

INTRODUCTION

Before you continue, please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the structure of this guide. Despite the dizzying array of options and opportunities in a single Dragon Age II playthrough, we have attempted to create a guide that doesn't merely offer a prescribed path through the adventure, but also enables you to make your own decisions – to play in the manner that *you* see fit.

WALKTHROUGH

With Dragon Age II defined by its huge number of quests, many of which have short or long-term consequences, a conventional start-to-finish walkthrough would be a sprawling jungle, crawling with bewildering caveats and qualifications. For this reason, we have instead chosen to present what we regard as a rewarding and enjoyable path through BioWare's absorbing and expansive adventure.

In short, you can regard our walkthrough as an "optimal" Dragon Age II playthrough, charting an efficient and rewarding route through all essential main plot missions.

Players who would like to complete optional activities will find page references to the companion Quests chapter, while those who simply wish to see the story through to its conclusion can do just that. Follow our guidance, prompts and suggestions closely, and you'll experience a successful and enjoyable first playthrough.

As a general rule, left-hand pages in the Walkthrough chapter offer concise guidance on what you must accomplish in each main plot quest. Right-hand pages focus on tactics and strategies, feature introductions, analysis and optional tasks.

STRATEGY & ANALYSIS

Once you are ready to understand the game on a deeper level, the Strategy & Analysis chapter is where we examine the mechanics that underpin the entire Dragon Age II experience.

As most players will want to learn more about certain key game features (such as combat tactics, abilities, or leveling up and associated concepts) during a first playthrough without having the story ruined, we have divided this chapter into two sections: an opening "spoiler light" section, followed by a second part that covers features that are strongly linked to narrative events in Dragon Age II (such as companion relationships). We strongly advise that players leave the latter part well alone until they have finished the story at least once.

INVENTORY

This chapter not only provides details on all preset items in Dragon Age II, but also reveals where to find unique objects (including armor upgrades for companions and Backpack expansions), and a guide to how the "random" item generation system works.

EXTRAS

The Extras chapter is home to reading material only suitable for consumption after completing the game, including story recaps (for both Dragon Age II and predecessor Origins) and a glossary of major events, characters and concepts.

Extras also includes a dedicated guide to all Achievements and Trophies in Dragon Age II. Players who take pride in acquiring such accomplishments should be warned that this is also (alas, unavoidably) packed with story spoilers. We do, however, offer prompts on "missable" accomplishments of this ilk throughout the Walkthrough and Quests chapters.



QUESTS

This chapter has information on every quest in Dragon Age II, and details the repercussions of all major actions or decisions. During a first run through the game, readers can follow page references from the Walkthrough chapter to complete optional tasks or study alternative solutions to critical main plot quests. On any subsequent playthrough, this chapter can be used for reference as you experiment with different resolutions to the many interlinked stories.

The majority of quests are divided into five categories: main plot, secondary, companion, side quests and (in a few select instances) Premium Content.

- The Quests chapter is split into sections that correspond with Dragon Age II's three-Act structure. Each of these begins with a flowchart that offers a visual representation of how to unlock the core quests in that Act.
- The main plot sections act as an addendum to the Walkthrough chapter, detailing alternative approaches to situations within mandatory quests critical to the main storyline.
- The secondary, companion and side quest sections offer more detailed descriptions and walkthroughs for their respective quests, with guidance tailored to suit the level of assistance most players will need.

MAPS

To save you the trouble of scouring every corner of each new environment for collectibles, the Maps chapter reveals the location of every notable container or item you can get. To find a location visited during your current quest, just refer to the tab system of the Maps chapter, or to the guide's Index. Given the sheer number of areas in Dragon Age II, and different permutations of frequently visited locales, grouping all maps together is by far the most practical and user-friendly solution to make them easy to access.

BESTIARY

Dragon Age II features a huge variety of combat situations. This chapter examines each type of enemy, offering information on their abilities, strengths and weaknesses – and how you might adapt your strategies to counter or exploit these to your advantage.

As with the Strategy & Analysis chapter, all spoiler-heavy contents (story-related enemies) appear in the final section of the Bestiary.

INDEX & GLOSSARY

Last (but, given the need for easy reference in a tome this large, by no means least), our comprehensive Index will enable you to find the information you need in an instant. All entries are color-coded to help you to avoid spoiler-heavy sections of the guide until you are ready. We have created a short glossary for those who have yet to play Dragon Age: Origins, or are otherwise unfamiliar with RPG mainstays.

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ACT 1

THE DEEP ROADS EXPEDITION



QUEST SUMMARY & MAP REFERENCES

- ◆ **1. A Friend in the Guard:** From Hightown (p. 112), head south to the Viscount's Keep (p. 126) → Talk with Aveline
- ◆ **1. A New Home:** Travel to Lowtown (p. 114) → Visit Gamlen's House (p. 122)
- ◆ **1. A Business Discussion:** Return to Lowtown → Enter The Hanged Man (p. 120) → Speak with Varric
- ◆ **2. Tranquility:** Head to Lirene's Fereldan Imports (p. 122) in Lowtown → Speak with Lirene → Meet Anders at his clinic in Darktown (p. 119) → Go to Hightown at night (p. 113) → Speak to the mage to automatically enter the Chantry (p. 125)
- ◆ **3. Long Way Home:** From the World Map, travel to Sundermount in the Free Marches (p. 132) → Speak to Keeper Marethari, then meet Merrill on the sloped path → Travel through Sundermount Caverns (p. 136) to reach the otherwise inaccessible Mountain Graveyard area of Sundermount

1 **A Friend in the Guard, A New Home, A Business Discussion:** Though you should feel free to explore Kirkwall, the best way to kick off Act 1 is to complete minor main plot quests to unlock further activities. Bringing Aveline into the fold is a priority: recruiting this steadfast warrior immediately swells your ranks to the maximum party of four. After visiting Gamlen's House and conversing with Varric in The Hanged Man, you will be ready to start Tranquility, the first main plot quest of note.

2 **Tranquility:** After conversing with Lirene in her Lowtown shop to learn about Anders, visit the mage and agree to lend your assistance. When you arrive in the Chantry, talk to Karl. In the battle that ensues, focus your energies on defeating Templars and Templar Archers before you direct your party's aggression towards the more hardy Templar Lieutenant and Templar Hunter. When this confrontation ends, the party is automatically transported to Darktown.

3 **Long Way Home:** After your meeting with Keeper Marethari, visit the Clan Craftmaster to sell extraneous items, then tell Merrill that

you are ready to set off. The Dalish mage acts as a guest party member for the duration of this quest. Though you cannot control her directly, she will contribute to battles as she sees fit. The journey to the Sundermount Passage entrance is punctuated by battles with undead foes; the presence of bodies on the ground is usually a sign of trouble ahead.

Once in Sundermount Caverns, try to stay close to the entrance when Giant Spiders attack; more enter the fray from the ceiling as the fight progresses. There is a second ambush in close confines (this time featuring Corrupted Spiders) just before the Mountain Graveyard exit. Don't head up the wooden steps during this battle (Fig. 1): doing so will bring further enemies (including Corpses, Shades and a dangerous Shadow Warrior) into the battle. Tackle these separately afterwards, claim whatever loot you can find, then take the nearby exit.



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Approach the barrier to trigger a cutscene; your reaction to Merrill's magic can lead to rivalry or friendship increments. Once the way forward is clear, a fairly hefty combat encounter will start. Beginning with Skeleton Archers, it will grow to comprise such fiends as an Arcane Horror and a Shadow Warrior. Once again, leave the latter foe until last: its high endurance will enable it to act as a tank while its weaker cohorts inflict great damage. After interacting with the altar (and the resultant conversation), return to the cave entrance. You will be automatically transported first to the Dalish Camp, then to Lowtown for the concluding conversation with your new companion.

USING THE WORLD MAP

- ◆ All exits marked "Leave Area" will take you to the World Map; those with an area name lead to a connected map.
- ◆ The World Map has three pages: Kirkwall (Day), Kirkwall (Night) and the Free Marches. All locations where you can advance active quests are marked by an arrow (▼). New destinations generally appear as you accept quests or make progress in existing ventures. Not all of these are permanent additions to the game world: certain locales disappear completely once you have satisfied all related plot requirements.
- ◆ Certain Kirkwall locations are only available during the day or night. Some areas (such as Lowtown, Hightown and the Docks) have unique evening versions of their maps where you will encounter different loot, denizens and quest opportunities.

GAMLEN'S HOUSE

Though Hawke's uncle may not be the most convivial host, this hovel acts as your base of operations during the events of Act 1. Paying a visit will instantly cure any existing injuries and allow you to reselect your party members.

- ◆ Interact with the Writing Desk to collect letters sent to Hawke. Though some missives only reflect plot developments (such as the letter that awaits you on first visit from the employer you chose at the end of the Prologue), reading many of these will trigger a quest or unlock the possibility of interaction in the game world. An animated envelope (✉) will appear next to Gamlen's House on the World Map whenever new mail arrives.
- ◆ The chest marked Storage can be used to safely stash items for future retrieval. This is extremely useful when you wish to save powerful weapons, armor or accessories until Hawke or his companions meet the usage requirements.
- ◆ Bethany or Carver can be found here when not travelling with your party. If you have access to Dog, you have one opportunity to rename him here. Miss it in Act 1, and you have to settle for the default monicker.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Birthright companion quest (page 63), unlocked on your first visit to Gamlen's House, is a short but rewarding episode that leads to a collection of significant secondary quests. You can also acquire Bait and Switch (page 57) from the Writing Desk (see Gamlen's House) which can lead to the recruitment of a new companion. If you have access to any of the three Premium Content quests available at launch, you can attend to these short tasks straight away (see page 69).

Lest you forget, the purpose of your Act 1 adventures is to raise capital to join Bartrand's Deep Roads expedition. The funds that you acquire by completing optional quests will provide all the sovereigns you need to accomplish that – and more besides.

COMPANIONS

VARRIC

Varric is arguably the most easygoing of Hawke's companions. You really need to be a *thoroughbred* bastard to invite his regular disapproval.

◆ He responds well to banter and relaxed humor. Unlike most other companions, Varric isn't defined by a personal crusade or all-pervading belief. He doesn't mind situations where individuals are seeking enrichment in ways that won't necessarily harm others. His silver tongue can be called into action to mediate peaceful solutions in a number of situations.

◆ Uniquely, Varric has a fixed weapon: Bianca, a crossbow that increases in power as he gains successive levels. Functioning exclusively as an archer, he can offer a potent combination of AoE assaults and debilitating attacks that offer your party an interesting tactical edge. See page 184 for further details.



ANDERS

First encountered in Dragon Age: Origins – Awakening, Anders is an apostate (a mage who refuses to submit to the Circle of Magi) and an erstwhile Grey Warden.

◆ Anders is an emotional character. He won't respond well if you reprimand him or if you are anything but committed in potential romantic interactions.

◆ Anders is inflexibly vociferous in his opposition to the treatment of mages in Kirkwall. That said, he adopts a rather less compassionate stance towards those who dabble in blood magic or involve themselves with demonic entities. Condoning such activities will anger him.

◆ Unless you intend to have Hawke perform this function, Anders is the companion best suited to the support healer role. See page 184 for more advice on this subject.



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MERRILL

If you did not choose the mage class for Hawke, you may find that Merrill represents your party's best choice for destructive magical damage. For advice on possible developmental paths for the Dalish mage, turn to page 185.

- ◆ As with Anders and Bethany, Merrill will disapprove if you condone or facilitate the oppression of mages.
- ◆ Ruthless behavior upsets her. Merrill is a pure-hearted creature, despite her propensity for consorting with demons, so those who favor a "might makes right" approach to interactions with others will struggle to maintain a harmonious friendship.
- ◆ Merrill does not cope well with criticism or condemnation. To establish and nurture a friendship (or, for that matter, romance), take an interest in her views and offer support whenever you can.



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- ◆ The Wayward Son quest marks your first extended visits to Lowtown and the Docks in the evening, so you may wish to read up on the gangs that inhabit these areas (and, for that matter, Hightown). See page 65.
- ◆ Complete the Fools Rush In secondary quest to recruit Isabela (see page 59). This optional companion has an intriguing role to play in major events of Act 2 but will be lost forever if you fail to approach her before you reach the Deep Roads.
- ◆ While some companion quests are extensive undertakings, others are simply short cutscenes and dialogue sequences that serve to further both the story and your relationship with the individual in question. Always approach these carefully – and especially so if you intend to unlock the "Great Minds Think Alike" Achievement/Trophy (see page 242).

QUEST SUMMARY & MAP REFERENCES

◆ **4. Wayward Son:** Speak to Arianni (Lowtown's elven alienage – page 114) → Speak to Thrask (Gallows – p. 118) → Meet with Samson (Lowtown, night – p. 113) → Visit the Docks at night (p. 117) → Retrieve the contents of the marked chest at Arthuris's Private Dock (p. 147) → Interrogate Danzig (Darktown) → Travel to the Wounded Coast (p. 134) via a detour to Dead Man's Pass (p. 155) → Free Feynriel in the Slaver Caverns (p. 148) → Return to Arianni in Lowtown

4 **Wayward Son:** This lengthy multi-part quest allows you to resolve situations in different ways, and your decisions will have later repercussions. Our walkthrough here follows the most direct path, but you can consult page 53 of the Quests chapter to learn about alternative solutions. We recommend that you include Aveline and Varric in your party.

After accepting the quest from Arianni, tell Thrask that you wish to help Feynriel, then have Aveline persuade him to accept your aid. The next lead, Samson, requires no special persuasion to reveal the information you seek. Arthuris's Private Dock is your next port of call. Switch to Varric and disarm the traps as soon as you enter the main room. Most of the enemies who attack here fall with little encouragement, though the Marine Enforcer is a more demanding adversary; save him until last, then immobilize him by any means at your disposal. The battle with Captain Reiner and the Abomination is much more challenging. AoE attacks work well within the tight confines of the room where it begins, but Reiner is a slippery foe. If you struggle with this fight, try manually directing your party to the main room and draw opponents to your position gradually. Collect Thrask's Letter from the remains of the Abomination (to start a secondary quest) and the Hideout Location Map from the marked chest, then leave via the area entrance.

Drop into Darktown and confront Danzig. His initial group of slaver allies can be disabled with a couple of simultaneous AoE attacks, but the

reinforcements that arrive are made of sterner stuff. The Slaver Mage is a particular danger. Manually positioning your party at the top of the steps is a tactical approach that works well (Fig. 2). Loot Danzig's remains for the Map to the Wounded Coast, then set out for that location. You will be waylaid at Dead Man's Pass during this journey; lend aid to Javaris to begin the Blackpowder Promise quest. Be sure to collect all items on this map (you cannot return here later), then continue on to your original destination. Take the south path to reach the Slaver Caverns. If you encounter a Dalish Assassin on the way there, turn to page 107 for further details.



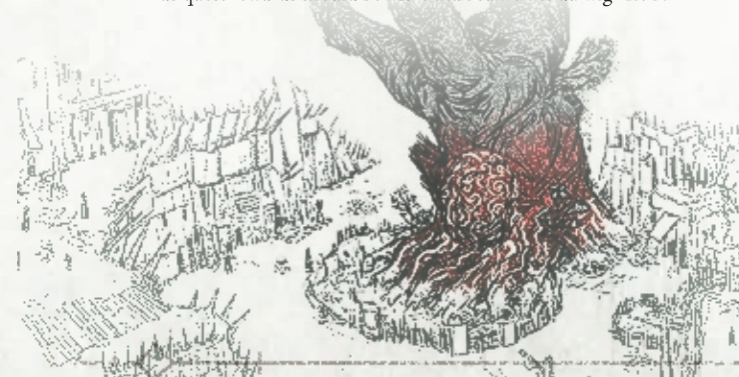
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Inside the cavern you will encounter a group of slavers – again pay special attention to the Slaver Mage. When you meet Varian, the quickest and easiest solution is to immediately call on Varric to negotiate on your behalf, then resolve the flashpoint peacefully. The final step is to choose whether to send Feynriel to the Circle or (his preference) the Dalish Camp. For the purposes of this walkthrough (and related quests), we suggest you pick the latter resolution. Take the northernmost exit to return to the Wounded Coast. You must relay the news of her son's whereabouts to Arianni to complete the quest, though you can leave this final task until later if you would rather complete Blackpowder Promise (covered overleaf) while in the vicinity.

MERCHANTS

Kirkwall's principle shopping districts are situated in Lowtown and Hightown during daylight hours, but you will also find individual merchants in other areas. To spend your coins in the most efficient way, digest the following collection of useful tips – and then study the Inventory chapter for more in-depth guidance.

- ◆ Though equipment can vary wildly in value between merchants and even between objects with ostensibly similar stats, all vendors offer the same level of reimbursement for the goods that you sell.
- ◆ Before you buy anything for a party member, be sure to check attribute and level requirements beforehand. You should also study the star ratings for such items, which indicate how effective a wearable object is for your current level: three is good, five exceptional.
- ◆ The majority of weapons, armor and accessories available in stores are "generated" items, randomly chosen from preset categories and scaled to your current level. These are often no better than objects you find on your travels. The best strategy for building a powerful party is to save for hard-coded "unique" items that offer proven long-term benefits: see the Inventory chapter on page 194 for further details.
- ◆ On the Normal and Hard difficulty levels, equipment found or offered as quest rewards should be more than sufficient during Act 1.





QUEST SUMMARY & MAP REFERENCES

- ◆ **5. Blackpowder Promise:** Travel to the Wounded Coast after meeting Javaris → Enter the Tal-Vashoth Cavern (p. 148) → Visit the Qunari Compound (Docks – page 116)
- ◆ **6. Shepherding Wolves:** Aid Sister Petrice in Lowtown (Night), then head to her safehouse to the north → Travel through the Undercity Warrens (p. 143) to reach the Vimmark Mountain Pass (p. 153) → Return to Sister Petrice

5 **Blackpowder Promise:** At the Wounded Coast, a lone Tal-Vashoth will warn of others of his kind on the path ahead before departing. Fight your way north from this position. The Tal-Vashoth have a moderate resistance to fire and electricity but are extremely susceptible to attacks imbued with cold and nature elements (including staves used by your mages – see Maximizing Damage). Use this knowledge to cut their ambushes short, then enter the cave.

The first battle inside the Tal-Vashoth Cavern is fairly uneventful, but the encounter that follows proves rather more demanding. Try ordering your party to hold at the bottom of the steps, then entice enemies to your position. If you can create a bottleneck centered on Aveline, a mage armed with Cone of Cold (in addition to other AoE attacks) can make a commanding contribution here.

Tactics of a very similar ilk work well for the final confrontation, where the open floor space of the cavern (not to mention waves of reinforcements) puts your party at a distinct disadvantage. It's advisable, then, to order your party to hold just inside the first wood-lined enclosure (or even the earlier cavern), then draw your opponents to you (Fig. 3). The Tal-Vashoth Leader provides a boost to all his allies while he still breathes (unless briefly incapacitated), so he's naturally a priority target; a micromanaged assault by all party members can topple him reasonably quickly. Potentially most dangerous of all, though, is the Tal-Vashoth Saarebas (a mage). He can

cause enormous problems if ignored (especially if your party is concentrated in a small area), so deal with this foe the instant you set eyes on him.



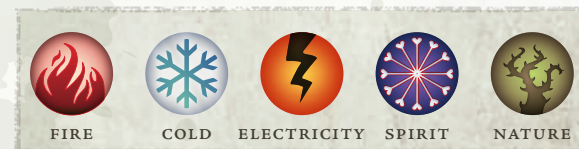
6 **Shepherding Wolves:** This quest is entirely straightforward until Sister Petrice makes her offer – just make sure you take a stock of potions to restore health, mana and stamina. The first half of the Undercity Warrens is populated by assorted spiders; note that the poisonous variety can attack from range. The Undercity Thugs fought after the cutscene assail your party in two waves, but both will perish rapidly with a quick succession of Area of Effect attacks.

At the Vimmark Mountain Pass, a confrontation with Arvaarad and his fellows is unavoidable. Due to the additional rewards it brings, we suggest refusing to hand the Tal-Vashoth Saarebas to the Qunari. As a commander (see page 222) he provides a stat boost to his peers, but focusing on him alone from the start would be ruinous. You first need to reduce the numbers ranged against you, and fast. Pause the action and direct a succession of big-hitting spells (Walking Bomb could be interesting) and abilities at the pack before they separate. Additional enemies will appear as the battle progresses; at this stage, it's a good idea to finish off Arvaarad if he's sufficiently injured. With a little astute micromanagement and timely application of potions, this is a tough but satisfying confrontation. Return to Sister Petrice to bring this episode to a close.

MAXIMIZING DAMAGE

Most assailants in Dragon Age II have fixed resistances and vulnerabilities. Acquiring a basic understanding of how these affect combat encounters can enable you to formulate more effective strategies against each enemy type. As this feature is examined in far greater depth in the Strategy & Analysis chapter (with individual strengths and weaknesses revealed in the Bestiary), the following introductory guidelines are merely designed to whet your appetite for further reading.

- ◆ Broadly speaking, enemies can possess some form of resistance or susceptibility to physical or magical damage. This explains why an opponent might wither under an arcane barrage yet stand tall in the face of whirling blades and whistling arrows.
- ◆ There are five distinct “elements” in Dragon Age II:



Enemies can possess a resistance to elements graded on a scale of one (light resistance) to five (immunity) or a two-level susceptibility: vulnerable and highly vulnerable. If an enemy has neither, elemental attacks will cause standard damage.

- ◆ The most obvious way to inflict elemental damage is through spells, but weapon attacks can also be imbued with the five elements. Staves almost always cause one specific type of elemental damage, though this is less common in other weapons (which tend to inflict purely physical harm).

Let's use a very simple example: the Rage Demon. As its body is a mass of flame, you might (correctly) assume that it possesses some degree of resistance to fire but continue to use such attacks regardless of that fact. However, it actually has a blanket immunity to fire attacks: you might as well be proffering pleasantries. Cold, by obvious contrast, is profoundly effective.

In difficult battles, pausing the action and directing all party members manually – even in short bursts – enables you to exploit weaknesses such as these and minimize wasteful assaults. Furthermore, if a party member is wielding a weapon that inflicts elemental damage, it makes sense to carry at least one backup to avoid situations where their default attack is mitigated by a resistance. On higher difficulty levels, you might even consider having a range of different elemental weapons (particularly staves) to exploit vulnerabilities in any given situation.

MISCELLANY

- ◆ In addition to scouring areas for interesting loot, you should always keep an eye open for crafting resources. Collecting these will enable you to create runes, potions, bombs and poisons – all of which can make your party stronger in battle. You also receive 200 XP per resource found. Consult the Maps chapter to learn where ingredients can be found.

- ◆ All locked chests in Act 1 are of Standard grade at maximum, which requires 20 in Cunning to unlock. If you have a rogue as a permanent fixture in your party, there's profit to be had by boosting this attribute at a fairly early stage. Complex chests that require 30 Cunning appear from the start of Act 2, so you may also wish to begin investing attribute points in anticipation of this.

- ◆ In the Xbox 360 and PS3 versions of Dragon Age II, there is a useful trick that you can employ to detect points of interactivity (especially sources of loot) in your immediate vicinity. Activate the Radial Menu and use the Camera stick to scour the environment. If there's anything of note to investigate within range, a text description will appear above it (Fig. 4). Note that this only works with points of interactivity on your current elevation. For the PC version, press the TAB key to achieve the same result.



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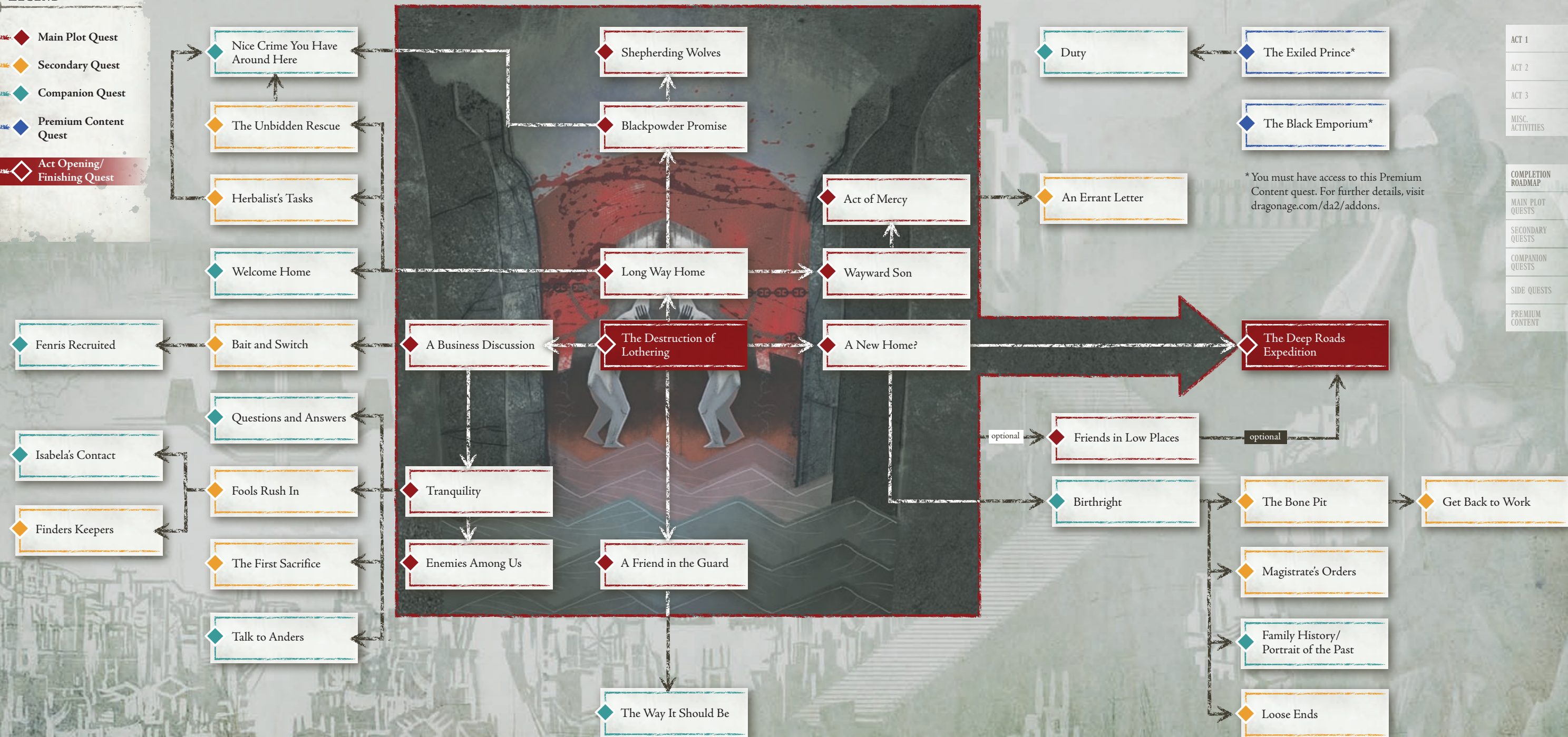
ACT 1

COMPLETION ROADMAP

If you do not wish to follow the path set out in the Walkthrough chapter, use this diagram to plan your route through Act 1. This reveals the unlock order for all main plot, secondary and companion quests. Over the pages that follow we provide fact sheets for all of these ventures, plus guidance for smaller side quests (which usually have their own unique unlock conditions).

LEGEND

- ◆ Main Plot Quest
- ◆ Secondary Quest
- ◆ Companion Quest
- ◆ Premium Content Quest
- ◆ Act Opening/
Finishing Quest



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THE DIALOGUE SYSTEM



FRIENDSHIP & RIVALRY

- PRIMER
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Hawke's performance in conversations is almost as important as his or her prowess in battle. In this section, we look at what each conversational option entails and how you can shape Hawke's personality. You can find advice on key quest conversations (and the branching story paths that you can negotiate) throughout the mighty Quests chapter.

DIALOGUE OPTIONS

ICON	DESCRIPTION	NOTES
	Diplomatic	Core dialogue choice for the Diplomatic personality type. Very rarely causes offense, likely to engender friendship increases.
	Helpful	Part of the Diplomatic personality type. Generally appears when Hawke is poised to volunteer his services to help someone or if sympathy or understanding is called for.
	Humorous	Core dialogue choice for the Humorous personality type. Rarely causes offense, tends to be a fairly "neutral" option where companions are concerned, though Isabela and Varric sometimes respond favorably.
	Charming	Secondary dialogue choice for the Humorous personality type.
	Aggressive	Core dialogue choice for the Aggressive personality type. Most likely to cause rivalry increases with companions.
	Direct	Secondary dialogue choice for the Aggressive personality type.
	Combat	Used to initiate combat immediately. The actual result (and effect on companion rivalry and friendship) depends on the context. Cutting short a conversation with a demon or brutal slavers to attack without compunction could be viewed favorably by those present; executing a misguided yet hapless pawn in a larger scheme might invite ire.
	Call on companion	Invites the specified companion to intervene in a conversation. These often lead to a unique (and, usually, non-violent or profitable) solution to a given situation. May also lead to a friendship increase.
	Flirt	Engage with a companion in an amorous or suggestive manner. Flirting is the only way to instigate a potential romance.
	End romance	Used to reject a romantic proposition from a companion or end an existing romance. Will often lead to a rivalry increase.
	Yes	Accept a proposal or offer as put forward by another character. Usually leads to new quests.
	No	Reject a proposal or offer as put forward by another character. Be very wary when rejecting potential quest opportunities: you may not get another chance.

ICON	DESCRIPTION	NOTES
	Choice	Appears when Hawke can choose from multiple responses that all address the situation in different ways. May lead to rivalry or friendship, your guide should be your knowledge of the person in question.
	Special Choice	This rare dialogue option represents a "unique" choice that may lead to a special outcome. These appear in accordance with Hawke's personality, with Diplomatic, Humorous and Aggressive types all having their own opportunities appear at set points in the story.
	Pay/Extort	Used to pay or bribe people or to enquire about a possible quest's rewards. May also be used to press for further payment at the conclusion of a quest or even blackmail or extortion in certain instances.
	Lie	Attempt to lie in order to extricate Hawke from a difficult situation. A rare option, this may not always lead to the desired result.
	Investigate	Choose this option to open a sub-menu where you can ask questions to learn more about a given topic. These may in turn offer further queries and even unlock otherwise unavailable dialogue options in other conversations.

HAWKE'S PERSONALITY

Though it may not be apparent at first, Hawke can exhibit one of three personalities based on the dialogue choices that you favor.

- ◆ Diplomatic/Helpful: Light blue or green highlight
- ◆ Humorous/Charming: Purple highlight
- ◆ Aggressive/Direct: Red highlight

The first dialogue choice you make sets Hawke's personality. If your first pick is a Diplomatic option, for example, Hawke's voice will adopt the Diplomatic tone in the next dialogue line that follows. As you keep choosing similar options at the dialogue wheel, they "stack". If you were to decide to change your personality later on, it would take more than twice the amount of (either Humorous or Aggressive) dialog lines to activate that version of Hawke's voice. The idea behind this system is to ensure a consistency in Hawke's delivery throughout each Act. After a certain number of specific dialogue choices, Hawke's personality is effectively crystallized.

At the start of each Act, Hawke retains his or her established personality, but the "stack" of previous personality choices is reduced. This gives you a window of opportunity to change your dominant tone.

Hawke's relationship with his companions is measured on a 200-point scale that ranges from rivalry to friendship. You can study a visual representation of his current standing with his cohorts in the active party at the Character menu screen (Fig. 1).



- ◆ No matter if you are speaking to them directly or addressing a third party, companions will react to your conversational options in accordance with their own unique personality.
- ◆ We offer advice on major relationship shifts throughout the Quests chapter in the Companion Guidance sections that fall at the end of each quest fact sheet. Using these, you should find it easy to engineer a full friendship or rivalry.
- ◆ Completing companion quests and increasing the relationship gauge to the 50% and 100% thresholds in either direction will unlock special mid-stage and final-stage companion conversations that serve to advance and formalize Hawke's relationship with his associates.
- ◆ Another way to further a relationship is to find and deliver "gifts", a small selection of items that will usually increase friendship. We reveal the locations of these items in the Quests and Inventory chapters.
- ◆ Developing the relationship gauge to +100 in either direction will "freeze" it in perpetuity and (Bethany and Carver excepted) unlock a special ability on a talent tree unique to friendship or rivalry with the relevant companion. At this stage, further relationship adjustments are disabled: short of dismissal, betrayal or late-game plot developments, that companion will be completely dedicated to working with Hawke (as a friend or rival).
- ◆ Don't assume that developing a rivalry will lead a companion to desert Hawke. In fact, this side of the relationship spectrum can be just as powerful as an established friendship if you take it to its conclusion. In essence, a healthy rivalry means that an ally may not agree with your methods, but they respect your ability to shape the world around you – even though the way in which goals are achieved might not correspond with their individual ideologies.

ROMANCES

If you wish to initiate a romance with a companion, follow these simple guidelines:

- ◆ Flirt with the object of your affections whenever possible. However, note that the presence of a Flirt option isn't always a true indication that a romance is possible.
- ◆ In Act 2, try to ensure that your visits to Hawke's abode occur at night. If your desired squeeze is present on arrival, use the Flirt option to initiate the next stage. When the option arises in conversation, enquire about living together.
- ◆ After the romance begins, **do not** make come-hither eyes at other companions or NPCs: this will not end well. Nor, for that matter, will any degree of ambivalence or outright rejection.
- ◆ For the rest of the story, develop the relationship gauge to maximum friendship or rivalry, complete all companion quests (including any ambient situational conversations that may occur), deliver the necessary gifts, then share a moment with Hawke's loved one in the calm before the storm during Dragon Age II's epic conclusion (you'll know it when you get there).
- ◆ For Isabela and Sebastian, the above technique only partially applies. The Companion Analysis section at the conclusion of this chapter contains a complete guide to wooing both (though Sebastian only ever offers a chaste relationship) but is surrounded by heavy spoilers if you are still on your first playthrough.



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- ATTRIBUTES
- RESISTANCES
- ELEMENTS
- STATUS EFFECTS
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UNIQUE WEAPONS



WARRIOR WEAPONS

The minimum requirements for wielding a warrior weapon are based on strength (with shields also requiring constitution), in addition to specific talent trees.

SHIELDS & ONE-HANDED WEAPONS

One-handed weapons and shields can only be used by a warrior with the Weapon and Shield talent tree. As you will mainly need such equipment for your tank, look for the following attributes:

- ◆ Improvements to armor, resistances and fortitude.
- ◆ Bonuses to health, regeneration and the healing applied to the character.
- ◆ Increased threat generation.
- ◆ Knockbacks, stuns and deathblows: these can reduce the number of opponents effectively dealing damage.

Furthermore, the high incidence of critical chance and attack speed modifiers can aid threat generation through damage.

As the game uses complex systems, note that all item attributes listed are average figures, so don't be surprised by a small degree of variation up or down. The format we use for many Acquisition notes is "item holder (location, quest)".

SHIELDS

NAME	ARMOR	PROPERTIES	REQUIREMENTS	ACQUISITION	ACT
Fereldan Soldier's Shield	37	-	12 Strength 12 Constitution	Dead refugee (Blightlands, Prologue)	1
The Bann's Backhouse Door	72	1 Rune slot +17 Health	18 Strength 18 Constitution	Coterie Leader (Lowtown - Night)	1
Markham Head Stopper	66	+38 Attack +7 Armor	18 Strength 18 Constitution	Korval's Blades (Hightown)	1
Winter-Weight	86	+9 Armor +8 Fortitude	20 Strength 20 Constitution	Dragon (Deep Roads, The Deep Roads Expedition)	1
Oddsmaker	72	+41 Attack +7% Physical damage	18 Strength 18 Constitution	Revenant (Long Way Home)	1
Kirkwall Shield	72	+20 Defense +7 Armor	18 Strength 18 Constitution	Armor Merchant (Lowtown)	1
River's Wave	134	+33 Defense +13 Armor	24 Strength 24 Constitution	Qunari Delegate (Ser Varnell's Refuge, Offered and Lost)	2
Warstopper	94	+50 Attack +4% Critical chance	21 Strength 21 Constitution	Korval's Blades (Hightown)	2
Brink-Boaster	103	+10 Armor +411 Nature resistance	22 Strength 22 Constitution	Qunari Delegate (Ser Varnell's Refuge, Offered and Lost)	2
Spirit of 4:60 Black	146	1 Rune slot +15 Armor +7% Physical damage	25 Strength 25 Constitution	Chest (Abandoned Slaver Den, A Bitter Pill)	2
Amell Family Shield	122	2 Rune slots +12 Armor	23 Strength 23 Constitution	Killer's Lair (All That Remains)	2
Defender of the Wall	122	2 Rune slots	23 Strength 23 Constitution	Armor Shop (Gallows Courtyard)	2
Darkspawn Shield	122	+4 Mana/Stamina regeneration rate +489 Fire resistance	23 Strength 23 Constitution	Weaponsmithy (Lowtown)	2
Shield of the Knight Herself	190	1 Rune slot +88 Attack +5% Critical chance 100% of basic attack damage vs. enemies that attack in melee	34 Strength 28 Constitution Aveline	Ser Varnell's Refuge (Offered and Lost)	2
Wardwall	190	+38 Armor 100% of basic attack damage vs. enemies that attack in melee	27 Strength 27 Constitution	Chest (Deep Roads, Finding Nathaniel)	3
Lord Bearing's Wall	208	1 Rune slot +94 Attack +47 Defense +10 Fortitude	29 Strength 29 Constitution	Hanker (Decrepit Alley, Kind of Want)	3
Cornerstone	208	+94 Attack +21 Armor Immunity to knock back	28 Strength 28 Constitution	Jeven (Darktown, Favor and Fault)	3
Hearth Shield	174	1 Rune slot +17 Armor +4 Health regeneration rate +19% Healing to this character	28 Strength 28 Constitution	Quest reward from Meredith (Best Served Cold)	3
Volcanic Shield	227	1 Rune slot +23 Armor +12% Fire damage	29 Strength 29 Constitution	Armor Shop (Gallows Courtyard)	3
Shield of the Resolute	248	2 Rune slots +25 Armor +8% Magic resistance	31 Strength 31 Constitution	Pile of bones (Templar Hall, The Last Straw)	3
Mage's Friend*	271	3 Rune slots +17% Magic resistance	32 Strength 32 Constitution	Faith quest	3
Lady Rosamund's Bulwark*	86	3 Rune slots	20 Strength 20 Constitution	Emporium's Relics and Antiques (Black Emporium)	1

* Downloadable content (see dragonage.com/da2/addons for details).

ONE-HANDED WEAPONS

NAME	DAMAGE	PROPERTIES	REQUIREMENTS	ACQUISITION	ACT
Overland Render	12 Physical	+38 Attack +4% Critical chance	21 Strength	Ship Captain (The Docks - Night)	1
Edge of Song and Glory	16 Physical	+47 Attack +7% Physical damage	24 Strength	Ser Karras (Gallows Courtyard, Act of Mercy)	1
Palvo's Cocksure Cleaver	12 Physical	+38 Attack +14% Threat generation	21 Strength	"Captain" Qerth (Shallowguard Base, Night Lies)	1
Thudpucker's Fist	20 Physical	1 Rune slot +57 Attack 5% Chance to Stun	28 Strength	Bonny Lem's Wares (Disused Passage)	1
Trust and Cut Blade	12 Physical	+38 Attack +14% Threat generation	21 Strength	Korval's Blades (Hightown)	1
Maelstrom	16 Physical	+4% Critical chance +4% Attack speed	24 Strength	Weapon Shop (Gallows Courtyard)	1
Notched Sword	15 Physical	+18 Mana/Stamina +7% Physical damage	23 Strength	Weaponsmithy (Lowtown)	1
Red Earth Long One	25 Physical	+76 Attack +5 Fire damage	32 Strength	Bartrand (Bartrand's Mansion, Family Matter)	2
Sundarin Thunder	20 Physical	+438 Electricity resistance +4 Electricity damage	28 Strength	Chest (Deep Roads, Fool's Gold)	2
Windsong Axe	27 Physical	+5% Critical chance +12% Critical damage +11 Electricity damage	35 Strength	Nexus Golem's Wares (Abandoned Thag)	2
One-Cut	21 Physical	1 Rune slot +61 Attack +8% Physical damage Messy Kills	30 Strength	Innley of Starkhaven (Sundermount, Bounty Hunter)	2
Markham Heart Stopper	27 Physical	+5% Critical chance +12% Critical damage Messy Kills	33 Strength	Weapon Shop (Gallows Courtyard)	2
Royeaux One and Two	13 Physical	1 Rune slot +41 Attack +4% Critical chance	22 Strength	Amaranthine Conspirator (Sundermount, The Conspirators)	2
Darktown Blade	23 Physical	1 Rune slot +4% Critical chance	30 Strength	Weaponsmithy (Lowtown)	2
Sataareth	29 Fire	1 Rune slot +94 Attack +8% Physical damage +8% Magic resistance	38 Strength	Quest reward for defeating the Arishok (Viscount's Keep, Demands of the Qun)	2
The Wailer	20 Physical	+4% Critical chance +11% Critical damage +8% Physical damage	28 Strength	Veld (The Sink, Gamlen's Greatest Treasure)	3
Bassrath-Kata	31 Physical	+100 Attack +4% Attack speed +20% Chance of Deathblows +9 damage vs. humans	39 Strength	Quest reward (The Lost Swords)	3
Perrin's Nail	25 Physical	1 Rune slot +76 Attack +19% Healing to this character	32 Strength	Korval's Blades (Hightown)	3
The Weight	29 Physical	1 Rune slot +94 Attack +11 Fortitude 5% Chance to knock back	38 Strength	High Dragon (The Bone Pit, Mine Massacre)	3
The Bringer of Silence	28 Physical	1 Rune slot +5% Critical chance +12% Critical damage +5% Chance to dispel hostile magic	36 Strength	Quest reward (Finding Nathaniel)	3
Woodsmen's Ire	27 Physical	1 Rune slot +32 Health +81 Attack +16% Threat generation	35 Strength	Jess "Leashmaster" Varvel (Run Down Alley, Reining It In)	3
Raider Sword	29 Physical	1 Rune slot +5% Critical chance +12% Critical damage	36 Strength	Shady Merchandise (The Docks)	3
City Guard Sword	29 Physical	1 Rune slot +94 Attack +4% Attack speed	36 Strength	Weapon Shop (Gallows Courtyard)	3
Sword of the Antaam	32 Physical	1 Rune slot +108 Attack +10 damage vs. humans	38 Strength	Liren's Fereldan Imports (Lowtown)	3
Aurvar's Prize	33 Physical	1 Rune slot +116 Attack +3 Armor +17% Threat generation	41 Strength	Chest (Deep Roads, Finding Nathaniel)	3
The Vague Blade	33 Physical	3 Rune slots Enemies cannot dodge attacks	41 Strength	Chest (Blood Mage Refuge, The Last Holdouts)	3
Glandivalis	33 Electricity	1 Rune slot +116 Attack +3 Armor 2.5% Chance to enslave normal enemies	41 Strength	Hybris (Hidden Dungeon, The Awiergan Scrolls)	3
Fade's Fury*	25 Physical	2 Rune slots +5% Critical chance +3 Spirit damage across 2m	34 Strength	Desire Demon (Harimann Estate, Repentance)	2
Desdemona's Blade*	17 Nature	2 Rune slots +50 Attack	25 Strength	Emporium's Relics and Antiques (Black Emporium)	1
Blade of a Thousand Battles*	35 Physical	2 Rune slots +5% Critical chance +8% Physical damage 5% Chance to knock back	42 Strength	Emporium's Relics and Antiques (Black Emporium)	3

* Downloadable content (see dragonage.com/da2/addons for details).



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STORY RECAP



You do not need to have played any previous Dragon Age games to understand and enjoy Dragon Age II and its story. Although they are set in the same richly developed universe, each episode stands alone. But if you are intrigued by the setting, it's worth noting that there is a continuity of incidents and characters. Some of the same events are covered from different perspectives. The games are broadly contemporaneous, taking place during and after the Fifth Blight, though Dragon Age II covers ten years rather than the two to three years of Origins and its Awakening expansion.

DRAGON AGE: ORIGINS

Origins opens in Year 30 of the Dragon Age, when Ferelden was threatened by the Fifth Blight. Our protagonist, later known as the Hero of Ferelden, was plucked from their place of birth under Right of Conscription and recruited by Duncan, a senior Grey Warden on his way to join King Cailan's forces. Reaching the historic stronghold of Ostagar, the new recruits were sent out on their first rookie mission to retrieve some old paperwork from a Warden outpost before the darkspawn advanced. Deep in the Korcari Wilds they encountered Morrigan and her mother Flemeth, an old Witch of the Wilds, who handed over the scrolls they were seeking.

On returning to Ostagar, the new recruits were put through an initiation ceremony known as The Joining. Only by drinking a preparation of the poisonous blood of the darkspawn can one become a Warden. Not all survive the test, and those that do are forever marked by the Taint.



As the darkspawn horde gathered, the Hero of Ferelden was assigned to light the beacon that would signal Teyrn Loghain's forces to launch a flanking assault. The King's regiment stood proudly before Ostagar, drawing the horde into a trap. But when the attack began, Loghain treacherously retired from battle and left Ostagar to perish. Both the King and Duncan were slain. The hero and fellow Warden Alistair were both rescued from the beacon tower by the old Witch, Flemeth.

Fearing that the world was lost, the survivors – now joined by Morrigan – resolved to invoke the invested authority of the Grey Wardens. Under the venerable law of Thedas, the scrolls of Ancient Treaties they had collected could revive age-old allegiances in days of Blight.

And so the hero's party swiftly set out to invoke the Treaties. After many quests and adventures, they enlisted the armies of Arl Eamon of Redcliffe; the clans of the Dalish Elves; the Dwarves of deep Orzammar; and even the Circle of Magi, whose members had been quarantined under the vigilant gaze of the Order of Templars. In a time of peril, the races and factions of Ferelden had always been compelled to forget their differences in confronting a common foe.

A Landsmeet was called in which the assembled forces rallied and the usurper Loghain's authority was challenged. They learned that only a Grey Warden may slay the archdemon leading the Blight – an act of sacrifice that would claim both lives. The demon's life essence would be reborn in the nearest darkspawn host, rendering it immortal, unless it could be drawn to the Warden instead – or to the Warden's unborn child if the player decided to perform a specific ritual with Morrigan.

Many endgame choices were open to the player, and it's worth noting that no one Dragon Age: Origins ending is considered the 'canon' or proper version of events by the developers.

DRAGON AGE: ORIGINS – AWAKENING

The Awakening expansion picked up the story six months after the conclusion of Origins. The player then assumed the role of a Warden-Commander, commissioned to take charge of the Grey Wardens at Vigil's Keep. Traveling from the city of Amaranthine, the Warden arrived to find the Keep had been attacked by darkspawn. With the end of the Fifth Blight, and no archdemon to control these darkspawn, such an organized assault should have been impossible.

Cleaning the tower led to the discovery of a new form of darkspawn, known as the "disciples," that were not only intelligent but capable of speech, hitherto thought impossible. With admirable regard for the empirical method, the Warden-Commander went on to establish that disciples could still bleed and die like any other darkspawn.

An encounter with the enigmatic Architect (the "father" of the disciples) revealed the existence of even stranger creatures. The player learned of the Mother – a sentient broodmother – and was quested to track it down. Only later was it revealed that the Fifth Blight was brought about by The Architect's sincere but botched experiment to create independent, free-thinking disciples.



Awakening concluded with a typically difficult choice. A darkspawn band had gathered to besiege the city of Amaranthine, while another was advancing on Vigil's Keep. Duties conflicted, the Warden-Commander was forced to choose between the two in lending support and saving lives.

Familiar Faces

Origins players may be able to spot the return of both major and minor characters while playing Dragon Age II. Although these are mostly cameos, it's a reminder that the Fifth Blight was only one chapter in the turbulent history of Thedas – and that life goes on, thanks to the Hero of Ferelden.

- Isabela**
Duelist captain of the pirate ship "The Siren's Call". Self-proclaimed "Queen of the eastern seas and sharpest blade in Llomerryn".
- Anders**
The dry-humored Grey Warden from Awakening.
- Alistair**
The Grey Warden and templar companion of the Hero of Ferelden.
- Merrill**
The origin story Keeper's apprentice.
- Leliana**
The bard-thief of Orlais who turned to the Chantry after an epiphany.
- Zevran**
City-elf assassin of the Antivan Crows, disgraced when he failed to kill the Hero of Ferelden.
- Nathaniel Howe**
Another companion, the rogue assassin from Awakening, currently sought by Delilah Howe.
- Bodahn & Gandal Feddic**
Dwarf trader and his enchanter son, first rescued from darkspawn on the Imperial Highway out of Lothering.
- Knight-Captain Cullen**
The templar imprisoned by Uldred in the Broken Circle quest, now enjoying a promotion.
- Justice**
A spirit from the Fade who has now fused with Anders, much as a spirit bound itself to Wynne.
- Gketch**
The bookish city elf from Leliana's Song (downloadable content).
- Benny Lem**
A merchant spy in the service of Marjolaine.
- Gophia Dryden**
Warden-Commander from Warden's Keep (downloadable content) who became involved in blood magic.

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