to magic map the Mazes of Menace; I absolutely want to make sure no mindfacer attacks get through. That would ruin everything. Not to mention how utterly discouraged I would become...
So now I’m on "super safe monster dispatching" mode - not that I haven’t been careful, so far. But I have this "extra" bit of added care when dealing with wandering / generated monsters.
To put it all in perspective, here’s what could potentially happen...
I’m sauntering through the dungeon. Happily mapping the levels. I meet, say, a lizard. I figure that since it’s only a lizard, I’ll take this opportunity to practice the, oh let’s say, the rubber hose. Now I’m next to it (the lizard). Just before I go to bonk it, it changes into a lich and disintegrates my cloak of displacement. Yikes! It was a chameleon. I didn’t check for that. Oh no. Since I have the rubber hose wielded, I don’t want to take an extra action to either exchange or wield something else. So: I step away from it, to line it up for some BDDD chucking. It has moved to either an off lined square,
or teleportated. Now I can’t kill it this round. It summons a horde of soldier ants around me. I throw some BDDD’s at the nearest one. Four launch, the first two killing the soldier ant, the last two sailing on and hitting the peaceful ogre king in the distance. The ogre king gets angry and zaps a wand of create monster. One of the new monsters is a rust monster. And on, and on...

Yea. Your saying; maybe a little extreme of an example. Well, I beg to differ. In my experience - NOT IN NETHACK!!

So here’s what I basically do concerning wandering monsters now...

Ellora’s New Monster Killing Technique / Procedure / Check List, or Whatever.

- Do the look (";") command).
- Verify for friendly (peaceful) status. If yes, then perhaps initiate conversation (#chat).
- Make sure it’s not a chameleon. If it is; then kill it immediately before it turns into something I don’t want to face. Pick up and/or dispose of corpse. So that pet doesn’t eat it. - If familiar monster and easily defeated, then either practice with a weapon or try some experiment.
- If familiar monster and recognized as dangerous, then drop on sight. Else, be careful if attempting to lure it to an altar.
- If an unknown type of monster, then try and assess its potential threat. Do the encyclopedia (";/" command). Count how many times it moves compared to you, etc. But if anything funny starts to happen - drop on sight.
- If any of the following; gnome lord, bugbear, hill giant, (all) were types, (all) centaur types, shop-keeper, (all) soldier types, priestess, nazgul, or vault guard, then be careful of a wand attack.
- If any of the following; titan, lich, demi lich, then drop on sight. Cursing attack is up to range 8. Disintegration attack is at range one. Don’t let any get next to you!
- If mindflayer or master mindflayer, then drop on sight using irresistible force and/or whatever means at disposal. DO NOT - under any circumstance, allow it to get next to you!

Okay. So that’s "basically" it. Now bear in mind that this is for how my current character is. Meaning with all her present stuff; equipment, armor, attributes, skill levels, etc. And my method is continuously refined as I discover new things about different opponents.

Ellora has; a ring of warning, the Longbow of Diana, blessed "Stormbringer", amulet of reflection, blessed +3 arrows, 9 BDDD’s, poisoned +1 arrows, blessed +2 spetum, cloak of displacement, boots of speed, gauntlets of power, wand of teleportation, wand of fire, wand of frost, wand of lightning, scroll of teleportation, unicorn horn, and a blindfold. These all directly pertain to her combat, defensive, and detection capabilities.

All of the above is at hand - not in the bag (besides the spetum). So she’s pretty versatile. She’s fast, can cause a lot of damage, has a virtual arsenal of ranged weapons, and can fire or throw in salvo.

Not only that, but she has good defenses too. Armor class is below -20 (unless I try to cast a spell). Has displacement out to a range of two. As far as I can tell, she is not affected by; cold, electricity, poison, fire, and sleep. Most ills can be cured in one action too.

If worse comes to worse: She can also escape out of there in the blink of an eye!

Almost never - does a monster land a hit on me. And when it does, it’s cause I let it. Usually because I can’t be bothered to step away. But only from wimpy things like; lizards, ants, orcs, unicorns, etc. Most of the time I don’t even lose any hit points from the hit. For those times that I do; it’s like one - yes only one - hit point (!).
I've become very good at counting the action steps I can take while fighting something. Before it has a chance to swipe at me - I then step back, or away. Often times the creature will swipe at one of my displaced images also. Then, I know that I have even more action steps at my disposal, in order to efficiently dispatch it.

I even do this when engaging at range (!). I like shooting from maximum range, and try to maintain that, by stepping back, when a monster tries to close with me. Mostly so that it does not use charges on its wands, and/or in case it wants to curse my stuff (like liches or titans). I've been compiling a ranged weapon table, which I keep next to me on the computer desk, for all my weapons. I'll publish it soon. Still have a few more entries to verify.

The whole idea behind my tactics can be summed up by this: Hurt them while keeping them from hurting you.

Works great (wink)!

...  
I got 8 of the upper levels and up to Marsville, in the caverns, magic mapped...  
Then while I was away, someone was passing the vacuum cleaner in my office. The game was still on when the nozzle disturbed the wires. This caused the computer to go kabloom! When I got back, I saw the computer was no longer on. Had to reconnect the jostled wires and, fearing the worst, booted it up.  
Had to go through the motions of the computer telling me about an; improper shutdown sequence. Clicking here and there whether I wanted to repair certain errors that had occurred, etc. I was developing a sinking feeling about the status of all my recent work in the game.

Then, a little box appeared. It said that it detected a game in progress and asked if I wanted to restore it from something or other. I clicked "yes", and Ellora was on the stairs to the last level I remembered from before.

Everything seemed to be okay. Just had to redo some things on the current level. But all the previous actions (magic mapping, items picked up, etc.) were still saved. Phewee! I was very much relieved.

For a few moments, I thought that the vacuum cleaner could have been as destructive to the game as a mindflayer!

Back to magic mapping and clearing out unbeknownst areas...

Tried something different when I heard the footsteps of a guard on patrol.

I used "Ellora" instead of "Mary Jane", when discovered by vault guards, in some newly found little vault rooms, here and there. There was no noticeable difference in their actions. They still said that they didn't know me, accused me of taking the gold, etc.

Vault guards are stupid. They always walk in front of me. Let's me have the initiative; whereby I shoot them in the back (grin). If "I" were escorting somebody away - I would make "them" walk ahead, while "I" followed from behind...

Met a pyrolisk. Remember that first encounter? Way back when?

I got him with a BDDD salvo. But not before two potions of extra healing bubbled and blew up on me (sad face). Man. They have a great ranged attack. Wish the wands of fire worked the same... Then again, maybe not. A bugbear would then be quite a formidable opponent (!).

Discovered that dragon scale mail doesn't interfere with my spell casting failure percentage. Well, not green dragon mail any way. That's pretty good. Now I can have that, the speed boots, and the robe while casting. Not that I'm not careful when I do. I still verify that there are no wandering monsters nearby before I disrobe for spell casting.
2.21. A MILESTONE REACHED

There was a virtual plethora of monsters on the ghost level to kill. There were tons of S’s, C’s, O’s, H’s E’s, and a Y. He he. I find it funny looking at letters running all over the place instead of pictures.

Found a new piece of armor: A leather jacket. Never seen one before in Nethack.

Saw a giant spider. Pulled "Sting" out of the bag and approached it...

(drum roll)

Four hits to kill it! (laugh!) What a disappointment.

Well... I’m gonna keep it with me (in the bag). I won’t stow it like "Orcrist" and "Dragonbane". After all, it’s the first gift I got from Mars... (wink - and then - roll eyes)

Found quite a few sealed closets - one by one rooms with no door nor secret door. Had to pick-axe my way into them. Most contained scrolls of teleportation. Sometimes a potion or a ring too.

On dungeon level 22, a cockatrice left a corpse. This was exactly what I was looking for - for a while now! I immediately ran to base camp level 24 with it, and put its corpse in the "Fridge". This is the missing ingredient that I require for that idea I had been alluding to lately... (thumbs up!)

The blue jelly corpse is still there. So is the rothe corpse. So now I know, or am assuming, that an ice box can preserve other things than just food. For quite a while too. That blue jelly corpse has been there for many thousands - yes thousands - of clock ticks!!

I try to bury my desire to experiment with my idea right away. Must maintain my discipline. I go back up and keep plugging away with the magic mapping. Only a few levels left...

Okay and, all right! It’s done! I’ve magic mapped all the Mazes of Menace from levels 1 - 26 inclusive! And the Caverns from levels 3 - 6 inclusive! Managed to get all that done before the spell conked out too (thumbs up!).

I found lots of little money vault rooms. But I never found another portal trap like the one on level 21.

*I will publish what the Mazes of Menace now look like, in a later chapter.*

I’ve now achieved a significant event, considering my history in playing Nethack. A milestone, so to speak.

I have uncovered / discovered / explored a huge part of the Mazes of Menace. Never accomplished so much before.

Being methodical and meticulous has paid off, for me. I now have a better idea how the game generates the levels and what they hold, both in monsters and booty. There is much to discover in this game called Nethack. Especially when some discoveries lead to still other discoveries!

I, also, have so many different items positively identified. My discoveries screen is huge! Often, I will hit the "\" key. Just to look and gawk; both in amazement and wonder (laugh)!.

I feel a great sense of pride. I’m quite satisfied with myself. Should something happen to Ellora in the near future, I would consider this game quite a success. Albeit, now that she is so powerful, I would be somewhat disappointed...

Perhaps now, you can better understand why I absolutely loathe the mindflayer species. Especially; that nasty one, that caught me by surprise, when it was invisible...

There is still no sign of Slinky... I fear he’s gone for good (sad face).

A little later on; Cuss was killed due to an accident (sad face).
I was trying to dispatch a tough monster. Think it was a titanothere. Cuss was behind it in a corridor. I tried hard not to hurt him from overthrowing BDDD's. Those just kill things too fast sometimes. So I was whittling it down with the "n" prefix while firing arrows. Thought I had it down to just two more... But who knows? The art of finesse firing is completely done with one's own "sixth sense". As things turned out; only one was required. The additional arrow went sailing on and hit Cuss, who subsequently lost his temper.

It would be his final undoing. I could not have an angry Grey-elf on the same level as my main base camp. So with a heavy heart - I quickly finished him off. Mercifully, only one salvo of BDDD's was required.

I decided not to offer his corpse. Still wanted to accomplish some things, without having a summoned demon (lord) getting in my way. I'll get a demon lord friend here later on. Only good thing that came about his death though - was that he had a scroll of charm monster (!).

Now I can go get that panther and have a pet again!

I'm all enthusiastic!

I nearly forgot to bring a leash. Only remembered when I was already two levels up and on my way (laugh!).

Turned back and retrieved one from the "Tools". I then fished out a wand of speed monster from "The Cache". While I was at it, I pulled out some tripe rations and a meat ball from the "Fridge".

Checked my inventory one last time, and headed back up in the Mazes of Menace.

Destination: Marsville.

2.22 It Worked!

Made it without any major incidents.

Since my main goal is to acquire the panther as a pet - not having to worry about mapping or cataloguing things, I'm putting some serious effort into the auto pickup experiments. Still pretty rough, and not yet comfortable with it being on continuously. Trying to fine tune the configuration is proving to be quite a task - to me.

But this will prove to be vital, should I get into another big battle with many monsters all around me. And considering what's waiting for me in the Valley of the Dead (dungeon level 29 in the Mazes of Menace), it (another big battle) is almost guaranteed (laugh)!

Now then. Unlock and open the door to the abandoned shop. Step inside...

Woah! She sure attacks a lot. She's all over me (laugh!). Good. I like her ferocity (grin). I take the scroll out of the bag, and read it while she's trying to maul me...

Got her! A little heart has appeared next to her picture. Now I'll give her a name...

Next action will be to tell her that; mine is the hand that feeds her. I throw a tripe ration at her...

Phiona catches a tripe ration. Phiona eats a tripe ration.

Now step next to her and slip the leash around her neck.

Next is to zap her with this wand of speed monster... Zap!

And finally; what happens when I chat with her...?

Phiona snarls.
Ooooh... I like that. Makes her sound fierce.
Okay! I have a new pet: A black panther!

(smile of satisfaction)

Coming back through the levels with a pet sure brings back memories of my previous pets. I almost forgot some of the habits that one needs with an animal in tow. The first; is that you have to be somewhat patient. But it gives you a chance to enjoy the scenery a little bit. I don’t like pulling on the leash unless it’s an emergency.

This will all be compounded when I also get a gremlin pet - which is my next, should I acquire another scroll of charm monster.

The walk back through most of the Mazes of Menace will be good. I’ll be studying how Phiona attacks, and what her patterns are like. Also, which type of monster she will engage, or not. What she will eat, and what she turns up her nose at.

This is good for me too. It’s kind of therapeutic. I have friends in the dungeon, but Phiona is more than this - she’s a companion. Hopefully I will be able to care for her well. The Mazes of Menace can be a hazardous place. My mind starts to drift towards the unfortunate demise of Sirius, Missy Prissy, Burp, and Grunt... But I quickly catch those thoughts and drive them from my mind.

Oh look over there. There’s a dwarf lord. Want to go play Phiona? Phiona snarled...

Guess what?! We found Chuckles on level ten!? (A peaceful gremlin called Chuckles) How did he get here...? Hmmm...

When I went to chat with him, I made sure not to let phiona get too close. Yep. It’s ol’ Chuckles all right. Still laughs uncontrollably at whatever I say (laugh!).

Around level 20, I killed a troll. Had another polearm fighting contest. I won, again (laugh!). Then Phiona ate the corpse. Good. That’s an easy way of getting rid of their corpses, if one doesn’t want it to revive. I’m starting to like having Phiona around, more and more (smile).

When we arrived at base camp level 24, I dumped all the accumulated junk from my recent romp through the dungeon on the altar to Mars. I can’t identify everything. I haven’t reread the spellbook yet. Still waiting to finish some other things that will surely take time. I want to save the amount of time to be able to cast the spell when I’ll be breaking new ground in the Mazes of Menace. For now, I’m just piling all these objects here.

Only thing that I’m worried about, is if a monster should materialize and grab some wands that are here. But I’ll get to that soon. I still want to see how tough a monster Phiona will engage. So I keep proceeding down through the levels with her...

We’re on the titans level now. Phiona is killing gremlins left and right.

Strange thing though; she does not eat any of their corpses. Same as Burp was doing. Must be something about them that tastes "real" bad. Like, if you all remember, Burp ate anything - even Jubilex (laugh)!

Damn. I keep forgetting to bring a scroll of earth with me...

I was trying and testing a few things out. Like; how does levitating with a pet on a leash affect movement over water, how do I get the pet from island to island, etc. Sometimes Phiona would just appear next to me, while I moved between land squares separated by water squares. Other times not.

Half way through the level, we turned around. Then four fire giants materialized on a small island. Great! An opportunity to do some experiments again. Giants carry boulders!
I levitated to another island, where I could land and line them up for some long range missile fire. Giants don’t throw boulders beyond a range of 8, so I made sure I always stayed beyond this distance.

Employing finesse firing; I managed to drop them all - without any missiles landing in water squares. Now I levitated over to where they had once stood, to try and push some of their boulders into water squares.

First thing I discovered: You can’t push a boulder while levitating (laugh)!

Second thing: Boulders fill in open water squares in the exact same manner, as the swamp room water squares on dungeon level 20.

Okay good. Now that that has been confirmed: Looks like I’ll be eventually able to retrieve my BDDD’s that I lost here a while back. Only thing is; to remember to bring that scroll of earth (wink).

Back at base camp level 24:

A few wandering monsters had crept into the level while we were gone. I put Phiona in the only empty room with restricted access, and locked the doors (there were three). With that purple worm still on the loose, and the disappearance of both Chuckles and slinky, I wasn’t taking no chances (!).

First thing I concentrated on was a nazgul. As always, it had nice loot; a knife, a long sword, a ring, a potion, and a wand.

Next was that purple worm. Through some patience, I managed to lure it onto the same square as the altar. It moved off before I could BDDD salvo it to death in the first round. These things seem to have lots of hit points. So three salvos were eventually required. But I never chucked any at it, until I had lured it back onto the altar square. No way I could lift it to it - that was for sure (laugh)!

When it expired, I offered it to Mars. This was the whole point of the exercise in killing it there.

As fate would have it, or he was really impressed at getting a big purple worm; Mars wanted to talk (got the reconciliation message).

I gazed towards the large box named "Cursed Stuff", sitting within it’s alcove. It’s been such a long time since Mars has uncursed any objects for me. Should I walk over there? Should I go through all the motions again? After I have looted it and amassed all its contents that I can possibly hold. Then praying and finding out that he’s not interested in such an act. I’ll have to put it all back in disappointment.

No. I won’t do that now. I still have a blessed scroll of remove curse. That will work when I really need a ton of items uncursed. I’ll instead see if Mars feels like doing something else. Something that I don’t have the means of doing myself. I’ll try again, and see if he will bless some armor for me.

So, in the square where I was presently standing, I took off my speed boots and wielded them with my sword arm (Meaning; not the one that holds a shield. Nethack does not differentiate between "right" or "left‖ arm.). Perhaps Mars will bless these - just as he has already blessed my BDDD’s. Then I prayed...

Well, as things turned out, Mars wasn’t interested in blessing things either (laugh!). Instead he granted me his protection, again.

Oh well. I started to put my boots back on. There were other creatures starting to close in on the ex-temple to Mars. That room with the monster generator was producing creatures again.

Looking at the screen, verifying what exactly was moving where, I was finishing up my conversation with my God:

Thanks any way Mars. At least your pleased with my progress.
Well, so he said. I think? Let me just take another look to make sure...

Hey... What is this I see?

Two potions on the altar glowed blue?!

I stared at the screen while sitting transfixed at the computer. My mind was racing. Which potions? Why would they do that? How?

I did the look here command ("."). Amongst all of the items here, two were described as being; holy water!

My mind sprang to "alert". Clarity was required. Trying to make sense of this.

The water potions I had left on the altars, in the upper levels of the dungeon were now here. I had collected them when I was magic mapping. While I was giving the Mazes of Menace its final clean up. I had just left them in the pile of junk here, on the altar, with all the rest of the stuff waiting to be; identified, sorted, and stowed. I had just prayed in this very same square. These vials glowed blue in the same action step as I got Mars’ protection.

Hmmm...

I’m certain that I prayed while having had vials of water in my inventory in the past. They never became blessed. Or did they? Could I have never noticed this in the past? No way. I would have caught something like that - that’s for sure. But still... I had noticed, and now recall, something funny when I was at the altar on level four. Not too late after I had gone to the fountain of blessed water.

And considering how I just tried to bless my speed boots - WHY DIDN’T I EVER THINK OF DOING THAT WHILE WIELDING VIALS OF WATER?

(slap + shake head)

Okay. There’s something here. Amongst all of this. I just can’t quite make it all fit together. I’m on the verge of something - I can taste it!

I have to try and repeat this - somehow.

Has to be done in a controlled environment. Too many things happening on the screen with these monsters coming in. I better take care of that first. Any way; I have lots of time before I can pray to Mars again.

A few skirmishes with sundry monsters and some offerings later...

A throng of Uruk-hai formed up in one corner of the level. Far away before they would be close to the altar. Now; you should all know me by now: I love playing - errr I mean - fighting with orcs (grim). Especially these guys. Poisoned crude arrows coming up!

I walked over to one of my piles. The one containing all my unidentified polearms. Picked up all I could carry and hurried off to where these dumb orcs were bumbling about.

You see. Another thing I noticed while wearing the cloak of displacement. Monsters get so confused on which way to take - especially when there’s a mob of them. So they just mill all about and, often times, take very long approach paths. Best to just go over to them, kill one off and put its corpse in the bag. Then you come back and offer it. Saves time, you know.

So I got to their area. Sure enough, these guys were even less organized than the Keystone Kops. I threw (not dropped) the polearms in their direction. There now. Let them figure out which one is cursed or not (wink). Also, when you get inside their zone (range of one) - they can’t hurt you.

(diabolical laughter from a female elf + sheer cries of terror from many orcs)
CHAPTER 2. BOOK 2

After much fun, and quite a few laughs, the battle drew to a close. Booty included a wonder whistle. I named it "Phiona" and whistled my pet panther over. Feast time, my dear. Phiona ate two Uruk-hai corpses.

So that you have even more of an idea what it’s like, hanging around at my main base camp, in the ex-temple to Mars, I have figured how ghosts operate. You see... Ghosts appearing have now become a regular occurrence. I used to be scared - the game tells me that I’m frozen in fear - but I’ve now kind of grown used to them.

They only appear when I enter the room. And only the room with the altar. No where else. If I want to exit the room - then no problem. And ghosts, like all other monsters, never materialize in a doorway. Nor in a section of the wall that has been dug out - what I call an alcove. Stepping into a doorway, entrance, or alcove is okay. You can then step back into the room with no problem. But once you have actually left the room’s outer boundaries, then you can expect to maybe generate one when re-entering it. I’ve done this a few times now, just to make sure (laugh!).

Now ghosts are slow - reaaaaal slow. Step away and dispatch with missile weaponry. Or count the moves it gets versus you, and use melee weaponry. Ellora can get at least 4 smacks at one before it can hit her. Sometimes I’ve seen six, depending if I get some free clock ticks or not.

You don’t need blessed or magical weapons to affect them either. I used to think so, but that has been disproved now. However - blessed and enchanted weaponry works better, don’t get me wrong (wink). In fact, besides the BDDD, the blessed +3 rubber hose is the best thing to use on them. Believe it or not - it works even better than "Stormbringer"!!

I still don’t know what their touch does, though. I’m not willing to go THAT far in my experiments (wink + laugh!). No ghost touches me - still and yet!

So with all that’s now known about these things; they are excellent monsters to practice weapon skills on. Especially ranged weapon skills. If I ever get into such a situation in a future game with a magic user; I’ll use them as easy monsters to practice with my offensive spells.

Just having finished sorting and classifying the booty into the different piles, a "?" showed up on my warning radar. Went to inspect and saw that it was a kobold mummy.

Hmmmm... That is an easy monster.

Let’s make sure it isn’t a chameleon... It wasn’t.

Hmmmm... I think I’ll try out that big idea I’ve been trying to put together lately...

I let the kobold mummy approach my position. Meanwhile; I went to the "Fridge", pulled out the cockatrice corpse, and wielded it.

When the little collection of rags got near the altar - I smacked it.

It turned into a statue.

Yep. So far so good. The cockatrice corpse still worked after all this time!

I picked up the new statue, and put it along the wall with the others that were already in the room. Adding it to the collection, that I had already carried here, from other levels in the dungeon.

Now then. Let’s try and take all of this one step further...

I went to "The Cache" and pulled out a bag of tricks. Took a few steps towards the wall of statues and...

Apply the bag. A monster popped out next to me. Smack! A statue of a giant ant, was added to the collection.
That was easy.
Apply the bag. A monster popped out next to me. Smack! A statue of a scorpion, was added to the collection.

WOW! This is great!
The "Fridge" can preserve the cockatrice corpse. When a monster wanders by, I can turn it into a statue. Then whenever I want to check up on how Mars is feeling - I can just flesh to stone a specimen to offer him!!

What a great system I thought up and improvised!!!
I'm going to create a reserve pool of sacrifices!

Apply the bag. A monster popped out next to me. Smack! A statue of a lurker above, was added to the collection.

Ouf. That one was kind of heavy to carry over.

Apply the bag. A monster popped out next to me. Smack! A statue of a soldier ant, was added to the collection.

This is so much fun (big grin)!

Apply the bag. A monster popped out next to me. Smack! A statue of a guardian naga - could not be lifted (!).

Hmmm... It's kind of in an awkward spot. I have to try and move it.

I dropped all my excess stuff. Still couldn't lift it.
I dropped everything except for what I was wearing. Still couldn't lift it (!). I dropped everything except for the gauntlets of power, which I was wearing. Or else my strength drops to 18. I STILL couldn't lift it!

Damn. It's not in a good spot. In fact - it's right next to the altar of Mars. I don't like the way it looks on the screen (sad face).

Okay. It will be one of the first ones I'll flesh to stone. That's all (shrug). Now that I know it's so heavy, I'll know to make sure it's on the same square as the altar, before I kill it. Fine. I can live with that for now.

I picked up all my stuff and made sure all was properly wielded, and worn again.
Now then. Since I just had that experience; I'll stand on the same square as the altar. That way, if say, a bactolithium should pop out - I won't turn it into a statue. Instead I'll kill it on the same square as the altar.

Which won't be so hard to lure it to - as I'm standing right on it. I'll just take a step back, and when it steps forward to get next to me, hopefully it will pick the same square as the altar is on. I've done this before with big heavy monsters. Just requires a little patience, that's all.

Man. Am I smart or what? Yet again:
I have anticipated a potential problem, and improvised a solution. Sometimes I even amaze myself (big grin)!

I reach into the bag of tricks once more...
Apply the bag. A monster popped out next to me.

My eyes suddenly grew wide. My mind gasped in terror. My fingers froze at the keyboard.

It was mauve with a pink head and wearing a blue robe.

Master mindflayer.
2.23 Exclamations


From the movie - Alien (1979)

If you’ve ever seen that film, then you have an idea what kind of scenes were flashing through my mind at this point.

Whenever one of the crewman on the ship, Nostromos, would turn around... And the camera would then show the creature... With the slime and goop dripping from it... And the stalk with teeth extruding from the orifice of its mouth... The sheer look of terror gripping the actors faces... Impending doom paralyzing them with fear...

That’s exactly how I felt now, while sitting at the computer desk...

That’s why I mentioned what ghosts did to my character, in the preceding chapter (Part 43 (2.22 on page 218)). Perhaps they grip, Ellora, in fear and paralyze her. But a mindflayer, let alone a master mindflayer, has that kind of effect on me!!

Easy now... Stay calm.

Try and think.

Every single monster I pulled out of the bag or, for that matter, that I created by a wand or scroll of create monster; has never moved before me. So I have the initiative...

Let’s just be extremely careful before hitting any keys. And I will make absolute certain to look at the keyboard before pressing any keys!

First thing is to go over everything in my mind, before I undertake ANY action...

Do I want this thing to be a statue? Do I want this thing to be decorating my main base camp? Do I even want to see, "a statue of a master mindflayer" every time I do the look command on it? Do I want to take the chance that it may one day come to life - as other statues sometimes do?

The same answer, to all of the above questions, kept on exploding in my head:

NO F***IN’ WAY!

Okay then. It will be killed. But first; I immediately need to be NOT next to it!

I fought off the temptation to zap it - or myself - with the wand of teleportation. I did not want to take the chance - no matter how small - that it, or I, would teleport next to one another again (!).

I must take advantage of my initiative this round. I’ll move. I’ll move away. I’ll move directly away while maintaining a direct line of fire.

I reviewed this decision, and subsequent course of likely events, in my mind once more.

Yep. It’s fine. It’s safe.

Okay...

Look at keyboard. Make sure finger is positioned over the "4" key. Press once...

The message screen filled up!

My heart skipped a beat. Forcing myself to stay calm, although my body was shaking, I read what had just transpired.

Six tentacle attacks on displaced images!!
2.23. **EXCLAMATIONS**

Pheeeww...
Okay. The initial shock has subsided - somewhat. But I feel my heart pounding all the way into my throat.
The monster went after a displaced image. It thought that I was still standing next to it.
Okay. Okay. Okay... Stop trembling.
I have to drop this thing. I want to take another step back. Put another square of distance between it and me.
Something is quickly welling up from within the depths of my mind: BUT WAIT!
There’s all this junk on the altar to Mars! It is standing right next to it. Monsters move and pick up things in the same action step! What if it moves onto the altar square and picks up some of the things there!? Like that unknown zinc wand!? What if it’s a wand of death!? I know that there’s also some wands of teleportation there! What if it picks up one of those!? Then zaps it and is then standing next to me again!? What about the mystery rings!? The mystery scrolls!? Monsters don’t have to identify scrolls - they always know what they are! Oh God...
NO!
I have to drop it now. Can’t take the chance of moving again. I already have it in line of fire.
I hit "i", to make absolute certain that everything is as it should be. Paying close attention that my BDDD’s are classified as "d". They always are - but I was under extreme stress here. Wasn’t trusting anything - nor taking any perceived chances with anything!
There was no question on what to use. Nothing in my arsenal packs more punch than a BDDD. Hope I get more than one off...
I pressed "t". Looked at the message area. Then pressed "d". Looked at the message area. Then finally "6".
FOUR LAUNCHED!
I looked at all the results individually. All were followed by a "!!". (More on this particular observation in a latter part in the story.) Good!
Needless to say, it was still standing. I wasn’t surprised. I remember - all too well - how tough these things are (See Part 24 ([2.3] on page [128]).
No response came from it. No retaliatory attacks. No movement. I have a free round on it!
"u" then "d" then "6".
THREE MORE LAUNCHED!
It fell on the first one that impacted with it!
(pause and let out a long sigh of relief...)
I’m still shaking...
I went to the "Fridge" and put the cockatrice corpse back in there. Next I went to put back the bag of tricks in "The Cache".
I’ve lost all desire to continue with; this now ABSOLUTELY INSANE idea that I had devised. It nearly ruined everything I’ve accomplished so far...
I kicked the corpse away. Towards the bottom of the ex-temple to Mars. To an area where there is nothing else near it.
I emptied the large box I named "Garbage". It was the one that had the least amount of items in it. Dumped all of its contents in a pile on the floor. I amassed all the items on the altar and put that in the box, for now...

Now I’m standing on the same square as the altar. I feel like collapsing.

I did not whistle Phiona over. This thing is too disgusting for me to even consider letting my pet eat. I hit the "." key, slowly, until the corpse rotted away.

I’m exhausted.

I saved the game and exited.

... Two days later, and after much absorption, reflection, and contemplation of the latest events; I fired up the game...

Well well. Let’s not let those valuable lessons be forgotten.

No matter how good things look - or seem to be going - disaster lurks behind every corner!

Do not forget this. Imprint it in your mind. Make a note, then tape it to your computer monitor!

(groan) I feel old...

Hokee dokey...

I better put that "big bright idea" on the "hold off for now unless you want a heart attack" list.

Although the; ice box + cockatrice corpse + monster + stone to flesh = a reserve pool of offerings...

It is certainly a potential recipe to a disaster. I thought I had considered everything, but most obviously - I had not.

Better to stick to some easier things for now. That idea involves too many things. Too many variables in the equation. There’s an old saying which goes: "The best idea is a simple one." I think I’m going to stick with that for a while, now (roll eyes).

Now then. Considering what I had recently written in "Part 42: A Milestone Reached" (see 2.21 on page 212), I feel extra bad. There I went into quite a long explanation on how careful I was. Looking at what just transpired with my 'big bright idea', which culminated to the master mindflayer being summoned, I feel quite embarrassed. But such is the case when one is reporting what actually happens...

And, although I mentioned it somewhere in the story already, I’ll say it again:

"When I first started this game, I never thought that I’d be writing all this down for a public viewing."

(laugh!)

I still don’t like the way that guardian naga statue looks in the layout of my base camp on the screen. I wonder if, by chance, Mort would be able to pick it up? I don’t seem to recall that friendly monsters pick up anything though (?). Where is everybody any ways? I don the blindfold and start going around the map with the look command.

Hmmm... There are now two storm giants on the level. I better make sure that I know which one is Mort, and whether the new one is friendly or not...

Okay. They’re both friendly (peaceful). I called the new one "Larry". Hopefully one will come around the area soon. If they do pick up stuff - hope it’s not one of the chests or the "Fridge" (laugh!)

My scan of the level revealed a few more wandering monsters. I whistled over Phiona and went after them. The usual slaughter and a couple of offerings were made. Collected the loot and sorted it into the proper piles.
Now that the level had been cleaned up, I went to "The Cache" and pulled out a scroll of earth. I'm going to cross something else off my 'list of things to do'.

We were almost on the downstairs, when a nurse and an orc captain suddenly appeared on the radar. (groan) I don't feel like this now. I just got organized for an expedition. Doesn't it always happen that way?

Okay. We'll take care of these latest intruders and then get back on our way. Which one do you want Phiona?

Phiona jumped the orc captain.
Fine. I'll suck the life outa the nurse then.
Exchange. Wield "Stormbringer".
Been a while since I used the 'great big black life-draining sanguinary battle-blade' any way. I still like reading what it does in the message area (grin)!

So while Phiona ripped out the orc captain's throat, I skewered the nurse.
Phiona ate her corpse. I offered mine to Mars...
Your sacrifice is consumed in a burst of flame! An object appears at your feet! The voice of Mars booms out: "Use my gift wisely!"
Oh boy!
Another gift from Mars!
It's been a long time since I got one this way. What is it this time?
A longsword named "Firebrand".
Hmmm... That rings a bell...
I've seen these before in prior games... I think? But I've been playing this particular game so long now, that my memory is starting to get fuzzy (laugh!). Any way, considering the classes I've played, longswords aren't weapons I can normally use - nor have used.

I remember "Frostbrand", from the game that Nethack is not, though. It was one of the best artifacts in the game. It was +3 normally, however it was +6 versus fire using / dwelling creatures.
So then perhaps "Firebrand would be the same, except that its +6 would be versus cold using / dwelling creatures?
Let's see what the "/" command has to say...
Hmmm... It does not appear in the 'cyclopedia.
I went through the usual motions of invoking, applying, rubbing, etc. Nothing. But then again, I kind of expected that (laugh!).

Okaaay... Then we all know what this means, eh?
I Need Some Test Subjects!!! (grin)
We scoured the immediate dungeon levels...
The fiery blade burns the leocrotta! The fiery blade burns the leocrotta! The leocrotta misses. The leocrotta misses. The leocrotta misses. The leocrotta misses. The leocrotta misses. The leocrotta misses. The leocrotta bites! The leocrotta misses.
The fiery blade burns the leocrotta! You kill the leocrotta! Phiona eats a leocrotta corpse.
I got bit for 2 points (shrug). But that's the chance you take when your standing at melee range.
But hey... I like that "fiery blade burns" part in the message (grin)!
The fiery blade burns the elf zombie!
The fiery blade burns the elf zombie! You destroy the elf zombie!
The fiery blade burns the wood golem!
The fiery blade burns the wood golem!
The fiery blade burns the wood golem! You destroy the wood golem!
The fiery blade hits the flesh golem. The fiery blade hits the flesh golem.
The fiery blade hits the flesh golem. The flesh golem turns to flee!
The fiery blade hits the flesh golem. You destroy the flesh golem! Phiona eats a flesh golem corpse.
Notice that there was no "burns" here. Instead it was "hits". Also notice the lack of "!!".
The fiery blade burns the ice vortex!
The fiery blade burns the ice vortex! You kill the ice vortex!
Two hits to kill an ice vortex. Not bad...
The fiery blade burns the snake!
"x"
The black blade draws the life from the snake! The snake turns to flee!
"n1td"
You throw one dagger named BDDD. You kill the snake!
That was to compare it with my other weapons. But what surprised me the most here, was how tough
that snake was!
The fiery blade burns the floating eye!
"x"
The black blade draws the life from the floating eye! You kill the floating eye!
The fiery blade burns the glass golem!
"x"
The black blade draws the life from the glass golem!
"n1td"
You throw one dagger named BDDD. You kill the glass golem!
Darn. It went down too fast. I need something else that’s a little tougher. To show you how my
BDDD’s do...
The fiery blade burns the umber hulk!
"x"
The black blade draws the life from the umber hulk!
"n1td"
You throw one dagger named BDDD. The dagger named BDDD hits the umber hulk!
"n1td"
You throw one dagger named BDDD. You kill the umber hulk!
That was better. Nope; I didn’t get confused. I timed my movements compared to his exactly, while I waited around a corner. I got lucky with the clock ticks, I guess. One more monster, and I’ll only single fire BDDD’s...
"n1td"
You throw 1 dagger named BDDD. The dagger named BDDD hits the invisible black light!
"n1td"
You throw 1 dagger named BDDD. The dagger named BDDD hits the invisible black light!
"n1td"
You throw 1 dagger named BDDD. You kill the invisible black light!
Mmmkay... A few things that stand out here...
I killed a few other monsters. I don’t have all the examples with me. I don’t know how to "copy + paste" from the message screen. So I have to type them out here when they appear. But...
- Notice that "Firebrand" does not always burn every creature. I’ve hit other types of creatures also. It burns most - but not all. However, it does burn all the ones that I’ve both encountered and associate as a NON "fire using / dwelling" type. So then perhaps, it is similar to how I’ve correlated it, from what I know, with a similar artifact in the game that Nethack is not.
- "Stormbringer" also does not automatically "draw the life from" every creature that I connect with it. Not quite sure yet. But it seems that creatures which are undead; meaning they have no more life to steal, are not affected.
- Now look at the "!", which come right after the; hit result sentences. Those exclamation marks do not always appear. This is something that I noticed way back from my first ever game of Nethack. I’ve been watching for those, and observing their happenings, through all my games. I have no data, nor been keeping notes on this particular phenomena. That’s too much work - even for me (laugh)! But here’s my theory on what they mean:

1. If the hit would cause great damage (and/or a 'critical hit' in the game that Nethack is not), then a "!!" will appear.

2. If the hit caused maximum or more damage than it would normally be able to (Example: According to the guide; a dagger would do similar damage as the same weapon in the game that Nethack is not. Thus from 1 to 4 points. If that dagger would roll a "4" then it qualifies. Also; if that same dagger were enchanted to a +3 or better, then it would do 1 to 4 points + 3 points on top. So in essence 4 to 7 points. Any result would be equal to or more than maximum normal damage.), then a "!!" will appear.

3. If a special attack is released and/or indicated (draws the life, burns), then a "!!" will appear.

4. If a blessed weapon / missile / projectile connects with an undead creature, then a "!!" will appear.

Take a note of these:
My blessed +6 daggers named BDDD, always receive a "!!". The cursed -4 arrows, never receive a "!!". The blessed +3 rubber hose, always receives a "!!". The uncursed +4 axe, mostly receives a "!!" (here, I'm assuming an axe does 1-6). Any way. This is probably not too interesting to some of you. But for some reason, this is fascinating to me.
Hmmm... That sounds like something Spock would say (laugh)!
I see that we got sidetracked again...
Okay. Off to the Titans level. Let’s see if we can get those BDDD’s out of the water...

2.24 That’s it!

I turned auto pickup off before doing any levitating over all the water on the Titan’s level. I dunno. Water is still kind of scary to me. I’ve been leery of it ever since that incident with them snow boots (see Part 10 [page 47]). I never feel totally comfortable while I’m levitating across large expanses like here. I always arrange my flight path to pass over as many land squares as possible. Just in case...
I’m on the other side now. Trying to remember where I was standing exactly when I battled the nazgul with one leg caught in that beartrap...
Okay, I was here. And I threw the BDDD’s in this direction. So they ended up over there. Yeah. I remember it now.
I gaze at the sea that lies between me and where I want to get to. I count all the water squares necessary to fill, in order to create a path to my destination. I then count the amount necessary to extend a land bridge to the nearest island. If this works, I’ll eventually make a land bridge that spans all the water between both stairs.
Ten. I need ten boulders. Darn. A scroll of earth only gives me nine. There’s one extra boulder on the level. But it’s on another island.
Hmmm... I wonder...
I levitated over to it. Stood on the opposite side of the boulder from where I was hoping it would end up. I then zapped it with a wand of teleportation. It disappeared. Where to? I couldn’t see from where I was.
I took a little jaunt around the island. Looking around the walls that were blocking my sighting range. Nope. It’s not out in the big open area. Either it’s in one of the rooms, or it got teleported to the bottom of the sea. I headed back towards the island with all the dark rooms.
Lucky me (grin). It was just inside the door from the water. Okay. Now to figure out where to position myself so that when all the boulders appear; I can best achieve my goal...
Much pondering...
Okay. I levitated to the spot and rumbled down nine boulders from the ceiling. Good thing I was wearing a helmet (wink)!
Believe it or not; the above thinking and subsequent moving of the boulders process, took me over an hour to do! It reminded me of how I had to figure out the puzzles on the Boulders levels (ha ha)! But it was necessary in order to get everything just right, cause I had just the exact amount in order to do what I wanted. Good thing I was able to levitate and land in otherwise normally inaccessible areas!
I felt quite satisfied with myself; in having accomplished this (smile).
Now. For what we’ve all been waiting for...
I pulled out the ol’ pick-axe from the bag and dug down. I dug a pit and found two daggers named BDDD!
All right! It worked! And they weren’t even rusted, as I had feared they would be. So now I have eleven BDDD’s (big thumbs up!)

Well done. Mission accomplished. And I also have a little land bridge to an island. Less levitating over water is now required to cross the level. Well. Let’s head back...

You hear the sound of a wolf howling at the moon.

Oh look. A werewolf.

I landed on an adjoining island and counted the range. It was 13.

So I took a step towards it and launched a BDDD salvo.

One flew.

No risk involved. BDDD maximum range is 12. There’s no chance that they’ll land in water, in case I should throw too many to kill it.

The werewolf took a step back. Now its back is up against water.

So I took another step towards it and launched a BDDD salvo.

One flew.

Hrmph. Not too lucky with the amount launching. But hey! If I’m going to be unlucky with the amount launched - it may as well be now, while it doesn’t really matter (laugh!)!

Okay. My turn to do an action again. I unthinkingly did what I had done the two previous turns.

I took a step towards it and launched a BDDD salvo.

Four flew.

The second killed it, the next two landed in the water one square beyond it...

(thud)

That was the sound of my head hitting the computer desk.

I can’t believe what I just did!!!

Aaarrrrrgh!

There’s no more boulders on this level. Crap! I’m going to have to use up another scroll of earth. But I had only brought one with me...

Crap! Crap! Crap!

I’m angry. I scan the level for an outlet to my frustrations. I know that if I keep playing while being emotionally upset, that that’s just asking for trouble...

There’s a Grey-elf near the upstairs. Well, it’s his unlucky day. He’s gonna serve as my release...

A short and swift battle ensued. Whereby I shamelessly murdered the Grey-elf by striking him with "Firebrand". I wanted my victim to see how callous I felt, even to his pleas of mercy. That’s why I did the dirty deed from up close.

There. I feel better - a little.

While Phiona ate his corpse, I shifted through the booty.

Amongst it; I picked up a burnt elven shield??

Hmm...

I didn’t see him read a scroll of fire. So this must have been caused by... "Firebrand"?

Neat-O! I like this fiery blade (grin)!
It should be good in conjunction with the black blade. Considering what I have postulated in the previous chapter (Part 44 (2.23 on page 224)), it should burn the undeads that "Stormbringer" isn’t effective against.

Thanks again Mars (smile)!

I feel much better now (laugh)! I’ll come back another time with a scroll of earth to retrieve my BDDD’s. Again...

Back upstairs. Base camp level 24. I discovered that some of that Grey-elfs possessions were cursed. Hmm.... That disproves my earlier conclusion that all elf booty is never cursed (Forget where I wrote that now, Ellora’s story is starting to get long to sift through, and find what and where I had previously talked about something. But I do remember mentioning that, at least once. And probably twice.)

Next. I want to repeat the holy water making procedure. I have to know how to do it properly. Must repeat everything I did previously, but with a few extra vials. Has enough time passed by? Is Mars ready to talk?

A spotted jelly corpse, scrounged from the level below, told me he was. Okay good. Now to make sure I cover all the bases...

I put two vials of water on the altar. Kept two on me in my backpack. And yet another two, I wielded in my sword hand. While physically being in the same square as the altar to Mars...

"#pray"

blah-blah-blah... Mars was well pleased... blah-blah-blah... Something about an object appearing at my feet...

Two potions on the altar glowed light blue!!

Okay! I have it figured out!

I think.

You have to have the water potions on the altar while praying in the same square. Also, I am assuming, your god has to be happy with you too.

I can make blessed holy water!

Yippee! I glanced at the spellbook. I think it was restore ability. I threw it into the chest with the rest. I have like 20 spellbooks now. Back in "Part 29: A Plain Spellbook?" (see 2.8 on page 152), I thought it was a great and wondrous thing. But now, it’s more like run of the mill (laugh!).

Okay. Now that I (or Mars) can make water blessed; the surviving priestess of Venus has now outlived her usefulness.

I have a new mission (Also some things that will get crossed off of my 'things to do' list.):

Murder the priestess of Venus on level 14, then convert the altar to chaotic!

I can hardly wait! I like doing stuff like that (big grin)!

Gleefully, I prepare my equipment for the upcoming expedition...

**Dungeon level 14, Mazes of Menace**

I went to the priestess of Venus and chatted. I wanted to refuse her donation request - just too piss her off (grin). That done...
2.24. THAT’S IT!

I dug out a straight corridor with the pick-axe, for BDDD salvo fire into the temple of Venus. I went to my selected spot, 12 squares from where the priestess would be. There I waited for her to move into my line of fire...

She never, ever moved there? Odd. Was she expecting this? Had the dungeon snitches informed her that she was next on my ‘hit list’?

Okay, I dug another path, parallel to the first one. This second one, was directly lined up with the altar.

I was walking to where I wanted to be, at range 12, but she moved into line of fire when I had reached range ten. Not wanting to bother to have to wait for her later, I took advantage of the opportunity now. Come to think of it; why should I have to kill her from range 12? I checked my ranged weapon charts. Yup. Priestesses spell range only reaches out to a range of eight. (shrug) Besides, what could go wrong?

BDDD’s away!

You throw three daggers named BDDD. The priest of Venus gets angry! The 1st dagger named BDDD hits the priest of Venus! The 2nd dagger named BDDD hits the priest of Venus! The 3rd dagger named BDDD hits the priest of Venus!

The priest of Venus casts a spell! The priest of Venus summons insects around your displaced image!

!!!

First thing that took me by surprise; was that this wasn’t a priestess (?). It was a priest! First time I ever met one (or noticed this) in Nethack. Don’t ask me how or why - it’s just the way it turned out (laugh!). And why would Venus, of all gods, want a male as one of her clerics? For some reason, this question really bothered me (and still kind of does)...  

Second thing; I forgot about my cloak of displacement. I had already noticed that it creates images of me out to a range of two. And that it affected melee and ranged combat - but this was the first time that I saw it affect spell combat (at least that I’ve noticed)!

Third thing was; that although I was less than worried about these insects being summoned concerning my own personal safety - the center of the spell had taken effect right on top of Phiona’s position! She was surrounded by 8 insects!

I did the look on every single one of them, of course. What concerned me the most was those soldier ants. They have poisonous bites! I did not know if Phiona was poison resistant or not. I strongly suspected the latter.

Oh great... I hate the times that I find myself in this situation in Nethack. There are so many things to always be considering (roll eyes). Through my lack of forethought - or to put it more bluntly - through my being lazy; I’ve now endangered my pet (groan).

I forgot about the priest. He’s not moving beyond range two of the altar, any way. I’ll kill him later. I have to go save Phiona! I took a step down towards her. The mass of insects were off lined to ranged fire. So I had to close to the constrained area. As I did so - an amber hulk suddenly appeared on the radar (!).

Oh Gawd... Just what I need. Welcome to one of "those potentially deteriorating situations in Nethack" (see what I wrote in Part 42 (see 2.21 on page 212)).

Hurriedly, I started dispatching insects. Phiona was in full attack mode. Lashing at the monsters around her. This made me even more concerned, as she kept on picking on soldier ants.

Somewhere in the mess of messages, I saw something about the priest healing himself.
Good for you! I yelled into the monitor. Just you wait till I finish here and get back to you. Threaten my poor pet panther, eh? Your gonna die hard... (sinister leer)

I tried to pick off the soldier ants myself. Willingly, I exposed myself to, taking swipes from the non-poisonous insects. The sooner they're gone, the easier I'll breathe for her sake. I had managed to hack my way through some of them. Now I was standing next to my companion.

The umber hulk is now at range 6. Confusion gaze attack range. But he still has to get a line of sight on me.

I stopped and considered. What would be the worst thing that could soon happen?
- The umber hulk gets into the clear and confuses me. - Now I can't risk hitting or throwing anything. Lest I risk hurting my companion. - The priest sends another horde of insects at us. - I won't have enough action steps to cure my ill, and then protect Phiona. - Phiona gets poisoned and dies. - All this guilt will be on my head.

Okay. Decision has been made. I won't let that happen.

I zapped Phiona with the wand of teleportation. Poof. She disappeared. Now I don’t have to worry.

As things turned out, the umber hulk did not confuse me till 3 rounds later. But hey! I was still glad that I had done what I did to Phiona. Better safe than sorry. And at least I was able to think clearly enough, and take precautions ahead of time. Not when my options would be limited - should I have continued on.

While staying confused, I finished off the insects. Then I applied the unicorn horn, and slew the umber hulk with BDDD's. Donned the blindfold, to check up on what Phiona was up to. Halfway from my position, and closing. Good girl. Picked up my missiles, and quickly sifted through some booty.

Now I know that when I’m wearing a cloak of displacement, to stand at least out to a range of 11 from priests or priestesses. That suited me just fine. I had plans for this priest. Range 11 was just fine by me (evil smirk)...

I move to the designated range and prepared some equipment...

Range 11 from the priest of Venus. He’s standing smack on the same square as the altar...

"tS2"
The black blade draws the life from the Priest of Venus!

"tF2"
The fiery blade burns the Priest of Venus!

"n1td2"
You throw one dagger named BDDD. The dagger named BDDD hits the Priest of Venus!

"n1td2"
You throw one dagger named BDDD. The dagger named BDDD hits the Priest of Venus!

"n1td2"
You throw one dagger named BDDD. You kill the Priest of Venus!

There. That will teach you to mess with me.

I was firing only one BDDD at a time, in order to prolong his agony...

Next was to convert the altar over. Surprisingly, I failed on the first attempt! I had even used the umber hulk corpse to do it! I was kind of taken aback. But I was determined to get all the altars in
the mazes of Menace to belong to Mars. So I tried again using the body of the priest. Maybe that will get things going...

It worked! Now there are no other; temples, altars, priests, or priestesses in the entire Mazes of Menace - except for those belonging to MY god:

Mars.

Hope your satisfied big guy (grin).

I found that nearly all of the priest of Venus’ stuff was cursed (laugh!) Dunno what the story was with this guy. Obviously wasn’t getting along with his god too good (lots of laughs!)...

Set up a large box and a chest in here. It will serve as a minor base camp, should I ever need it. Now I have three. Levels 4, 14, and 24.

Kind of curious, eh? Maybe my next one will be on level 34? Didn’t I once plan on getting to level 34...?

(scan Ellora’s story)

Yep! Look in Part 12 (laugh!) *(chapter 2.12 on page 171)*.

Hmmm... Maybe the gods of numerology have already decided my fate?!?

Okay. Let’s wrap things up here, and get back to the main base camp. I crossed off several things on my ’things to do list’ here. Threw Phiona a tripe ration, and headed back down. Mission well accomplished (smile of satisfaction)...

Killed that succubus around level 20 or something. Picked up the wand of teleportation. I’ll be curious to see if any charges are left when I get it identified. I named it "pop out babe" so that I’d recognize it amongst the pile I’m starting to amass...

Hokay... What’s next?

Oh yeah. May as well go back and fish out them BDDD’s - again (roll eyes).

I have only one scroll of earth left. Darn. I also want to plug up a crossing into the fortress on level 28. Hmmm... Let me think a moment here...

Ponder...

Okay. I think I have another idea. Let’s see if it works out...

**Dungeon level 26**

I pull out the pick-axe and chop a path from a boulder to the downstairs. Sometimes when you drop something on a downstairs, it falls to the level below. Why not a boulder? Like it must be heavy enough. Worth a try, no? At least it is to me (laugh)!?

So I pushed it over to the stairs and... There it sat.

Hmmm...

I tried again several times. Even seeing if it would work from different angles of approach. No show.

Darn. Oh well. That didn’t work (sad face)...  
We went down to the Titans level.

I turned auto pick up off again. Water you know...

Levitated to the island where the werewolf had fooled me (wink).
I only needed one boulder, so took quite a lot of time to contemplate where I would be placing the eight extra ones...
Pulled the chin strap tight on my helmet, and rumbled down nine boulders.
Pushed the first one to the water square where my BDDD's were located.
The boulder sunk out of sight!
What...?
That never happened before (?). What's the story with this?
Pushed another one into the same spot. It filled up the water this time. Just as I had expected that the first one should have done.
I felt a "little" apprehensive. Had a tingling in the back of my mind that something was somewhat amiss...
But after getting the message that it was "now safe to walk here", I put those feelings aside. Pulled out the pick-axe and dug my way down.
You dig a pit. The water rushes in! You sink like a rock! You can't swim! You managed to crawl out! Pheeeew! That was close! (Or something like that. I didn't write it down, cause I nearly had a heart attack. So I was not thinking about doing something as mundane as that.)
(pause to collect my wits)
Woah...
I almost died.
I nearly got killed.
Like I said before in "Part 10: Snow Boots" (see 1.12 on page 17),
That is "exactly the type of message" I get just before the one that asks if I want all my possessions identified!!
Gawd almighty... I need a break.
Save game. Went to take a break. Took a long one...
Next day; I fired up the game.
I gazed at the square I had dug, in retrieving my BDDD's earlier, half way across the map. Why had it not worked here...? Oh, the heck with it. I'm not going to risk my life again for just two BDDD's.
I had done some thinking. In fact; I did a lot of thinking...
Came to a conclusion concerning a new direction:
Well that's it! After; nearly starving to death (Part 33 (see 2.12 on page 17)), achieving so much (Part 42 (see 2.21 on page 212)), almost ruining my game with the master mindflayer (Parts 43 - 44 (see 2.22 on page 218 and 2.23 on page 224)), and just recently nearly drowning - not to mention my cat or the vacuum cleaner - I've decided to do something I've been wanting to do for sooo long...
I'm going to play with all my stuff!
I better do it now - before something happens to my character and/or the game. Before I should get killed somehow.
Part of me says to keep plugging away at my 'things to do list'. But after the recent events, another part says that I may never reach the end of it!
So I'm going to try all them potions, scrolls, bless all my stuff, and use my wishes.
2.25. MAPS AND TABLES

I don’t care about waiting for the "best" time. I’m going to do it while I still "have" time. I want to see what’s possible for my character. How powerful she can become with suped-up equipment, etc. Maybe I’ll be able to use Ellora as a gauge to future Nethack games (if I ever get this one finished)... So I checked my inventory. Yep. My scroll of teleportation has been wiped, and my potion of extra healing has been diluted. Also, my favorite, and best, helmet is now rusted. (sad face) That’s kind of funny. I’ve hardly ever used any potions of healing in this game. I can only remember of two occasions. The big fight in the last room at the boulders, and the extremely big fight at the fortress. So I’ve used two. Besides that - never. But I’ve lost potions many times, like when the pyroilisk micro waved me, and other accidents. I think it shows how careful I’ve been throughout the game. Made it back to base camp level 24. Good. Imagine if I would have died to something on the way back here from the Titan’s level (wink). Okay... (rub hands together) What to start with? Hmmmm...

2.25 Maps and Tables

As previously promised; here are some of my notes concerning the game with Ellora. I was going to publish these a little later, but I’m kind of hung up on a few things presently. Mostly dealing with which direction I’ll be soon taking with Ellora. Till then, I’ll publish these. It will fill the void for now (wink).

First are how I keep notes on what the Mazes of Menace look like now, and where things are.

The levels are represented the same way they appear on my status screen. Hence, DL = Dungeon Level. In some areas of the Mazes of Menace, this is the same (like in the Caverns), other times not (like in the Home area). But I’ve kept the same designation of the individual areas. Any way, I’m sure those of you who’ve seen this know what I mean.

On each level, I write the important features and/or landmarks. Most are self explanatory. The 2 square by 2 square rooms, where Zorkminds were found; I call them vaults. This is because when you ‘hear the footsteps of a guard on patrol’, you can then start searching for him within these rooms. And soon enough a ‘vault guard’ appears. They’re good for some armor and such, but most importantly they carry wands. So I use these vault guards as a source of these.

On the square in the opposite direction, to the direction of the adjoining stairs, I engraved in the dust where they are. This is so that I don’t rub out the engraving, as I travel between them often enough. This is in case I should, of all things, suffer another mindflayer attack. That way I’ll at least be able to find my way up and down quickly enough again.

Something else to take of note: All the most direct paths between the stairs - on all the levels - have been swept clear. So I don’t have to worry about stepping into a trap - like I did last time I forgot where everything was (see Part 13 ([1.15 on page 67])). Next, separated by a space, are the known monsters and their relation towards me. This is handy, as I look at these just before changing levels (going up or down stairs). Originally, I did this concerning other elves. But they are all dead now. You’ll see why in a chapter or two. As I had discovered, Nymphs can come in very handy (see Part 33 ([2.12 on page 171])). So their location, as well as that
of some others, should need ever arise again. Garbage = whatever I consider of little use or value. Usually sundry weapons and armor, some tools, and worthless pieces of glass.

Boulders are marked in case I ever figure a way to move them from level to level. There are quite a few water squares I want to fill on the Titan’s level.

Rocks are all in one pile near one of the stairs. Yea, I went around all the levels and collected them. That’s cause, monsters go around and pick them up. So I just have to count how many there are in the pile. If any are missing, I know that something is around. And who knows, I may find a use for them later on.

You’ll notice that all the dangerous statues have now been destroyed. You don’t want a rust monster, or lich statue coming to life at a bad time. And a bad time is defined as; any time your next to it (laugh)! All the levels from 1 - 26 in the Mazes of Menace, and from 3 - 6 in the Caverns; have been magic mapped. The others, I haven’t bothered, for various reasons. Some don’t seem like I’ll discover anything new (27, 28, the whole Boulders area), others I don’t think I need to, as I’m not going back there for now (7 - 11 in the Caverns, and the entire Home area). So then whenever you see: NMM = Not Magic Mapped.

Mazes of Menace

**DL1**

- altar (chaotic)
- chest (empty)
- sink
- boulder (x2)
- rocks (x150)
- peaceful Yeenoghu
- peaceful incubus called Death Row
- peaceful red naga

**DL2**

- stairs down (east)
- stairs up (center)
- stairs to the Caverns (west)
- statue of a Keystone Kop
- boulder (x1)
• rocks (x75)
• peaceful gremlin
• peaceful forest centaur

DL3
• teleportation trap
• vault
• boulder (x2)
• peaceful black unicorn
• floating eye

DL4 (Base Camp)
• altar (chaotic)
• vault
• chest (misc.)
• large box (garbage)
• 4 piles (garbage weap/arm)

DL5
• falling rock trap
• peaceful hill giant - dwarf king

DL6
• water (x4)
• boulder (x2)
• rocks (x23)

DL7
• boulder (x1)
DL8

- boulder (x2)
- xan

DL9: Oracle level

- 7 centaur statues
- rocks (x126)
- Oracle of Delphi
- peaceful ogre king

DL10

- Sirius's grave
- throne
- vault
- stairs to the Boulders (north west)
- stairs down (south west)
- stairs up (east)
- chest (garbage)
- boulder (x1)
- rocks (x46)
- peaceful ogre king
- peaceful bugbear
- peaceful gremlin called Chuckles
- peaceful quasit
- peaceful mountain centaur
- water nymph

DL11

- squeaky board trap
- peaceful mountain centaur
- small mimic
DL12

- vault
- large box (garbage)
- water trap (x2)
- boulder (x2)
- panther
- spotted jelly

DL13

- vault
- fountain
- boulder (x2)
- rocks (x120)
- peaceful hill giant
- peaceful gremlin

DL14 (Minor Base)

- altar (chaotic)
- fountain
- vault
- chest (empty)
- large box (garbage)
- boulder (x2)
- rocks (x64)
DL15

- large box (garbage)
- boulder (x2)
- rocks (x53)
- trap (anti-magic field)
- peaceful invisible gremlin
- peaceful homonculous
- peaceful black unicorn

DL16

- magic portal to Home level 1
- falling rock trap
- teleportation trap
- fountain
- vault
- boulder
- peaceful forest centaur (x5)

DL17 (Ghost level)

DL18

- fountain
- falling rock trap
- boulder (x3)
- rocks (x11)
- peaceful homonculous
- peaceful ogre lord
- white unicorn
2.25. MAPS AND TABLES

DL19

- fountain
- boulder (x3)
- peaceful ogre lord
- peaceful frost giant
- peaceful black unicorn
- wood nymph
- lizard
- giant mimic
- rock piercer

DL20

- swamp water room (x2)
- sink
- fountain
- boulder (x3)
- rocks (x119)
- peaceful homunculus
- spotted jelly

DL21

- Chibougamua’s general store
- vault + magic portal inside
- teleportation trap
- sink
- statue of a Keystone Kop
- boulder (x10)
- rocks (x87)
- peaceful quasit
- floating eye (x2)
- nurse
DL22

- vault
- teleportation trap
- large box (garbage)
- boulder (x9)
- rocks (x61)
- peaceful ogre king (x3)
- peaceful red naga
- peaceful mountain centaur
- large mimic

DL23

- fountain
- rocks (x37)
- peaceful red naga
- peaceful ogre lord
- mountain nymph

DL24 (Main Base Camp)

- altar to Mars (chaotic)
- chest (x4) (Missiles, Ordnance, The Cache, Tools)
- large box (x2) (Garbage, Cursed Stuff)
- ice box (Fridge)
- sink
- vault
- monster generator (?)
- an uncursed rock pile of a mystery shattered statue
- a statue of a guardian naga
- an uncursed statue of a coyote
2.25. MAPS AND TABLES

- an uncursed statue of a gnewt
- an uncursed statue of a goblin
- an uncursed statue of a sewer rat
- an uncursed statue of a giant ant
- an uncursed statue of a soldier ant
- an uncursed statue of a scorpion
- an uncursed statue of a lurker above
- boulder (x5)
- rocks (x161)
- peaceful storm giant called Mort
- peaceful storm giant called Larry
- peaceful red naga called Manfred
- peaceful Green-elf called Flap
- wood nymph called Cynthia

DL25

- fountain
- boulder
- rocks (x81)
- peaceful ogre
- jabberwock
- lurker above
- housecat

DL26

- vault
- boulder (x2)
- rocks (x103)
DL27 (Titan’s level (NMM))

- water between the stairs
- Grunt’s memorial
- statue of Perseus
- statue of a red dragon
- statue of an orc-captain
- statue of a giant mimic
- statue of a stone golem (x3)
- statue of a Green-elf - statue of a soldier
- magic trap
- falling rock trap
- boulder (x7)
- rocks (x260+)
- peaceful ogre lord
- peaceful black unicorn
- peaceful gremlin (x6)
- peaceful red naga -
- grey unicorn
- chickatrice
- orc shaman

DL28 (Fortress (NMM))

- trap door (x5) (way down)
- chest (x2), (both empty)
- large box (empty)
- 2 piles (garbage weap/armor)
- peaceful gremlin (x4)
- long worm
- yellow dragon
- guardian naga
DL 29 (Valley of the Dead (NMM))

- one way upstairs
- Horde of undeads, ghosts, and other horrors
- Burp the giant spider
- look for a gateway (magic portal)

The Caverns:

DL3

- Missy Prissy’s memorial
- squeaky board trap
- falling rock trap
- rocks (x26)

DL4

- unlit level
- rocks (x11)
- boulder (x1)

DL5

- unlit level
- squeaky board
- peaceful homunculus
- peaceful Grey-elf - yeti

DL6 (Marsville)

- Izchak’s candle shop
- altar (chaotic)
- chest (garbage)
- 2 piles of garbage
- rocks (x1)
- peaceful gremlin (x2)
DL7 (NMM)
  • unlit level

DL8 (NMM)
  • unlit level

DL9 (NMM)

DL10 (NMM)

DL11 (NMM)
  • unlit level
  • fountain

Home Forest: (entire area NMM)

Home1
  • magic portal to DL16
  • steel tree maze
  • chest (misc. + beartraps)
  • Orion
  • lots of peaceful monsters.

Home2
  • trees which may yeild fruit when axed

Home3
  • wumpus cave

Home4
  • unlit level
2.25. **MAPS AND TABLES**  

**Home 5**
- unlit level
- squeaky board trap
- polymorph trap

**Home 6**
- Scorpious’s hide out - throne

So that’s basically what the Mazes look like from my perspective of things. With all the running up and down, I’ve been doing the last couple of months, I’ve grown very comfortable with the dungeon. Especially above the ghost level.

I can handle any monster that the game randomly generates, and I just can’t think of any that hold a surprise to me now. Although, some are dropped on sight, like liches and mindflayers, so I don’t give them the chance to surprise me with a special attack (laugh!).

**Ellora’s Main Base Camp (dungeon level 24)**

I refer to this place so often in the story. Actually, at this time in the story, Ellora is there now. She’s working on her weapons and armor, and testing out a few things. So, after fielding a few questions on it, I got the idea of making a map for you all. I taught myself how to use MS Paint (took 2 days), and managed to make something that is pretty close. It’s not perfect, but if I can understand it, I’m sure the rest of you can (wink).

Here’s where it can be found *(see [2.1 on page 122]*)

*(links removed)*

If you can’t access it (you never know with computer stuff and how they work), contact me and I’ll send you a copy.

Sorry about not being able to put it here. But I couldn’t get Google to post it (or I don’t know how to do it).

Now then, here’s a few explanations to it...

**Garbage:** Large box filled with useless items that I don’t want to have laying around.

**Missiles:** Chest filled with all types of missile weaponry; arrows, darts, bolts, knives, daggers, shuriken, spears, javelins, etc.

**Ordnance:** Chest with all my good weapons and armor. It has to have an enchantment of +2 or more to qualify. Or has to be something that you don’t see too often. Like silver weapons or armor, leather jacket, different cloaks, etc.

**The Cache:** This is "the chest". It has all my; artifacts, super weapons, super armor, spellbooks, potions, scrolls, wands, essential tools, etc. If something would happen to it - I would be screwed (!).

**Bell:** The is the Bell of Opening. It refuses to be put in a container. So I dug out a space exclusively for it.
Tools: Chest full of tools. I’ve accumulated so many that I decided to have a place for them. I also keep all my tins here, cause I figure they don’t need refrigeration.

Cursed Stuff: Large box where cursed items are stored. I found that I needed a container for these. Else they get mixed up with all the rest of the junk, and you have to go through each container just to get them in one pile. Whenever I think that Mars might want to uncurse my things, I grab all I can from here. All of the above have their respective alcove, which I carved out of the back wall. Monsters are never generated in doorways. So I feel better about them being there. I’m always worried that a gelatinous cube will be generated on top of one of these. So that’s why I made, then placed them in such.

Fridge: This is an ice box. I keep all the comestibles that I feel are perishable in here. All my potions of booze (even the cursed ones) are kept in here too. I’ve since discovered that certain corpses can be kept in here also. I have a blue jelly corpse that’s been there for I don’t know how long! The "Fridge" was placed and loaded up before I had finished the final renovations in here. So that’s why it kind of looks out of place on the floor plan.

To the top left, I have three piles of miscellaneous weapons and armor. I have so much that I don’t feel like throwing them in the "Garbage". That’s how much I have. The top left pile is just identified weapons. Below it are identified armor. And the remaining one is unidentified weapons and armor.

Sundry Statues: I’ve now placed all the statues in one square at this location. I used to have them lined up along the walls, but this got to be too much clutter on my screen.

Altar: A black chaotic altar to Mars. Used for verifying the cursedness of objects, sacrifices, and the blessing of water.

G. Naga: A statue of a guardian naga. A mistake. I made it before knowing how heavy it was. That’s why it’s not with the others.

Rock Pile: These are what’s left of an unknown statue that was located in a room to the east. It was shattered by a monster with a wand of striking, back when I was first exploring this level. I’ve collected the rocks and placed them here. I’m seeing if that will have any effect on how the monster generator operates.

Rectangles: These represent doorways and/or entrances. There are only two doors left, from the original five. That’s cause of the different giants that have come and gone over the time I’ve been here. Needless to say, I no longer lock the doors. The other four openings were either created by me, as shortcuts to different areas, or by monsters (like umber hulks).

To The Downstairs: A pretty direct path cut by me. Saved time, as the old way was somewhat winding.

To The Upstairs: Same as above. The "J" on top of the "V", is supposed to be an arrow pointing down. To The Monster Generator: That’s a room to the east. Monsters are conjured in there - like you wouldn’t believe. I’ve magic mapped, and object detected the level. I have searched every square in that room so many times, you’d think I’m crazy. But I haven’t yet found what causes it. After a while, I cut a direct path to it. Makes it easier for the big slow heavy monsters to come at me. I then try to kill them on the same square as the altar.

Boulders: Those are the big circles I’ve super-imposed over some doorways. These I placed there on purpose. The two to the east are cause of the monster generating room. So many are continuously made there, that I decided to limit their access. Else I would just get flooded, as I sometimes have been in the past. The two at the south, were placed cause I sometimes got hit by ranged monster attacks while I was around the altar or "The Cache". I hated that. It would disturb my concentration.
I spend so much time on those squares, and the immediate surrounding ones. So now the monsters have to actually close and come in off-line to me. Gives me lots of time to finish what I’m doing, put away my stuff, then kill them.

The base camp has gone through lots of changes over time. Originally it was a temple to Mars. It had a priestess to Mars, and was completely dark. I’ve since cast light all over it. Jubilex used to be here, his favorite spot was just to the left of the altar. My original cache was located in the top left area of the temple. Also had three elven kings wandering in and out. Used to be able to pretty well close it off, when all the doors were there. The whole surrounding outside area has been dug out in a great big "U" 5 squares in diameter. This whole area has also been lit with light spells from a wand. With all of my present monster detecting abilities - there is no way something can sneak up on me.

So that’s pretty well what things look like there now. Now you know what I mean when I say things like:
- I sat on "The Cache" and pondered for a while. - I moved away from the mob, filing in from the room with the monster generator. - I went to the fridge for a potion of booze, then passed out on the altar.
And so on...

Next are my ranged attack tables. This should clear up, or shed some light on, why I do some of the things in the story...

**Thrown / Fired Projectile Ranges**

Too heavy to throw: stone giant, wumpus, baculathrium, fire giant, purple worm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range 1</td>
<td>tiger, sasquatch, hobbit, vault guard, horse, gargoyles, yeti, warg, panther, warhorse, Uruk-hai, Green-elf, gnomish wizard, dwarf, zruty, elven king, ogre, wood nymph, dwarf king, ape, mountain nymph, Grey-elf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 2</td>
<td>rothe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 6</td>
<td>thrown arrow, thrown bolt, python, cobra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 7</td>
<td>beartrap, rock peircer, quivering blob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 9</td>
<td>halberd, two-handed sword, dwarvish mattock, bardiche, battle-axe, morning star, voulge, lucern hammer, bill-guisarme, thrown rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 10</td>
<td>pick-axe, bec de corbin, guisarme, partisan, violet fungus, gremlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 11</td>
<td>spetum, crossbow, axe, Stormbringer, longsword, katana, glaive, ranseur, broadsword, quarterstaff, scimitar, elven broadsword, Orcrist, Snickersnee, silver saber, Dragonbane, fauchard, Firebrand, spellbook, leperchaun, ochre jelly, raven, homunculus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 12</td>
<td>flail, elven spear, orcish dagger, knife, spear, dart, worm tooth, dagger, silver dagger, BDDDD, Sting, Longbow of Diana, bow, sling, rubber hose, club, dwarvish short sword, orcish short sword, orcish bow, elven bow, thonged club, javelin, shuriken, silver spear, thrown gray stone, mirror, amulet, scroll, ring, wand, Bell of Opening, unicorn horn, towel, tin opener, skeleton key, bugle, candle, lock pick, leash, gem, worthless piece of glass, tin, bag of tricks, lizard, lichen, giant bat, acid blob, giant ant, giant beetle, floating eye</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Range 13  fired arrow, fired bolt, fired gray stone

Note: This table applies just for Ellora. She’s an Elf, a Ranger, and wearing gauntlets of power. I’m sure that another class of character will be different. Thrown: Means thrown by hand. Fired: Means when a missile is launched from a platform. Such as; arrow + bow, bolt + crossbow, and gray stone + sling.
Monster: Means its respective corpse, of course.
I found out very early that all arrows travel the same distance no matter what their designation. So that’s why I didn’t include the different types of arrows.

**Monster Attack Ranges**

Range 1  everything in the Mazes of Menace but most importantly; mindflayer tentacles, lich disintegration touch

Range 2  gas spore explosion radius, yellow light explosion radius, freezing sphere blast radius, flaming sphere blast radius, black light explosion radius, (all) troll types - polearms

Range 4  vampire charming gaze (?), cobra venom spitting

Range 5  Keystone Kop gaze

Range 6  winter wolf frost breadth,umber hulk confusion gaze, blue dragon lightning breadth, green dragon poison gas breadth

Range 8  lich (titan?) cursing attack, priestess spell, (all) giant types boulder throwing, attack wands

Range 9  pyroisk wide angled dispersion heat gaze

Range 16  unicorn ’pop and butt’ attack

That’s what I refer to when I want to make sure I’m out of a certain monsters range. It’s constantly being revised/amended when I discover something new, and/or discover that a particular monster has attacked me at a longer range than previously noticed.

### 2.26 A Day In The Laboratory

First thing will be to learn the identify spell again. Have to see what everything is first, in order to better assess my next step(s)...

Done. Now to identify all the stuff I can till I’m out of power...

Power is now at 4. Now I’ll do other stuff till it recharges...

I’m aware that some of you want to see this (laugh)! So here’s what appears in my "\" screen:

**Discoveries**

**Unique Items**

- Bell of Opening
Artifacts

- Orcrist [chaotic elven broadsword]
- Dragonbane [unaligned broadsword]
- The Longbow of Diana [chaotic bow]
- Stormbringer [chaotic runesword]
- Snickersnee [lawful katana]
- Sting [chaotic elven dagger]
- Fire Brand [unaligned long sword]

Amulets

- amulet of reflection (pyramidal)
- amulet of strangulation (circular)
- amulet versus poison (hexagonal)
- amulet of unchanging (square)

Weapons

- * elven spear (ruened spear)
- * elven broadsword (ruened broadsword)
- dwarvish mattock (broad pick)
- dwarvish short sword (broad short sword)
- elven bow (ruened bow)
- runesword (ruened broadsword)
- elven dagger (ruened dagger)
- orcish arrow (crude arrow)
- elven arrow (ruened arrow)
- katana (samurai sword)
- spetum (forked polearm)
- guisarme (pruning hook)
- orcish dagger (crude dagger)
• orcish bow (crude bow)
• halberd (angled poleaxe)
• shuriken (throwing star)
• javelin (throwing spear)
• battle-axe (double-headed axe)
• ranseur (hilted polearm)
• glaive (single-edged polearm)
• partisan (vulgar polearm)
• quarterstaff (staff)
• dwarfish spear (stout spear)
• bardiche (long poleaxe)
• bec de corbin (beaked polearm)
• orcish short sword (crude short sword)
• elven short sword (runed short sword)
• scimitar (curved sword)
• bill-guisarme (hooked polearm)
• voulge (pole cleaver)
• fauchard (pole sickle)
• lucern hammer (pronged polearm)

Armor

• * elven cloak (faded pall)
• * elven boots (buckled boots)
• helmet (crested helmet)
• dwarvish cloak (hooded cloak)
• low boots (walking shoes)
• orcish ring mail (crude ring mail)
• iron shoes (hard shoes)
• jumping boots (combat boots)
• orcish helm (iron skull cap)
• leather gloves (riding gloves)
• elven shield (blue and green shield)
• cloak of displacement (ornamental cope)
• speed boots (jungle boots)
• gauntlets of power (fencing gloves)
• shield of reflection (polished silver shield)
• kicking boots (snow boots)
• cornuthaum (conical hat)
• cloak of protection (tattered cape)
• high boots (jackboots)
• dwarvish roundshield (large round shield)
• orcish shield (red-eyed shield)
• dwarvish iron helm (hard hat)
• orcish cloak (coarse mantlelet)
• elven leather helm (leather hat)
• Uruk-hai shield (white-handed shield)

Scrolls

• scroll of scare monster (YUM YUM)
• scroll of create monster (TEMOV)
• scroll of enchant weapon (KERNOD WEL)
• scroll of light (ZELGO MER)
• scroll of teleportation (DAIYEN FOEELS)
• scroll of enchant armor (DUAM XNAHT)
• scroll of blank paper (unlabeled)
• scroll of identify (GARVEN DEH)
• scroll of stinking cloud (ELBIB YLOH)
• scroll of fire (NR 9)
• scroll of remove curse (READ ME)
• scroll of confuse monster (JUYED AWK YACC)
• scroll of earth (VENZAR BORGAVVE)
• scroll of gold detection (VERR YED HORRE)
• scroll of magic mapping (VELOX NEB)
• scroll of destroy armor (ELAM Ebow)
• scroll of amnesia (FOOBIE BLETCH)
• scroll of punishment (ANDova BEGARIN)
• scroll of taming (THARR)
• scroll of charging (XIXAXA XOXAXA XUXAXA)
• scroll of food detection (PRATyAVAYAH)

Spellbooks
• spellbook of dig (dog eared)
• spellbook of teleport away (cyan)
• spellbook of knock (vellum)
• spellbook of slow monster (plaid)
• spellbook of light (cloth)
• spellbook of blank paper (plain)
• spellbook of wizard lock (gray)
• spellbook of detect food (dull)
• spellbook of magic missile (purple)
• spellbook of haste self (red)
• spellbook of detect unseen (mottled)
• spellbook of cure sickness (orange)
• spellbook of extra healing (stained)
• spellbook of cause fear (dark blue)
• spellbook of cure blindness (wrinkled)
• spellbook of detect monsters (shining)
• spellbook of clairvoyance (silver)
• spellbook of stone to flesh (turquoise)
• spellbook of identify (dusty)
• spellbook of levitation (light brown)
• spellbook of healing (indigo)
• spellbook of restore ability (copper)
• spellbook of magic mapping (leather)
• spellbook of cone of cold (magenta)
• spellbook of cancellation (thin)
• spellbook of create monster (bronze)

Potions
• potion of extra healing (puce)
• potion of sleeping (cyan)
• potion of paralysis (sky blue)
• potion of gain level (emerald)
• potion of booze (orange)
• potion of restore ability (magenta)
• potion of hallucination (dark)
• potion of sickness (purple-red)
• potion of water (clear)
• potion of monster detection (brilliant blue)
• potion of healing (milky)
• potion of oil (golden)
• potion of speed (effervescent)
• potion of see invisible (smoky)
• potion of acid (murky)
• potion of confusion (brown)
• potion of invisibility (cloudy)
• potion of full healing (black)
• potion of gain energy (yellow)
• potion of blindness (pink)
• potion of enlightenment (dark green)
• potion of fruit juice (white)
• potion of polymorph (ruby)
• potion of levitation (swirly)
• potion of object detection (fizzy)
• potion of gain ability (bubbly)

Rings

• ring of gain strength (iron)
• ring of levitation (steel)
• ring of polymorph control (granite)
• ring of sustain ability (agate)
• ring of teleport control (emerald)
• ring of searching (bronze)
• ring of aggravate monster (engagement)
• ring of adornment (wire)
• ring of regeneration (diamond)
• ring of warning (topaz)
• ring of slow digestion (silver)
• ring of gain constitution (opal)
• ring of hunger (clay)
• ring of invisibility (wooden)
• ring of free action (ruby)
Wands

- wand of slow monster (runed)
- wand of make invisible (short)
- wand of light (uranium)
- wand of fire (ebony)
- wand of striking (iron)
- wand of teleportation (aluminum)
- wand of digging (tin)
- wand of secret door detection (jeweled)
- wand of nothing (brass)
- wand of cold (curved)
- wand of create monster (hexagonal)
- wand of magic missile (crystal)
- wand of lightning (silver)
- wand of sleep (oak)
- wand of wishing (glass)
- wand of enlightenment (steel)
- wand of undead turning (maple)
- wand of locking (balsa)
- wand of speed monster (long)
- wand of cancellation (zinc)

Tools

- bag of tricks (bag)
- magic flute (flute)
- magic whistle (whistle)
- bag of holding (bag)
- mirror (looking glass)
- Bell of Opening (silver bell)
• crystal ball (glass orb)
• tooled horn (horn)
• tallow candle (candle)
• tin whistle (whistle)
• skeleton key (key)
• wax candle (candle)

Gems

• luckstone (gray)
• flint stone (gray)
• worthless piece of orange glass (orange)
• worthless piece of blue glass (blue)
• worthless piece of green glass (green)
• worthless piece of yellowish brown glass (yellowish brown)
• chrysoberyl stone (yellow)
• worthless piece of red glass (red)
• citrine stone (yellow)
• black opal (black)
• jet stone (black)
• fluorite stone (violet)
• ruby (red)
• amethyst stone (violet)
• emerald (green)
• obsidian stone (black)
• worthless piece of white glass (white)
• opal (white)
• worthless piece of black glass (black)
• diamond (white)
• worthless piece of yellow glass (yellow)
2.26. A DAY IN THE LABORATORY

- agate stone (orange)
- worthless piece of violet glass (violet)
- topaz stone (yellowish brown)
- garnet stone (red)
- aquamarine stone (green)

Sure is huge, eh?!
Only thing disappointing is that I haven’t yet found a wand of death (concern).
I’m going to uncurse all the stuff I can from the "Cursed Stuff" large box. For this, I’ll use that blessed scroll of remove curse. I make sure that there are no wandering monsters around the level first, by wearing the blindfold... Nope. Just all my friends.
Oh yea. I have a new friend here; Flap. He’s a Green-elf. His name comes from, the way his hat flaps around all the time when he moves (snicker).
So then. Drop everything except for the gauntlets of power and the scroll. Pull out all the junk in here that I can. Read the scroll. Okay done. Now dress myself back up, before something nasty materializes in the room with the monster generator.
Now; sort and classify all the newly identified and uncursed objects...
Hokay take note of everything... Then consider what I want to be, and where I want to go with Ellora...
Much thinking...
I really want to be an elven archer again (See the prologue to Ellora’s whole story.). That was the original intent on choosing to be an Elf and a Ranger. I want to role play again.
I want to have fun while playing my characters role. I want to shoot things from a great distance with deadly accuracy. I want to do it with the elven bow, cause I get five shots in salvo fire. I’ve always wanted to do it with the bow. But until I discovered that blessed arrows don’t hardly get mulched, I had to use daggers. I have enough stuff here, that I can now change over to arrows again.
I’ve been murdering lots of elves lately. That was another reason for completely cleaning out the Mazes of Menace, and my recent efforts at magic mapping. Besides Flap, there aren’t any other elves alive. I’ve been collecting elven arrows for the whole game. I’ve been stashing them away. Besides my recent discovery on how to manufacture blessed water, elven arrows were very high on my list of ‘rare items’.
My dexterity is now at 18, I have lots of elven arrows (well, more than I’ve ever had with any character), I’m stealthy, I have a cloak of displacement, and boots of speed.
Yep. That’s what I’ll do. I’m going to be an - elven archer ranger sharp shooter. Able to quickly duck in and out of advantageous firing positions. All the while, being extremely hard to hit.
Yea... I like that.
Fine. Let’s get to work towards achieving this goal.
Okay... Now I’m going to pull out all my scrolls, potions, the wand of wishing, my best armor, favorite weapons, and other objects. Lay them all down on the altar here.
Wow! I sure have a lot.
There’s a lot of tedious and boring things to try now. But I’m curious and have an inkling about a few things...
Dip, apply, rub, invoke, zap, quaff, etc., for what turned out to be hours.
...
(the above three dots mean lots of; dip, apply, rub, invoke, zap, quaff, etc.)
...
dum - deë - dum - di - dah
(that’s me humming)
Yea. People say I’m tone death. I can’t carry a tune. I’ll spare you all. I’ll put a CD in the drive instead...
Hmmm...
< Choose an appropriate CD >
I originally had listed all the various albums and artists. But after re-reading the FAQ on Google, I decided that it was against the rules for posting here. So I edited them all out. Rest assured that, they were all very good for the different tasks I was doing at the time. I took great care in selecting the appropriate music for the ambiance. (wink).
...
< Change CD >
...
Quaff.
Potion of enlightenment works just like the wand!
I’m the Glory of Arioch?
What, and who, is that?
On a whim, I type "Arioch" in the in game 'cyclopedia ("/").
Arioch, the patron demon of Elric’s ancestors; one of the most powerful of all the Dukes of Hell, who was called Knight of the Swords, Lord of the Seven Darks, Lord of the Higher Hell and many more names besides. [ Elric of Melnibone, by Michael Moorcock ]
Wow (!). This guy sure has some impressive titles! And I’m considered as "his glory"?
How come Mars hasn’t informed me? Is this okay with him? I was under the impression that I was the instrument of Mars?
This looks like it’s also tied into the description I get for "Stormbringer"
Hmm... I need to do some thinking here. Perhaps a little research too. Looks like Elric is an important guy.
Any way, I can safely pray.
Make more blessed holy water.
...
< Change CD >
...
Quaff.
Darn. I should have drunk all my potions of gain energy before using all my power on identifying things earlier...
2.27  A DAY IN THE ARMORY

...  
Dip.  
Big discovery!  
I tried dipping some things in various potions. Discovered how to make arrows of sickness. Also tried for; arrows of blindness, arrows of confusion, arrows of paralysis, arrows of sleeping, etc. No show. But if the potion disappears when you’ve dipped something in it; something has happened. Darn it. This doesn’t work on daggers. So my BDDD’s can’t get more deadly...  
This was one of those accidental discoveries:  
What I was really looking for; was how I could make flaming arrows. If I could coat some with oil, then ignite them with the flint stone somehow, just before firing them - that would be great!  
...

< Change CD >
...

Zap!  
Guess what?! Another big discovery!  
A wand of cancellation turns potions into water! Too bad the wand is not blessed. It would have saved me a step in the water blessing process. I should also have tried this before praying for holy water earlier... But at least I don’t have to dip them at fountains no more! And now I can turn some of these useless potions into something useful - like water.  
...

Okay. Most of the incessant monotony of; dip, apply, rub, invoke, zap, quaff, etc. is over. Good thing. I was running low on appropriate music (wink).  
Mmmkay.  
Now that I have learned a few more things about all my items: Next is to plan all this out...

2.27  A Day In The Armory

I ponder...  
I Think too...  
< Change CD >
...

Gee... This sure involves a lot of thinking. The CD has already played out (laugh)!  
Okay! I have a procedure all planned out.  
< Change CD >
Drink potion of confusion.  
Fix the rust on my favorite helmet. Fireproof my cloak of protection and speed boots. I switch scrolls and do the same to; the blessed +2 spetum and, an old weapon of mine, the +1 even bow.  
I figure that rust/fire proofing is really worth using a scroll on, instead of giving it an extra "+". Reason being; that objects can suffer various degrees of rusting, corrosion, and burning.
Take my; thoroughly rusted and thoroughly corroded arrows for example. What do you think my
helmet would be worth after suffering those kind of effects? Even if it were at +4, I wouldn’t get any
net benefits to my armor class. So one scroll to protect them against this, is well worth the while - I
say any way.

I did it only to the items I really want to protect. I have only so many scrolls.
I have lots of positively enchanted shields in the chest called "Ordnance". So I can always exchange
it with another, should a mishap occur. Thereby, I’m conserving a scroll there. And the wonder of
mithril mail helps out here too. But concerning rare items like my gauntlets, boots, and cloak; these
must be protected.

The spetrum is an old favorite weapon of mine. I’ve outlined enough different reasons concerning this
throughout the story already. My elven bow is about to become my primary weapon again. Well,
even arrows are, actually. But I need a reliable means of delivering them to target.

Okay. Time to get my head straightened out.
Apply unicorn horn. Nothing seems to happen.
Apply unicorn horn. Nothing seems to happen.
Apply unicorn horn. Nothing seems to happen.
Oh come on...
Apply unicorn horn. Your less confused now.
It’s about time (roll eyes).

Following my new dictum; "blessed is best", I dip some scrolls in potions of holy water... Now I give
my elven bow an enchantment. Not that I need the extra "+" to hit anything. Don’t forget - I’m an
Elf AND a Ranger! I never miss. Even while being unskilled in crossbow, and using -3 bolts with a -1
crossbow, I still hit anything and everything. Instead, it’s so that the bow has a better saving throw
against any malevolent effects. Like disintegration from a lich (!).

Mmmm... Got only +1. I’ll come back to it if I have any to spare...

Oh. What the heck. I’ll give one to the Longbow of Diana too. It has served me well all this time...
+3! Looks like the artifact got favored (laugh!).

I’m running low on scrolls. But; I’m going to use one on "Stormbringer".

Yea. I know. I should should save it to empower my main weapons. But "Stormbringer" is still at
+0. And I like the way it has been described in the in-game encyclopedia. Also Mars transformed and
enhanced it for me. It deserves at least one "+", no? We can’t have the ‘great big black life-stealing
sanguinary battle-blade’ sitting at a measly +0, now can we? Like, even "Sting" is at +1 (laugh!)!

I’ve been doing some research on it lately. And I’m terribly impressed with it. Supposedly, this is
the most powerful artifact to ever be placed in a mortals hands! You can refer to the following for
additional information about Stormbringer and Arioch:

(link removed)

So that became yet another reason for me to give it a scroll.
So wield "Stormbringer"... Read the blessed scroll and...

+1 (!).

Well. Good enough for now. Now we can say it is ‘enchanted’ too (wink)!

All right. Now it’s time for something that I’ve been putting off for so long...
I dipped the charging scroll, the one I wished for a while ago, into holy water. Then charged the wand of wishing.

Found out that it (the wand) didn’t have to be wielded. But I wasn’t taking no chances with this procedure!

Wish #1: Magic Marker

First thing I did with it, was write a scroll of XIXAXA XOXAXA XUXAXA (charging) on a blessed blank paper scroll. Good thing cause, I soon ran out of charges writing scrolls of DUAM XNAHT (enchant armor).

I recharged the marker, and enchanted some armor before writing more. Wanted to see how well things were going first. I blessed the other scrolls with holy water, of course.

When I ran out of scrolls, I wrote another scroll of charging, on a blessed blank paper scroll, and the rest of the marker went towards scrolls of KERNOD WEL (enchant weapon).

I had very few scrolls of blessed blank paper, so used them for scrolls that would not need mass blessings, like the enchant types would receive.

Much to my disappointment, I saw that I would not have enough to get all my armor as high as I wanted to. So I made sure that everything got at least one "+" first. Except for the shield and mithril, those I had redundancy in already.

Now; I tried to recharge the magic marker again. The scroll of charging disappeared with no effect!

Ah man... This put a big crimp in all of my previous and careful planning (sad, sad face).

So only one recharge allowed? Its been too long since I’ve played a Wizard to remember now...

Well. What to do with this marker then? I thought again. Then wrote a scroll of VENZAR BORGAVVE (earth). After that, there was no more - no matter which scroll I tried to write...

Hokay... Let’s see how well things go on the weapons side...

I’m going to try and create some nice ones...

I have four blessed scrolls and one uncursed one. I have 4 stacks of elven arrows. By far the largest are uncursed +0. The next in size is uncursed +2. Then blessed +1. And finally uncursed +1. I have vials of holy water at the ready too.

I’ll start with the ones I have the most of. Once I see where they go, I’ll then be able to figure out the rest.

I wielded my biggest stack of elven arrows; uncursed +0. Read a scroll and got them to +3!

Okay, that was great. I have a reference for where I want to go. Now let’s work on getting the rest of the stacks evened out.

I blessed the pile of uncursed +1 arrows. Now I could combine them with the other same stack (I dropped them and picked up both piles of blessed +1 arrows).

Now big decision. Which one to try and and transform...

Okay, I feel lucky this way. I wielded the blessed +1 arrows and read a blessed scroll. They went to +3. That worked out well.

Now, I know what to do. I wielded my stack of uncursed +2 elven arrows. Now I read the uncursed scroll. They went to +3.

I dropped them and picked them up with the other pile of uncursed +3 arrows. I blessed those, and dropped them. Now I picked up all the elven arrows on the altar.
Now they were all combined in one huge stack. A total of 143 blessed +3 elven arrows!

Back to blessed scroll reading. The next one got them to +5! I felt thrilled!

The last one got them to +7! I was exhilarated!

I got a funny message too. Something about them vehemently vibrating. I guess the arrows were excited too (laugh!)!

Now to reconsider what I had planned earlier. That magic marker didn’t make as many scrolls as I had counted on...

Ponder...

Yep. I’m still going to go through with my original plan.

Wish #2: Jungle Boots

I wanted another pair of speed boots. I’ll carry them with me in the bag. Of all the things that could hurt me the most, should I get something disintegrated, would be to lose my speed boots.

Yes; more than the cloak of displacement, and more than the gauntlets of power. As for the other armor; mithril-mail, shield, and helmet, I have more of those - or can easily enchant something similar.

Yea. I’m going back to mithril. I have one that’s +4. That makes it as good as the dragon mail. But since it has magical properties, is both rust and corrosion proof, and is already enchanted, I’m going to put my trust into something that I already know works well. I’ll take a chance and trust what the guide says on this one.

Even if I were to lose the Longbow of Diana, I could muddle along. I’m not going to keep all 143 arrows on me all the time. I’m going to deposit a hundred in "The Cache". That’s for safe keeping. With 9 BDDD’s and the remaining 43 super stellar elven arrows, I’ll have more than enough to drop tough monsters. And if I don’t. Well, hopefully I’ll have found a wand of death by the time that should ever come about (laugh)!

Don’t get me wrong, they’re all nice to have. But the speed boots can get me out of sticky situations. While the rest of my stuff doesn’t do that. As long as I can get away, I can have a chance at regrouping / consolidating my character. Survival takes precedence over everything else!

Okay. Now I’m going to bless some of my other things.

The bag of holding. This is in case it gets cursed it will go to uncursed. Some things work backwards when cursed, as you have all seen in Part 32 (see 2.11 on page 167), this is one of them. My only brass lantern. Not because I’m worried about it not working. It still does if cursed. But to maybe improve its chances of not getting disintegrated. Like what happened to my other one when I was in the Valley of the Dead. I hardly have any candles left. So this item has become quite valuable to me. I’ll soon be heading into unexplored territory. I’m going to need it (!).

My +2 elven bow. All my primary armor. Another unicorn horn, as a back up.

Finally I’m going to bless one of these luckstones, and keep it in the bag with a blessed +2 sling. With the different monsters I’ve seen appear in the game so far; I have a feeling that I’ll be meeting "Goliath" sooner or later. And that this will probably kill him in one shot. Why else would they travel so far? Look at my ranged weapons chart (in the previous chapter). When fired from a sling, they travel as far as arrows and bolts.

I’ll keep two potions of blessed water on me too. You just never know. This is really handy stuff.

That done; I then dipped the whole stack of 143 newly created elven arrows into a potion of sickness. They got coated with poison.
I know that arrows sometimes lose their coatings. But the ones that do, I'll just collect them all in a pile. When I get enough, I'll just dip those in a potion of poison again. I have lots of arrows to hold me over, I'll be able to rotate them.

Okay... NOW I have some real arrows! I can really drop monsters with deadly accuracy from great distances now.

I quivered them and looked at how they now appeared in the inventory screen.

Oooh... They look good!

I'm gonna give them a name. Just like I named my daggers BDDD.

Hmmmm...

I chose BPEA: Blessed Poisoned Elven Arrows.

I looked at them in the inventory screen again...

I didn't like the way the name showed up. Hmmmm...

How about BPea?

Nope. I don't like that either...


BPAAA? Nah. How about just BP? Neither...

Okay. I won't name them (laugh!). They look good enough, just as they are.

Now I'm curious about another thing. Actually been wanting to do this for quite a while now too...

I put on; all my best armor, wielded the elven bow and had "Stormbringer" in my off hand, made sure I had my wands handy and the tools I like. In essence; I outfitted Ellora for 'battle mode'.

Zapped the now uncursed wand of enlightenment...

Current Attributes

- You are the Glory of Arioeh.
- You are piously aligned.
- You are fire resistant.
- You are cold resistant.
- You are sleep resistant.
- You are shock resistant.
- You are poison resistant.
- You see invisible.
- You are telepathic.
- You are warned.
- You have automatic searching.
• You have infravision.
• You are displaced.
• You are stealthy.
• You have slower digestion.
• You are protected.
• You are very fast.
• You have reflection.
• You are very lucky.
• You can not safely pray.

Well. That all sounds fine and dandy to me!
That combined with my current equipment, attributes, and knowledge; sure makes me feel confident that I’ll be able to breach the Valley of the Dead.
Although these last two days may seem to have been filled with tedious and repetitive actions; I found it interesting. I especially enjoyed, the thinking and planning of, the second day.
Still have another wish in the wand. Maybe more if I can recharge it. But with what happened to the magic marker, I have a strong suspicion that the wand won’t take another charging scroll. But we’ll see.
I’ll think about it overnight...

2.28 Gimmick

Well... I had a bad dream last night.
Dream that I got surrounded by mindflayers.
Tried to teleport out, but was caught in an area similar to the Boulders.
Needless to say: The battle went pretty bad.
But what was the worst, was that I survived (!).
Believe it or not; I might rather die then have to face going through mapping and identifying everything again! I have so much of it done already. Have so much knowledge. Dunno if I could bear such a catastrophe...
All day, through work, I couldn’t shake the thought from my mind.
I can’t go on like this. It’s driving me nuts...
I’m going to use my last sure wish. I’m going to protect my character. I’m going to get some peace of mind. I’m going to rid from the game, one of the worst creatures ever created.
The fearsome, and most despised; mindflayer.
Okay. Fire up the game.
Do some more thinking. Review the plan in my head...
Zap the wand of wishing.
Wish #3: Magic Marker
First thing was to identify this magic marker. Have to know about how much I'll be able to get out of it.
Oh God! It only had 30 charges. That's like nothing!
Okay. Better write a scroll of XIXAXA XOXAXA XUXAXA (charging) first thing! Else I won't have enough for what I need.
Do I have enough for another scroll of charging?
No I don't.
Phew. Good thing I identified it first! Else I may have written another type of scroll.
Okay. Charge the magic marker.
I write another scroll of XIXAXA XOXAXA XUXAXA on blessed blank paper. I now know that the magic marker can't be recharged a second time. But this scroll will be for the wand of wishing.
Now that that's out of the way (have to really think things out before doing stuff you know), I go to write a scroll of genocide on blessed blank paper. By the way, this is my last blessed scroll of blank paper.
Darn. I don't know what the genocide scroll is. I don't have it identified.
I ponder for a few minutes on what it can be?
I look at my discoveries screen ("\"").
Which one is missing...?
Hmm...
The only one that I can think of is HACKEM MUCHE.
Oh man... Do I take the chance?
Ponder...
Nah. I'll do the same when I first wished for my speed boots and bag of holding. The game recognized those without giving me a hassle. And come to think of it, when I wished for the scroll of charging, that's what I had typed in also.
Okay. Hopefully the same will apply for scroll writing...
"genocide"
You try and write a scroll of genocide. You don't know that scroll. You write "Ellora was here." on the blessed unmarked scroll and then it disappears!
(hang head + mutter a few choice words) DAMN IT. I felt like spitting.
Break time....
\textit{smoke + coffee + another smoke}
Okay... (sigh)
Well. You all saw it here. I printed it a few lines above. If I ever find a scroll of genocide and get it identified - it better not be HACKEM MUCHE! Cause if it is... Then I should have gone through with my first impulse (bang table)!
Sweet Jesus. Hope this doesn’t come back to haunt me... (nagging anxiety)
All right. I still have a few charges on the magic marker. I spent a wish on this thing. Let’s make it count.
Next I wrote a scroll of THARR. I’m going to get me a pet gremlin!
I’ve been wanting one for a long time (see Parts 23, 30, 34, and 43). I was very impressed by their description in the 'cyclopedia. Sounds like they could almost even be minions of Mars and/or Arioch (!).
Seventeen charges left in the magic marker. I’ll stow it in "The Cache". Save it for an emergency scroll of... Hmmm... A scroll of whatever.
All right. Grab another leash from the "Tools". Check my map for where the nearest wild gremlin is at... The Titan’s level. Fine. Off we go...
I’m on an island. Near the west side of the map. Where most of them are concentrated. Waiting for one of the little green dudes to come on land. They keep on hovering over water...
Time passes...
Okaaay... None of them are coming. Guess I’ll soon see if I can charm one while levitating...
Yes! It worked! I can read a scroll while levitating. A scroll of charm monster any way. I got a gremlin with a little heart next to his picture.
Now to apply a leash, and lead him over to the stairs. I didn’t risk throwing some food at him, cause I didn’t want him to miss it and then it would sink. I dunno what gremlins eat any ways. I’ll have to run some tests on this.
First thing is to give him a name...
Now I’ll name the leash. This is so I don’t get confused between the two, like what once happened to me with my two baby gargoyles.
Now zap him with this wand of speed monster...
Hold still a minute, will ya Gimmick?!
Zap!
There. Gimmick is moving faster. Okay let’s head for home.
I’m all excited: I have a pet gremlin (smile)!
Once back at the main base camp, I let him loose. He was able to keep up with me pretty good while on a leash. Same as Phiona. These speed wands are great for pets. Best use I’ve come up for them.
Now I pull a whole bunch of different food from the "Fridge". Food ration, slime mold, the rothe corpse, banana, kelp frond, pancake, cream pie, fortune cookie, you name it. I lay it all out on the floor for him. Let’s see what he eats...
Nothin’ (?)
Hoh boy. Hope he’s like the way Grunt was. Else I’ll have a starving gremlin soon...
Okay. Put everything back.
Now I go and grab some weapons and armor for him. Maybe he’ll wear some of those? Not from the piles on the floor, but from the "Ordnance" and "The Cache". Yepper - nothin’ but the best for my pet!
He just keeps hopping around all over the place. Hardly ever lands on the same square as an item. Hmmm....
2.28. **GIMMICK**

I gather them all up, and head to the vault on this level. It's a small room. I drop everything in four piles. Some weapons and armor evenly distributed between them. I whistle Gimmick over into the room. While I stand in the doorway - thus blocking his only exit - I then wait.

I'm looking at him bopping about, all over inside the room.


Man. He sure is fussy! It's not like I have cheap stuff in there with him either.

"Orcrist" (I'm not using it), "Dragonbane" (neither this), "Sting" (maybe he likes little weapons?), "Snickersnree", blessed +3 rubber hose, blessed rustproof +2 long swords (I have 4 of these), +2 dwarven mithril-mail, blessed +4 dagger, blessed +3 knife, +4 axe, +2 elven cloak (yea, my original one), some kind of +2 polearm, +3 kicking boots (my old snow boots), +2 mummy wrapping, +0 cloak of protection, blessed +2 elven short sword, blessed +2 elven broadsword, -2 ornithum (who knows what he likes?), +2 leather gloves, +0 shield of reflection, +3 iron shoes, +1 jumping boots, blessed +2 small shield, green dragon armor, +0 leather jacket (it has a small picture, maybe it's his size), blessed +1 morning star, +3 javelin, etc., etc. Loads of decent equipment.

And you know what is the only thing he ever picks up and decides to wear!? A blessed +2 orcish helm (?!).

Shheeeesh!

And I waited for like 100 clock ticks too (!). Even had a vault guard come and go (by getting shot in the back with a BDDD salvo), while I was waiting on him. Added another wand of striking to my collection.

Well at least he can use some "thing". Even if it's only "that" thing.

(roll eyes) Okay, Gimmick. Let's see what your made of. I gather all the items and go back to store them. Then we take a little walk to see what kind of monsters turn up...

...

Many encounters ensue...

You know what I found myself doing while this was going on? I discovered that I was using my; new super stellar poisoned +7 range 13 possibly 5 shot salvo fire elven arrows, as sparingly as possible! Seems I'm afraid of losing the poisonous coating on them (?). So I only used them when I thought that something was getting too close to Phiona. Think it was a krity. Besides that - that was it! Kind of goes against what I had said earlier about wanting to play the role of an elven archer, eh? Go figure (roll eyes).

...

Okay. Gimmick doesn’t do nothin’!? I can’t believe I used a wish to get him (roll eyes)!

He doesn’t attack anything. He has no special attacks (that I ever noticed).

He's supposed to be highly intelligent and completely evil. I haven’t seen anything that has shown me this.

He's supposed to live to torment other creatures. Only one he's tormenting is me (!), by just acting like a frog. He's supposed to go to great lengths to inflict pain or cause injury. He won't even attack a shrieker! Come on! It doesn't even fight back. It just sits there and shrieks, while you slice it up for a vegetable salad. What a useless pet he’s turning out to be (mumble grumble).

Okay. We're going back to base camp. I've wasted enough time and energy on this tame gremlin called Gimmick...
Dungeon level 23

We’re heading to the downstairs. An imp shows up on the radar. It will intersect our current path. Gimmick is two squares ahead of me, Phiona a few more behind me. I know Gimmick is a chicken. Well actually, half chicken. The other half is frog. He’s just going to step aside and let the imp by. Then watch while either Phiona, or I, kill it. I’ve seen this too many times now.

It’s just an imp (no, it’s not a chameleon). I’m not going to waste any missiles on it. Can’t be bothered to pick them up after.

So I stop. And hit "x". I’ll give "Stormbringer" an hors d’oeuvre...

Suddenly - I hear noises!

What?! Gimmick has attacked something - the imp! FINALLY!

The very next action phase...

You have a sad feeling for a moment. But then it quickly passes.

(smirk)

For once the game was right on this count. The sad feeling didn’t last long with me at all.

I’m now back at base camp level 24.

Boy-oh-boy. What a disappointment Gimmick turned out to be...

He didn’t leave a corpse, so no need for a burial. I didn’t even construct a memorial pile of rocks for him. He didn’t deserve it.

The failed attempt to rid mindflayers, the pitiful amount of use I got out of the magic marker, and then the demise of Gimmick; has left me with a sense that this is a bad day. Definitely not one of my best or lucky sessions with Ellora...

I’m not going to try and press it further. I won’t try to recharge the wand of wishing today. If it should fail - and judging by my luck so far today, it very well might (laugh!) - I’ll lose my last scroll of charging. I’ll just leave them both in "The Cache" for now.

Now then. I’m finished playing with all my stuff. I’m very impressed with how Ellora looks. Quite satisfied with her equipment. Too bad I ran out of enchanting scrolls, but she’s the; strongest, most developed, and advanced character I have ever had. She’ll now be used as a benchmark for me to gauge all future characters upon.

What’s left on my ‘things to do’ list?

Ellora’s list of: Things To Do - clear out the Valley of the Dead
- locate the gateway and/or magic portal on level 29
- create and outfit a gargoyl made personal guard with my eggs
- boulder required to cross the water at the fortress
- get the two BDDD’s from the water on the Titan’s level - ON HOLD!
- explore the magic portal on level 21
- reconstruct the shattered statue
- stone to flesh Perseus and see what he has to say about himself

As you can see, it’s starting to get shorter.

Mummmkay... I’ll start at the top of the dungeon and work my way down.
I’ll do the magic portal on level 21. When I finish that, I’ll relearn the stone to flesh spell. See what the statue is all about at base camp. Chit chat with Perseus. Fill the water and create a bridge at the fortress below him. Come back and organize my personal guard. Then I’ll be set for an assault on the Valley of the Dead.

Well... That’s the plan for now (laugh!). Let's see how often I get sidetracked...

When I was talking about the wand of speed for pets before, and how I found that as it’s best use, it gave me an idea about another wand...

I pulled out a wand of make invisible from "The Cache", and went to an empty room with Phiona. This is so that I don’t accidentally turn something else invisible - like one of my chests. Zap!

Phiona turns transparent!

Do the look (";")

A tame invisible panther called Phiona.

Great. That makes her even more neat. Can you imagine a panther stalking and readying to pounce upon it’s prey? Pretty scary, huh? Now imagine it when that panther is also invisible. Now that’s scary!

If your wondering why I do not turn myself invisible; it’s cause I don’t like the way it looks on the screen. I had a prior character that was invisible and I didn’t enjoy the game any more.

Now I suddenly had another idea. I relearned the healing spell. Not for me, but for Phiona. I’ll tap her with one, should I sense she’s taken too much damage. Remember what happened to Sirius? I don’t remember if I knew healing back then, but if I did: Too bad I didn’t think of that at the time...

I shake my head. Best not to start dwelling on the past. Best way I can honor Sirius; is by learning from his death. And not letting that happen again.

Off to dungeon level 21...

I’m at the entrance to the vault, with the magic portal hidden under the pile of zorkminds. I’m considering whether to bring Phiona with me when I jump through or not. I’m having a hard time deciding.

While thinking about it, I decide to leash her up. I don’t want her wandering around and getting into an inadvertent scrap, while I’m concentrating on my next few steps and plan of action. Besides, should I step out of the doorway, she may just run into the portal by accident. She moves fast, often two squares at a time.

Thinking that she now won’t move more than one square from me, I step into the room and next to the portal. I’m going to look in my bag and see if I have everything. Also, I’m going to give my inventory a final "once over".

Apply the bag and see what’s inside...

The invisible Phiona whimpers. Your leash goes slack. Suddenly the invisible Phiona disappears out of sight.

What?!

Oh no! She moved one square up and left. Then one square down and right. Scooted right around my picture. All in the same action step!

Well. That decides it. Guess we’re going in together. Actually she’s already there. Where ever there is (?).

With some apprehension, considering how things have gone so far today, I step forward...
There is a magic portal here. You see 76 gold pieces. You activated a magic portal! You feel dizzy for a moment, but the sensation passes. You penetrated a high security area! An alarm sounds!

T:136327 <- I’m going to include the time as it appears on my status screen at the end of each part from now on. A few of you were curious about it. A reasonable request, that’s no problem with me.

2.29 Shields

Okay. What have we got here...?
I check the status bar.
A-ha!
This place is called Fort Ludios.
That means nothing to me (laugh!).
I’m standing on the magic portal... Phiona is next to me... And so is what looks like the picture of an elvish king. Is he friendly...? Yep he is... Good. Don’t have to worry about him right off the bat.
We all seem to be in some kind of small room... No light in here... Check inventory... Damn. My lantern is in the bag, I’ll have to use an action step to retrieve it, then another one to light it. Better to do other things that take no time off the clock first...
I scan all the monsters in my immediate detection range... Thirty five monsters... Only two show up as question marks... This is good... That means I can then visually identify the general threat factor...
Hmm...
Quantum mechanic, titanothere, succubus, barrow wight, a throng of Uruk-hai, some wargs, winter wolf, nurse, rust monster, cobra, fire ants, long worm, floating eye and some other minor monsters...
Nothing to be really concerned about... Unless they’re all going to swarm me, of course... I’m still scanning... I’m sure that some of these are friendly... Yep... Peaceful red naga, peaceful homunculus, and the elven king, of course.

What’s this? The king is kneeling in my presence?
Oh yea! He’s recognized the "Glory of Arioch" (grin).

It’s okay king. Get off your knees. Your embarrassing me.
I turn to Phiona. Have to make sure she stays close...
You slip the leash around your invisible panther called Phiona. You hear a door open. You hear a chugging sound. You see a door open. The barrow wight throws a knife! The knife misses the fire ant. The knife misses the Uruk-hai. You are almost hit by a knife. The hobgoblin wields an orcish dagger!

Two more question marks have appeared. They’re both red. A ghoul has come into focus. A dog and a horse too. What also looks like an orc captain, and a gnome king.

What’s the story with the door I heard open? Is there another entrance to this room? I hope not (!).
Any way... No time to take out the brass lantern. An Uruk-hai has already stepped into the door that I can now see. Looks like it’s going to be party time!

Have to be careful where I step. There may be traps. Don’t want to be polymorphed or teleportated! I have to do some searches before to make sure...

... (<- For this chapter, these three dots will represent anywhere from 3 - 12 rounds of; hacking, slashing, gutting, poking, and whatever other actions you associate with combat)
I've managed to selectively kill monsters that were trying to come through the door, and now the hobgoblin is in the entranceway. He was wielding an orcish dagger, eh? I scroll up on the message display... Yep he is! Fine. I'm going to let him live for now. I'll use him as a shield from the rest of the monsters. That means I can now use the spetum (youpic + rub hands together)!

... The barrow wight casts a spell!
Someone shouts "Off with her head!"
What?! Who's head? "Her" head?! That means me?! Well... We'll just see about that...

... The spetum hits the ghoul! The fire ant bites the ghoul. The ghoul is destroyed!
Woah! Guess the barrow wight can cast confusion or something (?!). Must have gone after one of my displaced images (gotta remember that), and nailed a fire ant instead (he he).

... Killed a few more monsters with the spetum while the hobgoblin kept some meaner monsters from getting at me. I like this. Even though I'm not even wearing the shield; the hobgoblin can't hit me (snicker that gradually grows into laughter).

... Uh-oh (!). Something new on the radar: Umber hulk range seven!
I better keep an eye on him. If he gets a line of sight on me...
There's a lot of other monsters coming into view from the top and the right of the screen (I appeared on this level in the bottom left). But nothing that I can't handle. As long as they have to file in through this choke point... Although the room is dark. There haven't been any other monsters that have appeared inside. So that other door I heard open, came from somewhere else.
The barrow wight picks up an orcish helm. The barrow wight puts on an orcish helm.
You destroy the barrow wight!
Oooh... All you people who've been turning your noses up at the spetum - look at what just happened (wink)!
That's all that appeared in the message area when I applied the, blessed rustproof +2, spetum on him.
The barrow wight went poof in one hit!

... How come the umber hulk isn't passing through any walls?

The spetum hits the titanothere! The hobgoblin misses. You hear a sceptre pounded in judgment.

... Eventually the hobgoblin went down (sad face). Something killed him from behind by shooting arrows. Then: All of a sudden, the rust monster was in front of me. It missed me twice by going after displaced images!

I know I have all my armor and weapons rust proofed. But what about my amulet? My rings? My wands? The wonder whistle? There's so much to always be considering in Nethack. Remember that key that got rusted (see Part 10 (L.12 on page 37))? No way am I going to let that happen again!
No chances shall be taken. Time for my stately secret weapons! DIE rust monster!
Step back. Exchange. Fire!
You shoot 2 poisoned elven arrows. The 1st poisoned elven arrow hits the rust monster! The poison was deadly... The 2nd poisoned elven arrow hits the long worm! You cut the long worm in half.
Okay. Step back up to the door. Who wants to show their face next?
Quantum mechanic.
I don’t like these guys. They try and touch you. Yuch! I’m female an Elf AND a Ranger: I Absolutely Hate Being Touched! Fire!
Hmmm... Quantum mechanics don’t seem to be affected by poison. Don’t matter. He was most certainly affected by the super spectacular +7 enchantments! He’s dead.
...
An ape is now in front of me.
Phiona is whimpering again? What’s the matter dear? There’s something that she doesn’t like in here. What exactly, I can’t tell you (?) But she’s been doing it since we’ve got here.
I let the ape take some swipes at me while I unleashed her. Don’t worry; it missed all its attacks. Phiona moved away and whimpered - again (?)
What is it? Is she hungry? I remember feeding her a mimic on the way here. Can’t have been that much time that has past since then... (?)
Consult: "Thrown / Fired Projectile Ranges" table (See Part: 46 ([2.25](#) on page [227]).)
I look at what’s most likely to be filing in next, should the ape go down...
Step back. Exchange. Wield "Firebrand". Ape steps up. Doorway is empty.
The fiery blade burns the ape!
The fiery blade burns the ape! You kill the ape.
"SHIFT + O" Adjust pickup types and autopickup exceptions.
"SHIFT + @" Auto pickup ON!
Step forward. Which simultaneously picks up the ape corpse. I’m stressed (but it won’t be for long).
Long worm now blocking the doorway.
Throw ape to my right. Phiona eats an ape corpse.
There. That will hold her over for a little while. I cooked the meat for her too. See how thoughtful I am (big grin).
And look at how I’ve improved my ability at adjusting the game commands (bigger grin). I’ve come a long way since the beginning of the story, eh? (pat my own back)
Okay. Back to concentrating on the new situation... Hmmm...
Think for a minute...
How hard do these long worms hit again? How come I don’t know this...? I think it’s cause they’re wimpy. So I never considered them a threat. It could also be because I don’t usually let things hit me either (laugh!). I do know that they are real slow. So it won’t get in too many whacks at me. (shrug) I’ll try him out as a shield for now...
Wield blessed rustproof +2 spetum.
The spetum hits the pit viper! You hear the sound reminiscent of a seal barking.
Uh-oh. My mind is telling me that this has been heard somewhere before... Where was it again...?
You kill the pit viper! The long worm misses. The long worm misses. The long worm misses.
What’s this? Three attacks in one round?! Yikes!
Well they all missed. And I was right. I get like 6 action steps before it nibbles at me. I’ll keep him
for another six rounds and see what happens then...
...
The spetum hits the lieutenant! The long worm bites! The long worm just misses! The long worm
misses.
Look at status screen.

**HP: 124 (124)**

Okay! I’ll keep the long worm as a shield for a little while yet...
...
Killed an orc captain and a winter wolf. Long worm hasn’t hit me since. Then the lieutenant came
back into blessed rustproof +2 spetum range and...
You kill the lieutenant! The long worm bites! The long worm bites! The long worm bites!
WOW! It must have rolled three 20’s in a row! (*)
Look at status screen.

**HP: 124 (124)**

Okay!!! The long worm can stay in the doorway for ever! I’ll even try and protect it!! Can’t let any
of these stupid orcs or soldiers shoot it with missiles!!
Now I’m always trying to stick the spetum into Uruk-hai and/or soldiers that may be carrying missile
weaponry.
...
Eventually it went down. But I never hit it! It was all these ignorant duds from behind that whittled
it down with their missiles...
...
The spetum hits the succubus! The gnome king tries to wield a worm tooth. The gnome king’s bow
is welded to his hand!
Har-har!!
I’ll let you get next to me (big grin)! Hang on king! Let me kill this soldier for you.
Wield "Stormbringer". Feed the black blade. There. The path is clear. Come on! Oh you big dummy.
You let something else get in front of you (roll eyes). Feed the black blade another wretched soul.
Aww no! You let something else butt in front of you again! Smarten up, eh?! Can’t you see that I’m
in demand? Hold yourself up. Show your a king. Don’t let the rabble keep getting their way! I have
to help him out. He’s never going to get in front of me otherwise... (roll eyes)
Welcome to David’s treasure zoo!
Whaaat? Who’s David? Any ways: No time for that.
Traverse left. Fire! Step left. Traverse right. Fire! Step up and right. Exchange. Satisfy the runesword with a few more miserable souls.
Okay king! They’re all gone for now. Path is clear! Come and get me...
I run back inside the doorway. The gnome king follows and eventually takes the spot I wanted him to.
Okay good. He’ll be my new shield...
The very next round - an Uruk-hai from in the back of the room, kills him with a poisoned arrow! Awww man... Actually. It could very well have been one of mine that he picked up too. But I’m not sure...
Okay. Who’s coming in next?
Titanothere (!).
Oh wow... Your a big hunk of meat.
That gives me an idea. I want a little break. I want to explore the immediate area.
I wield the spatulum. Exchange. Then wait for it to enter the doorway...
Okay. That worked out pretty good. Phiona is going to be eating for quite a while. The entrance has been effectively blocked. I stepped out of any of the enemy monsters line of sight. Else they’ll fire missiles at me and hit Phiona. Now I have some time to explore the surroundings a bit.
Pull out the blessed brass lantern and apply it. Yep. Small room. No entrance on my right. But I better make sure. I search every square next to the wall 6 times.
Next, I hug the sides of the room and do a radar sweep with the ring and the Longbow of Diana. I’m trying to gauge what kind of denizens this Fort Ludios level has to offer...
Looks like a whole slew of soldiers are all cramming over to this side of the map. Wonderful. That means another epic battle is in the making... Hmmm...
The umber hulk is at range three from me. But he never seems to pass through any walls... I wonder if this place is like Scorpious’s palace on the Home level? I try the pick-axe. Dig down. No go. Only pits can be made. Walk to the western side of the room. I’m going to try a wall on that side...
Phiona got nailed by three arrows! Damn. I forgot about that when I walked across the doorway. Sorry girl...
I quickly head back to where I’m out of sight from the mob. There I start considering the situation. How will this develop? Do I have enough super stellar arrows? What are some of these strange messages I’ve seen? What are the best approaches to take concerning mine and Phiona’s welfare? Do I have the right materials? Can I get something better from my main base camp? Is there too much here to take on? Should I do another part of the Mazes of Menace, then come back to this area at a later time?
Hmmm...
Okay. I’ve thought out a few things... But I’m not going to tell you what they are - just yet (wink).
How we doin’ Phiona? Almost finished?
(#chat - direction - Phiona)
Phiona is eating noisily.
Okie... I take up position behind her (the monster archer has since moved off-line). Check inventory...
Oops! The brass lantern is still lit. Turn it off.
Apply the wonder whistle named Phiona.
You produce a strange whistling sound.
Phiona is now in the square to my immediate right.
Chat with Phiona again. She’s still eating. Okay. I’ll get some more exercise while waiting for her.
Any way, I wanted the doorway cleared for me now. I’m curious about something...
A nurse steps into the doorway.
Quiver orcish poisoned arrows. I picked some up before. Nurses are wimpy. I’ll save the super stellar ones for other things - like some of these sargeants and lieutenants...
I want to drop the nurse. I don’t like their pictures in the game... Fire!
Hmmm... Nurses aren’t affected by poison either I see... Wonder if I should start a list identifying poison resistant monsters? That may be a good idea. Then I wouldn’t be wasting poisoned arrows on them. Hmmm... I may just do that...
Fire at nurse again. Nurse dies. A swarm of monsters are trying to cram in towards me. Too many now. Have to use something better. I’m working on what I was thinking earlier any ways...
Quiver; sanctified seeking elven arrows. Fire!
You shoot 5 poisoned elven arrows. The 1st poisoned elven arrow hits the warg! The 2nd poisoned elven arrow hits the warg! The 3rd poisoned elven arrow hits the warg! You kill the warg! The 4th poisoned elven arrow hits the succubus! The poison doesn’t seem to affect the succubus. You kill the succubus! The 5th poisoned elven arrow hits the Uruk-hai! The poison was deadly...
You just gotta love my new surprisingly splendid elven arrows, eh?!
I took a step into that room. I want to get at that other door and shut it (!).
...
Oh man there’s a lot of people getting in my way here...
...
I’m surrounded on 4 sides. Taking multiple hits every other round. Only down 6 hit points though. I’ll press on...
... Too many soldiers! Can’t kill them fast enough. Can’t get through. I’m going to fight my way back...
...
Gawd. None of these soldiers seem to want to cooperate... Okay guys! Lemme get back! I’ve changed my mind!
...
Okay. I’m back in the room with the magic portal. Had to lift a few bodies out of the door. Then dear out all the junk here. Fight a few soldiers off, and then close the door. I locked it too.
Hit points are back at full. I count my remaining serenely salient elven arrows. 28 left in the quiver. So 15 are still in the other room beyond the door. Hmmm...
Okay. Put the leash back around my invisible panther. Accept a bow from the elven king. Step back through the portal...
Okay girl. Let's go back to base camp for now. We need some special equipment...

Back at base camp, I grabbed a few items from the different chests. Organized and sorted a few things then headed back. No incidents except that I saw a cockatrice on level 21. Made a note of its location. Then Phiona and I stepped through the magic portal to Fort Ludios once more...

(*) That expression is from back in my AD&D days. Rolling a 20, on a 20 sided die, meant an automatic hit. No matter how low the opponents armor class was, and even if the attacker could not normally hit.

T:136729

2.30 Shooting Soldiers

Back in the little room with the magic portal at Fort Ludios. Radar shows that there is a veritable horde of soldiers in the adjoining room. So much so, that they're wall to wall. So crammed in. Just like a tin of sardines!

Gawd almighty... I'm so loaded with stuff, that when I pulled out just the brass lantern from the bag of holding, I was burdened.

Better to pull out all the items I need for now. Then drop the bag. That's better. I'm now unencumbered. Can't dig through the walls. Yep. It's just like the last level back Home...

Read a scroll of magic mapping... A map coalesces in my mind... Mmmm... Hmmm... Some kind of fortress area.

Damn! I completely forgot about donning the blindfold last time I was here!?! (shake head) I do so now...

Mmmm... Hmmm... Black, red, blue, and silver dragons...

I have a terribly good idea what black dragons breathe. Found that out the hard way back in '78. With one of my most cherished characters in the game that Nethack is not (sad face + feeling melancholy...). Silver ones... I just can't remember. Was it frost or lightning or something...?

Four giant eels... A cave spider (yuch!)... Lucky thing I brought "Sting" with me (wink)... Couple of eves, invisible stalker, trapper, umber hulk, zruty, some Uruk-hai, and a veritable brigade of soldiers...

Central room in the fort... It's also crammed with monsters... There's this Croesus guy on the throne... Who the heck is that? Better check the "/'" command...

Croesus (in Greek: Kroisos), the wealthy last king of Lydia; his empire was destroyed when he attacked Cyrus in 549, after the Oracle of Delphi (q.v.) had told him: "if you attack the Persians, you will destroy a mighty empire". Herodotus relates of his legendary conversation with Solon of Athens, who impressed upon him that being rich does not imply being happy and that no one should be considered fortunate before his death.

Some rich guy who doesn't take advice. (shrug) I won't bother doing any research on him. Depending on how long it takes me to get there; he won't be alive after tonight any way. Tomorrow at the latest...

Quaff potion of object detection...

I can see kelp fronds! The elven king has a wand... Too bad for him. That now puts him on my "take lives for the glory of Mars" list... The black dragon is also sitting on a wand... The cave spider has a scroll... All the soldiers have either "C" or "K" rations, bugles, and such... There are two large boxes
and two chests! Maybe another wand of wishing! Just like at the fortress on level 28! Lots of gold in a central room... And gems in what is probably the corner turrets...
Okay. Put on ring of teleportation control. Zap wand of teleportation. Direction ",,.
< A mysterious force prevents you from teleporting! >
Damn. But I'm not really surprised. Teleportating isn't all what it's cracked up to be. Most levels, where you want to use it on yourself, don't allow it to happen...
(sigh)
Looks like it's going to have to be done the old fashioned way...
Check inventory. Ready weapons. Place equipment in proper order.
I brought all 143 serenely screaming arrows with me. This is going to be a good test to see how well they stand up in a major battle. Also, I'll see how often they get mulched, and/or lose their poisonous coatings...
Ready Phiona? Phiona snarled.
I nodded in response. Then, unlocked the door leading to the room that was jam-packed with monsters.
The door flew open, and the first of the faceless horde stepped into the doorway...
A big battle with soldiers, and assorted monsters, played into the night...
I had potions of sleeping, paralysis, and confusion available. As well as; a few judicious zaps from wands of sleeping and slow monster, assured that the fight would be one sided: My side!
I hadn't even been scratched, and was mowing them down quite effectively with the saliently sinister elven arrows. And then...
A wand was zapped. A purple beam ricocheted around the room. Never saw one as such before (?). On a hunch, I looked at my discoveries screen. Something new now appeared at the end of the wands section...
< wand of death (pine) >
!
I must get it before all the charges are expended! Which one of you has it?!?
Mow down the column in front of me.
Step into the mob. Message screen filled up with misses aimed at my displaced images.
Apply mirror.
< The umber hulk is confused by its own gaze. >
Soon enough, it gazed at a floating eye and, didn't move for a long time.
I'm now fighting my way deeper into the mob. I must get a line of fire on that other door...
Another dark purple beam ricochets around the walls! But I think I caught where it's point of origin was...
 Traverse up and left. Fire! Step up and left. Yes! I'm now in direct line. Fire!
I got him! Now I have to maintain a steady stream of fire on the area. Can't let the ones around him pick it up and use it...
< You shoot 5 poisoned elven arrows. Your elven arrow is no longer poisoned. The 1st elven arrow hits the soldier! The 2nd elven arrow hits the soldier! You kill the soldier! The 3rd elven arrow hits the soldier! The poison was deadly... The 4th elven arrow hits the soldier! The 5th elven arrow hits
the soldier! You kill the soldier! The umber hulk hits the Uruk-hai. The umber hulk hits the Uruk-hai. The umber hulk bites the Uruk-hai. The umber hulk gazes at the Uruk-hai... The soldier picks up 6 blessed poisoned +7 elven arrows. The soldier picks up a wand of death. The soldier throws a spear! The spear misses the umber hulk. You are almost hit by a spear. The soldier throws a spear! The soldier is hit.>

< You throw 3 daggers named BDDD. The 1st dagger named BDDD hits the soldier! You kill the soldier! The 2nd dagger named BDDD hits the soldier! The 3rd dagger named BDDD hits the soldier! You kill the soldier! The soldier wields a spear! The soldier throws a knife! The knife misses the umber hulk! The knife hits the homunculus. You hear a scepter pounded in judgment.>

Even though the umber hulk isn’t in-between me and the square I’m suppressing, those missiles are aimed at my displaced images. That’s why he’s getting nailed. Either that, or there’s some confused people in there too (laugh!).

< The soldier picks up a spear. It is missed. The potion misses the soldier. The vial crashes on your head and breaks into shards. You yawn.>

Yep. It is somewhat boring...

< You shoot 3 poisoned elven arrows. The 1st poisoned elven arrow hits the soldier! The 2nd poisoned elven arrow hits the soldier! The poison was deadly... The 3rd poisoned elven arrow hits the soldier! The soldier picks up 8 blessed poisoned +7 elven arrows. The soldier picks up a wand of death.>

< You shoot 3 poisoned elven arrows. The 1st poisoned elven arrow hits the soldier! The 2nd poisoned elven arrow hits the soldier! You kill the soldier! The 3rd poisoned elven arrow hits the captain!>

< You shoot 4 poisoned elven arrows. The 1st poisoned elven arrow hits the captain! The 2nd poisoned elven arrow hits the captain! The 3rd poisoned elven arrow hits the captain! You kill the captain! The 4th poisoned elven arrow hits the horse! The soldier picks up 15 blessed poisoned +7 elven arrows. The soldier picks up a wand of death.>

< You throw 2 daggers named BDDD. The 1st dagger named BDDD hits the soldier! You kill the soldier! The 2nd dagger named BDDD hits the soldier! You kill the soldier!>

< The horse strikes at your displaced image and misses you! The horse strikes at your displaced image and misses you! The umber hulk hits the floating eye. The floating eye is killed! The soldier throws a knife! It is missed. The knife hits the horse.>

< You shoot 4 poisoned elven arrows. The 1st poisoned elven arrow hits the horse! You kill the horse! The 2nd poisoned elven arrow hits the invisible stalker! The 3rd poisoned elven arrow hits the invisible stalker! The 4th poisoned elven arrow hits the invisible stalker!>

< The invisible stalker hits!>

I took 12 hit points on that (surprise!). First time I got hit. Even though I was neck deep in monsters. But I needed one more step, and then I’d be standing on the same square as where the wand of death lay (!)...< There are many objects here. The soldier wields a voulge!>

I did it! I’m standing on it!

< You shoot 5 poisoned elven arrows.>

Killed 2 soldiers.

< You shoot 5 poisoned elven arrows.>

Killed 2 soldiers again.
Now the wave of soldiers was starting to abate. The battle was degenerating into a disorganized fray. The umber hulk had sauntered back towards me. I couldn’t resist...

Apply mirror.
< The umber hulk confuses itself! >

These guys are funny in a room full of monsters (laugh)!
The fray fell apart into isolated pockets of resistance. After I mopped up, and secured some booty, I now started to concentrate on a plan against these dragons...

Checked the area on the western end of the big open area for traps with the brass lantern. I’m going to need it secured for blind target tracking.

Put on blindfold. Wait for dragon(s) to leave the water before shooting...

Killed the red and blue dragons while I was hugging the wall.

Two soldiers and the silver dragon coming around from the top...
< You hear a crackling sound. You hear a zap. It is hit. It is hit. >

No idea what that was all about, but the black dragon was now in line of fire...
< You shoot 3 poisoned elven arrows. The 1st poisoned elven arrow hits the black dragon! The 2nd poisoned elven arrow hits the black dragon! The 3rd poisoned elven arrow hits the black dragon! You kill the black dragon! Welcome to experience level 16. You feel more confident in your skills. >

Oh wow! It’s been a long time since I’ve seen that message!

Scan status screen for changes...


Still a Scout.... (shrug)

#enhance

There is absolutely no hesitation on my part, concerning which box to check...
< You are now most skilled in broadsword. >

There. Now I can wield the 'great big black sanguinary life-draining battle-blade'; "Stormbringer" with utmost ability! (smile of satisfaction)

While I was admiring my new prowess with the runesword...
< You hear a crackling sound. The blast of frost hits the invisible Phiona! The blast of frost whizzes by you! >

Woah! Silver dragons breathe frost!

Lucky it didn’t get reflected from my amulet! Else Phiona might have got hit on the rebound...

Killed the silver dragon with super stellar elven arrows.

Step down and right. Step down and right. Traverse up and left. Fire!

One salvo of silently seeking elven arrows dropped the two remaining soldiers.

Just the two on the bottom and the cave spider left...

Okay. That takes care of all the middle area stragglers. Remove blindfold. Go and sift through the booty dropped by the recent kills...

What is this?! There’s A white square on the water?
I thought the game got broken or something. Damn computers. I better not take any chances. I just went up a level!

*Save game and exit. Reboot computer. Fire up game again.*

It still shows up the same way?

Hmmm...

Look at square with the "/" command.

It’s... Ice (?!).

Okay. I’ll figure that out later...

First things first: Check for any monsters in the area. Nope. Change clothes and heal Phiona.

*< The invisible Phiona looks better. >*

Now then. Since I’m already in spell casting attire...

Cast light all over the level.

There. That’s better. Now if any kobold lords get generated, they will have a hard time here.

Change back into battle armor.

Murder... I mean: Take the lives, of the elven king and the two other elves, for the glory of Mars.

After that, I let the black blade and Phiona feast on a flesh golem.

Gathered up all the booty. No wand of wishing in the chest in the eastern room (sad face).

Power is back up.

Identified several things...

Twenty two poisoned orcish arrows... Six scrolls, but no enchant types... Eight useless potions, save one of poison (thumbs up!). Six wands, the wand of death still has 5 charges (yea!)... A spellbook of cancellation... An amulet of lifesaving... And a cursed oil lamp... That’s the exciting stuff for now.

The weapons and armor will have to wait. I’m out of power again...

I’ll make a trip back to base camp now. It’s getting late. I’ll croak Croesus tomorrow night...

Level 22:

*< You hear the footsteps of a guard on patrol. >*

Okay. Let’s make the detour and get another wand. I left the bag of holding near the downstairs, so as not to be burdened when the vault guard would appear. Phiona, the peaceful red naga, and I, then started searching the vault. It was a little tight with three of us in there, but I’m use to having others around me (wink).

The guard showed up, and we went through the motions of the interrogation. He turned around for me to follow him when... Fire!

He fell on the second shot. The poison was deadly. The corridor mysteriously disappeared and, a wall was now blocking the way.

Uh-oh...

We’re all trapped inside! We’ve been sealed in!

No problem. I’ll just pull the pick-axe out of the bag, then cut out a...(!?)

*< You don’t have that object. >*
2.30. **SHOOTING SOLDIERS**

Oh my God! The bag of holding! I left it outside! Quickly I look at my inventory. Do I have a wand of digging on me? No! I put it in the bag, in order to lighten the load. I have a scroll of teleportation on me (phew!). But I don’t have the ring of teleportation control.

Gawd... I hope I don’t teleport next to where I am - and still be within the room. Else we’ll be in a fine mess....

I stopped and thought about the whole situation for at least 10 minutes. Yep. That scroll is my only hope... Okay. Read the scroll.

I got sent to the other side of the level. Had to look for my picture. It’s always confusing to me, to have to find myself again after I do a non-controled teleport (laugh!).

I let out a sigh of relief.

Another lesson learned. Almost the hard way. Sometimes the most innocuous things can end your game!!!

I freed Phiona and the red naga from the vault. Then proceeded down towards base camp...

< You put an uncursed bugle into the chest named Tools. You put an uncursed bugle into the chest named Tools. You put an uncursed bugle into the chest named Tools. You put an uncursed bugle into the chest named Tools. You put an uncursed bugle into the chest named Tools. You put an uncursed bugle into the chest named Tools. You put an uncursed bugle into the chest named Tools. You put an uncursed bugle into the chest named Tools. You put an uncursed bugle into the chest named Tools. The Angel drinks a potion of invisibility! The Angels’ body takes on a strange transparency. For some reason, the invisible Angel’s presence is known to you. You feel aggravated at the invisible Angel. >

God damned right. For sure I am. In fact I’m infuriated! He’s disturbing the "Glory of Arioch" in her private chambers! (Grrrr...)

Didn’t leave a corpse. Lucky for him. Else I would have condemned him to eternal damnation by offering it to Mars.

Still sorting stuff. Monster generator, in that room next door, has decided to kick in and annoy me.

Next thing was an owlbear. Oh boy! Mars loves owlbears! I always, always, always have something good happen when I give an owlbear to Mars.

Have to lead him to the altar first...

< Your sacrifice is consumed in a burst of flame! The hill orc throws an orcish dagger! You are nearly hit by an orcish dagger! The orcish dagger hits Mort. >

Aaargh! Stupid orc! You ruined my sacrifice to Mars! You couldn’t have picked a worst possible time to do that! I didn’t get anything!! What is this? Pick on the "Glory of Arioch" night?

The orcs were dispatched with utmost cruelty. I took off my gauntlets of power (so they would die slower) and used "Firebrand" to sear their flesh.

Next annoyance was a golden naga. It took 7 arrows (over 3 rounds) to kill it. I was impressed with the amount of damage it could sustain. I couldn’t lift it either. So Phiona got bloated.

Finally, I was able to complete the sorting and classifying. The trip back from Fort Ludios took longer than expected. I’m tired.

*Save game and exit.*

Tomorrow I’ll finish clearing out that level.

Frost bread doesn’t freezes water, eh? Hmmm....

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2.31 The Sacking of Fort Ludios

Hokay... Back at Fort Ludios... Scanning with the radar... All clear except for what’s inside the fort itself.

Surrounding area has been cleared and secured. Time for final preparations, and the storming of the fortress. My way, of course (grin).

First thing is to discover where the secret doors leading to the insides are. Put on the ring of levitation... And go around to scan with my elf secret door detection ability... Monsters are casting spells and drinking potions while I do...

One door discovered only? On the eastern side. That’s it? (shrug) It’ll have to do...

Make sure there aren’t any traps, along a line of 13 squares, at a right angle from the door... That will serve as my firing line and path of approach.

Check the door for traps - 12 times.

Unlock the door...

< You see a door open. The stone giant throws a boulder! The boulder hits the hobgoblin! The hobgoblin is killed! >

Har Har!! That’s one way of assuring that no one can get into the doorway (snicker).

Okay. I’ll just move a square off-line and land on the other side of the moat...

Now to walk over to my fire station... (dum - dee - dum)

Okie. Range 8 from the doorway with the boulder blocking it. None of them can hit me with anything at their disposal.

Put on blindfold. Draw back on the elven bow and start mowing them down...

(Once I finish my contract with Mars, I’m sure I could get a job in the circus.)

The following represents the number of arrows fired and the monsters that went down during these rounds:

- 5 - goblin, gnomish wizard, bugbear
- 3 - orc shaman, gnome lord
- 3 - bugbear
- 4 - Croesus, bugbear
- 4 - bugbear, troll
- 5 - stone giant, hill giant, hobgoblin
- 5 - troll, gnome lord
- 3 - bugbear, goblin
- 5 - hobgoblin, mountain centaur
- 4 - gnome king, kobold lord
- 3 - Uruk-hai
2.31. **THE SACKING OF FORT LUDIOS**

- 4 - bugbear, kobold lord, hobgoblin
- 3 - troll
- 3 - bugbear
- 5 - orc-captain, kobold lord, invisible rock troll

That was all with 'full salvo fire'. No 'finesse firing' was used at this time.

Now I walked up to the moat and zapped a wand of frost. Ice formed. I knew it was safe to walk on, cause I saw some big heavy monsters do it yesterday.

I have to push this boulder, which is blocking the doorway, out of the way... < With great effort you move the boulder. You enter an opulent throne room! You try to feel what is lying on the floor. You trip over a hobgoblin corpse. You make a lot of noise! >

How embarrassing (blush). Good thing I wasn’t wielding "Stormbringer". Can you imagine how much Arioch would be laughing at me?

More fighting was necessary to finish off the stragglers. Here’s how these rounds went...

- Stormbringer - hobgoblin
- Stormbringer 2 - troll
- Step
- Stormbringer - hobgoblin
- BDDDD 3 - troll
- Exchange
- Arrow 1 - troll
- Step
- Arrow 2 - plains centaur
- Step
- Arrow 5 - ogre lord, hobgoblin, hobgoblin, bugbear
- Arrow 1 - nothing (!)
- Step
- Arrow 2 - bugbear
- Arrow 4 - invisible rock troll, gnome, bugbear
- Step Step
- Arrow 2 - bugbear
• Step
• Exchange
• Stormbringer - troll
• Step Step
• Stormbringer - invisible rock troll

I never got scratched. Never took a hit. Never got zapped by a wand or spell.

Whistled in Phiona, took off the blindfold, and started rooting through the booty...

Only thing I remember from here, was a spetum. So the rest of the booty was not spectacular. Well, compared to what I already have, that is...

Opened the door to the vault (I think the door was trapped), and discovered a pit right away. Couldn’t walk inside, so levitated across. Discovered pit after pit. Some were spiked. So I just remained levitated, and searched the whole room. Found like nine land mines.

All the gold in every square made it difficult to remember where all the pits and mines were. I had to continuously do the "SHIFT + ~" command. Managed to untrap and bring out 7 land mines. Two were set off by clumsy monsters before I could get to them (sad face). I considered the deactivated land mines, more valuable than the zorkmids (!). You can’t buy these. I’ve never seen one for sale. So one is dependent on the game generating them for you.

Made several trips through the magic portal. Deposited all the stuff I wanted on the other side. This included the two chests here. These, I also considered more valuable than the zorkmids. Too bad I didn’t clear this level before. I didn’t know that there were four good containers here! I would have left some on lower levels, instead of bringing them up to my main base camp...

During this phase, I found the following message funny...

< The invisible Phiona eats a stalker corpse. >

Next. I changed clothes, dropped most of my stuff and figured what I wanted to wish for (scroll of genocide). Sat on the throne three times - nothing ever happened. So I changed my pattern. Had to get the computer to give me a different result. I kicked the throne - then I sat on it. It disappeared in a puff of logic... Go figure (laugh)!?

Power was up, so I drained it all down to nothing, by casting identify on a pile of interesting weapons. The spetum, which was the most interesting to me, turned out to be; cursed -2 (sad face). Best thing I found, so far, was a +1 two handed sword. I’m still holding out a lot of hope, for the six flails I’ve gathered here.

Next. I walked over to the ice patch that the silver dragon had made yesterday. Don’t worry. I had no intention of digging through with a pick-axe (wink).

I deliberately slept on this the night before. Wanted to let my intuition work a bit. Needed to come up with a different way of testing the depth of the ice. What I did instead was; levitated over it and zapped a wand of digging downwards. A pit appeared!

Okay. Now I can take the "on hold" order off of my ‘things to do’ list, regarding the BDD’s on the Titan’s level (all right!).

Took me 4 or 5 trips to haul all the junk back to base camp. Brought only the items I wanted, and both chests. Left most of the weapons, and nearly all the armor behind. I identified things whenever
my power was near full, wherever I was at the time. Either at base camp or at the huge pile of weapons and armor.
Here’s what the level looks like now that it has been cleared...

**Fort Ludios**

- magic portal to DL21
- 2 large boxes
- huge pile of garbage weap/arm
- boulder
- rocks (x50)
- peaceful humonculus
- nurse

The two monsters got generated on the far side of the map, just as I was leaving. I didn’t feel like walking all the way back just for those two. They don’t give good treasure. If it would have been a linx, a werejakal, or a rothe, then I would have. So, that’s why they’re still alive.

Sorted and classified everything. But still have a pile waiting to be identified in one of the new chests. Carved out two more alcoves at base camp. Haven’t named the two other chests yet. I may just relocate them to a lower area of the Mazes of Menace, should I require another base. Not sure yet. I’ll see what happens in the Valley of the Dead first...

Monster generating room produced 11 Uruk-hai at one point. Most I remember seeing in one "summoning".

A new method has emerged with me, when I’m traveling in known areas of the Mazes of Menace. I find myself walking around with the blindfold on, nearly all the time now. Combined with the ring of warning, I can detect all monsters instantaneously when generated. Also, this allows me to know where they are at all times. Helps me keep track of what Phiona is up to also. No surprises anymore (!).

I’m going to count what’s left of my superbly suave elven arrows...

18 non poisoned, and 122 poisoned ones. So that means I lost 3 completely. Not bad. I must have shot over 150 of them too. Maybe more...

Power back up. Let’s do more identifying...

A +4 crossbow, a +3 blessed rustproofed longsword, a +2 pair of leather gloves, a blessed +1 crystal plate mail, and a +2 small shield. That’s all great stuff. Maybe some of my personal guard will be able to use them when I create the unit. Also discovered the aklys.

Now then. What’s left on the 'things to do' list...

T:141213
Chapter 3

Book 3

3.1 Nearing The End...

Since the retreat from the Valley of the Dead (Part 26) (see [2.5 on page 136], I’ve grown much more comfortable with Ellora. Many new discoveries have been made. These, properly applied, have facilitated a few things for her. The monster detection abilities and her equipment, have sure made me less apprehensive when encountering new situations.

I’m really impressed with the new super slick elven arrows. They’re making the game fun again. That is; from a role playing point of view.

Refreshed my memory with the stone to flesh spell. First thing is to get rid of this guardian naga statue. Can’t stand the way it looks on the map. This will make my screen look nicer...

Zap. Wait for it to move to the altar... Pretend guardian naga is a pin cushion for my stunningly sparkling elven arrows... Offer the corpse to Mars...

Prayed, and got a spellbook of detect treasure.

Ah crap! (slap head)

I forgot to drop all my vials of water on the altar before praying...

Oh well. Next time.

Throw spellbook into "The Cache" with all the rest. What a collection I have (roll eyes)...

Reconstruction of the mystery statue (the pile of rocks at base camp), resulted in 131 meatballs! Now there is no way I’ll ever find out what it was. (sad face). Looks like that mystery will never be solved...

< The invisible Phiona catches a meatball. The invisible Phiona eats a meatball. >

I think that Phiona and I would make a great circus act (!).

Hmmm...

That gives me an idea. Can I catch a meatball in my own mouth...?

< A meatball hits the ceiling, than falls on your head. Fortunately, you are wearing a hard helmet. A meatball hits the floor. >

HP: 126(127)
(laugh!)
Looks like that part of the act needs more work (wink).
Gaze at list of 'things to do'. Head down towards the Titan’s level...
Titan’s level:
Get proper angle figured out... Aim wand of frost... Zap!
Froze three water squares!
Good. Still need two more... Move to new location... Realign... Zap!
Froze two more!
Great. Now then... Hover over designated area... Aim wand of digging... Zap!
A hole was created in the ice!?!
My two BDDB’s are there though...
I do the "/" command to make sure there’s no water... Nope.
Okay! All is safe!
Remove ring of levitation...
Fell through the hole and landed on the fortress level!?!?
My BDDB’s fell through also, AND got scattered! Lucky they didn’t fall in the water on this level too (phew)!
Boy, I tell you. You have to be careful when around water with missile weapons. Once they’re in the drink - it’s hell trying to fish them back out (laugh)!
I’m now up to 11 BDDB’s in my inventory. Feels good (smile).
Although I really, really, really get off on my new simply spectacular elven arrows, I still very much enjoy my; old steady and secure BDDB’s.
Well. Since I’m now here on the Fortress level...
May as well handle the freezing of the moat here too... Zap!
< The moat is bridged with ice! >
There. That will facilitate things when I want to move from upstairs to trap doors.
Okay. What’s next?
Look at list.
Oh yeah. Perseus...
Back at the Titan’s level:
I’m now in the room with Perseus’ statue. I have to change into my spell casting attire... Magic is not my specialty, you know. Not like; blindfolded dagger chucking (wink).
Okay. I’m ready... "Ah-Lar-Kah-Zoot!"
< You fail to cast the spell correctly. >
(groan...) Take off gauntlets of power...
Try again: "Ah-Lar-Kah-Zoot!"
< The statue of a knight named Perseus comes to life! >
Okay! Let's see what the 'cyclopedia has to say about him now...
Here lies the noble fearless knight, Whose valour rose to such a height; When Death at last had struck him down, His was the victory and renown. He reck'd the world of little prize, And was a bugbear in men's eyes; But had the fortune in his age To live a fool and die a sage. [Don Quixote of La Mancha by Miquel de Cervantes Saavedra]

Hmmm... And the "/" command no longer gives any info when you type in "Perseus"!? I must have tripped a switch in the game, or something... (?)

(shrug)
So Perseus! What have you got to say? Happy I turned you back to flesh?

(#chat)
Nothing.
Is he peaceful...?
Nope.

Hmmm...
What can I possibly be missing here? Is there something more to this that I should be aware of?
I consult my notes...
Ponder...
Nope. Can't come up with anything. (shrug) Since he's so ungrateful... He'll just have to donate his life to the glory of Mars!

I slew Perseus the knight...
< Things that are here: 5 blessed +6 daggers named BDDD a knight corpse named Perseus a pair of mud boots >

I whistled in Phiona. Here girl. Have a snack.

Mud boots, eh? I don't have those discovered yet (!). Strange... I thought I had all the boots figured out a long time ago...? Oh well. I'll see what they are later on.

Back to base camp...
Okay. Pull out all the neat weapons and armor I've accumulated since the beginning of the game. I have loads of good stuff here. I bring it all to the vault room on this level. I learned this trick when I was trying to get Gimmick to do something (see Part 49 (2.28 on page 268))...

I'll bring in the gargoyles one at a time in here. Then they can root through, and pick out what they each want...

That done; I pull out the 6 eggs that are called "laid by you". Now, Phiona and I, just kind of wander around...

...

Now were wandering around on different levels...

...

Hmmm... Looks like the eggs aren't going to hatch?
I keep wandering for another 100 clock ticks...

What's wrong? I review "Part 12: Chain Reaction" (see 1.14 on page 58)...
Damn. Looks like something is no longer working. Can it be a time thing? Is there a gestation period? You kind of figure that, something made out of stone and masonry, wouldn’t be affected by such a thing... No?
...
(sigh) I was really looking forward to creating this personal guard (sad face)...
...
Okay. Staring at the screen doesn’t seem to be advancing anything either. I’ll just stow everything back (slump shoulders)... Well. We’ve finally gotten down to just a few items left on that old list. We’re finally nearing the end of it...

**Ellora’s list of: Things To Do**

- clear out the Valley of the Dead
- locate the gateway and/or magic portal on level 29
- create and outfit a gargoyle personal guard with my eggs (no go?)

Time for final preparations. We’re about to make a final push, towards completing the mission, for Mars!
I gather many different objects from my various chests... Bless a few more items... Take a little bit of extra food from the "Fridge" for me and Phiona... Doesn’t sound like, the Valley of the Dead, has too much to offer in the food department. Plus, if I should fall through a trap door several levels, I don’t want to have to worry about that while I’m trying to get back up. Learn a few spells... And see how they work when I cast them...
Okay... Now then...
Go over the contents of the bag of holding... Now in the inventory screen... Looks good.

**Inventory**

- a blessed amulet of reflection (being worn)
- 11 blessed +6 daggers named BDDD
- the blessed fireproof +3 Longbow of Diana
- the blessed rustproof +0 Fire Brand
- 18 blessed +7 elven arrows
- a blessed fireproof +2 elven bow named SMG (weapon in hand)
- 22 blessed poisoned +7 elven arrows (in quiver)
- the blessed rustproof +1 Stormbringer (alternate weapon; not wielded)
- a blessed +4 elven mithril-coat (being worn)
3.1. **NEARING THE END...**

- A blessed fireproof +3 pair of speed boots (being worn)
- A blessed +2 elven shield (being worn)
- A blessed rustproof +3 dwarvish iron helm (being worn)
- A blessed rustproof +2 pair of gauntlets of power (being worn)
- A blessed fireproof +1 cloak of displacement (being worn)
- 2 kelp fronds an uncursed lizard corpse
- 13 uncursed meatballs
- A blessed scroll of scare monster
- A blessed scroll of teleportation
- A blessed potion of extra healing
- A blessed potion of paralysis
- An uncursed ring of warning (on right hand)
- An uncursed ring of slow digestion (on left hand)
- A wand of fire
- A wand of death
- A wand of teleportation
- A wand of cold
- A wand of magic missile
- A wand of digging
- A wand of lightning
- A blessed bag of holding
- An uncursed blindfold named deep radar
- A blessed +0 unicorn horn
- A blessed magic whistle named Phiona
- An uncursed pair of lenses named Ebenezer Lich
Bag of holding contents

- an uncursed amulet of reflection
- an uncursed amulet of life saving
- a blessed +2 sling
- a blessed +0 silver dagger
- a blessed rustproof +2 spetum
- 100 blessed poisoned +7 elven arrows
- the blessed fireproof +1 Sting
- an uncursed +0 robe
- a blessed +2 pair of leather gloves
- an uncursed +0 green dragon scale mail
- an uncursed +0 shield of reflection
- a blessed +3 helmet
- an uncursed +0 pair of speed boots
- an uncursed +0 cloak of protection
- an uncursed cockatrice egg
- an uncursed lizard corpse
- various different kinds of food
- 19 scrolls comprising 10 types
- 12 potions comprising 7 types
- an uncursed ring of levitation
- an uncursed ring of free action
- an uncursed ring of regeneration
- an uncursed ring of teleport control
- an uncursed ring of sustain ability
- 18 wands comprising 9 types
- a blessed tinning kit
- a blessed brass lantern
3.1. NEARING THE END...

- a +0 pick-axe
- an uncursed skeleton key
- an uncursed expensive camera
- an uncursed tin opener
- an uncursed mirror
- an uncursed partly used tallow candle
- a blessed +0 unicorn horn
- an uncursed lock pick
- a blessed leash named Phiona
- a blessed luckstone

**Status Display**

Ellora the Scout St:25 Dx:18 Co:16 In:20 Wi:20 Ch:16 Chaotic Dlvl:24 $:0 HP:127(127) Pw:62(157)

**Weapons Skills**

- dagger [Expert]
- broadsword [Basic]
- polearms [skilled]
- bow [Expert]

**Spellcasting Skills**

- divination spells [Basic]
- 18 currently known spells

*Save and exit game. Start working (thinking) on a plan of action...*

Two days later:

Mmmkay... Fire up the game...

< Hello Ellora the elven Ranger, welcome back to Nethack! Be careful! New moon tonight. >

(laugh!) Sounds ominous...

A few scrolls of create monster, got rid of the "hopeful feeling" message with Mars. That's good. I didn't pray at this time though. I'll keep that in reserve. Now, if I should need his help a little later on, he'll be forthcoming.
Dunno how this will turn out. Had a lot of trouble last time (see Part 26 (2.5 on page 136)). But with my added experience with the game, and hopefully, applying wisdom; I'll be able to do a better job this time around... I have improved my equipment considerably since then. Have a better arsenal at my disposal. And many of my items are now blessed.
There are just so many things to keep track of in this game. Hope that I've considered everything...
Although, I still have a certain amount of apprehension, I feel confident.
Let's head for the fortress. I said good-bye to all my friends here, at base camp... Checked the different screens one more time... And headed out...
Avoided all the wandering monsters on the different levels to the fortress... There's a silver dragon here now... Have to be careful with Phiona. Don't want her getting a blast from their breadth attacks...
I'm going to leave her behind for the initial descent. I don't want to take the chance that she'll get hurt by any area effect attacks. I'm carrying lots of wands and such. Also I don't want to have to restrict any of my missile firing should she be in line...
I give her a hug and a kiss. Threw her a meatball. Then closed the door to the main room in the fortress. Silver dragon is making it's way towards us. I'll see how much it likes being fireballed when I get back...
I pull out a whole bunch of things from the bag of holding. Re-arrange some things and put some back. Now I'm burdened. Not good, I know. But I just want to have all the things I can on me, while bringing the bag down with me too. My first action will be to drop the bag once I'm there. After I'll have cleared out some of the nasties, I'll fix everything up.
Now I'm standing at the edge to the first trap door... Gazing into the darkness from below... Paranoia sets in and I again look at my different screens...
Okay. Stop that. Time to pull the trigger. Let's make a move.
I light the brass lantern, then take a step forward...
T:142047

3.2 Return To The Valley Of The Dead

< A trap door opens up under you! You arrive at the Valley of the Dead... The odor of burnt flesh and decay pervades the air. You hear groans and moans everywhere. >
Mmm... Sounds like this place hasn't changed much since last time I was here...
Okay... 28 immediate monsters and question marks on the radar.... I'm not surprised by this at all. From my past experience; I knew full well that this place was teeming with Horrors...
I do all type of actions that take no time on the clock first; look (","), what is ("/"), etc...
Lots of items littering the floor all over the place. These are left over from my last battle here (See Part 26 (2.5 on page 136))...
At least I'm within three squares of the upstairs... Have an escape route, should disaster start to become imminent...
Initial visual recon sweep has been made... Nearest potential threats have been identified... Fine then...
"SHIFT +O"
3.2. RETURN TO THE VALLEY OF THE DEAD

Adjust auto pickup exceptions...
Put appropriate CD in drive...
Drop bag of holding... Time to rumble...

Come on you undead horrors! I’ll kill you all! (Well... Kill you again, that is...)

I start spraying with the SMG. Have to clear away the closest surrounding monsters. I like having room to maneuver... A dwarf zombie was the first to fall. Turn. Fire! A ghost is dispatched to the ethereal plane of existence. Traverse left 180 degrees. Fire! Elf zombie destroyed.

Ghosts are congregating. A horse is charging towards me. Turn around, again. Drop to a crouching position. Aim... Fire! A sustained burst shoots out from my primary weapon... The horse falls.

Ghost range two! 12 o’clock medium. BDDD’s away! Another spirit gone...

Question mark on the radar has just been identified:

< & a major demon (ice devil) [seen: telepathy] >

!!!

An ice devil!!! They come from one of the planes of hell! What is that thing doing here...?

No time to contemplate. More lumbering horrors closing in... Fire! Human zombie disintegrates before me...

A large imp and a wreathed horror lined up... Fire! Tengu and wraith fall in the same salvo... Another wreath approaching... Need a line of fire. Step. turn. Fire! Wraith screams fill the area as I end it’s existence. How come I haven’t detected any lich’s yet...?

Step away and turn. Fire! Step back. Fire! Vampire crumbles to dust. Poison is not having any effect on these creatures...

Fire! Another ghost gone... Something has read a scroll (!). Spotted jelly point blank! Can’t step back. I’m not going to risk entering one of the other creatures touching range...

Fire! Spotted jelly is killed. But I’ve overshot. An ogre king has gotten angry...

Your life for the glory of Mars! Fire! The deed has been done...

Another ghost. Step to line of fire. Fire! It’s a tough one. Fire! It’s gone...

Two more horrors closing from the left. Fire! A salvo of five! Vampire lord and an elf zombie destroyed...

Ghost... BDDD salvo. Step down. Fire! Another gone...

Damn. Many more blips on the radar. Some room. I need "some" room to maneuver...

Spray with the SMG! (Make "rat-tat-tat" sound when I press the direction number.)
Step up and left. I want to know how tough these things are while I have a line of sight... Aim... Fire! It’s still standing. But I’m not surprised. Range is five. One more burst before trying something else on it... Fire!

The ice devil has fallen along with a wraith! What absolutely splendid missiles these enhanced elven arrows are!

Things are starting to get crowded. Maybe soon: I’ll be considering those stairs... Can’t drop all these creatures fast enough, compared to the rate they’re coming into view...

Step towards the stairs. Fire! Step towards the stairs. Fire! Ghost gone.

Step towards the stairs... Giant zombie blocking my path! I step down and fire up and left. Ghost is close too. I’ll take a hit compared to being touched! Fire at ghost again. It’s gone.
Can’t step out of the giant’s zombie range. Vampire lord too close. It swings! Cloak of displacement has come through. Fire! Fire! Giant zombie is cut down...
Step down and right. No! Wrong way! Step back before it hits me! Step away...
Turn and fire! Step away. BDDD’s away! Another ghost gone. Oh man... Things are getting tight...!
Sustained fire... Vampire lord went down at point blank range!
Things are too tight. Have to move. Change my position on the battlefield. Must make sure my cloak is reactivated too... Haven’t been hit, or (shudder) touched yet. But: Neither do I want to be (!).
I hesitate. Should I use the wand of fire...? No. I think I can see enough of a passage for which to make an escape...
Move and dodge. Picking up BDDD’s and stellar arrows along the way. Over step the stairs. Move and dodge.
Fire! Wraith falls... Turn and fire. Ettin zombie destroyed.
Moving again... Ack! Vampire lord moved two squares in one turn?!
Fire! It’s still standing... BDDD’s away! It fell.
Next is another of these never ending wraiths... Fire!
Now, yet again, a ghost... BDDD’s away! (BDDD’s seem to work better on ghosts, for some reason or other...). It’s gone.
No monster is in direct line of sight this round. Except for this little guy...
(#chat)
< The gremlin snickers. >
These guys are always having a great time (laugh!). They make god awful pets though (roll eyes)... Oh gross! Giant spider bearing down on me. It’s Burp (!). I try to step away...
It’s following me. Striking at my displaced images. Damn. I have to move again in order to reactivate the cloak.

Fire at wraith in the distance.
Move away from spider called Burp. Again...
I can’t stand this. He’s incessant. I hate spiders. I can’t stand looking at this picture on the screen. It sends shivers through my nervous system. Have to do something. There’s a battle that I must keep my concentration on without this added distraction...
I hesitate...
He was a great pet at one time. Don’t know if I would have done as well without him (?). Would I have gotten this far in the game? Probably not. But times have changed. I must move on. I have a mission to fulfill for Mars...
Take a breadth.
Fire!
< You kill Burp! >
(sad, sad face)
Lull in the battle. No more creatures in my immediate vicinity. I did well. Didn’t have to retreat up the stairs at all! Yet...
Activate (put on) deep radar...
3.2. *RETURN TO THE VALLEY OF THE DEAD*

Many monsters still out there. Where are the liches? How come they’re not amongst the cast of horrors? Some new ones here though... Different pictures I’ve never seen before...

And what’s this...? A priest?! Do the look...
Peaceful priest of Moloch?!

There’s a temple here? Maybe...?
I’ll see when I get there. It’s (he’s) on the other side of the screen...

Okay. Concentrate on clearing out the rest of the gruesome creatures here. New territory to step into in order to stalk them. Must be careful of traps...


Fire! Elf zombie destroyed...


BDDD’s away! Iron pierce dead...

Monstrosity in line of fire. But first: Do the ’cyclopedia...
Horned devils lack any real special abilities, though they are quite difficult to kill.

We’ll see about that. Fire! Three arrows launched. Horned devil fell down!


Gawd... There are devils here. Yuch! Devils are lawful. However: These guys (horned devils) are now off of my; ’Monsters to be Concerned With’ list... (grin)

These next types scare me more...
Sustained fire. Ghost dispatched...


Sustained fire. Another ghost dispatched...
Quite a concentration of blips zeroing in on my position again...
Locate area to make a stand... Move!


Step out for flanking fire... Shoot a sustained burst... Ghost, elf zombie, and the peaceful gremlin (oops) fell...

Tight cohort approaching... I won’t be able to fall them all before I’m in their touch range (!).
Fine. Wait two ticks for them to come closer... Now!

Zap wand of fire!
My aim was true: The flames have bounced from adjoining walls! Four targets were hit! They’re all still coming though...!

Fire flame thrower! Five targets hit! Fire wand of fire again!
Three ghosts, a dwarf zombie, and a vampire have all succumbed to the flames! One monster still standing. It was at a bad angle...

It hit me! Damn. Cloak of displacement didn’t work! Took 1 hit point as damage.

Turn! Damn you! Spray a burst from the SMG at point blank range. Elf zombie shreds to pieces in front of me. Probably got me cause it was elf...
Step. Step. Search. Step. More sustained firing...
Ghoul and a wraith now gone... Vampire lord and a "?" have also been sent on...
< You suddenly realize it is unnaturally quiet. >
Oups...(?) What does this mean?
Stop music in CD drive...
< Your lantern is getting dim. >
Oh great...
I still have a vampire and wraith that want to dance!
Vampire gone... Now then. Hold still, and... Fire! Wraith, and giant zombie are taken care of.
Just some stragglers left. The mobbing seems to have abated...
Kobold zombie is destroyed with "Fire Brand"
Stepping and searching...
A wraith, then two more vampires fall to the sustained staccato of the SMG...
Stepping and searching...
Warg is dead. That wasn’t here initially. I’m sure of that. The game is generating wandering monsters now...
Stepping and searching...
Next is an ettin. Not a zombie, nor a mummy. Poisoned ammunition for you! Fire! Dead...
Stepping and searching...
A dingo (!). Long time since I’ve seen something like that (laugh!). "n2d". Dead dingo...
Stepping and searching...
There’s like a graveyard here! Lots of tombstones. And there’s a bunch of large boxes and a chest amongst all the graves! Okay. I’ll dig all this up later. Have to make sure that none of these other creatures, that show up on the radar, can get at me...
Stepping and searching...
Okay... This area is secured. I say that, cause a recce sweep has revealed that this level contains three areas of monster concentrations. I’ve cleared the central one. It seems...
Yep... Fine then. I’ll go get Phiona. Don’t want her to be left alone too long...
Gather up some of this junk laying all over the place... Stuff the bag of holding with loot... Change clothes. I’ll be casting identify as soon as I’m back up those stairs...
"Shift + <"
< The yellow dragon breathes acid! The blast of acid whizzes by you! The blast of acid bounces! The blast of acid whizzes by you! The blast of acid hits the yellow dragon. >
?!?
Acid!? I thought that was what "black dragons" breathed on you?! And the range from; muzzle to ricochet to impact was 10!
I forgot to consult my notes before going back up. Forgot that there was a yellow dragon on this side of the fortress. I had the silver one, on the other side, still fresh in my mind.
And ANOTHER surprise was that: I surfaced in a different spot than the other times! Those one way stairs have shifted!!
3.2. *RETURN TO THE VALLEY OF THE DEAD*

No time to contemplate that now! I have an, acid belching overgrown yellow iguana, at range 5 from me!

Run into the maze on this side of the map. Another blast of acid whooshed around me! I didn’t want to drop the bag, cause I didn’t want it to get dissolved in the acid blasts. Hide in an angle. Put on deep radar. Dragon is plodding along. Change back into full battle armor (!). Hopefully the cloak of displacement will help... (cringe)

Track yellow dragon. Leave bag, and everything else not necessary to fall the beast, behind and within it. Wait for battery breadth at an angled juncture. When it comes round the bend, range will be only three (!). But I just don’t have the available terrain that will allow for a longer shot in here...

It poked it’s face out. No acid blast sprang from it’s mouth!? Does it need to recharge? Dragons can breathe 3 times before having to be able to, no...? Well. Better take advantage... Fire! Three hits! Dragon stepped out of line of fire...

Tracking... Run around to another point of approach... Wait for dragon to move, thus using it’s action step, before I expose myself again... It just moved. My turn!

Step out. Fire! It died. Good. That thing would be a pain to have around anyway. As I will have to travel through here a few times in the near future...

I whistled Phiona over. This carcass will keep her satisfied for quite a while, I’m sure.

Okay. Start identifying some things...

Hmmm... A container here would be handy. I could then set up a temporary shop...

I went down and came back with one of the empty large boxes. Now I have a place to stow the junk. Don’t feel like having to negotiate the five trap doors on the way to the big room. Besides, "Frosty" the silver dragon is on the other side of the door...

Okay. What’s the initial booty like...

- amulet of ESP
- spellbook of drain life
- blessed +2 leather gloves
- +0 trident
- +1 battle-axe
- 17 blessed +2 arrows
- 3 blessed +6 daggers named BDDD (The one’s I left behind in Part 26 *(see 2.5 on page 196). Now have 14 in total!)
- 23 blessed poisoned +1 arrows
- 6 scrolls
- 2 potions
- a blessed wand of speed monster
That was the interesting stuff. Not bad, eh? Still have graves to dig up, and boxes / chests to rifle, that are still below (rub hands together)!

Ready to go Phiona? Yes dear. I’m bringing you with me this time.

Phiona snarled in anticipation.

All right. Let’s go...

Oh. Have this long worm blocking the trap doors. I’ll just use finesse fire with BDDD’s to get rid of it. Don’t want to overshoot and have some land on these trap doors...

"n1td"
"n1td"
"n1td"
"n1td"
"n1td"
"n1td"

Hey!? What gives? That’s already 6 I threw... (scratch head)

"n1td"
"n1td"
Awh - come on! What the heck is this? It takes me five - six at the most - when slaying a dragon!

"n1td"

< You kill the long worm! >

It’s about time! I can’t believe this!? I’ve never had to use so many on anything... What’s the story...?

Is the game starting to make the monsters tougher? Hmm...

Yea. That must be it. I’m nearing the end. So the game is trying to hamper me; by giving the monsters more hit points than normal. (nod) Okay. That’s why the ghosts are tougher to destroy recently. (nod, nod)

Good thing I recently made all these super spectacular weapons. I’m going to need them all, it seems...

Come on girl. Leash Phiona. Drop down the trap door...

Dug up the graveyard... Some familiar names were discovered amongst some of the corpses... At least two I remember for sure; as past characters I played... Hmm....

Brought a chest near to the stairs. It will serve as a temporary dump off point for booty. I couldn’t locate a secret door on the west side of the graveyard. So we’ll have to access the west side of the map through the dart trap up north. I’ll bring the chest closer to there, should I not discover a door when I get on the other side of that wall...

Met a fire vortex. Never seen one before...

And a succubus is coming along too...

Hmmm...

You know what? I think I’m into this now. (nod, nod)

Sex in the graveyard... Moans and groans everywhere... Fire vortex hovering... Casting shadows off the catacomb walls...
3.3. **CONQUEST OF THE VALLEY OF THE DEAD**

Sure, I'll give it a go - this time (wink).
Check with the deep radar first... Now with the immediate radar from the ring, as well as, the Longbow of Diana...
All clear! Okay babe. Let's go!
(#chat)
< The invisible succubus cajoles you. >
Awww... What a let down. Are you sure...?
(#chat)
< The succubus strikes at your displaced image. >
Darn. When I'm interested, no one else is. (long sigh...)
You dare reject me, eh? Your life towards the glory of Mars!
Fire!
Interesting loot from the dig and rifling included; a spellbook of sleep, some blessed +2 leather gloves, and a potion of oil. The last is good, cause my lantern is running low...
And I again exited in a different part of the maze on the east side of the fortress (!). Those one way stairs up, from level 29, must be shifting continuously...
Pack all the extra stuff away, at the temporary camp, on the east side of the fortress. Check equipment...
Now back down to the 'Valley of the Dead'.
Let's see what some of these devils are all about. Time to finish the conquest of this level, in the Mazes of Menace...
T:142712

3.3 **Conquest Of The Valley Of The Dead**

Tried to refill my blessed brass lantern with a vial of oil. I couldn't get it to work? Tried applying / dipping in all the different combinations I thought was possible. Something wrong. Or I don't remember the correct procedure...?
Nothing doing. Oh well. I'll just use the cursed oil lamp I found earlier, for now...
If I could only get it going...
Finally. Took three tries (roll eyes),
Do a sweep with the deep radar. Where are the liches? Did I, per chance, kill them all before...?
(shrug)
Okay. Now to get the show on the road...
Saunter up to the dart trap...
None of these abominations has the guts to step through it?
(laugh!) Of course not! They have no guts. They're all just dead rotting lumbering husks.
This will be easy then... Stand on the other side. Aim down corridor... FIRE!
Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!
Step into dart trap. No; I did not disarm it - yet (!).
Fire! Fire! That just about takes care of most of the creepy squadron up here...
Just a few funny looking things to verify first. Before I send them on. To their planes of existence...
The vrock is one of the weaker forms of demon. It resembles a cross between a human being and a
vulture and does physical damage by biting and by using the claws on both its arms and feet.
Fiends are among the more powerful of devils, capable of attacking twice with weapons as well as
grabbing and crushing the life out of those unwary enough to enter their domains.
Okay. No problem. As long as they don’t teleport, I’ll never give them the chance to use their close
in attacks... Let’s see how well they stand up to long range stinging seekers...
I plug them full of holes...
Not too well (laugh)! They all fall down too (wink).
Explore the northern area of the Valley of the Dead...
Phiona ate a wraith corpse. First time I see any of my pets (besides Burp) eat an undead (?)... (yuch).
There’s another pile of chests, boxes, and graves here too... Hmm... wonder if the south western
congregation will yield the same results. Don’t things come in threes?
I explored up to the temple of Moloch. Yes. There’s an altar here. Wish I knew about it before. This
will be handy. But first, I’ll finish clearing the south western end of the level from it’s denizens...
Another trap is keeping the monsters at bay. This is good to know. I may very well use this knowledge
to my benefit in the future.
Spray SMG.
Step into the trap. Didn’t disarm it, yet either. Just like the one above. I can use this in case I need
to run away from something. Like maybe this thing...
These female-seeing devils named after the Furies of mythology attack hand to hand and poison
their unwary victims as well.
Sustained fire... It’s gone.
"Hezrou" is the common name for the type II demon. It is among the weaker of demons, but still
quite formidable.
SMG salvo. It fell...
Most of the rest of the horrors lining up in the narrow passageway fell. Just have a few stragglers
hanging around the extreme western area. Looks like it opens up here too...
Kill remaining monsters...
Phiona only eats wraith corpses (?). She’s been following me around. Turns her nose up to everything
disc except these... Hmm...
Yep. I guessed correctly. There’s another pile of chests and boxes here. More graves too. Power will
be back up soon. I’ll collect some booty and start classifying things...
Two trips to the temporary camp on the fortress level were made.
Now to start rifling and digging...
I found this tombstone interesting...

< You read: "Postman, please note forwarding address: Gehennom, Asmodeus’s Fortress, fifth lemur on
the left". >

Is the "Big A" in this game !???
3.3. CONQUEST OF THE VALLEY OF THE DEAD

My god... He’s the ruler of hell! The most powerful lawful/evil being in the universe!
Finished the looting of all the containers and graves in these two sections. There was lots of interesting stuff here. But my list seems to have disappeared (?). I may have thrown it out by mistake (sad face). From what I remember; there was another potion of poison, a +1 robe, a saddle (?), a scroll of scare monster, a +4 crossbow, and a scroll of enchant armor. There was other stuff too, but I won’t know till I can get back to the temporary containers...
Having accomplished all of this: I stop and take a look at the general lay out on the screen...
Holy Moly...! Would you look at all the large boxes and chests in this place (eyes marveling upon the screen)! Eh?!
If I would have known about this before; I wouldn’t have bothered with all the stuff I was doing on level 24 these last few weeks. I should have forced myself into this area sooner...
There’s a temple here. A huge one too! Lots of room for a base camp. And since this area behaves the same way as The Boulders; I don’t have to worry about liches teleportating on me, should one appear!
Gee - whizz... I say it again: I wish I would have known all this before...
Okay. No use sulking about it. I know now. Let’s just put it to use and move on.
All I have to do is kill this priest of Moloch, and then convert the altar to Mars. Then I’ll organize myself a really spiffy base camp...
I start walking around the temple... Checking for traps and such... Yep. I’ll line all my chests over here. Probably along the western wall. Too bad I can’t dig any alcoves here... Coming along the northern perimeter of the temple, I discovered a secret door...
Hmmmm... Better to check the whole temple. Don’t want any surprises once I’m established here... Nothing else was discovered.
Okay. What’s beyond this door?
A winding, twisting, turning passage. Complete with a spiked pit trap, and an unavoidable sleeping gas trap. Good thing I’m an Elf (grin)! Had to rescue Phiona from the pit. Gave her a heal too, while I was at it. Then I threw her a meatball. That makes her happy.
Now. Where do these stairs go? I’ll leave Phiona behind for a moment and go take a quick looksie...
< You are standing at the gate of Gehennom. Unspeakable cruelty and harm lurk down there. Are you sure you want to enter? [yn] (n) >
Eeesh. (gulp) Let’s finish here first...
"n"
Besides; by the sounds of it - I may not be able to come back once I go... Must be the endgame sequence. I’ll do all of my final preparations, and carry everything I can on me, before going there...
Well. Looks like I’ve now completed the last thing on my ‘things to do’ list! This must be the gateway, to somewhere else, that Izchak had told me about...
Let’s get to work on setting up a base camp...
Okay priest. What have you got to say?
Mmmm... Hmmmm... Same as all the other (false) religions.
I walk to the far wall within the temple. It’s the farthest I can get from the altar. Can’t dig through the walls here. Too bad the game doesn’t give me a command that asks; whether they want to convert
on their own. But, doing it the hard way don’t bother me too much. Mars is the god of war after all. He likes battle...

< You shoot four poisoned elven arrows. The priest of Moloch gets angry! The 1st poisoned elven arrow hits the priest of Moloch! The 2nd poisoned elven arrow hits the priest of Moloch! The 3rd poisoned elven arrow hits the priest of Moloch! Moloch roars: "thou dost profane my shrine!" The bolt of lightning whizzes by you! You are blinded by the flash! The bolt of lightning bounces! The bolt of lightning whizzes by you! The bolt of lightning hits the priest of Moloch. The 4th poisoned elven arrow hits the priest of Moloch! You kill the priest of Moloch! >

I stare motionless at the screen for a few moments...

Oh-kaaay... That was somewhat different...

Never had a different attack sentence(s) "within" my own attack sentences before... (?)!

Did the priest have a wand of lightning? The bolt seems to have originated from the altar, though...

Moloch sure is a loud mouth too. What does he expect? I’m an instrument of Mars. Does he think I’m going to let his shrine stand when; I (and Mars) could put it to better use?

I walk over to where the priest went down... The priest didn’t have a wand of lightning! Did he have a lighting spell...? Don’t remember one existing in the game... I collect his possessions and drop them on the altar.

Well. It seems to function like the other altars...

There is an altar to Moloch (unaligned) here.

Things that are here: an uncursed spellbook of drain life an uncursed spellbook of dig an uncursed glittering spellbook an uncursed spellbook of create monster an uncursed scroll of teleportation a blessed scroll of create monster an uncursed small shield a cursed robe an uncursed mace

Only thing that’s different; is this "unaligned" description. Does it mean it follows none of the known alignments?

Ponder...

Well, I dunno. Better run a test. Need a corpse. Priest of Moloch didn’t leave one (sad face)...

...

Now where is a sacrifice when you want one, eh? If I had a scroll of create monster, I’d use it now...

(slap head) There’s one on the altar (laugh)! I head back towards it...

Just when I reach it - a quantum mechanic gets generated outside the room. Fine. You’ll do for what I need. I’ll save the scroll in case it doesn’t work the first time...

Over here egghead... Quiver blessed +2 arrows. Don’t want to kill him too quick. Just to let him now where I am, and get him coming towards me...

"h1f"

That did it. Lead him to the altar... Fire full salvo of star stingers!

He fell over the altar.

Ookay. Get ready for a struggle between you and Mars, Moloch (grin)...

< Moloch rejects your sacrifice! The voice of Moloch booms: "Suffer, infidel!" >

!? What happened...?
3.4. MOLLIFYING MARS

Lost two points on my wisdom!? Check all my other screens... Did I get all my stuff cursed? Nope. Don’t seem like it, any way. Don’t notice anything else out of place...

What’s the story...?

Stare at screen for a few minutes. Review a bunch of things. Well; whatever I can remember from the opening screen to this game, and from my Oracle notes...

I don’t get it. But something is obviously not working out here...

I’ll have to do some research - and some more thinking on this matter. Let’s haul the booty back to base camp level 24 for now. Plans on making a base camp here, will have to be put on hold for a little while. At least till I can figure some things out...

Disarmed the two traps on my way out. Filled the bag till I was just under stressed, or strained. Don’t remember which one comes after burdened.

Killed "Frosty" the silver dragon with two salvos of sure starbursts. Didn’t feel like wasting any charges on the wand of fire. Actually: I had this perplexing situation at the ex-temple of Moloch continuously on my mind. I really wasn’t interested in applying my thought processes to anything else. So I simply went with the sure kill...

Something out of the ordinary happened on the way. Phiona attacked an ogre lord and killed him (!?). I remember that she had ignored him in the past (?). Strange...

First trip at base camp. Think I made three or four in total. Remove and take off everything. Check for cursedness on the altar. Everything looks fine. But after what happened below... I wasn’t taking any chances.

How’s the super seven arrow situation...? Hmm... 100 stashed away, 16 blessed poisoned +7 ones in the quiver, and 24 blessed +7 ones on standby... So, none got mulched, and only 6 lost their poisonous coatings. Good. Good. (thumbs up!)

Here comes a black naga. I’ll coax it to the altar. See what the situation with Mars is like...

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3.4 Mollifying Mars

< Your sacrifice is consumed in a burst of flame! You have a feeling of inadequacy. >

?

What the heck is this?

Was it something like this that happened to one of my old priestesses, or wizards...? What did I do at the time...?

...

I can’t remember (slump shoulders).

Something went wrong in the Valley of the Dead. Everything was fine before.

(sigh) Need to think...

Save game and exit.

Fire up game. It’s been two days. I can’t quite put my fingers on the exact problem...

Ever since I was fooling around with that shrine to Moloch...
"Moloch"

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Moloch; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Moloch, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name. And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Moloch, and kill him not: Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Moloch, from among their people. [Leviticus 20:1-5]

That doesn’t help me too much...

Well... I’ll go through the motions of identifying, sorting, etc. It’ll keep me busy for now. Maybe I’ll come up with something...

Perseus had cursed boots of levitation (!).

Mob of hill orcs got generated in the room with the generator. Slaughter and offer...

Mars isn’t very impressed (sad face)...

Okay. I have to use another charge on the wand. This might help give me a clue.

Zap wand of enlightenment.

**Current Attributes**

- You are the Glory of Arloch.
- You are piously aligned.
- You are fire resistant.
- You are cold resistant.
- You are sleep resistant.
- You are shock resistant.
- You are poison resistant.
- You see invisible.
- You are telepathic.
- You are warned.
- You have automatic searching.
3.4. MOLLIFYING MARS

- You have infravision.
- You are displaced.
- You are stealthy.
- You have slower digestion.
- You are protected.
- You are very fast.
- You have reflection.
- You are lucky.
- Mars is angry with you.

Well, well, well... Something definitely went wrong somewhere (sad face).

Ponder...

What’s with this luck stuff? How is that measured and/or acquired? What does it affect? the number of shots I get? The amount of hit points when I go up a level? My chances at seducing a succubus? I remember reading about it in the guide somewhere... And what about that new moon message I sometimes get...?

...

Back to sorting and classifying stuff. Have to keep the mind busy. Let my intuition work a bit...

...

OH CRAP! Did I change gods?!
"CONTROL + X"

Pheew! Nope everything is okay on that screen...

Back to the task at hand...

...

< You hear noises in the distance. >
What’s Phiona up to? Has another monster been generated?

No... Well not that I can see with the deep radar. She’s a little ways away. Next to Manfred. Manfred’s picture disappears on the next round!
What?!! Did Phiona just kill Manfred?!

I go take a look. No "?" showed up in her vicinity. When I got there, she was busily devouring a corpse. It could only have been Manfred’s, of course...

What’s the story girl? You never went after any of our friends before?
Man. Did something affect her too? How come she’s so ferocious lately?

...

Read the Guide - yet one more time!!
Mumkay...
Section 5.2 Mentions luck... But why?
Section 6.3 Tells me something about that saddle I found the other day...

Section 6.4 Might explain those ghosts that sometimes appear with my name on it (see Part 31 (2.10 on page 165))...

Section 7 Tells me the encumbrance order; ‘Burdened’, ‘Stressed’, ‘Strained’, ‘Overtaxed’ and ‘Over-loaded’. Now I’ll remember what they are - or at least know where to find it again (laugh!)...

Section 7.4 Interesting... I’ll have to think about a few things there...
Section 7.7 Wands can be canceled? Why would anyone want to do that?
Section 7.9 Luck affects spell casting...

Section 8. Hey! You can change the form of an object into the same type of object by polymorphing!? That’s a great idea! I always used those wands to zap pets and/or nasty monsters with...
I’ll keep that in mind. Maybe I can get another wand of wishing (!?)...

Always good to read the guide, from time to time. I mentioned it before, and I’ll mention it again: There’s lots of information in there, and no matter how many times I read it, I always come back with something newly learned - or a new idea to try!
Nothing about my immediate concerns with ol’ Mars, though... (sad face)
(sigh)

... Monster alert! Rock troll just materialized three squares from me!
< Your sacrifice is consumed in a burst of flame! Mars seems slightly mollified. >
Well... I’ll take that as something positive. But...
Man... Mars is still upset (sad face)...
Okay, I’ll see if I can make him happy again. I went to "The Cache" and pulled out all my uncursed scrolls of monster creation, 14 in all. I then dipped them in a vial of holy water. Blessed is best!
That’s my motto (grin). This will make them work better. Maybe they’ll now make big mean monster types appear. Give ol’ Mars some real nasties for his cohorts of destruction. I combined them with the four blessed ones I already had in "The Cache". Now I have 18 in all.
Make sure everything is in place concerning my equipment. Remember; that a (shudder) master mindflayer, could very well get created!
Next; I put Phiona on the level above. Don’t want her to get in the way, or eat a corpse on me...
Now then: Let’s get to work on mollifying Mars...

...
Burnt through all the scrolls. Couldn’t get past the feeling of inadequacy... (sad face) Even offered him; a troll, stone giant, and a hill giant. Geeze...
Despair is starting to set in...
Still have uses left in the bag of tricks, but I don’t feel like blessing that...
I’ll give it a rest for now.
Save game and exit.
Next day. Fire up game.
Still haven’t come up with a solution...
Keep going through the motions of putting around base camp...
...
Computer locked up for some reason (?). Grrr... I hate that. Have to do a reboot. Gawd. Hope I didn’t lose everything...
There is a game in progress under your name. Do you want to recover?
Yes.
Hmmm... Things look about the same... I’m still at base camp, but the timer seems to have jumped ahead by 280 clock ticks (?). Well... Good enough. I can live with that.
Back to the problem at hand...
The only thing that seems to have worked is that rock troll...
Hmmm...
...
Urghhh... I’m depressed.
Mars don’t like me no more (sniffle)...
I went to the "Fridge" and pulled out a potion of booze.
Downed it in one shot, then laid on the altar...
Pondering, whilst I lounged upon thine altar of Mars... Gazing, longingly, up at the ceilling... Reflecting, upon how, I couldst possibly mollify my god... Mort, the friendly storm giant, had come to my side...
To console me, in my time of despair... His enormous bulk, slowly obscuring my view...
Hmmm... (scratch head)
Stare at Mort...
My my... You are quite a big and powerful being... Are you not...?
In a moment of clarity: I was suddenly gripped by an idea!
I slid off the altar and stood directly opposed to Mort...
"Hey Mort!!" "What’s that behind you??"
Mort’s face turned inquisitive, then he twisted his head to look at what was behind him...
My hands flew to the scabbards, strapped - and along - my arms.
The air was filled with blades flashing in the light! The silent sound of ‘blessed death dealing daggers’ sailing to their target, could almost be - felt!
< You throw 4 daggers named BDDD. Mort gets angry! The 1st dagger named BDDD hits Mort! The 2nd dagger named BDDD hits Mort! The 3rd dagger named BDDD hits Mort! The 4th dagger named BDDD hits Mort! Mort drinks a potion of full healing! Mort looks completely healed. >
My tactic had worked. Mort was caught completely off guard. Patience. I must have patience. Have to keep whittling him down. No final coup until he is standing at the altar proper...
< You throw 3 daggers named BDDD. The 1st dagger named BDDD hits Mort! The 2nd dagger named BDDD hits Mort! The 3rd dagger named BDDD hits Mort! Mort picks up 7 blessed +6 daggers named BDDD. >
Come on Mort... Show me what you got.
I was expecting a thunderbolt to come my way. Hoping that the amulet around my neck would reflect it back to him. But none came... He did take a step towards me though...

< You kill Mort! >
One straight striker arrow. Must have hit him between the eyes...
Push boulder away from altar...
There is an altar to Mars (chaotic) here.
Things that are here: a blessed poisoned +7 elven arrow a storm giant corpse named Mort 7 blessed +6 daggers named BDDD
Pick up my weapons... Now make an offer to Mars...
< Your sacrifice is consumed in a burst of flame! Mars seems slightly mollified. >
Okay. (nod) Mars is demanding big time sacrifices... Or: That he still wants me to take lives for his glory... Either, or both: No problem with me (evil grin).
My eyes narrow... Where is Larry?
Activate deep radar...
We’ll just play the sequences. You guys can fill in the gaps (or ask me - laugh!).
< You throw 1 dagger named BDDD. Larry gets angry! The dagger named BDDD hits Larry! >
< A shiver runs down your spine. >
< You were wearing an uncursed blindfold named deep radar. You can see again. >
< Larry picks up a boulder. >
< Larry throws a boulder! You are almost hit by a boulder. >
< Larry throws a dagger named BDDD! The dagger named BDDD hits Flap! >
< You throw 2 daggers named BDDD. The 1st dagger named BDDD hits Larry! The 2nd dagger named BDDD hits Larry! Larry picks up 2 blessed +6 daggers named BDDD. >
< Larry throws a dagger named BDDD! The dagger named BDDD hits Vert! >
< You shoot 3 poisoned elven arrows. The 1st poisoned elven arrow hits Larry! The poison was deadly... >
There is an altar to Mars (chaotic) here.
Things that are here: a blessed poisoned +7 elven arrow a storm giant corpse named Larry a blessed +6 dagger named BDDD
< Your sacrifice is consumed in a burst of flame! Mars seems mollified. >
Okay. That sounds wonderful (smile)!
Ring of warning has picked up an intruder! I’m excited! Is it going to be something that leaves a corpse...
Gold golem. I ignore it for now. These things are pretty useless to me. I’m going to arrange these new boulders in my base camp...
Ice troll closing in from the west. Oh good! Trolls always leave a corpse (grin!).
< Your sacrifice is consumed in a burst of flame! The gold golem strikes at your displaced image. The gold golem strikes at your displaced image. You glimpse a four leaf clover at your feet. >
Okay. That’s starting to sound better. Mars is asking for leperchauns again (smile)...  
Scorpion - four leaf clover.
Gargoyle - four leaf clover.
Excuse me for a minute. But something insists on being a real pain...
BDDD’s away!
< You kill the gold golem! >
Monkey - four leaf clover.
Crocodile - four leaf clover.
Gelatinus cube - four leaf clover.
Purple worm - nothing.
(thumbs up!)
Cancel 24 useless potions. Drop them on altar. Grab everything I can hold, from the "Cursed Stuff" large box. Waddle back to altar.
"#pray"
< You begin praying to Mars. You are surrounded by a shimmering light. You finish your prayer. 
The potions on the altar glow light blue for a moment. You feel that Mars is well pleased. You are surrounded by a golden glow. >
Big discovery!

HP:132 (132)

They were; 127(127), before praying! That explains where I probably got some of those other hit points without going up a level (see Part 35 (2.14)).
Okay! Mars is acting normal again (youpee)!  
...
A little while later on; this was interesting...
< You begin praying to Mars. You are surrounded by a shimmering light. Bert’s ghost starts to attack you, but pulls back. You finish your prayer. You feel that Mars is well pleased. An object appears at your feet! >
I seem to remember another monster not attacking me in the past, while I was praying. Could have been somewhere in the beginning of this game, or in a prior one...
Another spellbook of teleport away. I threw it in "The Cache" with the rest of the collection...
T:145339

3.5 Formulating

Okay. Where’s the amulet again? What do I need to retrieve it? What’s required to win the game?
Consult the Guide...
The amulet is rumored to be somewhere beyond the Valley of Gehennom, deep within the Mazes of Menace.
The Amulet of Yendor is reputed to be some where beneath the twentieth level.
Valuable gems increase your score if you bring them with you when you exit.
Offering the Amulet of Yendor to your god is necessary to win the game...
Consult the Exploring The Mazes of Menace document...
To win the game (as opposed to merely playing to beat other people’s high scores) you must locate the Amulet of Yendor which is somewhere below the 20th level of the dungeon and get it out. The scoring is based on many aspects of your behavior, but a rough estimate is obtained by taking the amount of gold you’ve found in the cave plus four times your (real) experience. Precious stones may be worth a lot of gold when brought to the exit.

And the major consultations from the Oracle...

It is said that thou mayst gain entry to Moloch’s sanctuary, from a place where the ground vibradeth in the deepest depths of Gehennom. Thou must have the aid of three magical items. The pure sound of a silver bell shall announce thee. The terrible runes, read from Moloch’s book, shall cause the earth to tremble mightily. The light of an enchanted candelabrum shall show thee the way.
There are many stories of a mighty amulet, the origin of which are said to be ancient Yendor. This amulet doths have awesome powers, and the gods desire it greatly. Mortals mayst tap only portions of its terrible abilities. The stories tell of mortals seeing what their eyes cannot see, and seeking places of magical transportation, while having this amulet in their possession. Others say a mortal must wear the amulet to obtain these powers. But verily, such power comes at great cost, to persevere the balance.
Start another game and quit (I need to know what the starting paragraphs were)...

It is written in the Book of Mars

After the Creation, the cruel god Moloch rebelled against the authority of Marduk the Creator. Moloch stole from Marduk the most powerful of all the artifacts of the gods, the Amulet of Yendor, and he hid it in the dark cavities of Gehennom, the Under World, where he now lurks, and bides his time.
Your god Mars seeks to possess the Amulet, and with it to gain deserved ascendance over the other gods.
You, a newly trained Tenderfoot, have been heralded from birth as the instrument of Mars. You are destined to recover the Amulet for your deity, or die in the attempt. Your hour of destiny has come. For the sake of us all: Go bravely with Mars!
(Wow; she had 58 +2 elven arrows!)
The ’cyclopedia...

"Amulet of Yendor"

This mysterious talisman is the object of your quest. It is said to possess powers which mere mortals can scarcely comprehend, let alone utilize. The gods will grant the gift of immortality to the adventurer who can deliver it from the depths of Moloch’s Sanctum and offer it on the appropriate high altar on the Astral Plane.
3.5.  FORMULATING

"Quest"

Many, possibly most, Tours are organized as a Quest. This is like a large-scale treasure hunt, with clues scattered all over the continent, a few false leads, Mystical Masters as game-show hosts, and the Dark Lord and the Terrain to make the Quest interestingly difficult. [...] In order to be assured of your future custom, the Management has a further Rule: Tourists, far from being rewarded for achieving their Quest Object, must then go on to conquer the Dark Lord or set about Saving the World, or both. And why not? By then you will have had a lot of practice in that sort of thing and, besides, the Quest Object is usually designed to help you do it. [The Tough Guide to Fantasyland, by Diana Wynne Jones]

"high altar"

Altars are of three types: 1. In Temples. These are for Sacrifices [...]. The stone top will have grooves for blood, and the whole will be covered with dry brown stains of a troubling kind from former Sacrifices. [The Tough Guide to Fantasyland, by Diana Wynne Jones]

To every man upon this earth Death cometh soon or late; And how can man die better Than facing fearful odds For the ashes of his fathers And the temples of his gods? [Lays of Ancient Rome, by Thomas B. Macaulay]

"offering"

Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky, Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone, Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die, One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne, In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie. One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie. [The Fellowship of the Ring, by J.R.R. Tolkien]

"Bell of Opening"

"A bell, book and candle job." The Bursar sighed. "We tried that, Archchancellor." The Archchancellor leaned towards him. "Eh?" he said. "I said, we tried that Archchancellor," said the Bursar loudly, directing his voice at the old man's ear. "After dinner, you remember? We used Humptemper's Names of the Ants and rang Old Tom."* "Did we, indeed. Worked, did it?" "No, Archchancellor."

* Old Tom was the single cracked bronze bell in the University bell tower. [Eric, by Terry Pratchett]

"candelabrum"

Faustus: Come on Mephistopheles. What shall we do? Mephistopheles: Nay, I know not. We shall be cursed with bell, book, and candle. Faustus: How? Bell, book, and candle, candle, book, and bell, Forward and backward, to curse Faustus to hell. Anon you shall hear a hog grunt, a calf bleat, and an ass bray, Because it is Saint Peter's holy day. (Enter all the Friars to sing the dirge) [Doctor Faustus and Other Plays, by Christopher Marlowe]
"Marduk"

First insisting on recognition as supreme commander, Marduk defeated the Dragon, cut her body in two, and from it created heaven and earth, peopling the world with human beings who not unnaturally showed intense gratitude for their lives. The gods were also properly grateful, invested him with many titles, and eventually permitted themselves to be embodied in him, so that he became supreme god, plotting the whole course of known life from the paths of the planets to the daily events in the lives of men. [The Immortals, by Derek and Julia Parker]

Failures (/" command; knows of no such things)


And many more over the coming days. If you look at all the major words in the above texts; I typed in most of them...

And finally...

Izchack said I would need somthing from his shop.
Probably some candles (?). That's all he had for sale...
So I need Moloch's book and the enchanted candelabrum still. The silver bell must be the Bell of Opening - obviously. Besides the actual entry for the amulet, the other encyclopedia descriptions weren't too helpful...

All right: One more time... What do I have to do?

With all the information above

• I have to retrieve the amulet.

• Moloch stole it and is now hiding out in Gehennom.

• It's below the 20th level in The Mazes of Menace (no problem, I've found the gateway on level 29).

• It's somewhere in Gehennom (located the gateway on level 29, see above).

• I should gather all my gems (not that I care about a high score, but while I'm at it...), and maybe bring all the gold too.

• With the silver bell, Moloch's book, and the enchanted candelabrum; I can then access Moloch's sanctuary.

• If he won't hand over the amulet; I'll beat it out of him.

• Once I have the amulet. Wearing it will probably affect me somehow. (Maybe it's like the eye/hand of Vecna, from the game that Nethack is not. It will give me some adverse effects.) So I had better bring some restore ability potions and such.
3.5. FORMULATING

• Offer the amulet to Mars, on the high altar, on the Astral Plane. Though; I dunno how to get there yet... (?)

Then I can take a break. Maybe get a job in a circus sideshow with Phiona (wink + laugh!).
Wonder if I can bring a chest with me too? I'll see. Gawd... I wonder how encumbered I'll be when I say "yes" at the gateway (laugh!)...
Okay. Still a few unanswered questions, and probably some loose ends to tie up... But: I have a general plan. Let's prepare...
There's a "?" closing in - fast! I immediately switch my mind to battle mode...
Air elemental! Woah. It's been a long time since I've seen one of these.
Fire!
Five shot salvo launched!
Three singing starbursts killed it! Two overshot...
Picking up my arrows brought me to the square with all the statues.
Hmm...
Got an idea from my recent experiences with mollifying Mars...
Pick up one of the statues.
"#dip"
< Your statue of a leperchaun softly glows with a light blue aura. >
That's gonna be the one I'll use, for the next time Mars asks me for a leperchaun sacrifice (wink).
Things that are here:

• a blessed statue of a leperchaun
• an uncursed statue of a lurker
• above an uncursed statue of a scorpion
• an uncursed statue of a kobold mummy
• an uncursed statue of a soldier ant
• an uncursed statue of a giant ant
• an uncursed statue of a sewer rat
• an uncursed statue of a goblin
• an uncursed statue of a coyote
• an uncursed statue of a newt

I'm able to "Go Bravely With Mars" again (see Part 56 (see 3.4 on page 309)). So... Back to organizing my character...

...
Dip the scroll I found in the Valley of the Dead... Arrange my attire... Read blessed scroll of enchant armor...

< As you read the scroll it disappears. Your cloak of displacement glows silver for a while. Your cloak of displacement suddenly vibrates unexpectedly. >

Hmmm...

Same thing as what happened to my arrows, eh?

"Hi"

WOW! It jumped up to +4! It must have got excited as well (laugh!)!

...

Okay... Just ran some tests... An amulet of ESP works the exact same way, as when I have the Longbow of Diana in my inventory screen. So I don’t need that. I’ll leave it in "The Cache" as well...

Owlbear closing in from the east! My eyes light up!! Mars loves these things!!!

< You carefully open the chest named The Cache... You put an uncursed amulet of ESP into the chest named The Cache. Your movements are now unencumbered. The invisible Phiona hits the owlbear. The invisible Phiona hits the owlbear. The invisible Phiona misses the owlbear. >

Phiona! Get away from him. I need its corpse for Mars.

I blow in the wonder whistle. An attempt at trying to relocate her position, away from the owl bear...

< You produce a strange whistling sound. The invisible Phiona misses the owlbear. The invisible Phiona misses the owlbear. The invisible Phiona hits the owlbear. The invisible Phiona hits the owlbear. The invisible Phiona misses the owlbear. The invisible Phiona bites the owlbear. The owlbear hits the invisible Phiona. The owlbear hits the invisible Phiona. The owlbear squeezes the invisible Phiona. >

Damn. They’re too intertwined. Now I’m worried about my pet panther (!). Have to slay the monster before she gets hurt too bad...

< You shoot 4 poisoned elven arrows. The 1st poisoned elven arrow hits the owlbear! You kill the owlbear! The invisible Phiona eats an owlbear corpse. >

No owlbear for Mars today... (sad face)

...

Uncurse and bless the oil lamp I found earlier.

Going to be going in uncharted territory soon.

I’m gonna need the oil lamp. The blessed brass lantern don’t work no more... (sad face)

I just remembered that it’s these things that work with vials of oil. That’s why they’re called oil lamps. Still wonder what these lanterns use for fuel, though...? Fireflies? (shrug)

...

Okay. Pack up with everything I might possibly need. Don’t want to be caught without anything...

...

Oh no! I never # named which candles came from Izchaks shop! I have wax and tallow ones. Hmmm...

Better not take a chance; I’ll bring both kinds.

...

I’m loaded. Have lots of stuff. Ughhhh... Hopefully it’s not too much an involved area, or I’ll be able to establish a temporary base camp further on...
3.5. **FORMULATING**

...  
We’re at the Valley of the Dead again...  
I’m lugging a chest to the gateway. I’m strained.  
A little brown and red picture pops up on the radar.  
< d. a dog or canine (hell hound pup) seen with telepathy. >  
Oooh! A puppy... How cute.  
Do I have a tripe ration handy?  
< You drop a chest. Your movements are only slowed by your load. >  
I check in my bag...  
Yep. Now to lighten the load. Just in case...  
< You drop a blessed bag of holding. Your movements are now unencumbered. >  
Phiona is between me and the puppy. I try to reposition her by blowing the wonder whistle...  
< You produce a strange whistling sound. The hell hound pup breathes fire! The blast of fire whizzes by you! The blast of fire bounces! The blast of fire whizzes by you! The blast of fire hits the hell hound pup. You hear some noises. >  
Oookie (!). This is going to be a little more complicated than anticipated... (concern)  
...  
Didn’t work out. Never had a chance to throw the tripe at it. Phiona is just so ferocious lately...  
Back to lugging stuff towards the gateway...  
Met a baculathrium. Range was 6. Didn’t feel like dropping my load. So while strained, I shot a burst from the SMG. Four stellar slayers brought it down! I kid you not! And it didn’t die due to deadly poison either (!).  
This area (the Valley of the Dead) sure generates monsters. They seem to be continually materializing? They pop up in three distinct areas. Looks like mostly around the old grave sights. Here’s what I killed from this point on, just to reach the gateway...  
Four roths, a gargoyles, an ice devil, a ghost, a lizard, a quantum mechanic, a vampire bat, and a disenchanter. The last one had an interesting description...  
Ask not, what your magic can do to it. Ask what it can do to your magic.  
Good thing I read that before slaying it. So; I used "Stormbringer" on it while it was stuck in a spiked pit.  
I have a chest, a large box, The Bell of Opening, and the bulging bag of holding on the same square as the gateway now. With that done: It’s time to organize this level...  
First thing is to collect 50 rocks and construct a memorial to Burp. He really deserves one...  
"In memory of Burp. May he now feed to contentment."  
Best thing I could think of at the moment, to engrave at the place he fell.  
Pause for a moment, to remember our favorite purple worm...  
...  
Okay. Here’s what the place looks like when I finished the arrangements, and made it back to the gateway...
DL:29 the Valley of the Dead

- Burp’s Memorial
- monster generator? (x3)
- altar to Moloch (unaligned)
- magic trap (x2)
- anti-magic field (x2)
- pit (x29)
- squeaky board (x2)
- chest (x3)
- large box (x10)
- rocks (x70)
- peaceful black unicorn
- peaceful storm giant
- gray unicorn
- xan
- long worm
- titanotheres
- mountain nymph
- quantum mechanic
- warrior
- rabid rat
- green dragon
- bone devil (x4)
- rothe (x6)
- pony
- ? (x2)
Now then...
Pick up; chest, large box, Bell of Opening, and bag of holding.
"SHIFT" + ">
< You are standing at the gate of Gehennom. Unspeakable cruelty and harm lurk down there. >
< Are you sure you want to enter? [yn] (n) y >
< So be it. You fall down the stairs. >
(laugh!)
Okay. Let’s see if I can go back up...
< The invisible Phiona falls asleep! >
Okay dear. She stepped into the sleeping gas trap. You take a nap while I go check out what this Gehennom is like. I’ll be back for you later...
T:146891

3.6 The Fall

Dungeon Level 30

I set up the chest at the stairs for now. Transferred some stuff from the bag of holding to it. Left all my containers at that spot while I went to reconnoiter...
Activate deep radar. Light oil lamp. Search. Search. Step...
Some kind of mini maze in this area...
...
Discovered a fire trap! Read about them in the guide. First time I actually see one.
...
Looks like a maze...
...
Minotaur! Fire! Four arrows to slay it...
...
Search. Search. Step. Search. Search. Step...
...
Awwhh... This is taking forever... Verify deep radar. Change clothes. Cast clairvoyance. Move in a straight path - as much as possible - to other side of the map. Cast clairvoyance.
...
Okay. Searching and stepping is slow and painstaking. No use having the oil lamp on while I’m doing this. It’s not adding anything to what I’m doing. My short range radar, as well as the passive radar, serve just fine for this kind of work. I’ll save it for when I’m traveling.
...
Looks like the whole level is a maze (?). I don’t like that. It restricts my ranged attacks too much. I don’t like cramped quarters...
Things that are here:

- 4 blessed
- 6 daggers named BDDD an ogre corpse a credit card

Hmmm... Wonder how Chibougamau will like that? I'll pump up my credit to maximum. When I know that the game will be ending, I'll go back and "put him out of business". Then: Full credit rating again (laugh!).

The lowest of the inhabitants of hell.

Thought it was a mane. Looked like a mane. Died like a mane. (shrug)

Doppleganger. Left a corpse. Hmmm... Apply tinning kit...

Finally. There are the stairs down. This is like a complete maze. I'll finish exploring it now, before I go down. Don't want to leave any stones unturned. Besides, I'll finish the boring stuff before venturing further...

Didn't like the winding passage between the stairs. Pulled out the pick-axe and dug a straighter one. Swept it clear of traps. Now I'll be able to travel between the stairs with the blindfold on continuously. Yea. That's much better....

Okay. I'll go get Phiona and the bag of holding...

With the traps discovered. It's safe for Phiona. She's sticking to me like glue. It seems; she avoids them once they're discovered. Start picking up all the items around the maze, and put them into the bag. Fed her a few monsters while I was ferrying booty back and forth. The neat stuff; that goes in the chest on the upstairs for now. The garbage; I stow in the large box on the downstairs. That done; I go see what lies below... Don't know where to set up camp yet...

Okay. I wait for her to be two squares away before going down. Can't take a chance that she'll be hurt by something immediately on the descent. She's frozen in time any ways. I'll be back for her again when I see what the situation is like on the next level...

**Dungeon Level 31**

Hmmm... Looks like another maze? Deep radar shows no teleportating monsters on the level. Change clothes. Cast clairvoyance. Looks like another maze (concern)...

Green dragon poison gas range has now been amended to 7... (Yea. I killed it with only 5 BDDD's.)

Half of the maze explored... Wonder if there are many more? Maybe I should have refreshed magic mapping...? Only one shot left in the spellbook, though. Hopefully I'll find the stairs soon. Then I'll take a quick look downstairs and see what's up...
... 

Nope. Found the stairs after 90% of the map already discovered (laugh - but not too much)... Take a look... Another maze! (groan) At this rate, It’s going to take me a week per level...

Hmmm...

I’ll keep exploring till the counter is at 150,000. If it’s just mazes, I’ll head back for base camp...

Finish exploring level. Cut straight path between stairs. Sweep for traps. Go upstairs for Phiona and the bag of holding...

Start amassing all the booty here. Among it is a copper wand. I have a good idea what this might be...

...

I’ve now transferred stuff to the chest and large box upstairs. Most notably; I left 80 poisoned elven arrows behind. Doesn’t seem like I need to be carrying all of them with me continuously...

Going to the downstairs. I’ll leave the bag there before going down. It’s just full of junk. I brought too much with me. I need a temporary base camp somewhere...

Alert!

Two monsters just materialized. Demi-lich from the east. Olog-hai from the west. Both closing. Caught between both. "T" junction just to my rear. I’ll retreat to there. Make a stand. Blow away the first one that gets in my line of fire. Then I’ll kill the other. Start heading towards my desired destination...

"?" within the junction. But I figure it’s probably just some kind of pudding or jelly. I’ll dispatch it quick. Just let me turn the corner and see what it is...

< It explodes in a kaleidoscope of light! You are freaked out! >

(groan). It was obviously an invisible black light. I’m now hallucinating. Phiona was at range three from the blast center. She’s not affected, I’m sure.

Two monsters have also suddenly appeared. Both within range three. But not in line of fire. The Maze helps sometimes, other times it hinders...

Decision time. Do I apply the unicorn horn? Or position myself into a better firing line? The second, so that I may fire on the immediate next round.

Hmmm... I’ll take a step...

Good choice! A monster had also stepped. Fire! Whatever it was: It went down. I’ll focus on the next...

Two steps later: Fire! It’s still standing. Damn. But what is this? Something else is now next to me!? Missed me. Thanks to my cloak. Can it be the demi-lich? Gawd. It might disintegrate something! Can’t take a chance. Zap wand of teleportation. I’m outa here...

Okay. Where am I? Uncontrolled teleports are tricky. You have to not hit any keys that cause a tick on the clock till you have located your picture again. My trick is to do the look ("!"). Then hit the direction keys. When you see the little square move on the map; you know that your picture is near by...

Something else is near me!? I don’t remember anything dangerous from before...? Nope. Don’t remember anything worse than a leocrotta. I have to concentrate on this thing. Don’t want to risk it being a black pudding or ochre jelly...
As long as the monsters are one at a time; hallucinating is okay. I haven’t met anything in a long
time that I can’t handle - one on one. Only problem here though; is that I’m not in an area that I’m
certain has been swept of traps... (much concern)
And I can’t be sure that I didn’t undergo a cursing attack either.... (more concern) That demi-lich
was within range 8 of me for a few rounds before. The unicorn horn may be the worst action to take
at this moment. It might give me another type of ill. Not something I need now...
I’ll stay this way for now. Hopefully it will wear off soon...
Whatever that was; it’s still standing. But I have something else near me again! Deep radar had
nothing showing in the vicinity that could move so fast. It either just got generated - or the demi-lich
is back...
I haven’t taken a step from my new position. Need to search first. Not sure if the area has been
properly swept. Can’t risk a polymorph trap - that would be disastrous now!
Another creature! Do the look... Both are invisible (!). No way the other one can also be of the lich
variety... (?). Well. I hope not (gulp). Fire!
Poison doesn’t affect it (!). Doesn’t mean it’s the demi-lich. But sure as hell makes it a good probability
(!).
BDDDD’s away!
< You throw 3 daggers named BDDDD. The 1st dagger named BDDDD hits the Borg! The 2nd dagger
named BDDDD hits the baby silver dragon! You kill the paper golem! The 3rd dagger named BDDDD
hits the marilith! >
Something died. The other one disappeared. It’s gone. Didn’t die. Just vanished from my immediate
vicinity. Must have been the demi-lich. I turn to handle the old assailant...
Killed it with poisoned arrows. Stepped back twice. Searched once between steps. Yes; Blind searching
does reveal traps. Known that for a while. However; that will be that for moving. I don’t dare step
back any more. That part of the maze has not been swept for traps. That - I am certain.
I have to get rid of that demi-lich. Can’t let it rampage around me like this. But first: Take a chance
- I have to see clearly...
Apply unicorn horn...
< Nothing seems to happen. >
Oh no (laugh!). I can’t help but laugh. I have a feeling that something unpleasant is going to happen
soon. Always does when you expecting something to work - AND THEN IT DOESN’T!
Bamf! Four monsters around me! Don’t ask me what they are. They could be kobolds like they can
be mumaks! I shake my head while laughing to myself. This has all the makings of: Turning into one
of those Nethack moments!!!

[begin flash from past]

Part 42: A Milestone Reached *(see 2.21 on page 212)*

To put it all in perspective, here’s what could potentially happen...
I’m sauntering through the dungeon. Happily mapping the levels. I meet, say, a lizard. I figure that
since it’s only a lizard, I’ll take this opportunity to practice the, oh let’s say, the rubber hose. Now I’m
next to it (the lizard). Just before I go to bonk it, it changes into a lich and disintegrates my cloak
of displacement. Yikes! It was a chameleon. I didn't check for that. Oh no. Since I have the rubber hose wiedled, I don't want to take an extra action to either exchange or wield something else. So: I step away from it, to line it up for some BDDD chucking. It has moved to either an off lined square, or teleportated. Now I can't kill it this round. It summons a horde of soldier ants around me. I throw some BDDD's at the nearest one. Four launch, the first two killing the soldier ant, the last two sailing on and hitting the peaceful ogre king in the distance. The ogre king gets angry and zaps a wand of create monster. One of the new monsters is a rust monster. And on, and on...

Yea. Your saying; maybe a little extreme of an example. Well, I beg to differ. In my experience - NOT IN NETHACK!!

[end flash from past]

Since this (one of those Nethack situations) is going to be happening... Yea... I have no doubt about it... Experience tells me that "logic playing", has to take a back seat to what I call; "impulse playing"...

I'm Gonna Cut Loose!

I make sure that the poisoned elven arrows are indeed quivered...

FIRE! FIRE! Message screen fills up. Multiple swipes at my displaced images. No hits came through.

Step. Turn. FIRE! Step. FIRE!

Creatures go down. A wand was zapped. Spells were cast. Swipes come my way. I always try to take a step after multiple misses show up on screen. Must make sure my cloak is always activated. Haven't seen any hits land on me yet (!).

I count the creatures. An extra one is beside me! No chances. BDDD's away!

<i> The dagger named BDDD hits the teenage mutant ninja turtle! The winter wolf misses. The balrog misses. The baby long worm misses. The kobold misses. The brown pudding misses. The pushmi-pullyu misses. >

Okay... Slow down. (pant, pant)

Which one of you is the invisible demi-lich again? Is it you...?

<i> @ a human or elf (invisible maggot) [seen: see invisible, infravision, telepathy] >

(scratch head)

Where's Phiona in all of this?

<i> You produce a normal whistling sound. >

<i> The invisible siren hits the nafeshnee. The invisible mountain centaur hits the yeti. The invisible fire elemental misses the hobbit. The steam vortex misses the invisible wumpus. The vampire hits the invisible demilich. >

Take a step...

<i> d. 3 daggers named BDDD. You fall through a hole! >

Aaaaah!

T:149161
3.7 Lord That Flies

Dungeon level 37

I dropped six levels! YEEESH! How come that fall didn’t kill me?
Hallucinations stopped on their own. Look at inventory...
Everything "seems" to be normal. But I take no chances. I exchange the blessed unicorn horn with the spare in the bag. Lucky I was in the process of ferrying it (the bag of holding), else I’d be in a fine barrel of pickles now (!).
Well. What’s happening in this area of hell? Activate deep radar...
Mmmm.... A few different pictures to check out...
Not only do these demons do physical damage with their claws and bite, but they are capable of using magic as well.
Okay. So then I better remember to kill, the likes of you, at range...
What’s this next picture all about...
The "lord of the flies" is a translation of the Hebrew Ba’alzevu (Beelzebub in Greek). It has been suggested that it was a mistranslation of a mistransliterated word which gave us this pungent and suggestive name of the Devil, a devil whose name suggests that he is devoted to decay, destruction, demoralization, hysteria and panic... [Notes on _Lord of the Flies_, by E. L. Epstein]
Suddenly; I realize who this is! My body stiffens in momentary shock.
It’s "Balls-the-Bull"! An arch-devil! He’s lawful/(evil)!
Take a moment to calm down...
Mmmm Hmmmm... I wonder if this is his ruling plane? Which level of the Nine Hells was it again? I’m on the eighth presently. That’s too deep, from what I remember, from the game that Nethack is not. He was around the sixth (I think)...? Wonder how the designers proportioned it (the nine planes of hell) in Nethack? He’s peaceful, at least, so I may be able to chat with him. Wonder if there’s an altar here, on this level?
Well... Let me see if I can find the stairs up first. That should be my first priority...
...
Gawd... This place is another maze!
...
Okay... Located the stairs. They’re all the way to the west. And it looks like just half of this level is a maze. The eastern part is more like a set area. Probably Baalzebub’s lair, or something...
What’s upstairs? I go take a look...

Dungeon level 36

Uh-oh... Cast clairvoyance... Mmmm... Another maze, it looks like...
Okay. Ponder...
I’m already at Baalzebub’s lair - I assume. May as well see what’s the story there, no? Maybe he has a nifty artifact. I try to remember what he carried on him... Can’t come up with it.
3.7. LORD THAT FLIES

Any way. He has to go; if not now - then eventually. I can’t let him keep on ruining the cosmos with his lawful ideals...
Yep: He’s gonna get wasted. I can’t let Mars see me leave any lawfhs alive. Even though Baalzebub is evil, he didn’t choose the right way to enforce (apply) his evilness...
When you think about it; there’s really no choice in the matter. Guess who the ’Glory of Arioch’ is? I better do something meaningful to uphold that title. Now I’m really glad I used one of my last scrolls of enchant weapon on ”Stormbringer”!
I have all my best stuff on me. Nothing stands up to me ’one on one’ anymore. This will be a good test to see how strong Ellora really is (!).
Okay. My mind is made up. I’m set in my approach. This is Hell. Any devil killed on these planes can’t come back - ever! He will be gone for good...
I’m going to slay Baalzebub!
Check all my screens... Make sure everything is in place... Okay Mars: Start paying attention... Back down I go...

Dungeon level 37

Cautiously; I’m making my way towards the arch-devil’s lair. I eventually choose the southern most route...
...
Mauve question mark... Sure is moving slow. Must be a pudding or something...
< The blast of poison gas whisss by you! >
!!
Hang on! If it were a green dragon, I would have detected it long ago! What kind of "?" has a poison gas breath attack? Stop and think...
(scratch head) I’m stumped. Can’t come up with anything right now...
Okaaay... When in doubt: #1. Shoot first. #2. Ask questions later!
Fire!
Silent seekers disappear into the darkness...
< You shoot 5 poisoned elven arrows. The 1st poisoned elven arrow hits it. The poison doesn’t seem to affect it. The 2nd poisoned elven arrow hits it. The poison doesn’t seem to affect it. The 3rd poisoned elven arrow hits it. The poison doesn’t seem to affect it. The 4th poisoned elven arrow hits it. The poison doesn’t seem to affect it. The 5th poisoned elven arrow hits it. The poison doesn’t seem to affect it. You destroy it! >
Hmmmm... No "!" showed up in the results. First time ever; that’s happened with my +7 elven arrows...
Since I destroyed. and didn’t kill it - it must be some kind of undead that I can’t detect telepathically. Also explain why poison didn’t affect it. See how I’m paying attention to things now (grin)?
Any way: That took care of the "shoot first" part. Now to walk over and see if it left a corpse...
Things that are here:

• an iron chain
• an iron chain
• an iron chain
• an iron chain
• an iron chain
• an iron chain
• an iron chain
• an iron chain
• an iron chain
• 2 fluorite stones
• 5 blessed poisoned +7 elven arrows

? 

(scratch head) What is this all about?

"/

"n"

"iron chain"

"You are fettered," said Scrooge, trembling. "Tell me why?" "I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?" Scrooge trembled more and more. "Or would you know," pursued the Ghost, "the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!" [ A Christmas Carol, by Charles Dickens ]

!!!

Look at that! I was "sure" that something in this game had to do with that story by Dickens! See Part 28 (2.7 on page 145).

Okay. So then these lenses (uncursed pair of lenses named Ebenezer Lich) maybe allow me to see ghosts and/or undeads better? Maybe improve my aim cause I can see into the ethereal plane!? There's some connection... Can't quite put my finger on it... I'll keep them on for a while then. Maybe something will come from it...

...

Hmmm... Dead end. And the pick-axe; won't let me dig deeper than one square into the walls... Okay. Turn back. I'll try it from the middle area. Was suspecting that I could sneak up on the arch-devil from a back door. But looks like my feeling was wrong... Wish I had magic mapping. Clairvoyance just don't quite cut it, in full maze areas...

...
3.7. LORD THAT FLIES

I'm making my way through the center portion of the map. Three vampires are due east. Behind a door...
I check it for traps, of course - ten times. None detected. Okay... Wait for them to move away a little...
Unlock it now...
< You hear a werewolf howling at the moon.>
Okay. Activate deep radar. Where is this thing?
Range 6 due west. I'll head back. No way am I leaving something behind my position when I'm about to confront something else...
Werewolf summoned wolves and winter wolves. Twelve in all...
No real problem. Was in tight quarters, but my cloak and spectacular armor class came through. Never took a hit. The frost blasts were really funny. They bounced off the walls and my amulet - hitting all the others. (he he) Easy fight. Even drew the blessed silver dagger (Yes; I did bless it. Have so much holy water now; that I was able to bless nearly everything on my 'things to be blessed' list.), and seared the werewolf a couple of times (evil laughter).
Eat a wolf corpse...
Back to hunting down Baalzebub...
Open door to vampire chamber...
Yikes! The vampire lord moved two squares in one action step!
< ... The vampire lord bites! Bye-bye level 16. >
DAMN IT! (<- I said worse things actually...)
I must have been half way to level 17. I've been killing big time monsters lately. Must've had a ton of experience points. That's why I was angry. I'm certain that when I kill this thing, that I'll go immediately back up, but just to the point of having reached level 16. All those other experience points are gone... (sad face)
That hurts... (sad, sad face)
...
Stop staring at the screen. Can't change what happened...
BDDD's away!
Hit him with four. He can't have hardly anything left.
A scowl forms on my face. I'm going to drive a stake into it's miserable heart.
Thrust with blessed silver dagger!
As expected: I destroyed him. Went right back up to level 16 too. Checked the box for broadswords in the skills screen, again...
Revenge did not satisfy me, though... All those experience points gone... (sniffle)
Killed the other two handily enough. The passage forks into two routes heading east. I'll try a southern approach again...
...
< You find a magic trap. >
No choice. Unless I turn around and try the northern approach; I have to step into it. Just lose a few points off of my power. (shrug) No big deal...
< A tower of flame erupts from the floor! You are uninjured. Somehow, your wooden shield is not affected. >

!!!
Lucky thing it's an elven shield. They must get better saving throws...
Step off the trap.
"SHIFT" + "^"
< That is a magic trap. >
(shake head) I dunno. I just dunno. Must have something to do with being on a different plane than the prime material one. Things maybe work differently here... (?)
Back to stalking Baalzebub...
Okay. I'm at a door. Just below his current position. Nobody's moving. He must be just sitting on his throne or something... Check for traps on the door - ten times. None are found.
Change clothes. Cast clairvoyance. Nothing is really revealed. Hmmmm. Change back into battle gear. Unlock, then slowly open the door... Nobody is moving - still and yet (!). Hmmmm...
Take a step to my left - out of his line of sight. Pull out pick-axe. Try some of this surrounding masonry work... Can't dig... Okay. That tells me a few things... Fine then. I'm up to this. Let's just put the pick-axe away then wield "Stormbringer"...
< You put a +0 pick-axe into the bag of holding. Your movements are now unencumbered. Baalzebub appears before you. Baalzebub demands 82 zorlminds for safe passage. >
WOAH! He moved three squares in one action step! He's super fast!
What is this with the "demanding" thing?! Who do you think you are? How dare you take such a tone - with the "Glory of Arioch" !?
"00"
< You refuse. Baalzebub gets angry... Baalzebub bites! >
No hit points lost.
Damn. I don't have the SMG in my proper hand. Haven't had the chance to wield "Stormbringer" then exchange yet...
Hmmmm... I need a couple of action steps before squaring off with him...
Zap wand of teleportation at the arch-devil.
Balls-the-Bull gone away. (he he)
Now to wield "Stormbringer"...
< Baalzebub bites! Baalzebub's bite was poisonous! The poison doesn't seem to affect you. Baalzebub stares piercingly at you! You stagger... >

HP:136 (137) Stun

Ali no... He must have teleportation ability...
BDDD's away!
One shot out - only! It went straight north. My target, and intended direction, was straight east! (laugh!)
Okay. This will be interesting. Fighting an arch devil while stunned, eh...?
BDDD’s away!
Three launched. My aim was true. All found their target.
Baalzebub did nothing (!). Fine by me...
BDDD’s away!
Four launched! My aim was true - again!. I’m getting good at fighting while stunned, I see. Just had recent experience doing this while hallucinating (wink). Maybe my experience level affects how well I can cope with it?
Four more hits on the arch-devil. Then Poof! He was gone?
Did I kill him? No result saying; "You kill Baalzebub!"... He must have teleported. Any way; I can’t believe that only 7 BDDD’s would kill him. Then again... I’ve slain; dragons, baculathiriumums, and purple worms with less... (shrug)
Two of Balls-the-Bull’s cronies on the move! Must be some of his minions from within his lair (?). Exchange. Apply unicorn horn. I feel steadier. Fire bursts from the SMG.
Killed the horned devil. The barbed devil teleported away before I could finish him off. Damn...
Okay. Where’s ol’ Baalzebub? Remove lich lenses. Activate deep radar...
He’s on the upstairs...? Awww - Geeze... I have to go all the way back there. Good thing I cleared the route. I’ll go finish him off right away. Can’t leave an angry arch-devil brooding now - can we?
Start making my way back to the stairs...
"Ballzy" is back! Standing right next to me!
BDDD’s away!
Two launched. Both hit. "Ballzy" is gone again...
Activate deep radar. He’s back at the stairs. Start walking there again...
Back at the magic / fire trap. I put all non-fireproofed and flammable items in the bag. Throw it beyond the trap. Take a breadth. Step into it... Phew! No flame strike this time.
...
Baalzebub and the barbed devil teleported next to me simultaneously!
< Baalzebub bites! >

HP: 136 (137)

Well, I’m really not impressed with this arch-devil (!).
< You throw 4 daggers called BDDD. The 1st dagger named BDDD hits Baazebub! The 2nd dagger named BDDD hits Baazebub! The 3rd dagger named BDDD hits Baazebub! The 4th dagger named BDDD hits Baazebub! The barbed devil hits! The barbed devil hits! The barbed devil just misses! >

HP: 134 (137)

I can live with that. BDDD’s away!
Ballzy absorbed two more. Then he split again.
I killed the barbed devil.
Keep heading for the stairs...

... Ballzy's back! Same trick(s) as before. This time I let him have a burst from the SMG though. He ate three supreme strikers. Ballzy ran (teleportated) away again...

Hrumph. What a big coward. "Lord of the Chickens". That should be his title. Not "Lord of the Flies". Though he does take flight when threatened... Wonder if I can name him that...? Nope. Same thing as when I tried that with Yeenooghu. Oh well. He'll soon be dead any way. I have an idea...

Remove ring of slow digestion. Put on ring of teleportation control. Exchange. Zap wand of teleportation (at me)...

SURPRISE BALLZY!
Smack Baalzebub with the 'Great Big Black Life-Stealing Sanguinary Battle-Blade'!
< You hit Baalzebub! Baalzebub bites! Baalzebub stares piercingly at you! You stagger... >

Hmmm... Didn't suck the life out of him... (?) At least I got the "!!" in the result...

Another one of his minions has appeared next to me. Baalzebub must have the summoning spell (from the game that nethack is not) as an innate ability. I seem to recall (remember) that now...

(groan) More delays...

Apply unicorn horn.
< You feel a bit steadier now... >

Good! I want to try that again. Just to make sure...

Hey Ballzy! Eat the 'Great Big Black Life-Stealing Sanguinary Battle-Blade'!
< You hit Baalzebub! The erinys misses. Baalzebub escapes upstairs! >

Oh no... (laugh + swing head back + roll eyes + shake head)

Go for coffee. Call one of my friends. Tell him about how an arch-devil is scared of me. Have a few chuckles.

Ellora is really great in her role! I'm very impressed. Okay: Back to arch-devil stalking...

Hmmm... What to do...? Kill the thing that looks like a drunken blue fryar? Or go get Balls-the-Bull upstairs?

"Stormbringer" ain't workin' too well on this guy. I better switch to the SMG...

Exchange.
I'll come back for the erinys later. I bound up the stairs...

Dungeon level 36
Poof! A red thing appears next to me! What is it? I do the look...
< You begin bashing monsters with your bow named SMG! You hit the barbed devil! The barbed devil misses. The barbed devil misses. The barbed devil misses. >

(laugh!) Must not have hit the ";" key hard enough. At least I got a "!!" result here, again (wink)!
Baalzebub must have called for more help. It won't do him any good. Only delay the inevitable...
3.8. *THE CLIMB*

Well, I can’t leave two things right next to both the stairs on both levels. I’ll more than likely have to come back this way again. Besides, I might have to retreat to the level below too... Not from Baalzeph - obviously. But in case a mindflayer or lich type should show up...

Kill the devil thing here. Next go downstairs...

**Dungeon level 37**

Kill the devil thing there.

Six action steps later; I’m back on the stairs.

**Dungeon level 36**

There he is... Due west... Range three... Quiver non-poisoned solar spinners...

Fire!

< You shoot 4 elven arrows. The 1st elven arrow hits Baalzeph! The 2nd elven arrow hits Baalzeph! The 3rd elven arrow hits Baalzeph! The 4th elven arrow hits Baalzeph! You kill Baalzeph! >

Ellora; Elven Archer - Instrument of Mars - Glory of Arioch - Slayer of Baalzeph.

T: 151156

### 3.8 The Climb

Mmmm... Baalzeph had no loot on him. What a disappointment.

I look at the time counter. Been away from Phiona an awful long time. I’d better get back. I’ll ransack his lair later. Still have a few levels to climb. Might take longer than expected... Like none of this was anticipated to begin with. Thanks to that demi-lich (scorn).

...

I’m trying to locate the upstairs. Nothing more. I don’t go out of my way to kill any monsters; unless they’re dangerous, or are in my way, of course. Lich types and mindflayer types are all that I presently fear. The latter, many times more, than the former...

...

Found them. Up I go...

**Dungeon level 35**

...

Damn... Another maze level... That’s it. I’m going to learn magic mapping again. When I find her; I’ll grab Phiona and head back to base camp - my main one.

...

Come on... Where are the stairs...?

...

Killed another of these wretched wraiths. This one left a corpse.
Hmmm... Can I tin it?
I try. Nope. Game won’t allow me. Although, I’m pretty sure that it will rot away by the time I get back; I picked it up and stuffed it into the bag of holding for Phiona...
...
The stairs! Yeeaaaa!
Up I go...

**Dungeon level 34**

< Asmodeus demands 125 zorkmids for safe passage. >

No time for anything. That’s what greeted me as soon as I ascended! Crap. Can’t do anything until I answer him... No; screen flicking. No; looking. No; what is. No - nothing! Double crap. I hate that. (grrr...)

Time to think...
Asmodeus, eh...? Oooh... I have lots of respect for the "Big A". He’s the Overlord of all the dukes of hell. Rules by both might and wit. Very handsome, extremely cunning. Once per year; he even commands all the other devils to attend his court and pay hommage to him! This guy is Mr. Egomaniac with a capitol E! He has a rod of absorption. It, also can do other nasty things. Like different dragon breath attacks. Nice artifact. I’d like to have it. But I’m in a real bad spot presently. If I only had two actions steps to look at my screens and do some things...
After having offed Baalzeph, I might consider taking him on too. After all; Baalzeph is the #2 arch devil. The only other bigger banana in the Nine Hells - is Asmodeus!
Ponder...
Okay. How much you want again? I’ll pay him off for now. If that keeps him quite for a few rounds - I’ll see what I’ll do next...
I gave him 139. An extra 14 zorkmids more than what he was asking. Maybe it’ll buy me an extra round. Kept 2 zorkmids for myself...
He’s gone!?
Activate deep radar... Gone from here completely (?). Must have gated to another plane. Okay. That solves my present dilema. I’ll off him later on. Back to trying to get back up - and out of here...
...
Devils and other monsters fall. Nothing stands in my way. Well... Not for very long any ways (wink). Progress is slow. Have to find stairs up, while not getting nailed by traps. I’ve discovered all kinds of traps down here. But, thankfully, haven’t stepped on one unintentionally.
...
The following gave me a little scare...
< You throw two daggers named BDDD. The 1st dagger named BDDD hits the ice devil! The 2nd dagger named BDDD hits the ice devil! The herzou hurls a potion of paralysis! The potion misses the ice devil. The jar crashes on your head and breaks into shards. Something seems to be holding you. The ice devil misses. The ice devil misses. The ice devil misses. The ice devil misses. The ice devil
3.8. **THE CLimb**

hits! The ice devil hits! The ice devil bites! The ice devil stings! You’re covered in frost! The frost doesn’t seem cold! You can move again. >

Paralysis was what scared me. Not so bad when an ice devil is next to you. But what if it would have been a mindflayer! Now I’m concerned...

...

< You hear a slurping sound. >

What’s that?

...

Found the stairs!

< You sense a faint wave of psychic energy. >

Oh no... I know what THAT means!

ALERT! Mindflayer alert!

Located it. It’s back the way I came. Near the room where the ’Big A’ accosted me...

I’m going back. Can’t let this thing live. I know where it is now. I’ll kill it while I do. That way, it will be done.

Gawd... (shudder) I absolutely hate these things...

...

We’re now both in the same room. If you want to call it that. It spans for like half the level. Only three squares wide. But like 30 long...

A little later on...

< The mindflayer concentrates. You sense a faint wave of psychic energy. >

Look at my status screen. Not stunned or confused. Good thing that they haven’t incorporated psionics in Nethack. Else I’d be toast now!

Range is 15... Just have to close for two more...

A Scrooge picture appears out of thin air next to me!

< The master lich strikes at your displaced image and misses you! The master lich casts a spell at thin air! >

Holy Crap! Step away! Must re-activate the cloak immediately!

It keeps pace with me!

< The master lich misses. The master lich points all around and curses. >

It’s trying to curse my stuff!

F*** You - vile thing! BDDD’s away!

< You throw 3 daggers named BDDD. The 1st dagger named BDDD hits the master lich! The 2nd dagger named BDDD hits the master lich! The 3rd dagger named BDDD hits the master lich! >

Still there? BDDD’s away!

< You throw 2 daggers named BDDD. The 1st dagger named BDDD hits the master lich! The 2nd dagger named BDDD hits the master lich! >

It’s gone!

Where’s the mindflayer?
Range 13!
Fire!
| You shoot 5 poisoned elven arrows. The 1st poisoned elven arrow hits the mindflayer! The 2nd poisoned elven arrow hits the mindflayer! The poison was deadly... |
Good friggin' ridance.
Where's the master lich? Activate deep radar...
It's way over in the west!? Why did it go that far? Usually they run only to a range of about 8 or so...?
Go pick up my arrows...
Start heading for the stairs...
...
Every so often, I stop and check to see where that master lich is. What's the story? Did it fall into a pit or something? Why hasn't it come back to hassle me?
...
Guess what? I'm nearly upon it...
BDDD's away! Three launched. All hit.
It's just sitting there? So be it: BDDD's away!
| You throw 2 daggers named BDDD. The 1st dagger named BDDD hits the master lich! The 2nd dagger named BDDD hits the master lich! The master lich escapes upstairs! |
Oh no you don't!
Step (auto pickup gets me 5 BDDD's). Step. "SHIFT" + "<"
There he is. Right next to me. BDDD's away!
| You destroy the master lich! The master lich's body crumbles to dust. |
The hell with you! I take a step forward and spit on it's remains. Try and curse my stuff, eh? That will teach you... Didn't even leave any booty.
Now I carefully go over my inventory - again (grumble). It's like the fifth time I do a complete cursing check with all my stuff (mumble grumble). Ever since I took that fall (see Part 58 (3.6 on page 323))...

**Dungeon level 33**

Some kind of bog...? Lots of water... I betcha the stairs are on the other side of the map... I'll head straight for there, instead of exploring on this end...
...
All kinds of jellies and puddings here...
...
| It looks rather kind of muddy down there. |
...
The oil lamp is handy in this area. Not like in the maze levels...
...
3.8. THE CLIMB

Oh yuch! Green slime. How nice that they’ve included this in this game - not!

... 
I’m just hovering around... Looking for the stairs up... Only landing to pick up some selected potions...
Oil, gain energy, and booze - of course (wink)...

...
Rust monster a ways away. But he’s on another island. No problem, he can’t get to me. I land to pick up a potion of gain energy. At the same time, I’m feeding some lemurs to "Stormbringer".

Suddenly: Rust monster moving in on me fast!

!!!
Rust monsters can walk on water!?

Damn, I’m caught off gaurd. Don’t have the SMG wielded...

Crap! These things are super fast! Won’t have time to exchange before it’s on top of me. Plus: I don’t want to overshoot and have any of my arrows go into the water...

What if I throw them manually? Maybe the poison will work any ways...

< The poisoned elven arrow hits the rust monster! >

At least I recieved a "!" at the end of the sentence!

< The poisoned elven arrow hits the rust monster! The lemure misses! The rust monster misses. The rust monster misses. >

Okay. Melee range.

< The black blade draws the life from the rust monster! Your Stormbringer is not affected. The rust monster touches you! Your cloak is not affected. The rust monster misses. >

Phew... I was worried for my oil lamp. It’s not rustproofed (!).

< The black blade draws the life from the rust monster! You kill the rust monster! Your Stormbringer is not affected. >

Turn.

< The black blade draws the life from the lemure! You kill the lemure! >

Lunch time.

< The rust monster corpse tastes terrible! You finish eating the rust monster corpse. >

...
As suspected, the upstairs was on the other side. Now fix everything up in my inventory... And up we go...

Dungeon level 32

Deep radar on... Is that the demi-lich from before (See Part 58 (3.6 on page 323))? It’s not invisible, though... Not moving either... Hmmm...


Cast detect treasure. Yes! It is the same demi-lich from before. It has a wand of digging.

Okay... I have an appointment with this thing. That's what caused me all these problems in the first place... I go to hunting mode. This is my specialty. Being a Ranger and all...

... I'm nearly upon it, through this maze. Funny. It's not moving at all? Range is three. BDDD's away!
No result from my attack?! Did I miss? Can't be: I never miss! Do the look (",""")...
It's stuck in a spiked pit!
HAR HAR!
I'm going to bonk it on the head while it's helpless with "Stormbringer"...
I march up to it...
BONK!
< The demi lich casts a spell! The demilich becomes transparent! >
Yea. Like that's gonna save you...
BONK!
< The demilich zaps a wand of digging! The demilich has escaped through a hole! >
Awww no! Not again! Quickly, I step forward to follow it.
< There's a gapping hole here! >

**Dungeon level 34**

Put on deep radar. It's not here. Damn...
Have to look for it on the way back up... Again!!!

**Dungeon level 33**

There he is! On the island with the upstairs!
Sneaking up on him... What's the story with these lich types and sitting on stairs...?
Throw 3 BDDD's...
< You hear a nearby zap. You hear something crash through the floor. >
Oh man. Is that demilich ever smart or what?
Screw it. I'll get him later. Just make a note that he's below level 33...
Pick up BDDD's. Up the stairs again...

**Dungeon level 32**

Lich picture range 5! Do the look...
It's peaceful (!).
Good. One less to worry about...
It teleports next to me!
Hmmm...
"#chat"
3.8. THE CLimb

< The arch lich mumbles incomprehensibly. >
Hmm... Must come from the same school as Manfred did...
Whoops! The arch lich is gone. Its picture has been replaced by one of a carnivorous ape!
Must be a chameleon... (?)
Can’t let something like that live. The Mazes of Menace are confusing enough as is, without having
this thing changing to whatever monster it fancies all the time...
BDDD’s away!
...
Making my way towards the upstairs...
Suddenly the message screen fills up!
< The bone devil zaps a wand of magic missile! The magic missile hits the bone devil! The magic
missile hits you! But it reflects from your medallion! The magic missile hits the bone devil! The bone
devil zaps a wand of magic missile! The magic missile hits the bone devil! The magic missile hits you!
But it reflects from your medallion! The magic missile hits the bone devil! The bone devil misses.
The bone devil misses. >
Notice the "!'"'s?
...
A little later on; I killed a baculathrium with one shot - poison.
...
Just killed something. I’m just about to step forward. In order to pick up my pile of arrows. When...
< Really? Attack the arch lich? >
Whaaaaa...? What is this thing doing here? And since when do I get an option? Unless it’s friendly
(?). Do the look...
Yep it is... What’s the story?
"#chat"
< The arch lich mumbles incomprehensibly. >
Mmmmkay... I’m going to give you a name. Cause I don’t want to mistake you with anything else.
What’s the story with all these lich types? It’s a regular infestation down here...
I named it. Then...
It cast a spell! It’s suddenly moving faster!
It’s turned into a fire elemental!
(shake head) It’s a conspiracy - I tell you. Something is trying to confuse me...
BDDD’s away!
Four launched! It died.
...
Dungeon level 31

< The tripe ration misses the invisible Phiona. The invisible Phiona misses. The invisible Phiona
misses. The invisible Phiona misses. >
(sad face) My pet panther don’t recognize me no more... (sad face)
I lead her to a "j" hook in the maze. Then I give her the slip. I’ll be back for her when I can get my
hands on another scroll of charm monster...
Cast detect treasure... Ah-ha!
I go collect my BDDD’s and arrows from the previous battle (see Part 58 (3.6 on page 323)). Yep,
There certainly is a gaping hole here...

Dungeon level 30
Shift through my junk between the three containers. I’m leaving 80 poisoned elven arrows behind.
Other stuff too. No use lugging those back up with me. I’ll only be bringing them back any way...

The Valley of the Dead
I’m out of Gehennom! Puh - hoouie! What a place. Feels good to be back where things behave
normally!
Just have a bunch of monsters to blow through here... There’s like three monster generators on this
level. Too bad there’s something wrong; with trying to convert that altar of Moloch, to one of Mars.
I could be offering him lots of creatures...

Titan’s level
When burdened and traveling over ice; you tend to slip and/or trip over your own feet a lot... (laugh!)

Base Camp level 24
I can hardly wait to crash... Been a long climb back to here...
Bone devil? Never saw something like this, this high up in the Mazes of Menace? Killed it.
I’m at the altar. Drop bag of holding. Start taking off my armor. I’m going to be doing a full
cursedness check on all my items...
Grey dragon! Darn. Cursedness test will have to wait for now. I start putting my armor back on...
Coming from the west. Down the long corridor. Range is 8. Too close to take a chance. I’ll have to
catch it when it enteres the room. Quiver poisoned arrows.
Zwing!
A mauve beam blows by - just one square to the south of me!
Looked like what a wand of magic missiles shoots...
It’s in the room now. I’m going to line it up...
< The gray dragon breathes fragments! The blast of missiles whizzes by you! >
Wow!
Hmmm...
Doesn’t seem to be too good at hitting me. Maybe it’s breadth is a narrow arc - not area affect.
Wonder if I can kill it on the altar? I’ll try...
3.9. POLYMORPHING PLEASURE!

It breathed beside me again!
...
Breath weapon bounces off walls, and gets absorbed by closed doors.
...
Seven breadth attacks total before I killed it. I did manage to get it to collapse on the altar though. Never got hit once. Not even when I was at range two! These guys are easy.
Okay. I’m tired. Time to save the game.
Grab a potion of booze from the "Fridge"...
Walk back to altar... Quaff and pass out...
T:153879

3.9 Polymorphing Pleasure!

First: The big news...
I went to see one of my old friends and borrowed both; the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Monster Manual (1977), and the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Players Handbook (1978), off of him.
I scour through these now... Yes...
It’s starting to all come back to me now...

Baluchitherium: At least I now know how to spell it (laugh!).

Black Pudding: Dissolve wood and metal. Special defenses against; blows, cold, and lightning.

Cockatrice: Touch turns to stone. Their petrification aura extends into both the astral and ethereal planes. Good thing to know; as I have to find a high altar on the astral plane.

Couatl: Lawful / good. Hmmm...

Demons: Demogorgon, Jublex, Manes, Orcus, Succubi, Type I to Type VI, Yeengo. All are chaotic / evil. I’ll have to see if they carry amulets...

Devils: Asmodeus, Baalzebul, Barbed, Bone, Displacer, Erinyes, Geryon, Horned, Ice, Lemure, Pit Fiend. These are lawful / evil. Good thing I dispatched Baalzebul already (big grin)...

Dragon: Black = acid. Blue = lightning. Brass = sleep / fear. Bronze = lightning bolt / repulsion gas. Copper = acid / slow gas. Gold = fire / chlorine gas. Green = poison gas. Red = fire. Silver = cone of cold / paralysis. All the more reason NOT to get hit by breadth attacks...

Ghost: Good thing Nethack hasn’t carried over their special attacks...

Leprechaun: Have a great fondness for wine, and this weakness may be used to outwit them. I’ll try throwing a potion of booze at the next one I see...

Lich: Their touch is so cold as to cause 1 - 10 points of damage and paralyze opponents who fail to make their saving throw. All liches are able to use magic appropriate to the level they had attained prior to becoming non-human. These guys are annoying and dangerous...
Mind Flayer: The mind flayer’s physical attack is by striking a victim with its four tentacles. If a tentacle hits it will reach the opponent’s brain in 1 - 4 melee rounds and draw it forth, immediately killing the creature. The mind flayer then devours the brain. Its more feared attack mode, however, is the mind blast of psionic power. Yuch. I have to genocide their species...

Nightmare: I hope Nethack has some of these. I might try to tame one and use my saddle on it...

Nymph: If the nymph is nude or disrobes, an onlooker will die unless a saving throw versus magic is successful.

Owlbear: The horrible owlbear is probably the result of genetic experimentation by some insane wizard.

Purple Worm: Any creature swallowed will be dead in 6 melee rounds.

Stirge: I forgot all about these things. They’re really, really dangerous. They would be a good creature to implement into Nethack...

Titan: Lots of information on these guys. Too much for me to type out...

Will-O-(The)-Wisp: Another extremely dangerous creature that I haven’t encountered in Nethack...

Weight And Damage By Weapon Type: Finally. I have a reliable reference...

...

I’m really curious about something...

That hallucinating battle (see part 58 (3.6 on page 323)) had some really funny moments in it. It’s too bad I hadn’t copied all the sequences for you all. It gave me a lot of chuckles.

Since I’m in a relatively secure environment, being at base camp here, I want to see some thing...

Quaff potion of hallucination...

Offer grey dragon to Mars...

< Your sacrifice sprouts wings and a propeller and roars away! You realize that the gods are not like you and I. >

(Laugh so much I nearly fell out of my chair!)

Oh wow... That’s really deep... I better write that down. It’ll make great lyrics for a song!

Have some gray dragon scales now. I’ll get them appraised at Chibougmanu’s shop, next trip I make there...

Hmmm... For some reason my power is now at 153? Don’t ask me how, or when, I lost some...?

One of my unicorn horns was uncursed and so was my elven mithril-coat. I bless those up now... Damn liches (grumble)... 

Now I start organizing everything...

Picked up a few new things from that trip in Gehennom. Here’s the neat stuff that I identified:

- a wand of polymorph (0:4)
- a magic marker (0:43)
3.9. POLYMORPHING PLEASURE!

- an uncursed bell
- an uncursed +0 pair of fumble boots
- 10 +1 shuriken
- an uncursed credit card

Organizing the bag of holding... I have too much junk I never use in here... Lots of loot to be brought back up from Hell. I'll need to lighten the load...

The luckstone and the blessed sling doesn't make any sense to be carrying any more. I've now realized that a titan is way bigger than "Goliath". So one-shot-to-fall won't work on these. Unless it works on giants...? (shrug) I have way more adequate missile weapons, any way.

Just keep a few kelp fronds as spare food. They don't seem to weigh much. And when I kill something now - it's usually a big thing. So finding food is no longer a problem...

Monster generator is continually sending nuisances my way. While I'm doing the organizing, I try different things on some monsters - like my simply spectacular elven arrows (!).

Poison doesn't seem to affect cockatrices...

Fire giant - one shot - deadly poison...

Okay... Most of the stuff has been classified. Now I'll try out this wand of polymorph. Just like what I read in the guide recently. But first; I need to know its range.

I line up 36 pieces of redundant junk on the floor. Three wide by twelve deep. Have to know if it has a narrow beam, or if it's area effect. Only have a few charges, so I'd better make them count...

Zap!

Hmmm... Okay; it has a range of six, and it's linear. Good to know. My subsequent zaps will take this into consideration for maximum effect(s).

But meanwhile... I have transformed some items into some really nifty ones!!

A +2 ring of increase damage! And a stethoscope!

WOW-WEEN!!

Both of these are extremely handy. The stethoscope probably the most. These things are great. I'll be able to see exactly how much damage I cause to different monsters now (big grin). This will finally solve a few questions I've been asking myself - like for nearly the whole game! It gives the; armor class, the level, and the number of hit points for different creatures. As well as, if there's anything special about them; like if they're peaceful, fast, asleep, etc.

Oh goodie, goodie, goodie...

< Talking to yourself is a bad habit for a dungeoneer... >

Okay. It's just that - I'm so excited (laugh)!

All right. Now for the gargantuan task of lining up all my junk in six piles...

...

Two hours it took me. But I have only three charges left. Have to make them count...

Zap!
Something weird happened. Heard some rumbling sounds. Then a wood golem materialized! It died in one salvo of BDDD’s, of course. But that was strange - none the less...

Any way...

LOOK AT ALL THE NEAT STUFF I DISCOVERED ROOTING THROUGH THE NEWLY TRANSFORMED PILES!!

- 26 silver daggers
- 8 slippery cloaks
- 4 aprons
- 6 robes
- 2 gauntlets of dexterity
- 3 pairs of speed boots
- 6 hawaiian shirts
- 128 silver arrows
- 200 elven arrows
- 18 bamboo arrows (?)
- 80 shuriken
- 3 magic markers
- 13 scrolls of enchant armor
- 12 scrolls of charging

Lots - and I mean lots - of other stuff too! But those are the ones that stood out immediately!

The large box; that contained all of my negatively enchanted missiles, all the rusty and corroded weapons and armor, and the multitudes of worthless pieces of glass - got transformed into a tin opener (laugh!)! That must be one heavy and expensive tool! I’ll bring it to be appraised at Chibougamanu’s shop...

Two charges left. But all theses scrolls of charging effectively give me a bunch more...

Next will be spellbooks, amulets, rings, wands, and the rest of all the tools. But first; I want to have a lot of this newly transformed stuff appraised. I’m curious about what their prices are. I’ll also update my lists...

Man. This wand of polymorph is the best thing that’s recently happened to me! It might be even better than another wand of wishing!

My mind races. There are different things I want to do / try now, or in the near future...

- Charm a horsie. So that I can try this saddle.
• Bankrupt shopkeepers with the credit card. Although, money is no longer a problem - like it never really was...

• Transform some more scrolls and get some of genocide. I'm going to kill the mindflayer and the spider species.

• Figure out why my BDDD's are better against certain monsters than the poisoned +7 elven arrows. Same with "Stormbringer". This is where the stethoscope will come in handy.

• Enchant all my armor to as high as it can go.

Okay... Calm down... Let's take this one step at a time...
I have other huge piles of stuff. Mainly at Fort Ludious, and base camp level 4. I'll zap those too. See what comes from those. I'll also load up with some items. Get them appraised for now. Do things systematically. Okay. Start loading the bag of holding...
Now I'm going to head upwards in the Mazes of Menace. Making my way towards the stairs...
p43# & *$TJ euf %$!8gt 537CMRL:KA, p3m4quyn'.opc *
T:155000 (approximate)

3.10 Oblivion

I was playing the game when my cat, Mademoiselle, jumped up into my lap, then onto the keyboard (again, as she had done on a prior occasion)... She stepped on my fingers, which depressed keys, as well as, keys were pressed with her paws...
Windows flashed in and out, on and off, opened and closed...
When I got her off, which only took a second or two - the game was closed (!)... I tried to re-initiate the game...
But it brought me to the character creation process, instead of opening to the place where she (Ellora) last was...
I got out of that, and went to see if I could find the Ellora save file in the folder with the game...
I'm afraid that the game is gone. I don't see the "Ellora save file" in the Nethack folder any more (sad face)... I immediately contacted three of Ellora's closest technical advisors. Explaining what had happened, and asking if there was a way to salvage anything, I had also left my computer on 24/7 - just in case there was something I could do to recover (reconstruct) the missing information.
Upon their suggestions, I started another (random) game, and immediately quit. The following showed up on the final screen...

No Points Name Hp [max]
1 1710837 Ellora-Ran-Elf-Fem-Cha quit in The Dungeons of Doom on level 24 [max 37]. 142 [142]
CHAPTER 3. BOOK 3

So then; the incident with my cat, had caused the "#Quit" command to be activated somehow. Things looked pretty bad.

After a couple of days of the computer staying on 24/7; the system finally locked up. No way, was I able to do anything with it. I finally was forced to reboot it...

As was told by one of Ellora's friends: "The Random Nethack God sent you a deadly creature! 8-|

It sure did. It goes by the name of "Mademoiselle". I will see if I can get a picture of this monster, and send it to Boudewijn for his site where the material to the story is being collected...

While talking about that, and to answer a question I sometimes get; I have no idea how he collects and puts up the different parts to the story. I don't send the posts of the Ellora story to him directly.

It had even happened in the past, that I've posted something at Google Groups, and it appeared on his site, hours before I could see my post on Google (!).

I know how much, and how closely, people have been following the 'Saga of Ellora'. In anticipation of a few questions; here are what my intentions were before the incident...

What I was planning to do with Ellora:

- Get the newly discovered, as well as some of the newly polymorphed items, appraised at Chibougamau's general store on level 21 of the Mazes of Menace.
- Discover why my BDDDD's were better against certain monsters than my enhanced elven arrows. Same goes with "Stormbringer". The stethoscope would prove invaluable here.
- Switch to a shield of reflection, keeping it on at all times. I could use all my regular weapons the same, except for the spetum - which I was starting to use less and less. The amulet would have probably been switched to one of life saving.
- Enchant up all my armor evenly to +5 (the highest I've seen). Then see how high my elven mithril-coat would go. Then start enchanting the rest of my armor till I ran out of scrolls.
- Polymorph scrolls until I got some of genocide. Kill the mindflayer and the spider species.
- Polymorph wands till I got a few of; death, and polymorph. Maybe one of wishing too. Although I have a feeling that these won't come about.
- Polymorph spellbooks till I got an extra one of; Magic Mapping, and Identify.
- Write (depending on how the polymorphing went) a few scrolls of Scare Monster, then bless them. When dropped in one spot, most monsters won't attack me in melee combat. Handy against liches and mindflayers.
- Write (depending on how the polymorphing went) a few scrolls of Enchant Weapon. Enchant up "Stormbringer" as high as it would go. Enchant the silver arrows and silver daggers. These "sear the flesh" of more and more creatures that I'm encountering now. The stethoscope would have told me how much more this worked.
- Depending on the tactical situation: Alternate between the rings of; slow digestion, warning, and +2 increase damage.
- If encountered in the game, I would slay the following; Asmodeus, Baalzebul (probably already done), Dispater, Geryon, Tiamat. Any other creature judged to be "lawful" would also be slain.
3.10. OBLIVION

There may very well be a discussion, that will ensue in the thread, on whether Ellora was going to
ascend or not. I’ve been informed (in the past) that some of you were discussing (in code) on how she
would die.

I don’t want to discourage any of this. In fact, I’m well aware that; it is in human nature to be curious
and/or wonder how something (will) turns out.

Should some of you wish to pursue this: I would very much appreciate it, if people could maybe start
another thread(s) on this subject. I will be monitoring the Ellora thread(s) for a little while yet, and
still do not wish to have any game secrets posted here.

I will gladly answer any questions concerning the ’Saga of Ellora the Elven Archer’. But please; word
them in such a way as not to provoke anything that I may consider to be spoilish.

One question I can answer immediately: I will play another character in Nethack, but will not be
writing another story (see prologue to Book 3 for further information). I may give a report on how
things turn out, though...

I would like to thank all the people that communicated with me during the time I was writing the
Ellora Saga.

I must say that: I was very much impressed by the; response, enthusiasm, and affection towards Ellora,
that I received from (all of you) the readership. Up to this point in time - from 16 different countries
around the world!

I encourage many of you that contacted me by e-mail, to start posting in the news group at r.g.r.n.!
There are so many of you that read this. Don’t hide in obscurity! The Nethack community could
certainly benefit from all of your input (smile).

Special thanks go to three people: Boudewijn Waijers, Dylan O’Donnell, Janis Papanagnou. For their;
technical assistance, constant encouragement, and undying loyalty in helping to preserve the integrity
of the story.

Last, but far from being least, I’d like to thank the Development Team responsible for the game of
Nethack. For making such a wonderful product, that so many people enjoy and derive satisfaction
from playing. (Two big thumbs up!)

Sincere Regards,

Kryisia’s Krusader