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An introduction to
the wonderful world of

HACK

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Edited into human-readable form
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[When I received this, it was suffering badly from line-wraps, misplaced tabs, typos, bad grammar, misspellings, etc. I have now cleaned up as much as I can of it. It's not perfect, but it's better. Although I have edited the context freely, the content as originally posted is unchanged, with the exception of one place which contained data which I know to be incorrect for all versions: It was stated that nothing bad would happen if you prayed at the wrong time. This has been corrected. I have also added some new data to reflect changes in the latest release of NetHack. Any other comments of my own are in brackets, like this, with my initials, like this. -PG]

[My contribution has been to reformat into MS-Word (from the original text file) and add whatever information, comments and recommendations I can. All such addendums are initialed. - SY]

[With the 2.3 mods we received two spoiler files. These files have been edited into a format which matches the original version of this document.]

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CHAPTER 1: What is Hack?

"Toto, I don't think we're in Kansas anymore."
                                        — Dorothy

Hack is a single-player, interactive fantasy game in which you play a mighty hero, determined to recover the powerful Amulet of Yendor. This task will not be easy, however. During your quest, you will journey deep into the earth, battle strange and ferocious creatures, be blinded, confused and encounter deadly traps. And, perhaps worst of all, you will slowly starve. Have no fear, however. Although an unending horde may assail you, and you are a weakling at the start of your trek, you have the potential to far surpass all of your mightiest enemies. As you defeat your foes, you will become more powerful, learn how to fight better, and increase your stamina. You will also find many items, some ordinary, while others have great powers. In addition, you are not quite alone. You will find shops which can sell you useful items. And what fool would adventure without a faithful watchdog beside him. But beware! The gods frown upon those who turn against their allies. Here begins your journey into a new and exciting world... the world of HACK.

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CHAPTER 2: A brief introduction to the game of Hack.

The first step is to run the game itself. Type hack (or whatever the name of your version is), and press return. The first thing which will happen is that it will welcome you to the game, and ask you what type of character you wish to play. For now, we will play a Caveman. Type "c" to indicate this to the program. After a few moments, the game will start. You will see something like this:

Your Command ?

```
 ------------
 |..........|
 |...@......|
 +.d........|
 |..........|
 |.....+....|
 ----+-------
```

AC 7   Str 18 Hp 12(12) Exp: 0 Level: 1

You are the "@" symbol. What you see is a single room in the Dungeon of Doom. The dungeon is divided into many "levels." Most levels consist of up to nine rooms connected by a twisting passageways. The "." are simply empty places on the floor of the room. The "-" and "|" symbols are the walls of the room. The "+" symbols represent doorways leading out of the room. Finally, the "d" symbol is your faithful dog. Don't worry yet about the information on the bottom of the screen. The "Your Command?" at the top of the screen indicates that the program is waiting for you to give it a command. In Hack, the world literally waits on your command. Until you type in something for it to do, NOTHING will happen during the game. This means that you can leave the computer, eat lunch, and come back, and the game will be exactly as you left it. (Note: The command prompt is not always as it appears above.) Basically, if nothing is happening on the screen, the program is waiting for you to give it a command. Let's move the character one space to the left. Movement is performed by typing the key (make sure your caps lock is off) which corresponds to the direction you want to go in.

The direction keys are:

```
     y  k  u
      \ | /
     h- @ -l
      / | \
     b  j  n
```

This means that if you type "h", the "@" will move one space to the left. If you type "u", the "@" will move diagonally up and to the right one space. So to move to the left one space, we type "h". The room now looks something like this:

```
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 |.....|
 |..@<.|
 +..d..|
 |.....|
 |.....+
 ----+--
```

Notice that not only have you moved one space to the left, but the dog has moved one space to the right. The dog's movements are controlled by the program, and he will move when all the other computer controlled people (and monsters) move. The "<" symbol is the way out of the dungeon. "<" represents a set of stairs which go up to the previous level. If you leave the dungeon, then the game ends. Similarly, the ">" symbol represents stairs going to the next level. To climb or descend the stairs, type the stair symbol you are on. That is, to climb up, type "<". To go down, type ">". Once you have moved

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a few times, you should have the idea of how basic movement works in Hack. Now to deal with other things. Type "i". You now see a list of objects. It will look something like this:

       (a) +1 Club (weapon in hand)
       (b) +1 Bow
       (c) 43 +0 arrows
       (d) +0 Leather armor (being worn)

The "i" command stands for "Inventory." The list of objects is the list of items in your possession. Most items will be carried in your characters "back-pack." Those that are not, such as the club in the above example, are indicated in your inventory. "Weapon in hand" means that your character is holding that item in his hand. If he attacks a creature, he will hit it with this weapon. "being worn" means the character is wearing that item. In particular, the character will wear armor to protect himself from damage. You may have seen symbols in the room other than the ones discussed. The general rule is: if a symbol is a letter, then it is a creature. Otherwise, it is an object. There are exceptions to both parts of the rule, however, so be careful. To see a list of all the object symbols, type "?". This will send you into the help subroutine. If the program asks you "Long or Short help?" type "s" for now. A list of all the objects and commands will be printed on the screen. Read them carefully, and follow the prompts. The long help contains information on how to play hack. It is strongly recommended that you read this also. To pick up an item, you simply walk over it. When this occurs, you will automatically attempt to pick up the item. Be aware, however, that items are not weightless, and so you may find yourself unable to pick up an item because it weighs to much. To move onto a space without picking up an item, type "m", and then the direction you wish to move. If there is something on the space you are on, you may look at it by typing ":". [In some versions, you can also set your "pickup" option on or off by typing the "@" symbol. This is very useful if there are a lot of items around that you don't want to pick up. -PG] The last thing which will be covered is combat. Let's say that you have been wandering about for a little while, and you have found a monster. The monster appears as a symbol on the map, just like the little dog. Combat in hack is very simple. There are three ways that you can fight a monster:

    1)   You can bash it with your weapon.
    2)   You can throw or shoot something at it.
    3)   You can zap it with a wand, or cast a spell at it.
           (Spells are only used in nethack.)

To accomplish 1), you simply attempt to move into the space the monster is currently in. So, for example, if the creature is one space to the left of your character, and you type "h", you will attack it. Likewise, monsters attack you by moving into your space. For 2), you must have something to throw. You can throw anything, but it is strongly recommended that you use a weapon if you want to do damage to the creature. To throw an object in your inventory, type "t". The game now asks what object you wish to throw. To see your inventory, type "*". To see the weapons in your inventory, type "?". Once you have decided what to throw, type the objects letter, and then the direction you wish to throw it in. You will now (hopefully) hit the monster with whatever you threw. To use a bow and arrows for maximum effect, you must be wield the bow, and then "throw" an arrow. To wield a different weapon, type "w", and then the letter of the object you wish to wield. Be careful that you are not bashing a creature with your bow, as this is not very effective. The same applies for slings and rocks. [And crossbows and bolts. -PG] For 3), the procedure is similar to 2). Type "z" (for zap), and the letter of the wand you wish to use. If the program now prompts you to type a direction, then type the direction you want to blast in. There are three basic effects possible when zapping a wand:

  1) The wand has no direction, and simply does something.
      Example: When a wand of light is zapped, it will light up the room.

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2) The wand affects whatever is in the given direction.
   Example: A wand of slow monster will slow down any monster it is zapped at.
3) The wand shoots a "ray" or "bolt" in the given direction. It will try to hit any creature in its path, and may bounce off of walls and doors. BE CAREFUL! It is very easy to bounce such a blast into yourself.
   Example: A wand of fire shoots a bolt of fire in the indicated direction. Note that you may throw or zap in any direction (including up (<) or down(>)) that you may move in.

When you attack a creature (or are attacked by one), if the attack hits damage is done by the attacker. This damage is represented as hit points, or HP for short. Every creature, including yourself, has a certain number of these hit points. When you take damage, you will lose a certain number of them. The greater the damage, the more hit points you will lose. If a creature is reduced to less than one hit point, it dies. Hence, ALWAYS BE AWARE OF HOW MANY HIT POINTS YOU HAVE LEFT, because if you lose them them all, the game is over, and you have lost. The amount of HP's damage that is done depends on a number of different factors, such as what weapon you are wielding and what your current strength. Your strength is the number listed after "STR" on the bottom of the screen. This is discussed later on, and you do not have to worry to much about it to start. Any attack has a percent chance to hit which depends on a few key statistics. The first of these is the armor class of the defender, or AC for short. This number ranges (usually) from 10 to -10. It may go higher or lower depending on the circumstances. In particular, armor classes for a winning character very often do go below -10. The lower the number, the better the chance that any attack on that defender will miss. The second factor is the "level" of the attacker. Your level is listed on the bottom of the screen. Initially it is 1, but it will rise as you kill monsters. For every monster you kill, you will be awarded points, called experience points (EXP). Your level is directly determined by the number of EXP you possess. In addition, your hit points will increase every time you go up a level as well. The final factor is a vague factor known as luck. The program will not tell you what your luck is, but it is used in many factors of the game. Basically, the higher your luck, the better you are at doing almost everything. There are ways to modify your luck, which are up to you to find. [These are virtually impossible to find out through play. If you want to know them, read them in the spoilers section below. -PG] Now you should know enough to play the game, and discover things on your own. What follows is a summary of the commands and symbols, and then a section which discusses more advanced topics. It is meant to act as a guide to players of what their options are. The final section contains "spoilers", or information which gives away something in the game which might "spoil" the game for those who prefer to find the information on their own. CONSIDER CAREFULLY YOUR DECISION TO READ THIS SECTION. Only if you are truly stuck should you have to resort to reading it, and many players feel that spoilers are another form of cheating. That being said, enjoy the game!

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CHAPTER 3: COMMAND SUMMARY AND DESCRIPTIONS

(The following is an excerpt from the long help command in nethack)

Commands:

Hack knows the following commands:

?	help: print this list.
Q	Quit the game.
S	Save the game.
!	Escape to a shell.
^Z	Suspend the game.
<	up: go up the staircase (if you are standing on it).
>	down: go down (just like up).

kjhlyubn — go one step in the direction indicated.

k: north (i.e., to the top of the screen),
j: south,
h: west,
l: east,
y: ne,
u: nw,
b: se,
n: sw.

KJHLYUBN — Go in that direction until you hit a wall or run into something.

m	(followed by one of kjhlyubn): move without picking up any objects.
M	(followed by one of KJHLYUBN): Move far, no pickup.
g	(followed by one of kjhlyubn): move until something interesting is found.
G	(followed by one of KJHLYUBN): as previous, but forking of corridors is not considered interesting.
i	print your inventory.
I	print selected parts of your inventory, as in I* — print all gems in inventory; IU — print all unpaid items; IX — print all used up items that are on your shopping bill; I$ — count your money.
s	search for secret doors and traps around you.
^	ask for the type of a trap you found earlier.
)	ask for current wielded weapon.
[	ask for current armor.
=	ask for current rings.
$	count how many gold pieces you are carrying.
.	rest, do nothing.
,	pick up some things.
:	look at what is here.
^T	teleport.
^R	redraw the screen.
^P	repeat last message (subsequent ^P's repeat earlier messages).
/	(followed by any symbol): tell what this symbol represents.
\	tell what has been discovered.
e	eat food.
w	wield weapon.
	w- means: wield nothing, use bare hands.
q	drink (quaff) a potion.
r	read a scroll.
T	Take off armor.
R	Remove Ring.
W	Wear armor.
P	Put on a ring.
X	transcribe (learn) a spell.
x	print a list of know spells.
z	zap a wand.
t	throw an object or shoot an arrow.
p	pay your shopping bill.
d	drop something.

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        d7a: drop seven items of object a.

D   Drop several things.
        In answer to the question "What kinds of things do you want to drop? [!%= au]" you should give zero or more object symbols possibly followed by 'a' and/or 'u' 'a' means: drop all such objects, without asking for confirmation 'u' means: drop only unpaid objects (when in a shop).

a   use, apply — Generic command for using a key to lock or unlock a door, using a camera, using a rope, etc.

c   call: name a certain object or class of objects.

C   Call: Name an individual monster.

E   Engrave: Write a message in the dust on the floor.
        E- means: use fingers for writing.

O   Set options: You will be asked to enter an option line.If this is empty, the current options are reported Otherwise it should be a list of options separated by commas. Possible boolean options are: *oneline, time, news, tombstone, rest_on_space, fixinvlet, beginner, male, female.* They can be negated by prefixing them with '!' or "no".
        A string option is *name*; it supplies the answer to the question "Who are you?"; it may have a suffix denoting character class, i.e. Name=Brunhilda-V, is a Viking named Brunhilda.
        A compound option is endgame; it is followed by a description of what parts of the list of topscorers should be printed when the game is finished. Usually one will not want to use the 'O' command, but instead put a HACKOPTIONS="...." line in one's environment.

v   print version number.
        See Options below for more details.

You can put a number before a command to repeat it that many times, as in "20s" or "40.".

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COMMAND REFERENCE MANUAL:

The following is a more complete description of the commands in hack. The syntax used is:

(Command name) (additional prompts)
Example:
a [*? or letter] means type "a". At the next prompt, type a letter, * or ?

a [*? or letter]
-	apply an item which has an unusual use, such as a camera, leash or lunch box. All such items fall under the class of Tools.
	"a ?" — gives an list of all Tools in the inventory.
	"a *" — prints the inventory.
	"a <letter>" — If that letter is in the inventory, applies that item if possible.

b -	move one space down and to the left.
B -	move down and to the left until an object is encountered.
c [yn] [?* or letter] <name> - allows the player to name an object or type of object in his inventory. At the prompt "Do you want to name an individual object? [yn]" type "y" if you wish to name a specific item in your inventory, or type "n" if you wish to name a type of object.
	"c y" — Typing "?" or "*" displays the inventory. If the letter of an object is typed, the player is prompted for the name of the object. This name will be used whenever the program refers to that object. Example:"c y <long sword's letter> Stormbringer" results in the long sword being called "Stormbringer", as in the inventory listing: "a long sword named Stormbringer"
	"c n" — Typing "?" will list all unidentified items in the inventory. Typing "*" will display the inventory. If the letter of an object which is not identified is typed, then the player will be prompted for the new name of that type of item. Example:"c n <white potion's letter> Feel Good" results in all white potions being referred to as "a potion of Feel Good." The name will be nullified when the item is identified.
C [hjkl.] <name> — allows the player to name a specific creature. At the prompt, a cursor will appear. Move the cursor with the keys "hjkl" as with normal movement. When the cursor is over the monster to be named, type ".", and then the name of the creature. This names only that monster, and not that class of monsters. Example: naming your little dog "Spot" will result in any future references to the little dog as "Spot", as in: "Spot hits the acid blob. Spot kills the acid blob!" [This can be hilarious at times. Try walking into a treasure zoo while wearing a ring of conflict and naming every creature in sight. The play-by-play of the ensuing brawl is a riot. -PG]
d [?*$ number or letter] — Allows the player to drop either his gold or a specific item in his inventory. Typing "?" or "*" displays the inventory. Typing a letter drops all items labeled with that letter. Typing "$" drops all of the player's gold. Typing a number, and then either a letter or "$" drops that number of the item being dropped
	Example: "d 3 <darts' letter>" drops 3 darts. "d 250 $" drops 250 gold.
D [`()[]%/=?!*$ and/or a] <return> [nyaq] - Allows the player to selectively drop items from a selected set of object types. To use, type a string which consists of object symbols of the types which are to be dropped. If this string is followed by an "a", all items of the listed types are dropped. Otherwise, the program displays, in inventory order, each item which is one of the selected types, and prompts the player with "[nyaq]". Typing "n" will keep the item in the inventory, and prompt for the next item. Typing "y" will drop that item, and prompt for the next item. Typing "a" will drop that item, and all subsequent items. Typing "q" will abort the command. Example: "D %/=* a" will drop all food, wands rings and gems in the inventory.
e [?* or letter] — Eats something in the inventory. Typing "?" displays all food in the inventory. Typing "*" displays the inventory. Typing a letter of a Comestible results in the player eating one of that item.
E [?*- or a letter] <phrase> - Allows the player to engrave a phrase on the ground with some specified object. Typing "?" displays all items listed after "-" in the prompt. Typing "*" displays the inventory. Typing a letter wields that item if the item can be engraved with. Typing "-" unwields the players weapon (if uncursed), and writes in the dust with the players fingers. Once the writing implement is selected, the player is prompted for a phrase. This phrase is written in that spot. If a sharp object or magic marker was used, the engraving is permanent,

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and whenever the player walks over the spot, he will see the phrase which is engraved there. If fingers are used, the engraving will smudge after the player takes an action, and not be as legible. The effects of different objects on Engravings are left to the reader's imagination.

(f or g) [yuhjklbn] — Moves the player in the specified direction until next to an object, intersection, door, stairs or unfriendly monster.

(F or G) [yuhjklbn] — moves the player as above, but ignores intersections.

h —   moves the player one space to the left.

H —   moves the player to the left until he moves onto an object.

i —   displays the inventory

I [`]([%/=?!+] — Allows the player to display objects of specific types in the inventory. At the prompt, type the symbols for the types of objects you wish to display. Example: "I %=!?" gives a list of all food,rings, potions and scrolls in the inventory.

j —   Moves the player down one space

J —   Moves the player down until he moves onto an object.

k —   Moves the player up one space.

K —   Moves the player up until he moves onto an object.

l —   Moves the player one space to the right.

L —   Moves the player to right until he moves onto an object

m [yuhjklbn] — Moves the player one space in the specified direction, but if the player moves onto an object, he will not attempt to pick it up.

M [yuhjklbn] — As above, but moves in the specified direction until no legal moves are possible.

n —   Moves the player one space down and to the right.

N —   Moves the player down and to the right until he moves onto an object.

O <option> — Allows the player to set game options during play. Possible options include: *help*: gives help on setting options in hack. *rest_on_space* (or restonspace): makes the space bar act as the "." command. *time*: displays the number of turns the player has been playing for on the bottom line of the screen. *tombstone*: If on, a tombstone is displayed after the player dies. *(fe)male*: Sets the players sex. Compound options include: *name*:<players name>: sets the players name and class, as in "Merlin-W". *dogname*: gives the name of the players (first) dog (e.g. dogname:Spot) *packorder*:<")[%?+/=!(*0>: sets the default packorder of the inventory. The inventory will be sorted by the object type given. The above order is the default. Example: Since "?" comes before "/", scrolls are displayed before wands. *endgame*:<options>: describes what is displayed after the game is ended. options are separated by the "/" character. options include: own scores: displays all scores with the players name in the high score list. <number> top scores: displays the top <number> scores <number> around my score: displays the <number> scores greater than and less than the player's score. Example: "endgame:own scores/5 topscores/4 around my score" [Note: these options may be setting by modifying the "Hackoptions" STR resource with ResEdit - SY]

p —   If the player has unpaid items in his inventory or on his bill for a shop, he will pay the shopkeeper the full amount of the bill if possible.

P [?* or letter] [rl] — Puts a ring on one of the players hands. Only one ring is allowed per hand. Typing "?" displays all rings in the inventory. Typing "*" displays the inventory. If the letter of a ring is typed, the program will ask which hand to place the ring on, if both hands are available. Ring's powers remain in effect as long as the ring is worn. [If only one hand is free, the ring will automatically go on that hand. -PG]

q [?* or letter] — Quaffs a potion. Typing "?" displays all potions in the inventory. Typing "*" displays the inventory. If the letter of a potion is typed, the player will quaff that potion. Potions are only usable once. After being quaffed, the item is destroyed.

Q [yn] — Quit the game.

r [?* or letter] — Reads a scroll in the inventory. Typing "?" displays all scrolls in the inventory. Typing "*" displays the inventory. If the letter of a scroll is typed, the player will read that scroll. Some scrolls may have to be named by the player after being read. In these cases the program will ask what to call the scroll. Type in the name, as if typing in the name for the "c" command. All scrolls (except possibly for "blank paper") may only be read once. They are destroyed after use.

R [rl] — Remove the ring on the right or left hand. If the ring is cursed, it cannot be removed with this command.

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s —   Search for secret doors and traps. There is a fair chance on each use of this command that any neighboring secret
          door or trap will become visible. Do not expect only one search to be sufficient.
S —   Save the game in progress. The next time the game is played, the old game will be restored from the point at which
          the player left off. This command ends (temporarily) the game in progress.
t [?* or letter] [yuhjklbn<>] — Throws an object in the inventory in the specified direction. Typing "?" lists all weapons in
          the inventory. Typing "*" displays the inventory. Typing the letter of an object makes the game prompt for the
          desired direction. After typing the direction, the object is thrown away from the character in that direction.
T [?* or letter] — Removes a specified piece of armor which the player is wearing. Typing "?" lists all worn items (except
          rings). Typing "*" displays the inventory. Typing the letter of a worn piece of armor takes off the armor. Note that
          this command may take a number of turns to execute.
u —   Move one space up and to the right.
U —   Move up and to the right until the character moves onto an object.
v —   Print the version number and information.
V —   Prints author's credits and version information.
w [?* or letter] — Wields an item in the inventory (usually a weapon). Typing "?" displays all weapons. Typing "*" displays
          the inventory. Typing the letter of an item in inventory makes the player wield that object as his weapon. This
          object is used in all close combat as the player's weapon. If the player is wielding a cursed item, this command is
          aborted. If the player is wearing a shield, he can not wield a two-handed sword.
W [?* or letter] — Allows the player to wear a specified piece of armor. Typing "?" will display all unworn pieces of armor.
          Typing "*" will display the inventory. Typing the letter of a piece of armor will, if possible, result in the player
          wearing that piece of armor. The player must remove his cloak before altering his body armor. If the current armor
          of that type is cursed, this command is aborted.
x —   List all spells that have been transcribed by the player.
X [?* or letter] — Attempt to transcribe a spellbook. Typing "?" lists all spellbooks in the players inventory. Typing "*"
          displays the inventory. Typing the letter of a spell book results in the player attempting to transcribe the spell book
          into memory. Note that transcription success depends on level, and also transcribing a spell may take a while.
          [Note: This can be dangerous, since you can be attacked while transcribing. Unlike most other actions, you will not
          stop your attempt to transcribe! -PG]
y —   Move one space up and to the left.
Y —   Move up and to the left until the player moves onto an object.
z [?* or letter] [direction or string?] — Zaps a wand in the inventory. Typing "?" displays all wands in the inventory. Typing
          "*" displays the inventory. Typing the letter of a wand zaps that wand. Note that wands have a limited number of
          charges, and will not work (usually) after their charges are depleted. Some wands require the player to specify a
          direction in which they may be zapped. One wand requires the typing of a string. (The player must find this one.)
<a number> <a command> — If a number if typed before a command character, then the command which follows will be
          executed that number of times, or until something swings at the player, or the command is no longer possible.
          Example: "5h" moves the player five spaces to the left. Example: "10s" searches ten times.

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@ — Toggles the pick-up option (default is ON). When this option is OFF, the player will not automatically pick up any item in a space he moves into. He must pick it up using the "," command. Note that this is particularly useful in rooms which are crowded with worthless items, and when walking over dead cockatrices.

[command] — Allows the player to use an extended command. To use an extended command, type "#" followed by the command's name, and return. The possible commands are:

#? "?" — Displays the set of extended commands

#b "breathe" — If the player is able, he will breathe fire like a dragon.

#c "cast" [letter] - casts a spell which the player knows. Typing the letter of a displayed spell will cast that spell. The number listed next to the spell is its mana cost. This is deducted from the players current energy. Spell effects are left to the reader's imagination.

#d "dip" [letter] — dips a specified object into something, such as a pool or a potion To dip an item into a pool, stand over the pool and use the dip command.

#p "pray" — Plead with the gods for help. The reader may experiment with this command at his own choosing (and risk).

#r "remove" — If the player has the ability to do so, he can remove a cursed item, such as an iron ball.

#s "sit" — Sit down on the space you are in. Sit in thrones at your own peril.

#t "turn" — Attempt to turn undead creatures. Turned creatures will flee in terror from the player. Only knights and priests may turn undead.

#w "wipe" — Wipe of the player's face. Useful when it is dirty.

$ — Counts the player's money. If the player has a large quantity of money, he will sit down to count it. [This is mostly useless, since gold is displayed at all times. -PG]

^ [yuhjklbn] — Tells the player what type of trap a "^" represents. If the player is adjacent to a trap, and types "^" followed by the direction the trap is in, the program will tell the player what the name of the trap is.
Example: "This is a sleep trap.")

— This displays the what the player's currently wielded weapon is.

= — This displays what rings the player is wearing.

[— This displays the armor that the player is wearing.

\ — This displays a list of all items (except weapons and armor) that have been identified, or have been named by the player.

: — This displays everything that is in the player's space.

, [`)([%/=?!+ aA] — This allows the player to pick up items in his space. All gold is automatically picked up. If there is only one item, it is picked up. If there are multiple items on the space, the player is prompted for which types of item he wishes to pick up. To pick up all items in the space, type "a". To pick up all items of one or more types, input a string consisting of the symbols for the types you wish to pick up, followed by "A" To pick up only certain items of specific types, input the types as above, but do not type "A". The program will display, one item at a time, every item in the inventory which is of the specified types, followed by the prompt "[ynaq]". Typing "y" picks up that item, and displays the next. Typing "n" displays the next item. Typing "a" picks up that item, and all remaining items of the named types. Typing "q" aborts the command. The program will not allow the player to pick up any item which is too heavy.

. — The player does nothing for one turn.

/ [symbol] (for versions before nethack.) — displays help on the symbol typed at the prompt. Example: "/=" tells the player that "=" represent rings.

/ [yuhjklbn.] (for nethack) — allows the player to display help about any visible symbol. The player moves the displayed cursor with normal movement keys onto the symbol in question, and then types "." Help is then displayed on that symbol. [You may also use the command as above to tell you about a class of symbols, rather than a specific one. -PG]

< — Climb up to the previous level. The player must be on a "<" symbol.

> — Go down to the next level. The player must be on a ">" symbol.

^R — redraws the screen.

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CHAPTER 4: SPOILERS WARNING AND PREFACE

The following section contains information which the player does not have to know in order to play the game, but which can be found out through the normal course of play. Players who wish to win without any additional help should not read the following sections. Those who only wish to find some specific information may find what they want here, and then not read anything else. For those whose curiosity has gotten the better of them, read what you will.

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SPOILERS ON NETHACK

The following is a reprint of an article posted by Maarten Jan Huisjes on 13 Aug, 1987. It has been extended to include other useful information. All information is for the nethack version of hack. For people playing other versions of hack, you may ignore all the items which do not appear in your game. In particular, ignore all references to spell books. This is a nethack property only.

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FOOD

<0	Fainting
0-49	Weak
50-149	Hungry
150-999 Satiated	
1000-1499	Having a hard time
1500+	Choke

Example: If the player is Having a hard time getting food down, he has at   least 1000 turns before fainting. Hunger goes down 1/turn; 10/turn if regenerating or wearing a hunger ring You are hungrier after vomiting and casting spells. [Information under rings says 5/turn. I don't know which is correct. -PG] Meat becomes tainted after ~50 turns. It is best to eat it immediately, or not at all.

Name   = The name of the food. The name used when wishing for the object.
Chance = The chance that a "%" symbol is that type of food.
Weight   = weight in pounds.
Nutrition   = The number of turns added to the players hunger count.

Name	Chance	Weight	Nutrition[1]	Remarks
food ration	46	4	800	
tripe ration	16	2	200	May make you vomit. Tastes okay if polymorphed.
pancake	3	1	200	
dead lizard	3	1	40	Try when turning to stone.
fortune cookie	7	1	40	Some rumours are true, some rumours are false.
carrot	2	1	50	May improve vision
slice of pizza	5	1	250	
cream pie	3	1	100	Fun to throw
tin	7	1	*	
* Contents of Tins:				
Salmon			60	Will make your hands slippery
Peaches			40	
Apple Juice			20	
Substance			500	
Rotten meat			-50	Makes you vomit
Spinach			600	Strength++.
orange	1	1	80	
apple	1	1	50	
pear	1	1	50	
melon	1	1	100	
banana	1	1	80	
candy bar	1	1	100	
egg	1	1	80	
clove of garlic	1	1	40	Can wield against undead
lump of royal jelly	0	1	200	Healing, Sometimes strength++.

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[1]s = may make you sick (lose 1-8hp)
 p = Poisonous food. Persons with poison resistance may ignore the effects.

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DEAD THINGS:

It is advised that the player not save meat for long periods of time, as it may become tainted. Eating a dead monster often conveys one of its attributes. These are listed in the Remarks.

Name	Chance	Weight	Nutrition	Remarks
dead acid blob	0	3	p30	Try when turning to stone.
dead centaur	0	50	500	
dead cockatrice	0	3	30	If you want to be a statue (But may eat safely as a cockatrice.)
dead daemon	0	80	800	
dead dog	0	20	200	Aggravate monsters.
dead dragon	0	150	p1500	Makes you fire resistant.
dead ettin	0	3	30	
dead floating eye	0	1	s10	Gives you telepathy.
dead fog cloud	0	1	10	
dead freezing sphere	0	1	10	Makes you Cold resistant.
dead gelatinous cube	0	10	100	
dead giant	0	70	700	Strength++.
dead giant ant	0	3	p30	
dead giant bat	0	3	30	Confuses
dead giant beetle	0	1	p10	
dead giant rat		3	30	
dead giant scorpion	0	10	p100	Same as killer bee.
dead gnome		10	100	
dead hobgoblin	0	20	200	
dead homunculus	0	20	p200	
dead human	0	40	400	Permanent aggravate monster.
dead imp	0	1	10	
dead jackal	0	10	100	
dead jaguar	0	30	300	
dead killer bee	0	1	p10	Makes you poison resistant.
dead kobold	0	10	p100	
dead leocrotta	0	50	500	
dead leprechaun	0	40	s400	Makes you teleport.
dead long worm	0	50	500	
dead mimic	0	40	400	Mimic a treasure chest.
dead minotaur	0	70	700	
dead nurse	0	40	400	Aggravate monsters,heal wounds.
dead nymph	0	40	s400	Makes you teleport.
dead orc	0	20	s200	
dead owlbear	0	70	700	
dead piercer	0	20	200	
dead purple worm	0	70	s700	
dead quantum mechanic	0	20	s200	Makes you teleport.
dead quivering blob	0	10	100	
dead rust monster	0	50	s500	
dead snake	0	10	p100	
dead stalker	0	40	400	Gives you see invisible (Also invisibility if invisible?)
dead tengu	0	30	300	Makes you teleport.
dead troll	0	40	400	
dead umber hulk	0	50	s500	
dead unicorn	0	30	s300	
dead vampire	0	40	p400	
dead violet fungus	0	10	100	Cosmic indeed (Oh wow).
dead wraith	0	1	10	Gain level.
dead xan	0	30	s300	
dead xorn	0	70	700	

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dead yellow light | 0 | 1 | 10 | Confuses. May improve vision

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dead yeti	0	70	700	Cold resistance.
dead zombie	0	3	30	
dead zruty	0	60	s600	

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WEAPONS

AXE, SWORD, KATANA, and TWO-HANDED SWORD are good for worm-cutting.
(PICK-)AXE, DAGGER, and CRYSKNIFE are good for tin-opening.
SPEAR is good against X, D, n, e.

The damage is the maximum damage done by the weapon against that size of creature, not including damage modifiers.

Name	Chance	Weight	Small/Large-damage		
aklys	1	3	6	3	
arrow	6	0	6	6	
axe	5	3	6	4	
bardiche	1	3	4	4	/* +1d4 small, +2d4 large */
bec de corbin	1	3	8	6	
bill-guisarme	1	3	4	10	/* +1d4 small */
boomerang	1	3	9	9	
bow	4	3	4	6	
broad sword	1	3	4	6	/* +d4 small, +1 large */
club	1	3	6	3	
crossbow	5	3	4	6	
crossbow bolt	6	0	4	6	
crysknife	0	3	10	10	
dagger	4	3	4	3	
dart	6	0	3	2	
fauchard	1	3	6	8	
flail	5	3	6	5	/* +1 small +1d4 large */
glaive	1	3	6	10	
guisarme	1	3	4	8	/* +1d4 small */
halberd	1	3	10	6	/* +1d6 large */
javelin	1	3	6	6	
katana	1	3	12	12	
lance	1	3	6	8	
long sword	5	3	8	12	
lucern hammer	1	3	4	6	/* +1d4 small */
mace	6	3	6	7	/* +1 small */
morning star	1	3	4	6	/* +d4 small, +1 large */
partisan	1	3	6	6	/* +1 large */
ranseur	1	3	4	4	/* +d4 both */
rock	4	1	3	3	
scimitar	1	3	8	8	
short sword	1	3	6	8	
shuriken	3	0	8	6	
sling	4	3	6	6	
sling bullet	6	0	4	6	
spear	4	3	6	8	
spetum	1	3	6	6	/* +1 small, +d6 large */
trident	1	3	6	4	/* +1 small, +2d4 large */
two handed sword	4	4	12	6	/* +2d6 large */
voulge	1	3	4	4	/* +d4 both */
worm tooth	0	4	2	2	

Enormous Rocks-   have an excellent chance of hitting, and will do 1-20 damage, but you must be a giant to wield them.
Heavy Iron Balls-   will do 1-25 damage! (but are extremely heavy)

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ARMOR

Name	Chance	Weight	Ac
banded mail	9	5	4
chain mail	10	5	5
helmet	3	1	9
plate mail	5	5	3
ring mail	12	5	7
scale mail	10	5	6
splint mail	7	5	4

The armors below do not rust.

bronze plate mail	6	5	4
crystal plate mail	1	5	3
elfin chain mail	1	1	5
elven cloak	5	0	9
leather armor	15	3	8
pair of gloves	1	1	9
shield	3	0	9
studded leather	12	3	7

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SCROLLS

Many scrolls give strange effects when confused or hallucinating.

Name	Chance	Remarks (Effects when the player is not confused)
amnesia	3	Player loses all spells, maps and knowledge of what items are.
blank paper	3	The player may write on the paper in magic marker, and create a scroll. Write the name of a scroll you have already found
confuse monster	5	The player will confuse the next monster he hits.
create monster	5	A monster appears next to the player.
damage weapon	5	The weapon has a -1 penalty cast upon it.
destroy armor	5	Destroy the player's worn armor.
enchant armor	6	Gives the armor a +1 bonus. Do not try more than a +4 armor or it might evaporate.
enchant weapon	6	Gives the weapon a +1 bonus.
fire	5	Player loses 1-6 h.p., and may lose some flammable material.
food detection	1	Displays all food on the level.
genocide	2	The player may destroy any one type of monster. Do not try genocide '@', or reading when confused.
gold detection	4	Displays all gold on the level.
identify	18	The player may identify items in his possession.
light	10	If read in a room, the room is now lit.
magic mapping	5	Maps the level.
punishment	1	The player is cursed with a heavy iron ball.
remove curse	6	All cursed items wielded or worn are uncursed.
scare monster	4	The scroll has two uses: 1) If read, all monster in sight will run in terror from the player 2) If dropped on the ground, no monster may attack the player in hand to hand combat so long as he remains standing on the scroll. If the player attempts to pick up the scroll after he has dropped it, it disintegrates.
taming	1	Any creature next to the player becomes the player's pet.
teleportation	5	The player teleports to a (random) location on the level.

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EFFECTS OF SCROLLS WHEN CONFUSED

amnesia	— you forget how to read.
confuse monster	— Normal effect.
create monster	— surrounds the player with eight acid blobs ("a").
damage weapon	— weapon is now rustable
destroy armor	— armor is rustable.
enchant armor	— armor glows silver, and is now rust proof.
enchant weapon	— weapon is now rust proof.
fire	— you burn your hands.
food detection	— see fake food
genocide	— kills all @. (including you)
gold detection	— see fake gold
identify	— identifies the scroll as an identify scroll
light	— room is now not lit.
magic mapping	— gives random spaces of the map
punishment	— ?
remove curse	— curses item
scare monster	— aggravate monster blank paper — Normal effect.
taming	— tames EVERY creature in sight. (fun for treasure zoos)
teleportation	— the player is teleported to a random level. If the player has

teleport control, he may choose the level.

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WANDS

Some wands may be used on the player. Type "." for direction.

Name	Chance	Remarks - (D) indicates the player must specify a direction.
cancellation	5	(D) The target loses any special abilities. If the target had or was a magic object, it loses any magic pluses and charges.
cold	5	(D) Fires a bolt of cold in the direction indicated.
create monster	5	Acts as a scroll of create monster.
death	1	(D) Death will kill any creature it hits. Use with care, it might bounce.
digging	5	(D) Digs a hole in walls in the direction the wand is pointed.
fire	5	(D) Fires a bolt of fire in the direction indicated.
light	10	Acts as a scroll of light when zapped.
magic missile	10	(D) Fires a bolt of magic missle in the direction indicated.
make invisible	7	(D) Makes the target invisible.
nothing	2	This wand does nothing when zapped.
polymorph	5	(D) Use it on wands and you might find another. The player changes the target(s). This is discussed further under POLYMORPHING YOURSELF AND YOUR ITEMS.
probing	2	(D) Displays the stats of any monster it is pointed at.
secret door detection	5	All secret doors in sight of the player are found.
sleep	5	(D) Will sleep any creature it hits.
slow monster	5	(D) The monster's speed is halved. Not cumulative.
speed monster	5	(D) The monster's speed is doubled. The player gains Speed.
striking	7	(D) The player gets a ranged attack on any creature or object it is pointed at.
teleportation	5	(D) Teleports the target (randomly).
undead turning	5	(D) If zapped at undead creatures, they run in fear If zapped at a dead monster, it is brought back to life.
wishing	1	Actually this chance is even smaller. The player may wish for an item. This is discussed under "WISHING FOR OBJECTS"

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SPELLS

These spells are for nethack only. Level is the difficulty of learning the spell, and its point cost. It is harder to transcribe spells before the player is 7th level.

Name	Chance	Level
cancellation	1	7
cause fear	4	3
charm monster	3	3
cone of cold	1	5
confuse monster	5	2
create familiar	1	6
create monster	4	2
cure blindness	3	2
cure sickness	3	3
detect food	5	2
detect monsters	5	1
detect treasure	3	4
detect unseen	4	3
dig	2	5
extra healing	3	3
finger of death	1	7
fireball	2	4
force bolt	4	1
genocide	1	7
haste self	3	3
healing	6	1
identify	1	5
invisibility	3	4
levitation	3	4
light	5	1
magic mapping	2	5
magic missile	4	2
polymorph	1	6
remove curse	2	5
restore strength	2	4
sleep	6	1
slow monster	4	2
teleport away	2	6
turn undead	1	6

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RINGS

Rings all weigh 1

<u>Name</u>
adornment	No effect, other than its value.
aggravate monster	All monsters will be awake and angry at the player.
cold resistance	The player is immune to cold.
conflict	All creatures will attack the creature closest to themselves. Great at treasure zoos.
fire resistance	The player is immune to fire.
gain strength	The player's strength is increased.
hunger	The player becomes hungrier 5 times as quickly.
increase damage	The player's damage is increased.
levitation	The player floats off the ground, and can not fall down, nor can he pick up items.

He is immune to pit traps, trap doors and water   spaces, and can carry more items up stairs.

poison resistance	The player is unaffected by poison. (But watch out for biologically contaminated orange juice).
protection from shape changers	All shape changers appear as a ":", and cannot change shape.
protection	The player gains a bonus on his A.C.
regeneration	The player heals one hit point per turn.
	Note: This ring makes the player become hungrier 5 times as quickly. Also, at high levels the rings SLOWS DOWN your regeneration.
searching	The player performs a free "s" command each turn.
see invisible	The player can see all invisible objects and creatures.
stealth	The player will not wake up sleeping monsters, unless he attacks them.
teleport control	The player may choose, when he teleports, where he wishes to go to.
teleportation	Bestows intrinsic teleportation. [But not control! -PG]
warning	The ring will glow when a monster is generated.

[These last two are additions as of NetHack 2.2 -PG]
polymorph	Randomly polymorphs player into another monster. May or may not be human.

May or may not kill player from shock.

polymorph control	The player may choose what type of monster to Polymorph into.

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GEMS

Name	Chance	Pecunia
dilithium crystal	1	4500
diamond	1	4000
ruby	1	3500
sapphire	1	3000
emerald	1	2500
turquoise	1	2000
aquamarine	1	1500
tourmaline	1	1000
topaz	1	900
opal	1	800
garnet	1	700
amethyst	1	650
agate	2	600
onyx	2	550
jasper	2	500
jade	2	450

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POTIONS

Potions may be quaffed, or thrown. If a potion is thrown down (">" for direction), the message listed next to Vapor is received.

Name	Message(s)
restore strength	Wow! This makes you feel great!
	... looks sound and hale again! (Thrown to monster)
gain energy	Magical energies course through your body.
	You feel feverish. (Confused)
booze	Ooph! This tastes like liquid fire!
	You feel somewhat dizzy. (Vapor)
invisibility	Gee! All of a sudden, you can't see yourself.
	For an instance you couldn't see your right hand.(Vapor)
	You feel rather airy. (Blinded)
fruit juice	This tastes like fruit juice.
healing	You begin to feel better.
	... looks sound and hale again! (Thrown to monster)
paralysis	Your feet are frozen to the floor!
	Something seems to be holding you. (Vapor)
	You are motionlessly suspended. (Levitated)
monster detection	You sense the presence of monsters.
	You feel threatened. (No monsters)
object detection	You sense the presence of objects.
	You sense the presence of objects close nearby.
	You feel a pull downward. (No objects)
sickness	Yech! This stuff tastes like poison.
	... looks rather ill. (Thrown to monster)
confusion	Huh, What? Where am I?
	What a trippy feeling. (Hallucinating)
	You feel somewhat dizzy. (Vapor)
gain strength	Wow do you feel strong!
	... looks sound and hale again! (Thrown to monster)
speed	You are suddenly moving much faster.
	Your knees seem more flexible now. (Vapor)
	Your legs get new energy. (Fast)
blindness	A cloud of darkness falls upon you.
	It suddenly gets dark. (Vapor)
	Bummer! Everything is dark! Help! (Hallucinating)
gain level	You feel more experienced.
extra healing	You feel much better.
	... looks sound and hale again! (Thrown to monster)
levitation	Oh wow! You're floating in the air! (Hallucinating)
hallucination	Oh wow! Everything looks so cosmic!
	You have a vision for a moment. (Vapor)
holy water	You feel full of awe.
	This burns like acid. (When you are 'Z','V','W' or '&')
	... shrieks in pain! (Thrown to 'Z','V','W',' ' or '&')

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EXTENDED COMMANDS:

#dip	Dip arrows or darts in the potion and if it was a potion of: Sickness or Paralysis --> your dipped weapon gets stronger. Holy water --> your weapon gets blessed and is better in use against the undead. Note that this uses up the potion, just like quaffing it.
#pray	You can pray 300 turns after you last prayed (1000 if a demigod). However, you can wait too long between prayers. You can also use the "time" option to see how much time has passed. Terrible things may happen if you pray too soon, so be sure that your time has come. Possible effects include having your strength, hit points and hunger restored, gaining 5 additional hp; gaining an intrinsic power; gaining an item, and becoming the hand of Elbereth (good luck). The negative effects of praying too soon are left to the player to discover.
#sit	Use this command while you are on an throne (\). You might get a wish (Chance 1 in 86), but also you can lose your gold or your possessions get cursed or identified!!
#wipe	Clean your face when dirty.
#breathe	First polymorph yourself in a Dragon. Then you can breathe fire.
#remove	First polymorph into a Nymph. Then you can remove iron balls.

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SPECIAL NOTES FOR HACK:

LUCK:

Luck is used in many different features of hack. In particular, luck   is used in combat to determine whether the player and his opponent hit, and   how much damage is done. Luck is also used when praying, and in using   wands of wishing. Luck begins at 0, and increases or decreases as the game goes on. The   higher the player's luck, the luckier he is. The maximum luck is usually 10   (although this changes with the phases of the moon in some versions). The   minimum luck is -10. The player should try to be aware of two basic ways of modifying his luck. The first is that killing any tame creature (such as your dog), and killing   any human (such as a shopkeeper) will result in the player's luck being   drastically reduced. The second is that if the player throws a gem at a   unicorn, his luck will be increased. It is the latter that we will discuss   in depth. First, the gem must be an actual gem, and not a piece of colored glass. Also, if the gem has been identified as being real, then the increase in   the player's luck will be much greater than if the gem the was unidentified.   More importantly, it is fairly difficult to get into a position to throw   a gem at a unicorn, since the unicorn will never move into such a space. Should the unicorn be forced to move into such a space, it will teleport to   another space on the level. There are numerous methods to circumvent this. One method is to quaff   a haste potion, and simply walk next to it during the player's "free" move. Another, more more useful method, is to get a teleport control ring and   teleport next to the unicorn (or along a line of sight). The unicorn does   not have a chance to move away, since teleporting does not count as a turn   for movement purposes. The latter method is more common, since teleportation is (can be) intrinsic to the character, and teleport control is a   necessity. One method to trap the unicorn, so that the player can move next to it without the use of ^T is the following: Unicorns in rooms only move diagnolly, and will only teleport if a move   is impossible. Hence you can restrict the unicorn to two spaces as shown   below:

```
|.....
|..@..
|1....
|.2...
 ------
```

The unicorn will only move in the spaces marked 1 and 2, and will not   teleport away. This allows the player to teleport freely next to the unicorn.

THE LITTLE DOG:
To me, the most interesting (although by far not the most useful) feature of hack is the little dog, and the way tame creatures work in general in hack. If the player wishes to try to make use of his pet, he should be aware of its abilities, limitations and its intelligence (or lack thereof).   The dog is friendly towards the player, and will tend to follow him around the dungeon. However, the dog, like the player, requires food to live. The dog can eat every non-poisonous substance safely, and will not eat tainted meat. Under normal circumstances, the dog will not eat food rations, fruit and other "human" foods.   The dog goes through three stages of development: little dog, dog and large dog. In fact, the dog actually goes through more, but they are divided equally into these three classes. All dogs may attack twice per turn, and move two spaces per turn (i.e. they are hasted). Dogs will do about 1-6 points of damage per hit, so they can do 2-12 points of damage per round. A hasted dog can be quite vicious.   The dog improves by gaining experience from killing monsters, just as the character does. The dog, however, is limited to level 6, and about 85 hp, so the dog cannot become as powerful as the character. However, initially, the dog can be much better than the character at killing creatures, and so can be useful for low-level characters as a guard dog.   If the player goes up or down levels for any reason, then if the dog is on a space adjacent to the character, he will change levels with the player. But if the dog is not on an adjacent space, he is stranded on the old level. When a dog becomes stranded, he becomes wild. The player may also find other wild dogs in the dungeon. A wild dog will attack the player like any other monster. However, the dog will be tamed if the player throws any food (except fruit) at the dog. The dog will then "devour" the food, and is from then on the pet of the player. Note, also, that the player is not limited to one pet, but may tame as many pets as he wishes.   A pet has other abilities as well. The first is that the pet will tend not to walk over cursed items. This gives the player a cheap test to see if an item is cursed. In addition, the dog will pick up items that he finds, and bring them to the player. Finally, the dog will stay closer to the player if the player has a tripe ration.

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GHOST LEVELS:

Occasionally, when a character dies, hack will save the level he died on for future use. This level is called a ghost level, and the reader is bound to find one sooner or later. Everything on the level will be exactly as it was when the character died, with one addition. The old character's ghost is also on the level. Ghosts, although hard to kill, can do almost no damage. The nice thing about ghost levels is that all of the old character's items are in one pile on the space the character died. It is a simple matter to get these items. In fact, the hardest thing about ghost levels is that usually whatever killed the old character is powerful enough to kill the new character as well. There can be multiple ghost on one level. I recall one level which had three cockatrices and five ghosts. Fortunately, ghost levels are eventually cleared by the program after a certain period of time, so the player does not have to worry to much about them in general.

WISHING FOR OBJECTS:

Near the end of the game, the player <u>will</u> find wands of wishing. When these are zapped, the player is asked to wish for an item. One of the most frustrating things in hack is when a beginning player can not figure out what the exact name of the item he wants to wish for is. Here is how wishing is accomplished. In the previous item list, the name of the object is the name the player gives hack to wish for that item, not including the number wished for, and the plus of the item (when wishing for weapons or armor). The general format is: <# wished for><plus of item><name of item> The player can NEVER wish for more than 3 of any item, or for an item with magical plus greater than +3. Example: To wish for 3 potions of gain level, the player would type "3 potions of gain level". To wish for a +3 elven cloak, "+3 elven cloak" [Note that if the program can't understand what you want, it will make a random selection. -PG]

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THE CHARACTERS OF HACK[2]:

ARCHAEOLOGIST: (or Speleoligist) This character has a passion for the exploration of the unknown. But don't let those spectacle deceive you. believe that mild mannered exterior lies a character as tough as the Sahara. The Archaeologist begins with a pick axe, and a large box for storing his lunch.
Initial Stats: Strength: 14 Armour Class: 7 Hit Points: 12
Favorite dog names: Caesar, Rama Tut, Troy
Special abilities: Speed
Special items: pick axe, large box

TOURIST: Always cheerful, the tourist has always wanted to see the sights in the Dungeon of Doom. Although the weakest of the characters, he is ready ready to have a ball. He has his picnic lunch, his wallet, his ever ready camera and his custom made darts (just in case there's a pub down there.) The camera also has the Fisso-Blast Nuclear Flash Bulb, making night into solar flare and blinding any creature to stupid enough to let its picture be taken. Let's hope you remembered the leash. The tourist: He may not be strong, but he sure isn't hungry.   Initial Stats: Strength: 11 Armour Class: 10 Hit Points: 10
Favorite dog names: Spot, Rover, Fluffy
Special abilities: None
Special items: expensive camera, leash, +2 darts, lots of food

BARBARIAN: [Changed from FIGHTER with NetHack 2.2 -PG]   You heard that the Dungeon was a real challenge, but you heard that kind of talk before. Before you whip out your sword that is. It's not that accurate, but if it hits, you can kiss that baby goodbye. Rough and tough, with a sword the size of the Sears building, this character is a foe to be reckoned with.
Initial Stats: Strength: 17 Armour Class: 7 Hit Points: 14
Favorite dog names: Spartan, Killer, Fluffy (don't laugh)
Special abilities: None
Special items: Two-Handed Sword

KNIGHT: Some people have called you a coward and a wimp because you wear so much armor, and you're not very strong. But then again, they're dead and you're not. After all, as long as you've got the armor available, why not use all at once. Plus you know a few tricks when it comes to turning undead. When it comes right down to it, a fellow can't be too careful.
Initial Stats: Strength: 10 Armour Class: 3 Hit Points: 12
Favorite dog names: Arthur, Lancelot, Sir Robin
Special abilities: Turn undead
Special items: Long Sword

CAVE-MAN: FOOD! It is the way of life. Food is good. Raw. The big cave has much food. Has funny trinket too. You kill food with bow and club. You kill food with bare hands. You kill food with mean glance. Smash anything in your way. You may be hungry, but you sure are strong.
Initial Stats: Strength: 18 Armour Class: 8 Hit Points: 16
Favorite dog names: DOG, WOOF, FOOD
Special abilities: None
Special items: +1 club

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[2]Knight, Priest, Elf, Wizard and Caveman are standard Hack character classes. Others are exclusive to Nethack.

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SAMURAI: Your honor is at stake. You must recover the sacred amulet, or die trying. The ancient fighting skills of all your warlord ancestors are yours to command, as is your mighty katana. You are quicker than your foes, and strong, and will defeat the evil creatures in your path.   Favorite dog names: Sun-Tzu, Rising Sun, Tsunami   Special abilities: Speed

Special items: None NINJA: None can hear you come, and none can warn your passing. Silent as the night and deadly as a cobra, you stalk your prize in the fabled dungeon. Your katana can dispatch the weak, and your stealth will allow you to pass the strong. Quicker than your foes, the prize is as good as yours. The ninja never fails.

Initial Stats: Strength: 16 Armour Class: 4 Hit Points: 16

Favorite dog names: Swift-wind, Night blade, Sushi

Special abilities: Speed, Stealth

Special items: Katana, [Blindfold, as of NetHack 2.2 -PG]

PRIEST: You are on a holy quest to recover the sacred relic from the hands of the evil in the Dungeon. With the power of God, you will turn the undead monstrosities, and venture into the bowels of the earth. You know a little magic as well. If only you had remembered the holy hand grenade.

Initial Stats: Strength: 15 Armour Class: 4 Hit Points: 13

Favorite dog names: Jonah, Samson, Gabriel

Special Abilities: Turn undead

Special items: Blessed +1 Mace, 2 Spellbooks

VALKYRIE: Fabled warrior of Norse legend, you enter the halls to do battle with the creatures of the dungeon. You wield your mighty spear, and use your quickness and fighting skills to defeat your terrible foes. You are tough, and are used to the frigid winters of Frygia. Glory in the battle to come!

Initial Stats: Strength: 17 Armour Class: 6 Hit Points: 16

Favorite dog names: Thor, Odin's Blood, Balder

Special Abilities: Cold resistance

Special items: Long Sword

ELF: How silly to take something like the Dungeon so seriously. After all, how can any of those nasty creatures catch you, let alone escape your bow? Besides, you're pretty sneaky, and have really good eyesight.You may as well get the amulet, and then think of something else that would be fun to do.

Initial Stats: Strength: 16 Armour Class: 9 Hit Points: 16

Favorite dog names: Happy, Hee-Hee, Keebler

Special Abilities: Stealth, Speed

Special Items: Sword

HEALER: As a doctor, you live to heal those in need. You also wouldn't mind making a lot of money. Stethoscope in hand, you venture bravely into the darkness of the dungeon. You were vaccinated, just in case, and have your poison antidotes ready. You may be a healer, but you wouldn't mind kicking some butt down here.

Initial Stats: Strength: 15 Armour Class: 10 Hit Points: 16

Favorite dog names: Casey, Kildare, Quincy

Special Abilities: Poison resistance

Special Items: Stethoscope

WIZARD: The mighty one, who wields the forces few can guess at. With your powerful magical items, magical spells and good teleportational potential, the denizens of this dungeon will bow before you power. Either the weakest or most powerful of characters, the wizard is in a class by himself.

Initial Stats: Strength: 16 Armour Class:9 Hit Points: 15

Favorite dog names: Gandalf, Merlin, Skeeve

Special Abilities: Better with spells, teleport and magic whistles

Special Items: lots of magic items

Each character has advantages, but some are more unusual than others. The Tourist is a weak human being, but is equipped with a camera and inexhaustible flash unit that blinds monsters. The Healer (with a stethoscope to diagnose monsters) and the Tourist are both weak and difficult to keep alive. (The idea is to get by until weapons, armor and magic can be found, so that the benefits of the peculiar items can be enjoyed.) The Archaeologist/Speleologist starts with a pickaxe to dig and box to keep food. The remaining characters are self-explanatory.

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POLYMORPHING YOURSELF AND YOUR ITEMS
(and other masochistic pastimes)

The following only applies to nethack, and certain updated versions of hack.   The player should be aware that he is able in some versions to cast polymorph on himself and on objects, as well as on monsters.   To polymorph yourself (and, in fact, to cast any spell on yourself), you type "." for the spell's direction. Polymorphing yourself results in the character becoming some type of monster. The character's hit points will be reduced to conform with the monster type, and the character will gain all abilities of the monster he is.   Be forewarned, however, that any armor you are wearing when you polymorph may be destroyed, and that non-humanoid monsters can not wear armor or wield weapons, in addition to there more limited hit points. Polymorphing is not for everyone. To polymorph an object, simply drop the object, and polymorph in the direction of the object, as if it were a monster. Objects are polymorphed into random objects of the same type. For instance, a food ration can be polymorphed into a carrot, a tripe ration, or any other comestible. The only exception is that rocks are polymorphed into gems. The uses for this become quite clear after some thought on the readers part. For instance, useless items can be transformed into more powerful ones. In particular, polymorphing wands has its own special side effects.

THE LEVELS BEYOND 26 (not for hack v1.0)   Once the player has reached level 26, he should be prepared to win the game. However, finding the amulet is by no means easy, if you don't know where to look. Rather than tell the player how to find the amulet and wands of wishing, we will only give the following advice. Through the halls the dungeon calls for the hero to check the walls. For not in sight is the wand of might, but instead in a spot quite tight. Blast asunder to receive the plunder by pushing once, and looking under. The last you seek in a place quite bleak and of brimstone it does reek. Your quest now nigh Beware, or fry, If from fire you can die. Give not a care to lack of stair but go directly to His lair. To His home you must now roam, though surrounded by brine and foam. A protective coat is his moat above this trap you must float. And then you run up towards the sun and claim victory with a prize well won.

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STRATEGIES OF HACK

The following is is a discussion of the various strategies used by hack players, and some helpful advice from Erik Lauer, our resident hack expert.

The blitz strategy:
This strategy is to blitz down as far as possible, taking only enough time to find the items on the level and collect them. This particular strategy is usually used by more inexperienced players who want to see how far they can get in a certain amount of time. In fact, it is surprisingly easy to go down levels, at least to the 26th level, even with a character who is not very powerful. It is equally easy, however, to go to a level with creatures far beyond your ability to reckon with, so care must be taken to ensure this does not happen.

The "snail's pace" strategy:
Here the player will only go down when he is running low on food. This allows the player to develop as much as possible before encountering the harder creatures on the next level. This strategy has a few intrinsic problems. One is that it is extremely easy to run too low on food if the player is not careful. Another is that this takes a very long time, and so is only for the truly patient. Finally, there is a point of diminishing returns, sometime around when the cockatrices first appear, that it is no longer profitable to fudge around on the upper levels.

The best overall strategy is somewhere in between the two, and is based primarily on what you find available.   Although overall strategy is important, the most important thing in hack is based on a simple idea: Hack is a game for opportunists. That is, as hack has grown, and more options become available to the player, every little detail presents a potential tool for the observant player. This has become increasingly true as hack expanded into nethack.   Try to find a use for everything you find. I read an article once in which the writer denounced the destroy armor scroll as totally worthless. He had never thought that he could use it to destroy cursed armor also, and so made his game that much harder. If you can do this, then you can win the game.

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SPECIFIC HINTS ON VARIOUS PARTS OF HACK:

Stores:
This section presents probably the most useful thing in hack, the store. The secret to stores does not lie in the buying of items, however. The real secret lies in robbing them blind.   There are probably as many ways to steal from shops as there are shopkeepers. The most common is to acquire teleportation, on a scroll, wand, or intrinsically, pick up everything you can in the shop, and teleport out. Another method is to polymorph the shopkeeper. He may become more powerful, but it is not very likely. You can then walk past him. Another possibility is to kill the shopkeeper. This is recommended only if you are powerful (shopkeepers are not wimps), and either desperate or just plain sadistic. Finally, you can steal individual items by having your dog go into the shop and bring them out. [Reward your dog after he brings you the first item, and he will continue bringing you items. Note that any item on the space directly in front of the door is a freebie. -PG]   Teleportation is the best method by far. Since it is very to find a leprechaun on the first and second levels, it is highly recommended that you eat one, and thereby gain intrinsic teleportation. The same in fact goes for finding floating eyes to gain telepathy. [Having intrinsic teleportation isn't always a good thing, unless you can control it -PG]

Kops:
The Keystone Kops were an addition to nethack, originally intended to hinder people who rob shops. When a shop is robbed, a number of "K"'s appear. The Kops attack by throwing cream pies at you, and regenerate when they are killed. However, the Kops in fact represent yet another aspect of hack which the observant player can make excellent use of. The Kops are very easy to kill, and do very little damage. Although you can be blinded by a cream pie, since it is very easy to acquire telepathy, this is definitely not a hindrance. Most importantly, since every Kop carries a large number of cream pies, they also create an abundance of readily available food. Finally, since Kops sometimes carry magic items, killing them gives the player hoards of treasure. Regeneration is, therefore, just a bonus, because it means your supplies of food, treasure and experience points will not run out.   There is only one way the Kops can hurt a player who is even moderately powerful, but it should not be taken lightly. If the Kops throw a cream pie at you, but miss and hit the shopkeeper, the shopkeeper will get mad and attack you. This means that you must trap the shopkeeper if you do not want him getting in the way. The best way is to trap yourself and the shopkeeper with a boulder in the shop. Then, when you teleport out, the shopkeeper is alive, but trapped.

Food:
Once you have mastered combat, you will find that food becomes the main problem. If you do not continually eat food, you will eventually begin to faint and starve. Fainting is often enough to kill a character by itself.   The key is to hunt down food constantly. Hunt, kill and eat all the edible creatures you can find. ALWAYS search for monsters which can give you special abilities. In particular, before continuing below the second level you should find and eat, if possible, a leprechaun and a floating eye. [See my earlier comment on eating leprechauns. -PG]   However, do not eat so much that you could not eat any more. The reason is that if you are on the verge of choking, and kill, for example, a wraith, you would not be able to eat the cadaver for a long time, and so it might spoil before you get the chance.

Unidentified items:
Yet another key point is to find out as quickly as possible which items have which powers. This does not mean, however, that you should try every item out the instant you get it.   We will deal with the different items separately. Potions: You should almost never test out potions until you are at least seventh level, at full hit points and are on a cleared level. If you are not seventh level, you run the risk of wasting a potion of gain level. If you are not at full hit points, then should you quaff a healing potion, it will not affect your maximum hit points. If there are creatures nearby, you run the risk of being paralyzed or confused, and unable to defend yourself.   Lastly, always test your duplicate potions first.

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Scrolls:
You should only test out scrolls when you are wearing a spare set of armor and are wielding a spare weapon. This allows you to not risk your good equipment on determining which scrolls are the destroy armor and damage weapon scrolls. Of course, once one of these have been found, you no longer have to take precautions against it. You also should wait until you have something to identify, in case it is an identify scroll. You won't have to wait long. And, as with potions, check the duplicate scrolls first.

Rings:
Rings should be identified first, since they are the hardest thing to identify, aside from gems. Trying on unidentified rings is not encouraged, as one cursed ring can ruin the game. If you have a scroll of remove curse, it is safe to try on the ring. You can check it out if there is a Nymph on the level. That is dealt with later. [If you have several unidentified rings, (or armor or weapons) try them all until you have on as many cursed items as possible. This will allow you to de-curse as many as possible with one scroll. -PG]

Wands:
ALWAYS test out wands as soon as there is a weak monster in your area to zap them at. Since wand might shoot out a ray or a bolt, which bounce, it is vitally important to shoot the wand diagnolly in such a way that should the bolt bounce, it will not hit the character. [The bolt is of a finite length, so in a large room it may be safely zapped in a straight line. -PG] Usually, the wand's function is now apparent. For wands, however, this may not be sufficient to identify the wand. After zapping such a wand, and observing the target, call the wand something such as "tested1". This shows you that, although its purpose is not known, the wand has been used.

Spellbooks:
Do not read spellbooks until you are at least eighth level and have identified a scroll of amnesia. This is because transcribing spells is hard for characters less than eighth level, and the amnesia scroll remove all the spells you know. In either case, the player loses valuable spellbooks. [If you know any spells, but don't know which scroll is amnesia, don't read any scroll without identifying it. Also, just because you can learn a spell, doesn't mean you can cast it. Since spellbooks have a limited number of castings, be careful not to waste them. -PG]

Vaults:
Eventually, the player will encounter what is known as a treasure vault. The vault is a 2x2 room, with four "$" spaces, and no doors. There is always a secret door somewhere on a vault level which leads to a space which teleports the player to the vault. There is always an engraving which says "ad ?ae??um." If you find this engraving, search for the secret door next to it. To get out of a vault with all the money, you have to either teleport or use a wand of digging. If you have neither, eventually a guard will enter the vault. He is harmless, but will lead you out of the vault if you are carrying NO money. Should you discover the answer to his question, he will leave by yourself in the vault. (In other words, knowing the answer does not help). [My luckiest move was zapping a guard with a wand of polymorph. He turned into a Quantum Mechanic, hit me, and whammo! I was teleported out! - PG]

Nymphs:
Although Nymphs can be annoying, they can do one extremely useful thing: they can steal cursed items. Therefore, if a Nymph is found, you can use her to remove your cursed items. The way this is done is demonstrated in the following example of how to check unidentified rings with a Nymph on the level.
1) Clear out the level the Nymph is on.
2) Go down to the next level, and clear it.
3) Try putting on your unidentified rings. If a ring is not cursed, name it something such as "uncursed1" to mark that this type of ring is not cursed.
4) Upon finding a cursed ring, remove ALL of your equipment, and drop it on that space. Then go up the stairs, find the Nymph, and let her steal an item. The item she steals then has to be the cursed item. Go back down, equip yourself, and continue.

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Not using the dog:
Although the dog seems to be a useful ally, in fact he presents a good player with a handicap. This is for a number of reasons.
1) Anything the dog kills, the character does not get experience for. This means that it takes longer to go up levels while using the dog.
2) The dog will eat edible monsters and other Comestibles that the character needs. Hence, there is less food for the character.
3) Perhaps the worst thing about the dog is that the player can NOT enter the dog's space. This means that the dog can actually trap the player in a corridor, and prevent the player's escape from a powerful monster. For these reasons, unless you have the uncontrollable urge to experiment with the dog, it is best to leave the dog behind on the first level.

Carry extra items, but don't carry gold:
The player should always carry as many items as he possibly can through the dungeon. This is because even worthless items can be polymorphed or sold in the shops for gold. On the other hand, you should NEVER carry gold. The gold weighs a non-negligible amount, and is not used unless the person is buying an item in a shop. Since buying items is very rare, it is best to pile all the gold from a level next to the stairs going up. That way, on the way back up, the winning player can collect all the money he left behind. One useful technique of bringing more items than you can carry along is to shuffle them down. Carry your items in two (or more) piles. Leave one pile by the stairs, while carrying the other items. When you find the stairs going down, drop the surplus items, go get the other pile, and bring it down to the next level. Drop that pile, go back up, and get the other items.

Fighting floating eyes:
Many beginning players fight floating eyes by killing them in hand to hand combat. This is not a very good method, since it lets the eye get a chance to paralyze you. Instead, it is far preferable to attack floating eyes by throwing weapons at them. If you have your dog, you can always let the dog kill it, and then step in to eat the eye before the dog gets a chance.

Killing Leprechauns:
The leprechaun is yet another reason not to carry any gold at all. If you are hit by a leprechaun while you have gold, not only do you lose the gold (temporarily), but the trickster also teleports away, and so you have to hunt him down. If you do not have any gold, however, he is a very weak monster worth gold and experience. Before you fight one, drop your gold in a place he can not get to, and then kill him. Also be careful about letting the leprechaun run away, since he is faster than you are.

Dealing with Shapechangers:
Once you begin to encounter shapechangers, you should already be able to deal with all the other creatures. The shape-changers, however, are the most potentially dangerous creatures in the game, because
1) They can not be genocided, and can turn into previously genocided creatures.
2) They can kill the player instantly in more than one way.

Do not believe that the only way a shapechanger can kill you is by turning into a cockatrice and stoning you. They also have the unique ability to swallow you, as a purple worm for instance, and then kill you by changing into a different creature. There is no defense against this attack other than to wear a ring of protection against shape changers. DO NOT take them lightly.

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SPOILERS

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The following are spoilers which go beyond (in my opinion) helpful hints. Some of these spoilers (in fact most of them) can be figured out in the course of play, but they also dramatically change how the game works. Read this only if you are truly stuck.

ELBERETH:
Any version which has engraving has the secret word Elbereth in it. If the player etches the word "Elbereth" on the ground, and does not smudge the word by moving (you may type "."), monster will flee in terror upon moving adjacent to the player, so long as the player stands on that space. It works much like a scare monster scroll, except that the player can not attack off of it and preserve its abilities. Using Elbereth allows a competent player to win at will, but it is basically cheating. It is possible to guess about the word Elbereth, however. Use it only when no one is watching. [Elbereth has been weakened as of release 2.2 of NetHack. I'm not sure exactly how. But it is definitely cheating. My one win was accomplished without using it. -PG In 2.2 and greater releases, you need a Magic Pen to Engrave the E-word in order to make it permanent and useful. I never use it. - SY]

EXCALIBUR:
In nethack, there is a fairly good chance that any long sword named "Excalibur" will become +5 after being dipped in a fountain. This gives a very powerful weapon to anyone who can get a long sword; in particular a knight. [This has been eliminated in NetHack 2.2. There is still a way to get it, but I don't know what it is. -PG Just dip any longsword in a fountain. It should not be named "Excalibur" before dipping. The weapon will become progressively worse (- damage) until suddenly being 'blessed' and renamed "Excalibur" - SY]

CROESUS:
Croesus is the name that the vault guard is expecting. This does not help you win the game, but is listed for the curious.

The rubber chicken attack: If the player is wearing gloves, he may pick up and wield a dead cockatrice. Any creature struck by the bird is automatically turned to stone. Unfortunately, the cockatrice disintigrates after a period of time, but in the mean time it can wreak vast devastation. Be careful! Should you fall down while carrying a dead cockatrice, it may accidentally touch you!

Polymorphing wands:
One really big spoiler is that should you collect a large number of wands (from a wand shop, for example), and put them in a pile, you may polymorph the wands, and try to get wands of wishing. With enough wands and charges in your polymorph wand, you can eventually get at least one wand of wishing. By wishing for more polymorph wands, you can continue the process, acquiring a truly disgusting number of wishes. The best part is that the charges are the charges the old wand had, so that one wand may have up to 15 wishes!! Clearly this presents a simple, yet powerful (and cheap) method of winning. [This is also the only use I have found for the fabled "wand of nothing." They have a lot of charges. -PG] [Polymorphing your dog: If you want a real powerful pet, you can polymorph your dog, and he will remain loyal to you. However, if you have a large dog, he's probably just as good without being polymorphed. One warning, though. If your dog turns into a dragon, he may still kill you with his breath weapon, if you get in his way. -PG]

Praying for food:
One fairly common effect of praying is that the character is surrounded by a strong aura. This aura not only heals damage and restores strength, but it also raises the player's maximum hp. by 5 AND restores the player's hunger to its initial value of 900 turns. This means that, by praying every 300+ turns, even if this result only occurs once out of every four tries, the amount of food that needs to be eaten is better than halved. Use the time option to keep track of when it is time to pray.

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Canceling wands of wishing:
It is an interesting fact that a wand with zero charges CAN be zapped after a long number of tries, after which it can no longer be zapped, and has -1 charges. This works for wands of wishing as well. But, a wand of cancellation used on another wand makes the wand have 0 charges. Hence, by zapping a wand of wishing with a wand of cancellation after the wand is at -1 charges gives the player another wish. The player can continue this process indefinitely, but it takes a VERY long time. This is really an alternative to the polymorphing technique mentioned previously, but can be used by earlier versions of hack. [Another "feature" written out of NetHack 2.2. When a wand reaches -1 charges, it disintegrates. -PG]

Iron Balls:
The punishment scroll gives you an extremely powerful weapon: the Iron Ball. Although the cockatrice is more powerful, it has the disadvantages of disintegrating and of destroying all edible monster. The iron ball, although very heavy, can kill many monsters in one swing, and almost every monster in two. Try wielding it some time.

Nurses and the spell of extra-healing:
Both of these allow the player to gain an enormous number of hp. The spell grants the player hit points each time it is cast, so the player can with this spell increase his maximum hit points as many times as he has the mana to do it. [No longer true, since the spell has a finite number of uses. -PG] Nurses will cast extra healing on any character they "attack" which is not wearing any armor. This means that by letting a nurse attack you for a long period of time, you can gain literally hundreds of hit points.

Finding the wands of wishing on the 26th level and below:
Each level below the 25th has a wand of wishing on it. The wands are located beneath a large boulder ("`") which is adjacent to 3 walls. To get one of the wands, use a wand of digging to create a hole next to the boulder and push the boulder away. Using a wand of striking will work also. [You can also remove most of your goodies, and move toward the rock again. This will let you crawl under it to get the wand. -PG]

[The Medusa:
A new creature, the medusa, has been added as of NetHack 2.2. She is a unique monster, shown by the symbol "8". She guards the lower levels, and can be tough to defeat, since looking at her will instantly turn you to stone. Two items have been added to help you: the mirror, and the blindfold. Using these is the most popular method of destroying the medusa, but there are others. -PG]

Going below the 26th level:
To go below the 26th level, you must be confused and read a teleport scroll with a ring of teleport control on. This allows you to teleport to a lower level. The dungeon goes down to the 40th level, and none of the levels beyond the 26th have stairs going down. [40 is no longer the lowest level, and the Wizard isn't always there. -PG]

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Surviving the 40th level:
You MUST have fire resistance to enter the 40th level and live. The amulet is guarded by a powerful wizard and his hell hound. They are located in the center of the level, surrounded by a moat, and an inner wall. It looks like this:

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The wizard is located in the center. You can levitate over the water, or you can destroy a space of water with a wand of fire. Once over the water, use a wand of digging to blast open the wall, fight the wizard and retrieve the amulet. Now leave the dungeon, and collect as much money as you can. You also get bonus points for leaving with a pet. These points are directly related to the pet's experience level.