Dragon Age Roleplaying Game Set 2 Open Playtest

Hi! Welcome to the *Dragon Age RPG* Set 2 open playtest!

If you've stumbled across this document without having heard anything else about this open playtest, here's a recap of the announcement we originally posted about what we're trying out here:

Dragon Age Open Playtest: September 2010!

The *Dragon Age RPG Set 1* was enthusiastically received. Old hands and new tabletop roleplayers leapt at the chance to tell exciting stories of their own in Thedas.

We at Green Ronin hoped to follow Set 1, which covers PC levels 1–5, with the speedy release of Set 2, containing rules for heroes of level 6–10. We're sorry that Set 2 is not out yet, because we know that many *Dragon Age* players have hit level 5 and are anxiously waiting for the rules that will take them further.

If we could publish Set 2 tomorrow, we'd do it. Because we can't, we're going to do what we hope is the next best thing. In mid-September, we're going to open a public beta test of most of the game-mechanical aspects of Set 2, including rules for advancing Player Characters through levels 6–10.

We hope to kill two birds with one stone, giving the *Dragon Age RPG*'s fans the chance to resume their campaigns right away while also strengthening the Set 2 rules with the whole Internet's playtest notes.

When they're ready, the free beta playtest materials will be available at greenronin.com. Anyone who wants to download them will be able to. More details about how to submit your playtest reports—if you choose to do so—will be posted along with the playtest package.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the fans who've adventured in Thedas since Set 1 came out, who've told us how much they like the game, and who've patiently awaited Set 2.

We'll see you on the forums!

What's Here

This PDF contains (a) these playtesting instructions, (b) a blank playtest release, and (c) the playtest rules themselves.

Unless you're a writer, editor, proofreader, or graphic designer by trade or inclination, you're probably not used to looking at manuscript pages before they're laid out. But you'll see that the playtest rules are just such a document, containing, for example, different levels of headers notated with layout tags rather than differing levels of size

and weight. You'll see similar notation marking the beginnings and ends of tables and sidebars. None of this should be especially confusing, but a warning seems fair.

You'll also notice that most of the playtest rules haven't been edited or proofread yet. Typos abound! Just ignore them. Our process will catch them later on.

Finally (and although we hope it's obvious) many of the mechanics you'll find in these playtest rules have not been thoroughly playtested… yet! So let this serve as a warning that you may run into rules that still need some tweaking. Heads up!

What's Not Here

The playtest rules found here are not the entirely of Set 2's contents. They are simply the majority of the set's game-mechanical elements. So you may (for example) see references in the playtest rules to sections that are not actually found here. Don't let this alarm you—Set 2 will be released as a comprehensive product!

How to Playtest

One of the key reasons for this open playtest is to enlist your help in making Set 2 awesome, so we hope you'll submit a playtest report.

Your playtest report should consist of a single PDF document, which should have three parts, occurring in this order: First, your playtest release; second, your answers to four main questions; and third, your other notes.

Please only submit one report for your group that reflects its consensus, or summarizes its differing opinions. (Or, if different voices in your group want to submit individual reports, that's fine, too.) What we don't want is a series of reports that chronicle your thoughts as they evolve over the playtest period, for the simple reason that we expect to receive lots of reports even at one per group or voice. So, plan to submit one report that reflects everything you think.

We promise to read all the reports we receive in their entirety. Although it probably goes without saying, good reports will communicate clearly and succinctly. Your conclusions are most likely to be persuasive if they're supported with concrete evidence.

To be considered, submit your playtest report by midnight (US Pacific time) on October 17, 2010. Send it, attached to an e-mail, to openplaytest@greenronin.com.

You are free to discuss, debate, write, and talk about the open playtest rules on forums, blogs, podcasts, and other social media. Just be aware that we won't necessarily be aware of those discussions unless you also submit your thoughts as described above.

Playtest Release

The first page of your playtest report PDF must be a playtest release signed by each member of your group who contributed. Any playtest report whose first page is not such a release will be deleted unread.

Note that we will assemble a list of playtest credits from the names recorded on these releases, so legibility counts!

Four Questions

In the next section, answer the following questions in as little or as much detail as you wish:

1. How did you use the playtest rules?

(Did you just read them? Use them in actual play? For how many sessions? Using what kind of PCs?)

2. What kind of experience does your group have with tabletop RPGs?

(Are you old hands? Relative novices? A mix of both? Feel free to list your most favorite, or least favorite, other RPGs if that would help us understand your perspective.)

3. What is the most critical problem you've identified in the playtest rules?

(Keep in mind that if you have an issue with something that's baked into the core of the Adventure Game Engine, taking issue with it here isn't likely to result in your satisfaction. We obviously can't make sweeping changes to the basics of the game in Set 2.)

4. What's the most critical success you've identified in the playtest rules?

(That is, what would you like to see published in Set 2 exactly the way it's presented in the playtest rules, without any significant changes at all?)

Other Notes

After answering the four questions, include any other notes you want us to read, the bad and the good. (Or just the bad. Or just the good. Up to you!)

If you want to summarize your critical problem and critical success (#3 and #4, above) at first and then provide extended notes and back-up in the "other notes" section, that's fine. If you want to draw diagrams and make charts and embed videos of the members of your group waving their arms in outrage about some travesty of game design, that's great!

One area you might want to address in this section are any rules or elements that you expected to see but did not seem to be addressed, or that you observed but you don't think belong here. (But keep in mind that the playtest rules only include the Set 2 game mechanics. Lots of background material will also be provided as part of Set 2, it's just not included in the open playtest.)

You are likely to want to refer to specific passages of the playtest rules in these notes. It's generally better to refer to sections by their header names, rather than by page numbers, but keep in mind that some headers recur in different sections, so make sure you're clear when you make a reference. (For example, every class description has a "Class Powers" header, so it's not specific enough to say that you love everything found underneath that header.)

Something that's not useful are proofreading and editing comments, unless you want to identify a passage so obtuse that you could not even understand what it meant. At this stage, proofreading and editing comments just distract everyone from the big picture.

One final—and important—instruction about writing your playtest notes is that we're not looking for you to do design work. That's our job! Because tabletop RPGs attract creative people, you may be tempted to whip together a new subsystem to address something that you think is a hole or shortcoming, and drop it into your playtest report. When this urge strikes, please restrain yourself. We simply want your feedback on the playtest rules as they exist. To be clear, though, it's fine to say something like, "I think there should be a talent for dancing." What you shouldn't do is send us the six new Talents you designed.

A Great Big Thank You!

We at Green Ronin are excited about this open playtest. We really want to thank you in advance for downloading this playtest package, especially if you're able to send us a playtest report.

Thanks!

Dragon Age RPG Set 2 Open Playtest — Playtest Release

By signing my name below, I certify and agree that my playtesting suggestions, ideas, and comments as recorded in this document are mine to freely express, and become the exclusive property of Green Ronin Publishing, LLC.

Name (print legibly!):

Signature:

Name and signature of parent or guardian, if playtester is a minor:

E-mail and physical address:

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Signature:

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[Chapter] Character Options

Player characters that have completed the first 5 levels of their class have survived their initiation into a dangerous world. They have gained new abilities and valuable experience, and they can move with confidence in the world. They may have earned some respect but they shouldn't get smug just yet. Thedas is home to many powerful people and monsters and there are still lessons to learn.

To start with this chapter includes new character creation options. There is a point buy system for determining abilities, an alternate method for arranging rolled abilities, and ten new backgrounds. The latter expand your options beyond Ferelden and its environs. Notable additions include the dwarves of Orzammar and the qunari.

The core of this chapter presents the class information that will let mages, rogues, and warriors advance from levels 6-10. The most important new class power is the specialization, which is chosen at level 6. A specialization unlocks a new type of talent that lets you further customize your character. You can learn more about them in **Chapter 3: Focuses, Specializations, and Talents.**

Last but by no means least, **Chapter 2** provides rules for playing a Grey Warden. This road is not for every character, but those willing to make the sacrifice required gain some unique powers.

[H1] Ability Options

The character creation rules in Set 1 were designed with the beginner in mind. Random elements make the process easy because they cut down on decision making. If you've gotten to Set 2, however, you clearly have some experience. When you make a new character, either for a new campaign or because your previous character died, you may wish to use one of the following options when you get to Step 2 of character creation: Determine Abilities. The GM decides whether these options are available in his campaign, so you should confer with him before using one.

[H2] Option 1: Arranging Abilities

In this option you roll your abilities randomly as per Set 1. However, you can assign the results as you wish, so you have total control over which rating goes with which ability. Instead of making a first roll and assigning it to Communication, a second and assigning it to Constitution, and so on, you simply roll 8 times on the Determining Abilities table (page 19 of the Set 1 *Player's Guide*) and note the results on a piece of scratch paper. Then you assign each rating to the ability of your choice.

[H2] Option 2: Point Buy Abilities

Option 1 provides you with more control over your character's abilities, but some players want total control. That's what the point buy option is for. In this option your character's abilities start at 0 and you get 10 points to buy them up (and you must spend them all). Each point raises an ability by 1 and no ability can be greater than 3. Backgrounds then modify these starting scores as normal in step 3 of character creation: Choose a Background. So you could buy your character's Constitution up to 3, for example, and then choose the Fereldan Freeman background to make it a 4.

Note that unlike some point buy systems, this does not allow you to make some abilities worse so you have more points to spend on others.

[H1] New Backgrounds

Set 2 introduces ten new backgrounds for the Dragon Age RPG: Antivan Wayfarer, Dwarf Duster, Ferelden Craftsman, Lower Caste Dwarf, Marcher Burgher, Nevarran Adventurer, Orlesian Exile, Qunari Beresaad, Qunari Tal-Vashoth, and Upper Caste Dwarf. These backgrounds allow for characters from the wider world and serve to introduce some of the nations beyond Ferelden's borders. Not all of them will make sense in every campaign. The dwarves of Orzammar rarely leave their homeland, for example, and those that do venture above ground usually lose their

caste status. If you aren't sure how a background will fit into the campaign, talk it over with your GM before making your final choice.

[H2] Antivan Wayfarer

Antiva is a coastal nation north of Ferelden and east of the Tevinter Imperium. While technically a monarchy, Antiva is really ruled by its merchant princes. It produces little of note but excellent wine, so trade is a way of life. Antiva is famous for its merchants and sailors, though it has little in the way of a warrior tradition. It is said that Antivans are good at everything but fighting. Or at least fighting on the battlefield. In fact, they excel at dirty fighting and Antiva is home to the most notorious guild of assassins, thieves, and spies in Thedas: the House of Crows. The Crows are part and parcel of the political structure in Antiva, though the identities of the rich and powerful that direct its council are a secret. The system seems anarchic but the House of Crows has proved a valuable safeguard to Antivan independence. While the nation may not have a standing army, the leaders of any invading force know that the Crows will get to them in the end. This is an effective deterrent to would be conquerors.

Since Antivans trade all over Thedas, they are frequently found in port cities and other commercial centers. The Crows too export their services. They are valued for their skill, discretion, and professionalism.

[H3] Playing an Antivan Wayfarer

If you choose to play an Antivan wayfarer modify your character as follows:

- Add 1 to your Communication ability. Antivans are expressive and love to talk.

- Pick one of the following ability focuses: Communication (Bargaining) or Cunning (Navigation).

- You can speak and read Antivan and the Trade Tongue.

- Choose a class. You can play either a rogue or a warrior.

- Roll twice on the following table for additional benefits. Roll 2d6 and add the dice together. If you get the same result twice, re-roll until you get something different.

[table]
Antivan Wayfarer

2d6 Roll	Benefit
2	+1 Cunning
3-4	Focus: Cunning (Cultural Lore)
5	Focus: Communication (Seduction)
6	Focus: Communication (Persuasion)
7-8	+1 Dexterity
9	Focus: Dexterity (Initiative)
10-11	Focus: Perception (Hearing)
12	+1 Perception
[/table]

[H2] Dwarf Duster

Dwarf society in Orzammar is rigidly hierarchical. Most dwarves belong to a caste, with the nobles on top and the servants on the bottom. All citizens with a caste receive certain protections under the law. There exists an underclass of dwarves that have no caste, however. They are known as dusters, after their neighborhood in Orzammar (Dust Town). These dwarves lost their caste or are descended from those that did. Dusters receive no protection under the law and they are forbidden from doing any job controlled by a caste. Practically speaking, this means almost no legal work is open to them. They can't be miners, craftsmen, traders, or even servants. To survive in Dust Town, most have little option but to turn to crime. Many work for the Carta, a powerful organized crime syndicate that controls a virtual shadow economy in the slums.

Dusters are the most likely dwarves to leave Orzammar. They have little to lose by going to the surface world, since they are already casteless. If there is a surprising facet to dwarf society, it is

that so many dusters stay in a city that treats them like rubbish. Those who escape to the surface rarely look back.

[H3] Playing a Dwarf Duster

If you choose to play a dwarf duster, modify your character as follows:

- Add 1 to your Dexterity ability. Dusters must be quick to survive in the slums of Orzammar.

- Pick one of the following ability focuses: Communication (Deception) or Dexterity (Legerdemain).

- You gain the Magic Resistance (Novice) talent.

- You can speak and read Dwarven and the Trade Tongue.

- Take the rogue class.

- Roll twice on the following table for additional benefits. Roll 2d6 and add the dice together. If you get the same result twice, re-roll until you get something different.

[table]
Dwarf Duster

2d6 Roll	Benefit
2	+1 Perception
3-4	Focus: Constitution (Running)
5	Focus: Perception (Searching)
6	Focus: Dexterity (Stealth)
7-8	+1 Communication
9	Focus: Communication (Bargaining)
10-11	Focus: Cunning (Evaluation)
12	+1 Cunning

[/table]

[H2] Fereldan Craftsman

The crafting class in Ferelden is essentially the middle class: above the freemen but below the nobility. The class is divided into a series of guild-like organizations called crafthouses. Most of these groups are indeed concerned with crafting of some sort (smithing, wood carving, building, etc.) but there are two exceptions. First, there is the Traders' Crafthouse, which is an organization of merchants. Surface dwarves founded it originally, since the rough and tumble barbarians of Ferelden looked down on middle men. The dwarves are still in charge, but most of the day to day work is done by Fereldans now. Second, the Chantry is considered part of the crafting class. This gives priests an honored position but not as much political sway as the Chantry would like. The Chantry in other nations, particularly Orlais, has much greater political power.

Ferelden craftsmen are not as likely as freemen to become adventurers. Their lives are generally more settled and most have obligations to their crafthouse or the Chantry. There are always those who see more from life, however, be it the armorer in search of rare metals, the explorer looking to open up new trade routes, or the priest in search of ancient artifacts.

[H3] Playing a Fereldan Craftsman

If you choose to play a Feraldan craftsman, modify your character as follows:

- Add 1 to your Dexterity ability. Craftsmen are good with their hands.

- Pick one of the following ability focuses: Dexterity (Crafting) or Cunning (Religious Lore).

- You can speak and read the Trade Tongue.

- Choose a class. You can play either a rogue or a warrior.

- Roll twice on the following table for additional benefits. Roll 2d6 and add the dice together. If you get the same result twice, re-roll until you get something different.

[table]
Fereldan Craftsman

2d6 Roll	Benefit
2	+1 Communication
3-4	Focus: Communication (Bargaining)
5	Focus: Communication (Persuasion)
6	Focus: Willpower (Faith)
7-8	+1 Cunning
9	Focus: Cunning (Brewing)
10-11	Focus: Strength (Smithing)
12	+1 Strength

[/table]

[H2] Lower Caste Dwarf

The dwarves of the lower castes do the hard work day after day that keeps Orzammar functioning. Its castes are Miner, Merchant, and Servant. The Miner Caste is the most prestigious, particularly those that do the dangerous job of mining lyrium. The Merchant Caste is the next important, as they bring money into the city and arrange valuable trade deals. The Servant Caste is the lowest, though even they rank above surface dwarves and the casteless.

Of this group it is the members of the Merchant Caste who are most likely to leave Orzammar or become adventurers. Trade deals often lead to contact with humans and the surface dwarves were originally part of the Merchant Caste. Sometimes a member of the Merchant Caste will join his kin on the surface despite the loss of status at home. This happens more rarely with members of the Miner and Servant Castes, though it is not unknown for miners to sell their expertise to human nations for gold and other riches.

[H3] Playing a Lower Caste Dwarf

If you choose to play a lower caste dwarf, modify your character as follows:

- Choose a caste: Merchant, Miner, or Servant.

- Add 1 to your Communication ability. Members of the lower castes need to make friends to get ahead.

- Pick one of the following ability focuses: Communication (Persuasion) or Constitution (Stamina).

- You gain the Magic Resistance (Novice) talent.

- You can speak and read Dwarven and the Trade Tongue.

- Choose a class. You can play either a rogue or a warrior.

- Roll twice on the following table for additional benefits. Roll 2d6 and add the dice together. If you get the same result twice, re-roll until you get something different.

[table]
Lower Caste Dwarf

2d6 Roll	Benefit
2	+1 Perception
3-4	Focus: Communication (Etiquette)
5	Focus: Perception (Hearing)
6	Focus: Communication (Bargaining)
7-8	+1 Constitution
9	Focus: Constitution (Drinking)
10-11	Focus: Strength (Might)
12	+1 Strength

[/table]

[H2] Marcher Burgher

North of Ferelden, across the Waking Sea, is the Free Marches. This loose confederation of city-states is known as the breadbasket of Thedas due to its rich farmland and abundant crops. The Free Marches has no central government and most of the time its member cities are embroiled in any number of minor feuds over trade, tariffs, and territory. When threatened by an outside power, however, the Marchers pull together and put armies in the field that rival those of their neighbors. The major cities of the Free Marches are Ansburg, Tantervale, Ostwick, Starkhaven, and Kirkwall.

The burghers are a dynamic people. They are great traders but they are also fierce defenders of their home cities. Many practice their martial skills to compete in the Grand Tourney, a traveling tournament and faire that moves from city to city. Roughly once every three years, the Grand Tourney settles down for a year to hold a Contest of Arms. People from all over Thedas travel to the Free Marches to see or compete in this legendary event.

[H3] Playing a Marcher Burgher

If you choose to play a Marcher burgher, modify your character as follows:

- Add 1 to your Cunning ability. The Free Marches are nothing if not competitive and it takes a sharp mind to thrive there.

- Pick one of the following ability focuses: Cunning (Evaluation) or Communication (Bargaining).

- You can speak and read the Trade Tongue.

- Choose a class. You can play either a rogue or a warrior.

- Roll twice on the following table for additional benefits. Roll 2d6 and add the dice together. If you get the same result twice, re-roll until you get something different.

[table]
Marcher Burgher

2d6 Roll	Benefit
2	+1 Constitution
3-4	Focus: Constitution (Swimming)
5	Focus: Communication (Gambling)
6	Focus: Cunning (Cultural Lore)
7-8	+1 Communication
9	Focus: Communication (Deception)
10-11	Focus: Dexterity (Legerdemain)
12	+1 Dexterity

[/table]

[H2] Nevarran Adventurer

Nevarra was once one of the Free Marches, and so it still might be if not for the military genius of the Pentaghast clan. A series of strong rulers and brilliant commanders enabled Nevarra to expand and become a powerful nation in its own right. This was cemented in the Blessed Age when Nevarra defeated Orlais in a war and conquered the mineral-rich hills to the west. Despite the military tradition of Neverra, few thought that this upstart nation could beat the empire and its vaunted chevaliers. The hills remain under Nevarran control but are a troubled territory. The Nevarrans tax their new subjects heavily and Orlais foments unrest there.

The Nevarrans are proud of their heroic tradition and this is celebrated with statuary through the country. Nevarra is famous for its dragon hunters, who were thought to have eradicated dragon kind until the start of the current age. The romance of such deeds exerts a strong pull on the young and many seek their own adventures throughout Thedas. They hope they too will be celebrated in song and statue in their homeland one day.

[H3] Playing a Nevarran Adventurer

If you choose to play a Nevarran adventurer, modify your character as follows:

- Add 1 to your Willpower ability. It takes inner strength to face the challenges of Thedas.

- Pick one of the following ability focuses: Strength (Might) or Willpower (Courage).

- You can speak and read Orlesian and the Trade Tongue.

- Choose a class. You can play either a rogue or a warrior.

- Roll twice on the following table for additional benefits. Roll 2d6 and add the dice together. If you get the same result twice, re-roll until you get something different.

Nevarran Adventurer

2d6 Roll	Benefit
2	+1 Communication
3-4	Focus: Communication (Leadership)
5	Focus: Perception (Tracking)
6	Focus: Willpower (Self-Discipline)
7-8	+1 Strength
9	Focus: Strength (Jumping)
10-11	Focus: Constitution (Stamina)
12	+1 Constitution

[H2] Orlesian Exile

Orlais is the most powerful and cultured nation in Thedas. The Empress Celene I rules from the glorious city of Val Royeaux. The Chantry is also centered in the city. The leader of the Chantry, the Divine, rules from her seat in the Grand Cathedral, one of the most breathtaking buildings in Thedas. In Orlais secular power and religious power meet and it is not often clear where one ends and the other begins. Despite the power of the empire, however, Orlais has seen serious setbacks in the last 60 years. First, it lost a war with Nevarra over a slice of valuable territory. Then the Orlesians were defeated in Ferelden and their occupation ended. The situation remained tense for some years, but under King Maric relations with Orlais were eventually normalized and the threat of renewed war receded.

Within Orlais and Val Royeaux in particular, the nobles play an endless game of status and politics. The gossip of the salons can end a man's life as quickly as a sword thrust. The fickle nature of factions and fashion can see a family ruined one year only to return triumphant the next. Like any game, this one has losers and sometimes the wisest course of action is to leave Orlais, at least for a time. Some are formally exiled for crimes real or implied, while others choose to wander Thedas until conditions at court change. Such Orlesian exiles can be found all over Thedas.

[H3] Playing an Orlesian Exile

If you choose to play an Orlesian exile modify your character as follows:

- Add 1 to your Communication ability. Orlesians are artful in their use of language.

- Pick one of the following ability focuses: Communication (Persuasion) or Strength (Jumping).

- You can speak and read Orlesian and the Trade Tongue.

- Choose a class. You can play either a rogue or a warrior.

- Roll twice on the following table for additional benefits. Roll 2d6 and add the dice together. If you get the same result twice, re-roll until you get something different.

Orlesian Exile

2d6 Roll	Benefit
2	+1 Perception
3-4	Focus: Perception (Empathy)
5	Focus: Cunning (Heraldry)

6	Focus: Communication (Deception)
7-8	+1 Strength
9	Focus: Dexterity (Riding)
10-11	Weapon Group: Light Blades*
12	+1 Dexterity

* If the class you choose provides this already, you can take the focus Dexterity (Light Blades) instead.

[H2] Qunari Beresaad

It is fair to say that the humans of Thedas have little understanding of the qunari. To outsiders they appear a diabolic race of giants bent on conquest. It is often assumed that qunari live under a military dictatorship. This is understandable because it is the leader of the military, the Arishock, who handles diplomacy with foreign nations. The qunari do not have a dedicated group of diplomats, however. Instead the have the Beresaad, the vanguard of the qunari people. The Beresaad are soldiers first and foremost and they view the world as such. They are trusted to go in to foreign lands and deal with humans, elves, and dwarves. Sometimes these are formal diplomatic missions, but in other instances the Arishock sends the Berisaad to do intelligence work or investigate specific aspects of foreign cultures.

The Beresaad always have a mission, even if its nature is not apparent. If you choose this background, you should work out with your GM what brought you to Ferelden and what your orders are. Soldiers of the Beresaad are sometimes gone for years at a time, but they are still part of a military machine and at a certain point they must report in. In a long running campaign, this is something you'll have to deal with eventually.

[H3] Playing a Qunari Beresaad

If you choose to play a qunari Beresaad, modify your character as follows:

- Add 1 to your Strength ability. Qunari are large and physically imposing.

- Pick one of the following ability focuses: Cunning (Qun) or Strength (Intimidation).

- You can speak and read Qunlat and the Trade Tongue.

- You are male. Qunari females do not join the military.

- Like all qunari you are susceptible to magic. You suffer a -1 penalty on all ability tests to resist spells and other magical effects, such as magic item powers.

- Choose a class. You can play either a warrior or a rogue.

- Roll twice on the following table for additional benefits. Roll 2d6 and add the dice together. If you get the same result twice, re-roll until you get something different.

Qunari Beresaad

2d6 Roll	Benefit
2	+1 Constitution
3-4	Focus: Constitution (Stamina)
5	Focus: Communication (Leadership)
6	Focus: Cunning (Military Lore)
7-8	+1 Cunning
9	Focus: Cunning (Historical Lore)
10-11	Focus: Strength (Might)
12	+1 Strength

[H2] Qunari Tal'Vashoth

The qunari people follow a philosophy known as the Qun. Before they embraced it, they were a barbaric people prone to violent rages. The Qun made these barbarians into thinkers, planners, and technicians, though they also remained warriors. There are those qunari, however, who reject the Qun. Some of them want to return to the old ways of their people, while others just want to

live by their own rules. These rebels are known as vashoth or "grey ones" and they must leave qunari lands before they are detected or face reeducation or punishment. Such exiles are not considered part of the qunari people any more. In the spirit of defiance, they call themselves Tal' Vashoth or "true grey ones." Many of them now worship the old, animist gods of their people and see themselves as the real inheritors of their ancestors' legacy.

Tal'Vashoth live in foreign lands and get by as they can. Many work as mercenaries because their strength and skill in battle are prized. Others become raiders, pirates, smugglers, or even slavers. Roving bands of Tal'Vashoth are not uncommon in the north and they pose problems for both qunari and human settlements.

[H3] Playing a Qunari Tal'Vashoth

If you choose to play a qunari Tal'Vashoth, modify your character as follows:

- Add 1 to your Strength ability. The Tal'Vashoth revel in their physical dominance.

- Pick one of the following ability focuses: Constitution (Stamina) or Strength (Intimidation).

- You can speak and read Qunlat and the Trade Tongue.

- Like all qunari you are susceptible to magic. You suffer a -1 penalty on all ability tests to resist spells and other magical effects, such as magic item powers.

- Choose a class. You can play either a rogue or a warrior.

- Roll twice on the following table for additional benefits. Roll 2d6 and add the dice together. If you get the same result twice, re-roll until you get something different.

[table]
Qunari Tal'Vashoth

2d6 Roll	Benefit
2	+1 Willpower
3-4	Focus: Willpower (Courage)
5	Focus: Constitution (Running)
6	Focus: Strength (Might)
7-8	+1 Constitution
9	Focus: Constitution (Swimming)
10-11	Focus: Strength (Climbing)
12	+1 Strength

[/table]

[H2] Upper Caste Dwarf

At the top of dwarf society are the noble houses, whose feuds and fights go back many generations. The rest of the population is divided into castes, the top tier of which are the Warrior Caste, Smith Caste, and Artisan Caste. The Warrior Caste is the most prestigious for obvious reasons. The warriors fight a never ending war against the darkspawn in the Deep Roads, as well as providing the rank and file soldiers of the noble houses. There are so many warriors that the caste is actually divided into several sub-castes, such as the Soldier Caste, Guardsman Caste, and Officer Caste. The Smith Caste is the next important and again the reasons are clear. How would the warriors fight without arms and armor? Finally, there is the Artisan Caste. They too are highly esteemed in dwarf society, for they are the builders and makers that make Orzammar hum.

Since upper caste dwarves have privileged positions in Orzammar, it is rare for them to leave for the surface world. Some are exiled for committing crimes or being on the wrong side of a dispute between houses. Others may be sent on missions to the human lands, though this an unusual occurrence. If you want to play an upper caste dwarf who has left Orzammar, you should talk to your GM about the circumstances of your departure and whether this will lead to loss of your caste should you return home.

[H3] Playing an Upper Caste Dwarf

If you choose to play an upper caste dwarf, modify your character as follows:

- Choose a caste: Artisan, Smith, or Warrior.

- Add 1 to your Strength ability. You must be strong to survive the politics of Orzammar.

- Pick one of the following ability focuses: Cunning (Crafting), Strength (Intimidate), or Strength (Smithing).

- You gain the Magic Resistance (Novice) talent.

- You can speak and read Dwarven and the Trade Tongue.

- Choose a class. You can play either a rogue or a warrior.

- Roll twice on the following table for additional benefits. Roll 2d6 and add the dice together. If you get the same result twice, re-roll until you get something different.

[table]
Upper Caste Dwarf

2d6 Roll	Benefit
2	+1 Willpower
3-4	Focus: Willpower (Courage)
5	Focus: Communication (Etiquette)
6	Weapon Group: Axes
7-8	+1 Cunning
9	Focus: Cunning (Engineering)
10-11	Focus: Constitution (Stamina)
12	+1 Constitution

[/table]

* If the class you choose provides this already, you can take the focus Strength (Axes) instead.

[sidebar]
[H3] Mages from Other Nations

The mage backgrounds from Set 1, apostate and Circle Mage, assume a character from Ferelden. If you'd prefer to play a mage from another nation, you can do this simply by modifying the character's starting languages. A mage from Orlais or Nevarra will also speak and read Orlesian, for example, while one from Antiva will also speak and read Antivan. The existing backgrounds work as is for mages from the Free Marches. Generally speaking, each nation has its own Circle of Magi. If you are playing a Circle mage from another country, you should work out with the GM your relationship with your home Circle and why you are away. Apostates, of course, always have a good reason to be on the move.
[/sidebar]

[H1] Classes

Set 2 contains class information for levels 6-10. In addition to the specific powers unique to each class, all *Dragon Age* characters gain the following benefits upon achieving level 6:

- You can now add an applicable focus to the result of the Dragon Die when determining the degree of success of an ability test. Your experience gives you better results than lower level characters. Note that this applies to degrees to success only, not to the generation of stunt points.

Example: *Locke, a city elf rogue, makes a successful Perception (Seeing) test. She has the Seeing focus, and the Dragon Die comes up 5. A character of level 1-5 would have a degree of success of 5. However, Locke recently became level 6, so she can add her Seeing focus to the Dragon Die. Her degree of success on this test is thus an impressive 7.*

[H2] Gaining Levels

The experience points required to attain each level are summarized on the accompanying table. When your experience point total is high enough, your character gains a level. When this occurs, four things happen immediately:

- Your character's Health increases by 1d6 + Constitution.

- You may increase a single one of your character's abilities by 1. If you gained an even numbered level, you must increase a primary ability. If you gained an odd numbered level, you must increase a secondary ability.

- You can pick one new ability focus. If you gained an even numbered level, you must choose a focus from one of your primary abilities. If you gained an odd numbered level, you must choose a focus from one of your secondary abilities.

- You gain the class powers for your new level. You can find them in the class description.

When you go up a level, you may also want to review your goals. Have any of them been achieved? Based on the events of the campaign, do you have any new goals? You can do this any time, of course, but leveling up is a convenient time to check in and reassess.

[sidebar]

[H3] Experience Point Table

This table summarizes the experience points (XP) you need to attain levels 6-10. You should keep track of your XP on your character sheet.

XP Total	Level
0-1,999	1
2,000-4,499	2
4,500-7,499	3
7,500-10,999	4
11,000-14,999	5
15,000-19,499	6
19,500-24,499	7
24,500-29,999	8
30,000-35,999	9
36,000-42,499	10

[/sidebar]

[H2] Mage

[100 words about the class here.]

[H3] Class Powers

Mages gain the following powers at the specified level.

Mana Points: You continue to gain Magic + 1d6 mana points whenever you gain a new level.

[H4] Level 6

New Specialization: You may choose one specialization for your class. You gain the novice degree of its specialization talent. See **Chapter 3: Focuses, Specializations, and Talents.**

New Spell: You gain one new spell.

[H4] Level 7

Long Lance: The range of your arcane lance attack becomes 24 yards.

New Talent: You become a novice in a new talent or gain a degree in a talent you already have.

[H4] Level 8

New Spell: You gain one new spell.

New Specialization Talent: You gain the journeyman degree in the specialization talent you gained at level 6.

[H4] Level 9

New Talent: You become a novice in a new talent or gain a degree in a talent you already have.

Power Lance: You can increase the damage of an arcane lance attack by 1d6 by spending 2 mana points. You must spend the mana before making the attack roll.

[H4] Level 10

New Specialization Talent: You gain the master degree in the specialization talent you gained at level 6.

New Spell: You gain one new spell.

[H2] Rogue

[100 words about the class here.]

[H3] Class Powers

Rogues gain the following powers at the specified level.

[H4] Level 6

New Specialization: You may choose one specialization for your class. You gain the novice degree of its specialization talent. See **Chapter 3: Focuses, Specializations, and Talents.**

[H4] Level 7

Dirty Fighting: You can daze opponents with sharp blows to vulnerable areas. To use dirty fighting, you must first hit with a melee attack. If successful, you inflict no damage but your opponent must make a successful TN 13 Constitution (Stamina) test or become stunned. A stunned character can attempt the test again at the start of his turn, and if successful can act normally. Otherwise, the only thing a stunned character can do on his turn is take a single move action. While your opponent is stunned, all of your melee attacks are considered backstabs. Stunts are possible on your initial attack roll, so you could stun your opponent and then use Lightning Attack for an immediate backstab, for example.

New Talent: You become a novice in a new talent or gain a degree in a talent you already have.

[H4] Level 8

New Specialization Talent: You gain the journeyman degree in the specialization talent you gained at level 6.

[H4] Level 9

Lethality: You use your wits to hit enemies where it hurts. With either melee attacks or ranged attacks (your choice), you can add your Cunning to damage. You must choose between melee and ranged attacks when you first gain this power.

New Talent: You become a novice in a new talent or gain a degree in a talent you already have.

[H4] Level 10

New Specialization Talent: You gain the master degree in the specialization talent you gained at level 6.

[H2] Warrior

[100 words about the class here.]

[H3] Class Powers

Warriors gain the following powers at the specified level.

[H4] Level 6

New Specialization: You may choose one specialization for your class. You gain the novice degree of its specialization talent. See **Chapter 3: Focuses, Specializations, and Talents.**

[H4] Level 7

New Talent: You become a novice in a new talent or gain a degree in a talent you already have.

Stunt Bonus: You know how to unhinge your opponents. You can perform the Threaten stunt for 1 stunt point instead of the usual 2. Threaten is a new stunt in Set 2. See **Chapter 6: Playing the Game**.

[H4] Level 8

New Specialization Talent: You gain the journeyman degree in the specialization talent you gained at level 6.

New Weapon Group: You learn a new weapon group of your choice.

[H4] Level 9

Expert Strike: You know when to strike with precision and when to strike with power. When you make a melee attack, you can take up to a -3 penalty on your attack roll to receive a corresponding bonus to your damage roll. For example, you can take a -2 penalty on your attack roll to get a +2 bonus on your damage roll. Alternately, you can receive up to a +3 bonus on your attack roll if you take a corresponding penalty on your damage roll.

New Talent: You become a novice in a new talent or gain a degree in a talent you already have.

[H4] Level 10

New Specialization Talent: You gain the master degree in the specialization talent you gained at level 6.

[H1] Grey Warden

It is possible for any Player Character to become a Grey Warden. There are not strict pre-requisites for this and it is not tied to class or level. The only requirement is that a Grey Warden thinks that the candidate has what it takes. Strength of will and a strong sense of duty are common attributes but sometimes the most unlikely candidates end up making the best Grey Wardens. Duncan, the leader of the Grey Wardens in Ferelden, was naught but a street thief in Orlais when he was recruited into the order.

Those chosen go through a period of training. This can be as long or as short as the warden trainer desires. It is uncommon for characters of less than level 6 to be chosen for the Joining, the ritual that turns a recruit into a full fledged Grey Warden. It is an elite order and normally only those who have proved themselves are given the chance to join its ranks.

If you become a Grey Warden, it will be a major event in the game. You will play through your training period and the Joining. If you make it and become a Grey Warden, you gain the following:

- You increase a single ability of your choice by 1.

- You become a novice in a new talent or gain a degree in a talent you already have.

- You gain a resistance to the taint. You can't be turned into a ghoul by darkspawn blood.

- You have the Right of Conscription. You can recruit others into the Grey Wardens. In theory this can be anyone, but political realities (especially in Ferelden) usually cause wardens to tread carefully.

- You can Detect Darkspawn up to a number of yards equal to 5 x your level (so a level 8 character can detect darkspawn up to 40 yards away). You can make Perception (Detect Darkspawn) tests to find out more information (such as rough numbers and even types). The result of the Dragon Die determines how much information you get. You do not start with the Detect Darkspawn focus but you can take it later when you level up.

There is more to being a Grey Warden than this, but the rest you will find out by playing in your campaign. *In war, victory. In peace, vigilance. In death, sacrifice.*

[Chapter] Focuses, Specializations, and Talents

Chapter 3 of the *Set 1 Player's Guide* introduced focuses and talents, and this chapter covers the same area but with a major addition: specializations. First, a few new focuses are introduced. Then the talents are revisited. For ease of reference, the talents from Set 1 are repeated here with their master degrees added in. This allows you to see the talents in their entirety when making choices for your character. Several new talents are also included. Lastly, the chapter introduces specializations. You get access to them through your class and each one opens up a special talent that is off limits to other characters.

[H1] Ability Focuses

Set 2 does not introduce a raft of new focuses. Those presented in Set 1 were meant to be broad and cover all the major areas. A list of all the focuses follows, with new ones noted in italics.

Communication Focuses: Animal Handling, Bargaining, Deception, Disguise, Etiquette, Gambling, Investigation, Leadership, Performance, Persuasion, Seduction.

Constitution Focuses: Drinking, Rowing, Running, Stamina, Swimming.

Cunning Focuses: Arcane Lore, *Brewing,* Cartography, Cultural Lore, Engineering, Evaluation, Healing, Heraldry, *Herb Lore,* Historical Lore, Military Lore, Musical Lore, Natural Lore, Navigation, *Poison Lore, Qun,* Research, Religious Lore, Writing.

Dexterity Focuses: Acrobatics, Bows, Brawling, Calligraphy, *Crafting, Dueling,* Initiative, Legerdemain, Light Blades, Lock Picking, Riding, Staves, Stealth, Traps.

Magic Focuses: Arcane Lance, *Blood,* Creation, Entropy, Primal, Spirit.

Perception Focuses: Empathy, Hearing, Searching, Seeing, Smelling, Tracking.

Strength Focuses: Axes, Bludgeons, Climbing, Driving, Heavy Blades, Intimidation, Jumping, Might, Spears, *Smithing.*

Willpower Focuses: Courage, Faith, Morale, Self-Discipline.

[H2] New Focuses

Set 2 introduces the following new focuses:

Blood (Magic): Understanding the forbidden art of Blood magic.

Brewing (Cunning): Making beers, ales, and other concoctions.

Crafting (Dexterity): Making items with manual skills like wood working, sculpting, glass blowing, etc.

Dueling (Dexterity): Fighting with weapons from the Dueling Group.

Herb Lore (Cunning): Knowing about herbs, their uses, and preparations.

Poison Lore (Cunning): Knowing about herbs, their uses, and preparations.

Qun (Cunning): Knowing about the philosophy of the Qunari people.

Smithing (Strength): Forging items made of metal, from weapons to jewelry.

[H2] Trade Focuses (Optional)

Dragon Age is not the game of everyday life in Thedas. It's about adventurers facing grave threats in extraordinary circumstances. This is why, while there are focuses to cover trade skills, they are quite broad. There is one focus (Smithing) that covers armorers, weaponsmiths, goldsmiths, and so on. This is not an accurate simulation of the differences between artisans, but nor is it in meant to be. For the purposes of most *Dragon Age* games, the Smithing focus is enough.

Some players, however, may want finer distinctions than the current focus list provides. Maybe your character is a dwarf from the Smith Caste in Orzammar and it's important to you that his skills are specifically those of a weaponsmith. If you want to do that and your GM agrees, you can take almost any medieval trade you can think of and turn it into a focus. You just need to figure out the most appropriate ability (most will likely be Cunning, Dexterity, or Strength). These focuses will be much narrower than most in the game, but if that suits your character concept (or a NPC in the case of the GM) the option is open to you.

[H1] Talents

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the full spread of talents is presented here. With the addition of the master degree for each talent, you can now see the full progression of each talent in one place. This should make it easier for you to compare your options when choosing new talents. Several new talents are also introduced. The format is the same as Set 1, but now each entry includes the master degree.

[h4] Talent Name

Classes: Classes that can take this talent are listed here.

Requirement: You cannot take this talent unless you have the specified requirement(s).

A short description of the talent.

Novice: The benefit gained when you become a novice.

Journeyman: The benefit gained when you become a journeyman.

Master: The benefit gained when you become a master.

[sidebar]

[H3] List of Talents

A complete list of talents follows. Italicized talents are new to Set 2.

Animal Training, Armor Training, Archery Style, Chirurgy, Command, Contacts, Creation Magic, Dual Weapon Style, Entropy Magic, Horsemanship, Linguistics, Lore, *Magic Resistance,* Music, Primal Magic, *Quick Reflexes,* Scouting, Single Weapon Style, Spirit Magic, Thievery, Thrown Weapon Style, Two-Hander Style, Unarmed Style, Weapon and Shield Style.

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[h4] Animal Training

Classes: Mage, Rogue, and Warrior.

Requirements: None.

You know how to train animals. Fereldans commonly train dogs, while Avvarian hillsmen prefer falcons and other birds of prey.

Novice: You know the basics of dealing with animals. With a week of training, you can teach an animal to follow a simple one-word command like "heel," "follow," or "attack." You can teach a single animal a number of commands equal to your Communication.

Journeyman: You can train animals to follow more complex commands, like "guard this place" or "return to me when strangers approach." Teaching a complex command takes two weeks of training and the total number of commands a single animal can learn is equal to your Communication +2.

Master: Your training can turn animals into prime examples of their kind. With a month of training, you can increase an animal's Dexterity or Strength by 1. It also gains the Willpower (Morale) focus. An animal can only receive such training once.

[h4] Armor Training

Classes: Warrior.

Requirement: None.

You have learned to fight while wearing armor. You only take the armor's penalty to your Speed, while those without this talent take it to Dexterity (and thus to Speed).

Novice: You can wear leather and mail armor without suffering a penalty to Dexterity.

Journeyman: You can wear plate armor without suffering a penalty to Dexterity.

Master: You can get the most out of your armor. The Armor Rating of any armor you wear is increased by 1.

[h4] Archery Style

Classes: Rogue and Warrior.

Requirement: You must be trained in the Bows Group.

You are experienced with bows and crossbows.

Novice: Your aim is true. When you take the aim action while using a bow or crossbow, you gain a +2 bonus on your attack roll instead of the usual +1.

Journeyman: Due to long hours of practice, you can reload faster than common bowmen. You can reload a bow as a free action and a crossbow as a minor action.

Master: When shooting a bow or crossbow, you can perform the Lightning Attack stunt for 2 SP instead of the usual 3. If you are using a crossbow, you'll also need to perform a Rapid Reload stunt to take advantage of this benefit (since you must have a loaded weapon to use Lightning Attack).

[h4] Chirurgy

Classes: Mage, Rogue, and Warrior.

Requirement: You must have the Cunning (Healing) focus.

You can treat wounds and illnesses.

Novice: You have trained in the art of chirurgy and your aid is swift and sure. Heal is a minor action for you.

Journeyman: You have the hands of a healer. When you use the heal action, your ally gets back an amount of Health equal to double the Dragon Die + Cunning.

Master: Your healing ability is legendary. When you use the heal action, your ally gets back an amount of Health equal to triple the Dragon Die + Cunning.

[h4] Command

Classes: Mage and Warrior.

Requirement: You must have Communication 2 or higher.

You are a natural leader.

Novice: Your presence inspires your allies. If you take a major action to make a heroic gesture (raise your sword, shout a battle cry, wave a flag, etc.), your allies gain a +1 bonus to Willpower (Courage) tests for the rest of the encounter.

Journeyman: Your allies follow your lead. Any NPCs that you lead gain a +1 bonus when rolling for initiative.

Master: When you stand firm, your allies stand with you. When you lead NPCs in an encounter, they do not have to take a Willpower (Morale) test until more than two-thirds of your side's combatants are out of the fight (dead or incapacitated). If you leave the fight or fall in battle, the benefit is lost.

[h4] Contacts

Classes: Mage, Rogue, and Warrior.

Requirement: You must have Communication 1 or higher.

You know many people, sometimes in the unlikeliest of places.

Novice: You can attempt to make a contact out of a NPC with a successful Communication (Persuasion) test. The GM will set the TN based on the likelihood of you knowing the NPC or having mutual friends. The more distant the NPC's homeland or social class from yours, the more difficult the test will be. A contact will be friendly to you, but won't go out of the way to help you without additional motivation. You can't make a contact out of a NPC who already dislikes you or is an enemy.

Journeyman: Once you've established a contact, you can try to get a favor with another successful Communication (Persuasion) test. The TN is based on the nature of the favor and whether it puts the contact in any danger.

Master: You can turn an acquaintance into an ally with a show of loyalty. If you do a significant favor for a contact, he will treat you as a friend when you ask him for favors. He will go out of his way to help you and will be willing to put himself in danger for you.

[h4] Creation Magic

Class: Mage.

Requirement: You must have the Magic (Creation) focus.

You have delved into the secrets of Creation magic.

Novice: You can summon a light wisp without spending mana points. The wisp hovers near your shoulder until dismissed, illuminating a 10-yard radius around you with the brightness of a lantern. Summoning and dismissing the light wisp are free actions.

Journeyman: Your knowledge of Creation magic is deep. When you cast a Creation spell, its cost in mana points is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 1. You also gain one new Creation spell.

Master: Creation magic flows through you, granting you a +1 bonus to Defense. You also gain one new Creation spell.

[h4] Dual Weapon Style

Classes: Rogue and Warrior.

Requirement: You must have Dexterity 2 or higher.

You can fight with a weapon in your main hand and another in your off hand. Neither can be a two-handed weapon.

Novice: Wielding two weapons can aid you in attack or defense. If you take the activate action, you can gain either a +1 bonus on your melee attack rolls or a +1 Defense bonus vs. melee attacks until the end of the encounter. You can switch the bonus you are taking with another activate action.

Journeyman: Your weapons are a blur in combat. You can perform the Lightning Attack stunt for 2 SP instead of the usual 3 but the second attack must come from the weapon in your off hand.

Master: You can overwhelm opponents with blows from both weapons. If you make a melee attack with the weapon in your main hand, you can make a second attack with the weapon in your off hand as a minor action. The second attack cannot generate stunt points, and you only add half of your Strength (rounded down) to damage.

[h4] Entropy Magic

Class: Mage.

You have delved into the secrets of Entropy magic.

Requirement: You must have the Magic (Entropy) focus.

Novice: You gain deathsight. When someone you can see drops to 0 Health, you can tell how many rounds it will take him to die.

Journeyman: Your knowledge of Entropy magic is deep. When you cast an Entropy spell, its cost in mana points is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 1. You also gain one new Entropy spell.

Master: Entropy magic is so strong in you that opponents making melee attacks against you suffer a -1 penalty on their attack rolls. You also gain one new Entropy spell.

[h4] Horsemanship

Classes: Mage, Rogue, and Warrior.

You are a skilled rider and can handle horses and other beasts of burden with ease.

Requirement: You must have the Dexterity (Riding) focus.

Novice: You can jump into the saddle quickly. Mounting a steed is a free action for you.

Journeyman: You can ride like the wind. When you ride a mount, it gains a +2 bonus to its Speed.

Master: You were born in the saddle. You add +1 to your Defense while mounted. You may also re-roll a failed Dexterity (Riding) test but you must keep the result of the second roll.

[h4] Linguistics

Classes: Mage, Rogue, and Warrior.

Requirement: You must have Cunning 1 or better.

You can learn new languages easily. Some of the listed languages are spoken in lands far from Ferelden and are not commonly heard there. When you learn a new language, you learn to both speak and read it, with two exceptions. Ancient Tevene is only read because it's a dead language. Elven is only spoken because the Keepers are the only ones who know the secret of writing it.

Novice: You learn an additional language from the following list: Ancient Tevene, Ander, Antivan, Dwarven, Elven, Orlesian, Qunlat, Rivaini, Trade Tongue.

Journeyman: You learn to speak an additional language from the previous list. You can also try to imitate a specific dialect with a successful Communication (Performance) test.

Master: You learn two more languages from the previous list. You can also pick any one language you know and speak it like a native (i.e. without an accent).

[h4] Lore

Classes: Mage, Rogue, and Warrior.

Requirement: You must have Cunning 2 or higher.

You have an inquisitive mind and absorb facts easily.

Novice: You have studied hard. When you make a successful Cunning test with a lore focus, the GM should give you an extra piece of information on the topic. A lore focus is any Cunning focus with the word "lore" in it, such as Cultural Lore and Historical Lore. The GM determines the additional information and it may or may not be pertinent to the main question at hand.

Journeyman: You are an accomplished researcher. When making Cunning (Research) tests as part of an advanced test, you gain a +1 bonus to the result of each dragon die. This allows you to reach the success threshold faster. Advanced tests are detailed in the *Game Master's Guide*; ask your GM if you want to know more.

Master: While your knowledge is vast, you have two areas of particular specialization. You can pick any two of your lore focuses. When making tests using those focuses, you can re-roll a failed test but you must keep the result of the second roll.

[h4] Magic Resistance

Classes: Rogue and Warrior.

Requirements: Player Characters can only get this talent from a background.

You have a natural resistance to hostile magic.

Special Note: Unlike other talents, you cannot gain new degrees in Magic Resistance. This talent represents an innate resilience and it is not something that can be learned or enhanced.

Novice: When targeted by hostile magic, roll 3d6. If you get a 15+, the spell does not affect you. This does not dispel the spell or help others targeted by it. It only means that you are unaffected.

Journeyman: As Novice but you only need roll a 13+.

Master: As Novice but you only need roll an 11+.

[h4] Music

Classes: Mage, Rogue, and Warrior.

Requirement: You must have the Communication (Performance) focus or the Cunning (Musical Lore) focus.

You have a natural talent for music.

Novice: You know how to play an instrument, sing, and write and read music.

Journeyman: Your musical journey continues as you learn to play more instruments. You know how to play a total number of instruments equal to your Communication.

Master: You are a true virtuoso. You can play all the instruments common to Thedas. If you come across a more exotic instrument, you can learn to play it with 1d6 weeks of practice.

[h4] Primal Magic

Class: Mage.

Requirement: You must have the Magic (Primal) focus.

You have delved into the secrets of Primal magic.

Novice: You can create a small flame in your hand without spending mana points. The flame can't be used in combat but can set mundane items alight. It remains in your hand until dismissed. Creating and dismissing the flame are free actions.

Journeyman: Your knowledge of Primal magic is deep. When you cast a Primal spell, its cost in mana points is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 1. You also gain one new Primal spell.

Master: You are bursting with Primal magic. When you perform the Mighty Spell stunt with a Primal spell, you can inflict the stunt's extra damage on more than one of the spell's targets. This costs 1 SP per additional target (so it cost 3 SP to affect two targets, 4 SP to affect three targets, etc). You also gain one new Primal spell.

[h4] Quick Reflexes

Classes: Mage, Rogue, and Warrior.

You react to threats speedily and instinctually.

Requirement: You must have Dexterity 2 or higher.

Novice: You can prepare yourself for action in an instant. Ready is a free action for you.

Journeyman: You can flip yourself up or drop down with lightning speed. You can go prone or stand up as a free action. These normally can only be done as part of a move action.

Master: It is hard to get the drop on you. You may re-roll your initiative roll at the start of a combat encounter, but you must keep the results of the second roll.

[h4] Scouting

Classes: Rogue.

You are skilled at the art of reconnaissance.

Requirement: You must have Dexterity 2 or higher.

Novice: You can use the lay of the land to your advantage. If you fail a Dexterity (Stealth) test, you can re-roll it, but you must keep the results of the second roll.

Journeyman: You know how to get the drop on your enemies. You can perform the Seize the Initiative stunt for 2 SP instead of the usual 4.

Master: You are a skilled observer. If you fail a Perception (Seeing) test, you can re-roll it, but you must keep the results of the second roll.

[h4] Single Weapon Style

Classes: Rogue and Warrior.

Requirement: You must have Perception 2 or higher.

You can fight effectively wielding only a single-handed melee weapon.

Novice: Fighting with a single weapon demands increased awareness. If you take the activate action, you gain a +1 Defense bonus until the end of the encounter while fighting in this style.

Journeyman: You can create a web of steel with but a single weapon. Your bonus to Defense increases to +2 while fighting in this style.

Master: You know how to fight several enemies at once. Opponents making melee attacks against you never gain a bonus on attack rolls for outnumbering you.

[h4] Spirit Magic

Class: Mage.

Requirement: You must have the Magic (Spirit) focus.

You have delved into the secrets of Spirit magic.

Novice: You can sense the mood of an intelligent being within 6 yards of you as a minor action. The GM must describe the mood in one word (angry, confused, or happy, for example).

Journeyman: Your knowledge of Spirit magic is deep. When you cast a Spirit spell, its cost in mana points is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 1. You also gain one new Spirit spell.

Master: Your skill with Spirit magic is such that mana flows through you like a river. You gain a +1 bonus on each roll to regain mana points. You also gain one new Spirit spell.

[h4] Thievery

Class: Rogue.

Requirement: You must have Dexterity 3 or higher.

What's yours is yours and what's theirs is yours too.

Novice: You don't let locks stand in your way. If you fail a Dexterity (Lock Picking) test, you can re-roll it, but you must keep the results of the second roll.

Journeyman: You are familiar with many types of traps. If you fail a Dexterity (Traps) test, you can re-roll it, but you must keep the results of the second roll.

Master: You know how to find what's hidden. If you fail a Perception (Searching) test, you can re-roll it, but you must keep the results of the second roll.

[h4] Thrown Weapon Style

Classes: Rogue and Warrior.

Requirement: You must be trained in the Axes Group, Light Blades Group, or Spears Group.

You are adept with throwing weapons.

Novice: Your accuracy is uncanny. You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls with throwing weapons.

Journeyman: You can ready a throwing weapon in an instant. You can reload a throwing weapon as a free action instead of a minor action.

Master: You know how to bypass your enemy's armor. When you perform the Pierce Armor stunt, your damage is penetrating. The stunt normally halves your opponent's armor rating, but penetrating damage allows you to ignore it altogether.

[h4] Two-Hander Style

Class: Warrior.

Requirements: You must have Strength 3 or higher and be trained in the Axes Group, Bludgeons Group, Heavy Blades Group, or Spears Group.

You are deadly with two-handed melee weapons.

Novice: The length of your weapon and the power of your attacks forces foes to yield ground. When you hit with a melee attack with a two-handed weapon, you can move the target 2 yards in any direction.

Journeyman: You can strike fearsome blows with your weapon. You can perform the Mighty Blow stunt for 1 SP instead of the usual 2 when wielding a two-handed weapon.

Master: You and your weapon are as one. When wielding a two-handed weapon, you can choose to re-roll your damage. However, you must keep the second roll, even if it's less than the first.

[h4] Unarmed Style

Classes: Mage, Rogue, and Warrior.

Requirement: You must be trained in the Brawling Group.

You know a thing or two about brawling.

Novice: Your hands are as tough as iron. When you attack with your fist, you inflict 1d6 damage instead of 1d3.

Journeyman: Your punch can drop the toughest opponents. You can perform the Knock Prone stunt for 1 SP instead of the usual 2 when attacking with your fist or a gauntlet.

Master: You can't be disarmed, but the same can't be said of your opponents. When performing the Disarm stunt, you gain a +2 bonus to your attack roll in the opposed test.

[h4] Weapon and Shield Style

Classes: Warrior.

Requirement: You must have Strength 2 or higher.

You've been trained to fight with a single-handed melee weapon and shield.

Novice: You can use shields of all shapes and sizes. You get the full Defense bonus when using a shield.

Journeyman: You know how to get the most from your shield. You can perform the Defensive Stance stunt for 1 SP instead of the usual 2.

Master: Opponents must work hard to get by your defenses. The shield bonus of any shield you use increases by 1.

[H1] Specializations

Specializations are a new addition to *Dragon Age* in Set 2. Basically, a specialization is another way to customize your character and focus your class. If you say your character is a warrior, that's a broad statement. If you say that your character is a Templar, that says a lot more about him.

You get access to specializations through your class. As described in the previous chapter, you can take a specialization for the first time at level 6. That grants you the apprentice degree in the appropriate specialization talent (a talent unique to that specialization). You gain the journeyman degree at level 8 and the master degree at level 10; this is the only way to gain new degrees in specialization talents. Set 2 includes three specializations for each class: Arcane Warrior, Blood

Mage, and Spirit Healer for mages; Assassin, Bard, and Duelist for rogues; and Berserker, Champion, and Templar for warriors. You'll find additional specializations in Sets 3 and 4.

Example: *Kate's city elf rogue character, Locke, makes it to level 6. She can now choose her first specialization. Her choices from Set 2 are Assassin, Bard, and Duelist. Kate looks over the three specializations and decides that Duelist is most appropriate for her character. She notes on her character sheet that Locke now has the Duelist (Apprentice) talent. She sees that this gives her training in the Dueling weapon group, so she writes that down as well. She will get her next degree in this specialization as one of her class powers at level 8.*

[H2] Unlocking Specializations

The default assumption of the rules is that every specialization for your class is open to you when you hit level 6. This gives you the broadest array of choices. Your GM may require you to work to access certain specializations, however. Generally speaking, you can unlock a specialization in three ways:

- You can find a trainer. This is a NPC who already has the specialization. Trainers have motivations of their own, of course, so they may require money, favors, oaths, or actions before agreeing to teach you.

- You can go on a quest. These can vary widely but basically your GM will create a special side adventure, the completion of which will unlock the desired specialization. If you wanted to become a Spirit Healer, for example, you might have to figure out how to contact a benevolent spirit in the Fade.

- You can find a tome. The knowledge of some specializations has been written down and can sometimes be learned by reading and study. There are many forbidden tomes about blood magic, for example, and they have led many a mage down that dark path.

Since you know that you'll be getting a specialization at level 6, it's a good idea to start thinking about your choice when you hit level 5. Then discuss it with your GM. This will give your GM a chance to prepare and work your choice into the campaign. If he decides you must find a trainer, for example, that's something you can pursue while working towards level 6. Then we you get there, you'll be ready for the specialization.

[H2] Arcane Warrior

Mage Specialization

[Overview Text]

[H4] Arcane Warrior Talent

Class: Mage.

Requirement: You must have Magic and Dexterity 3 or higher.

You have learned a potent mix of magic and melee skills.

Novice: You learn a new weapon group of your choice and you can use Magic to satisfy the minimum Strength requirement of weapons. You can also enter the Combat Magic mode by taking an activate action. While in this mode, you add Magic instead of Strength to your damage with melee weapons. However, any spell you cast has its mana point cost increased by 2. You can end usage of Combat Magic with another activate action.

Journeyman: You reduce the Strain of any armor you wear by 3.

Master: When you activate Combat Magic, you can spend 5 MP to shift yourself so you exist partly in the real world and partly in the Fade. This is called a Fade Shroud and it gives you a ghostly countenance that is obvious and unsettling to many. A Fade Shroud increases your Defense by 3 but you must pay 3 mana points per round (at the start of your turn) to maintain it. If you do not, the effect ends immediately but Combat Magic remains active.

[H2] Assassin

Rogue Specialization

[Overview Text]

[H4] Assassin Talent

Class: Rogue.

Requirement: You must have Cunning and Dexterity 3 or higher.

You know how to kill quickly and efficiently.

Novice: You can assess a nearby opponent and reveal weaknesses that can be exploited in combat. With an activate action you can mark a visible target within 10 yards of you for death. All ranged and melee attacks against a target Marked for Death receive a +1 damage bonus. The mark lasts until the end of the encounter (or more typically, until the end of the target...). A character cannot be marked more than once in the same encounter.

Journeyman: Your attacks are sudden, precise, and deadly. When you use the rogue's dirty fighting power, your opponent's Constitution (Stamina) tests are TN 15 instead of TN 11. Additionally, once per encounter, you can use the dirty fighting power as a free action.

Master: You know how to exploit your target's weakness. When you backstab an opponent you have Marked for Death, you inflict an extra 1d6 damage.

[H2] Bard

Rogue Specialization

[Overview Text]

[H4] Bard Talent

Class: Rogue.

Requirement: You must have Communication and Dexterity 3 or higher.

You learn songs that can uplift and captivate. Starting a song is a major action. On subsequent rounds, you can maintain a song with a minor action.

Novice: You can sing a Song of Valor. Allies within 12 yards of you gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls as long as the song is maintained.

Journeyman: You can sing a Song of Friendship. It can be used in a combat encounter like the other songs, but it's more appropriate for roleplaying encounters. You perform a song for those assembled that affirms the power of camaraderie and harmony. Until the end of a roleplaying encounter (or for as long as it's maintained during a combat encounter), you and your allies gain a +1 bonus to Communication (Etiquette, Investigation, Persuasion, and Seduction) tests.

Master: You can sing a Song of Captivation. Once per round while singing the song, you can attempt to captivate one opponent within 16 yards. This is an opposed test of your Communication (Performance) vs. the target's Willpower (Self-Discipline). If you win, the target can take no actions on his next turn.

[H2] Berserker

Warrior Specialization

[Overview Text]

[H4] Berserker Talent

Class: Warrior.

Requirement: You must have Strength and Willpower 3 or higher.

You use your rage as a weapon.

Novice: You can drive yourself into a killing frenzy. First you must use the activate action to enter the Berserk mode. You receive a +2 bonus on Willpower (Courage) and Willpower (Morale) tests while in this mode. You also receive a +1 bonus on your damage rolls in melee combat. However, you suffer a -2 penalty to Defense and a -1 penalty to Perception tests while Berserk. You return to normal at the end of the encounter or if you force yourself out of the mode with another activate action.

Journeyman: Your rage becomes more potent. While Berserk you gain the same bonuses and penalties as described in the novice entry, but your bonus damage in melee combat increases to +3.

Master: Your fury is unstoppable! You can perform the Lethal Blow stunt for 4 SP instead of the usual 5 when Berserk.

[H2] Blood Mage

Mage Specialization

[Overview Text]

[H4] Blood Mage Talent

Class: Mage.

Requirement: You must have Constitution and Magic 3 or higher.

You have learned the forbidden art of Blood Magic.

Novice: You can use your own blood to power your spells. First, you must use the activate action to enter the Blood Magic mode. When casting a spell in this mode, you can inflict 1d6 penetrating damage on yourself and you gain mana points equal to the damage. The mana points so generated must be used on the spell you are casting this round; any excess are lost. You can use this mana to cast spells from any school but you must be in Blood Mage mode to cast Blood spells. While in this mode, you cannot be healed with potions or Spirit spells. You can end Blood Magic with another activate action.

Journeyman: You can use the blood of a willing ally to power your spells. This works as per the novice degree, but your ally takes the damage. The ally must be within 6 yards of you when you cast the spell.

Master: You can use anyone's blood to power your spells. You can pick a target with 6 yards of you and attempt to use their blood as a minor action. This is an opposed test of your Magic (Blood) vs. the target's Willpower (Faith or Self-Discipline). If you win things work as per the journeyman degree. If the target is adjacent to you and helpless (unconscious, tied up, etc.), you inflict 2d6 penetrating damage (and perhaps understand why mages of the Tevinter Imperium were not so popular).

[H2] Champion

Warrior Specialization

[Overview Text]

[H4] Champion Talent

Class: Warrior.

Requirement: You must have Communication and Strength 3 or higher.

You are a beacon of strength on the battlefield.

Novice: Your battle roar intimidates your opponents. When you take the charge action, you can shout a war cry that gives all enemies within 8 yards of your final position a -1 on attack rolls on their next turns.

Journeyman: You can lead your allies in an inspired defense. First, you must use the activate action to enter Rally mode. Your allies within 8 yards of you gain a +1 Defense while this mode is active. You can end Rally with another activate action.

Master: Your presence on the battlefield cannot be ignored. When in Rally mode, you affect allies within 12 yards of you. They also receive a +1 bonus on Willpower (Courage) and Willpower (Morale) tests.

[H2] Duelist

Rogue Specialization

[Overview Text]

[H4] Duelist Talent

Class: Rogue.

Requirement: You must have Dexterity and Perception 3 or higher and Dual Weapon Style (Novice).

[Brief text] .

Novice: You learn the Dueling weapon group. When fighting in the Dual Weapon Style and using either a main gauche or spiked buckler in your off hand, you gain both +1 on your attack rolls and +1 Defense vs. melee attacks. Normally when fighting in that style, you must choose between them.

Journeyman: Your precise attacks hit opponents where it hurts. While fighting in the Dual Weapon Style, you inflict +1 damage with melee attacks.

Master: Your pinpoint accuracy can find the gaps in your opponents' armor. When you perform the Pierce Armor stunt, your damage is penetrating. The stunt normally halves your opponent's armor rating, but penetrating damage allows you to ignore it altogether.

[Dueling weapons follow. This will live in the equipment chapter of the final book.]

[htable] New Weapons

Weapon	*Damage*	*Min. Str*	*Cost*
Dueling Group (Dexterity)			
Main Gauche	1d6+1	-	11 sp
Rapier	1d6+3	0	18 sp
Spiked Buckler	1d6	-1	15 sp

[/htable]

[sidebar]

[H3] Dueling Group

Main Gauche: This is a long dagger specifically designing for use in the off hand as a parrying weapon. Fereldans prefer the term left-handed dagger to the Orlesian main gauche.

Rapier: A rapier is a long, narrow thrusting weapon favored by duelists. It is a weapon of finesse, its users prizing deftness over the raw power of heavy blades.

Spiked Buckler: This is a very small shield with one or more extruding spikes. It can be used to block blows or punch opponents. It is a weapon, but also gives the wielder a +1 Defense vs. melee attacks.

[/sidebar]

[H2] Spirit Healer

Mage Specialization

[Overview Text]

[H4] Spirit Healer Talent

Class: Mage.

Requirement: You must have Communication and Magic 3 or higher.

You can summon benevolent spirits from the Fade to heal people.

Novice: You have learned to summon spirits. You learn the spell Group Heal. To cast it and other spirit healer spells, you must first enter Summoning mode. This requires an activate action and you must pass a TN 14 Magic (Spirit) test. If you fail and roll triples, you must roll on the Magical Mishaps table. If successful you have attracted a suitable spirit and you can now cast spirit healer spells for as long as you stay in this mode. You can end it with another activate action, which releases the spirit back whence it came.

Journeyman: You learn the spirit healer spell Revival.

Master: You learn the spirit healer spell Life Ward.

[H2] Templar

Warrior Specialization

[Overview Text]

[H4] Templar Talent

Class: Warrior.

Requirement: You must have Magic and Strength 3 or higher.

The Chantry has trained you to deal with mages.

Novice: You have learned mental techniques that help you resist magic. You gain a +2 bonus on tests to resist spells and other forms of magic.

Journeyman: Your blows can drain mages of their mana. When you hit a mage (or any creature that uses mana) with a melee attack, your target loses 1d6 + your Magic mana points in addition to taking normal damage.

Master: You can cleanse an area of ongoing magic. This is a major action and the concentration required is such that you suffer a -2 penalty to Defense until the beginning of your next turn. All ongoing spells within 6 yards of you end immediately.

[chapter] Magic

Magic is a complex and, as anyone will tell you, dangerous art. Those with the potential to wield its power undergo years of extensive training and study to master it, and are tested until they are tempered—or broken—by the process. Magic is not for the faint of heart, because those lacking the strength to use it will instead be used by it, becoming vessels for unspeakable evil and cruelty.

Set 1 of the *Dragon Age RPG* introduced you to the basics of magic in the world of Thedas, the most common spells known to mages and how they are used. This chapter tells you more about the power of magic: higher order spells, and the risks they carry, along with the factions most concerned about the powers of magic in the world, the Circle of Magi and their ever-vigilant Chantry overseers, the Order of Templars.

[background information]

[h2] The Risks of Magic

As the existence of the Circle of Magi and the Templars attest, magic is a dangerous practice. The simple and basic spells given in Dragon Age: Set 1 are relatively safe, apart from the strain they place on the caster's mana. More advanced magic, like that found in this set, however, comes with additional risks.

When casting any spell with a requirement, if the casting roll fails and the Dragon Die comes up a 1, then a *magical mishap* occurs.

<center>**Casting roll failure + Dragon Die of 1 = Magical mishap**</center>

When there is a magical mishap, the caster immediately makes another **Magic** test (with the same focus) against the spell's Target Number. A successful test means the caster is merely knocked prone, like the standard stunt. It takes a minor action to get back up, and opponents gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls against the prone mage. The mage has the option on a successful test to spend additional mana equal to the spell's original cost. If so, then the mishap has no effect. The mage is not knocked prone, but has spent double the normal mana for a failed spell.

If the second Magic test fails, then the outcome of the mishap is based on the result of the Dragon Die:

[table]

[htable] Magical Mishaps

Dragon Die	Mishap Result
1	*Misfire:* The spell effect occurs, but targets an ally rather than an enemy (or vice versa) or has the opposite of the intended effect (healing rather than harming, or vice versa). The GM determines the particulars of the misfire.
2	*Backlash:* The shock of the mishap leaves the mage unable to cast any spells for 1d6 rounds.
3	*Mana Drain:* The mage loses mana equal to twice the normal mana cost of the spell in addition to the initial cost paid (for a total of triple the usual cost).
4	*Mana Burn:* The mage loses Health equal to twice the mana cost of the attempted spell.
5	*Lost in the Fade:* The mage falls into a trance, spirit lost in the depths of the Fade for 2d6 minutes. The mage is helpless during this time and vulnerable to a Coup de Grace.
6	*Harrowing:* As *Lost in the Fade,* except the mage must also make a Willpower (Faith or Self-Discipline) Test (TN 13) every two minutes to avoid being possessed by a demon and becoming an abomination. The longer the mage's spirit wanders the Fade, the greater the risk.

[/table]

The Gamemaster should feel free to come up with additional magical mishap results based on the circumstances: location, type of spell attempted, intended outcome, and so forth, particularly for a Misfire result.

Example: *The mage Lorrahn is ambushed by a group of darkspawn. He wants to slow them down before they engage him in melee, so he attempts to cast the grease spell. However, he fails his casting roll, putting him in danger of a magical mishap. Since grease is a spell with a requirement, Lorrahn must now make a **Magic (Creation)** test (since grease is a Creation spell). He just needs to meet or beat the TN of the grease spell to avoid trouble, but fails again. The Dragon Die result of the second roll is 1, so a Misfire has occurred. The GM decides that grease is indeed created but instead of landing where the mage wanted, it doused Lorrahn and knocked him prone. The GM further specifies that if Lorrahn is hit with any sort of fire attack, he'll ignite and take the damage specified in the spell description.*

[background information]

[h1] New Spells

The rest of this chapter details a bevy of new spells used by the mages of Thedas. Further spells are available in Sets 3 and 4.

The spells are presented in the same format as those in Set 1, with one addition. Some spells have a **Requirement** entry. This lists spells, talents, or specializations a character must have in order to learn that spell. For example, glyph of warding lists glyph of paralysis as a requirement, so a character must already know the glyph of paralysis spell in order to learn glyph of warding. A character who does not meet the requirements cannot learn that spell.

[h2] Blood Magic

Set 2 also introduces Blood magic, which is practiced by mages with the blood mage specialization. Blood magic is treated as a fifth school of magic. Only those with the blood mage specialization can use its spells, and even they must be in Blood Magic mode to do so.

[h3] Affliction Hex

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Entropy	Attack	5 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 12

Test: Magic (Entropy) vs. Spellpower

Requirement: Vulnerability Hex

You curse a visible target within 30 yards and all other foes within 10 yards of your target. Until the end of the encounter, those affected by the affliction hex have a −2 penalty to all tests against Spellpower. A primary target that makes a successful Magic (Entropy) test against your Spellpower suffers only a −1 penalty, while other targets are completely unaffected if his test is successful. A character can be subject to a vulnerability hex and an affliction hex at the same time.

[h3] Arcane Shield

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Spirit	Defense	1 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 10

Test: None

Requirement: Arcane Bolt

You create an arcane aura around you that deflects attacks. For one minute, your Defense becomes equal to your Spellpower (10 + Magic + Focus). You can extend the spell's effect by spending 1 mana point per additional minute.

[h3] Aura of Might

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Spirit	Enhancement	4 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 10

Test: None

Requirement: Arcane Warrior specialization

This spell causes magic to flow through the caster, giving the arcane warrior a +1 bonus to damage with melee attacks for 1 minute.

[h3] Blood Sacrifice

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Blood	Enhancement	4 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 11

Test: None

Requirement: Blood Mage specialization

You can draw upon the life force of a willing and visible ally within 20 yards to replenish your own Health. This ally must have blood (no golems, for example). You gain 1 Health for each 1 Health lost by your ally, up to 25. This can result in the subject's death, if reduced to 0 Health. The subject of a blood sacrifice recovers the lost Health normally.

[h3] Blood Wound

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Blood	Attack	6 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 14

Test: Constitution (Stamina) vs. Spellpower

Requirement: Blood Mage specialization

You make the blood of all enemies within 12 yards of you boil, causing excruciating pain. All targets take 1d6 + Magic penetrating damage and must make a Constitution (Stamina) test vs. your Spellpower. Those that fail can only take a minor action on their next turns.

[h3] Decompose

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Entropy	Utility	2 MP

Casting Time: One Minute   **Target Number:** 11

Test: None

Requirement: Entropy Magic (Journeyman)

After tracing mystic glyphs over the subject, any single piece of non-living organic material, you speed up the natural process of decay. Every second that passes is the equivalent of a day for the subject. So in a minute's time, it decays as if two months have passed. In an hour, it decays nearly ten *years!* This continues until the object is reduced to nothing more than dust. You can halt the decomposition with a glyph of preservation, but the subject decays some ten months in just the time it takes to cast that spell. If the glyph of preservation wears off, the accelerated decay reasserts itself.

[h3] Death Magic

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Entropy	Enhancement	5 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Drain Life

You draw upon the residual life force of the dying to replenish your own. Any living creature that dies within 6 yards of you while this spell is active grants you Health points equal to the creature's Constitution, with a minimum of 1. Death magic lasts for a number of rounds equal to your Magic ability. This spell and death syphon are mutually exclusive, and cannot be maintained at the same time.

[h3] Death Syphon

Magic School: **Spell Type:**   **Mana Cost:**
Spirit   Utility   5 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Walking Bomb

You draw upon nearby entropic energy to replenish your own mana. Any living creature that dies within 6 yards of you while this spell is active grants you mana points equal to the creature's Magic, with a minimum of 1. Death syphon lasts for a number of rounds equal to your Magic ability. This spell and death magic are mutually exclusive, and cannot be maintained at the same time.

[h3] Dispel Magic

Magic School: **Spell Type:**   **Mana Cost:**
Spirit   Utility   5 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 14

Test: Magic (Spirit) vs. Spellpower

Requirement: Spell Shield

You remove magical effects from a chosen visible target within 25 yards of you. Roll a test of your Magic (Spirit) vs. the Spellpower of any affected magic. Success means you remove that magic. Failure means you do not remove that magic, as it is too powerful. Test once for all magic affecting the target; you may remove some and not others, based on their Spellpower.

[h3] Dream Sending

Magic School: **Spell Type:**   **Mana Cost:**
Spirit   Utility   3 MP

Casting Time: Five Minutes   **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Sprit Magic (Journeyman)

You send a dream across the Fade to a particular subject, who must be known to you. When the subject next dreams, it will be the dream you have sent. You can script the general events of the dream, including things like conversations, but you are not aware of the subject's reactions and not truly interacting with them. You can use a dream sending to carry a message or convey information, or to display imagery meant to incite emotional reactions.

Generally, the content of a dream sending cannot be longer than an hour or so. While the dream may influence the subject's decision making process (providing a particular omen or key piece of information, for example) it does not exert any direct power over the subject's mind or will.

Dream sending does not work on subjects that do not dream, such as dwarves or the Tranquil.

[h3] Elemental Mastery

Magic School: **Spell Type:**   **Mana Cost:**
Primal   Enhancement   4 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Primal Magic (Master)

You strengthen your ties with the primal forces of the elements. For 1 minute, you add +2 to the damage of any Primal spell you cast. You can extend the duration by spending additional mana: 2 MP extends the spell by 1 minute.

[h3] Fade Shield

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Spirit	Defense	5 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 11

Test: None

Requirement: Arcane Shield

Shifting partway into the Fade enhances your arcane defenses. For one minute, your Spellpower increases by +2 and your Defense becomes equal to your Spellpower. You can extend the spell's effect; each minute costs 2 MP.

[h3] Flaming Weapons

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Primal	Enhancement	6 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Flame Blast

The readied melee weapons of all allies within 10 yards of you burst into flames, inflicting an additional 1d6 damage with each successful attack. The flames last for 1 minute; you can maintain the spell by spending an additional 2 MP per minute.

[h3] Force Field

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Spirit	Defense	5 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 14

Test: None

Requirement: Mind Blast

You surround a subject within 25 yards with a protective field of magical force that absorbs all damage. The force field lasts a number of rounds equal to your Magic ability. During that time, the subject is completely immune to damage, but also cannot move from the spot (the force field is immobile), make attacks, or give or receive any items. Spells and other effects that do not cause direct damage, such as daze, mana drain, or vulnerability hex, still affect the subject. You can renew a force field when its duration expires for additional rounds equal to your Magic by spending its mana cost again.

[h3] Frost Weapons

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Primal	Enhancement	6 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Winter's Grasp

The readied melee weapon of all allies within 10 yards of you exude freezing cold, inflicting +2 penetrating damage with each successful attack. The freezing cold lasts for one minute; you can maintain the spell by spending an additional 2 MP per minute.

[h3] Glyph of Preservation

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:

| Creation | Utility | 1 MP |

Casting Time: Five Minutes   **Target Number:** 10

Test: None

You draw a faint glyph on the surface of the subject, which can be any piece of dead organic material. The spell arrests the process of decay for the material, keeping it as a fresh as it was when the glyph was inscribed for a month. A glyph of preservation can be renewed and, when it expires, the process of decay begins again from where it left off. The spell is used for purposes from preserving foodstuffs to corpses (for lying in state or dissection) to protecting valuable items made of wood, paper, or leather.

[h3] Glyph of Sealing

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Creation	Utility	3 MP

Casting Time: 1 Minute   **Target Number:** 11

Test: None

You touch any object that closes, from a door or gate to a jar, drawing a faint glyph that connects its two surfaces. Once the glyph of sealing is complete, the object is held closed and only you, or someone you designate when casting the spell, may open it. For anyone else, the only way to open the seal is by breaking whatever it is inscribed upon, whether smashing open a jar or breaking down a door. The glyph lasts until the object is opened, after which it must be renewed to seal it again (assume it is not destroyed in the process).

[h3] Glyph of Warding

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Creation	Defense	4 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 13

Test: None

Requirement: Glyph of Paralysis

You trace an arcane glyph on the ground with your hand or staff. Allies within 3 yards of the glyph of warding gain a +2 bonus to Willpower tests and their Defense against ranged attacks so long as they remain within the glyph's area. You can maintain a number of glyphs of warding equal to your Magic at any one time.

[h3] Grease

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Creation	Utility	4 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 12

Test: Dexterity (Acrobatics) vs. Spellpower

Requirement: Spell Wisp

You create a slick of grease covering an area up to 10 yards across anywhere within 30 yards of you. Anyone in or entering the slick must make a successful Dexterity (Acrobatics) test against your Spellpower or fall prone. The grease created by this spell is flammable; contact with fire ignites it, immediately causing 1d6 penetrating damage to everyone in the area. The grease fire burns for rounds equal to your Magic before burning out, and those inside the area will take 1d6 penetrating damage on their turn each round until they exit it.

[h3] Group Heal

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Creation	Utility	3–9 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Spirit Healer specialization

A number of subjects equal to twice your Magic and within 10 yards of you regain 1d6 Health per 3 mana points spent on the casting. You may choose to make yourself one of the subjects of the spell.

[h3] Heroic Aura

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Creation	Defense	3 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Heroic Offense

This spell surrounds a subject within 30 yards with an arcane aura that deflects incoming attacks. The subject gains a +2 bonus to Defense for the rest of the encounter.

[h3] Horror

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Entropy	Attack	3 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 12

Test: Willpower (Self-Discipline) vs. Spellpower

Requirement: Daze

You overwhelm a visible target within 20 yards with a blast of sheer terror. Until the target succeeds on a Willpower (Self-Discipline) test vs. your Spellpower, he can do nothing but cower in fear. If he fails the initial test, he may try again at the start of each of his turns. A target that succeeds on the test still suffers a −1 penalty to all ability tests until the end of the encounter.

[h3] Invigorate

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Spirit	Enhancement	3 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 11

Test: None

Requirement: Mana Drain

You emit waves of mana, bolstering your allies. Those within 10 yards of you get a +1 SP when they generate stunt points. To maintain this spell you must spend 1 MP at the start of each of your turns.

[h3] Levitate

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Spirit	Utility	1 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 12

Test: Strength (Might) vs. Magic (Spirit)

Requirement: Mind Blast

You exert telekinetic force to move an inanimate object, like an invisible pair of hands. The spell has a *total* effective Dexterity and Strength equal to your Magic, and neither value can be less than 0. You must be able to see the object in order to manipulate it, and you cannot levitate aware and animate objects (creatures). You can move a levitated object with a Speed equal to your (Magic x3) with a minimum of 1. Once the spell is cast, moving an object is typically a minor action, unless you do something like attack with a levitating weapon, in which case it is a major action. Attack rolls are based on Magic (Spirit) and most objects do damage as improvised weapons. To maintain this spell you must spend 1 MP at the start of each of your turns.

[h3] Life Ward

Magic School:	**Spell Type:**	**Mana Cost:**
Creation	Utility	3 MP

Casting Time: Major Action **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Spirit Healer specialization

You weave a protective ward around one ally within 6 yards of you. The first time the target's Health drops below 10 in this encounter, he immediately regains 2d6 Health. Life ward only works once per casting and it ends at the end of the encounter if not triggered. A character cannot have more than one life ward on him at the same time.

[h3] Lightning

Magic School:	**Spell Type:**	**Mana Cost:**
Primal	Attack	3 MP

Casting Time: Major Action **Target Number:** 12

Test: Constitution (Stamina) vs. Spellpower

Requirement: Shock

A bolt of electricity leaps from your outstretched hand or staff to strike a single target within 30 yards. The bolt inflicts 2d6 + Magic penetrating damage. Targets that make a successful Constitution (Stamina) test vs. your Spellpower take 1d6 + Magic penetrating damage.

[h3] Mana Cleanse

Magic School:	**Spell Type:**	**Mana Cost:**
Spirit	Defense	4 MP

Casting Time: Major Action **Target Number:** 13

Test: None

Requirement: Mana Drain

You use your own mana to block that of other casters. For the duration of the encounter, if someone spends mana points in a 16 yard radius of you, you can spend your own mana points to negate theirs on a 1-to-1 basis. So, for example, if another mage spends 4 MP to cast a spell within 16 yards of you, you can spend 4 of your MP to negate that spell. If you do not have enough mana points to counter the entire cost, there is no effect.

[h3] Memory

Magic School:	**Spell Type:**	**Mana Cost:**
Spirit	Utility	4 MP

Casting Time: Major Action **Target Number:** 14

Test: Willpower (Self Control) vs. Spellpower

Requirement: Mind Blast

You touch a target and cause them to either forget or recall a specific memory. You can remove a memory within a number of hours equal to your Magic, but the spell can restore a memory over any time, so long as it is something the subject experienced. The subject makes a Willpower (Self Control) test against your Spellpower to resist losing a memory, but there is no test to restore a lost memory.

The GM decides on the appropriate length of the affected memory, but it should generally concern a single incident or experience no longer than the caster's Magic in hours (and likely much less).

[h3] Paralyze

Magic School:	**Spell Type:**	**Mana Cost:**
Entropy	Attack	4 Mp

Casting Time: Major Action **Target Number:** 13

Test: Constitution (Stamina) vs. Spellpower

Requirement: Weakness

Ghostly wisps of entropic energy surround at an opponent within 30 yards. A target failing a Constitution (Stamina) test vs. Spellpower is paralyzed, completely unable to move, while a successful test means the target's Speed is halved (rounded down) for the rest of the encounter instead. A paralyzed target gets a new test at the start of his turn each round, with success allowing the target to move at half speed.

[h3] Rejuvenate

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Creation	Utility	3 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 11

Test: None

Requirement: Heal

You channel regenerative energy to an ally within 10 yards. The subject regains 1d6 Health immediately, and another 1d6 Health at the start of his turn each round for a number of rounds equal to your Magic ability.

[h3] Repulsion Field

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Spirit	Defense	4 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 14

Test: Strength (Might) vs. Spellpower

Requirement: Force Field

This spell surrounds you with a field of energy that pushes foes away from you. Every other round, beginning on the round you cast the spell, a wave of repulsive energy surges out. Enemies within 6 yards must make a successful Strength (Might) test vs. your Spellpower or be pushed to 4 yards away from you and knocked prone. To maintain this spell you must spend 1 MP at the start of each of your turns.

[h3] Revival

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Creation	Utility	4 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Spirit Healer specialization

Your touch helps to restore the fallen. A dying subject adjacent to you immediately regains 10 + his Constitution + your Magic in Health. Since dying characters cannot take actions, you cannot cast this spell on yourself.

[h3] Shape Earth

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Creation	Utility	3 MP

Casting Time: Major Action   **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Creation Magic (Journeyman)

You can shape and move a mass of sand, earth, or even stone within 6 yards. The spell allows you to move earthen materials with an effective Strength equal to twice your Magic. The materials do not levitate, but are pushed or pulled along the ground. You can also mold them as if they were soft clay, shaping them as you direct. The GM may require a Magic (Creation) test to finesse a particular result, especially if any fine detail is involved. To maintain this spell you must spend 1 MP at the start of each of your turns.

Once you stop maintaining the spell, the materials stay where they are, subject to the usual natural forces (like gravity). Shaped stone will typically retain its shape, so long as it is capable of supporting its own weight.

[h3] Shelter

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Primal	Utility	2 MP

Casting Time: One Minute   **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Primal Magic (Novice)

A glyph traced upon the earth with hand or staff creates a faintly shimmering dome, up to six yards across and up to three yards high at the center. The atmosphere within the dome is a cool, dry, comfortable environment, regardless of the weather outside. Rain, snow, and other debris (including falling leaves, ash, or smoke) are kept out, and you can control the light level within from shade (slightly darker than the outside) to lit as brightly as by a lantern.

The shelter lasts for up to 12 hours, or until you dismiss it. You can only maintain a single shelter at a time.

[h3] Spring

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Creation	Utility	3 MP

Casting Time: One Minute   **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Creation Magic (Journeyman)

Tracing magical glyphs on natural earth or stone, then striking with your hand or staff, you cause a spring to burst forth from the spot, pouring out water at a rate of your Magic in gallons per minute. The water is fresh, clean, drinkable, and entirely mundane, and it will pour or evaporate away naturally. If the spring forms in a hollow, it will fill to become a small pool.

You may choose to stop the flow of the spring at any time. Otherwise, it lasts hours equal to your Magic before stopping of its own accord.

[h3] Weather Weaving

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Primal	Utility	8 MP

Casting Time: One Hour   **Target Number:** 13

Test: None

Requirement: Primal Magic (Master)

You shape and direct the weather in an area with a radius equal to your Magic in miles. You can choose any natural weather condition normally possible in the area for the given time of year (so you cannot make it snow in the middle of summer, for example). The weather forms within eight hours of your casting, so generally only limited changes are possible. You can make it warmer or colder by about 20 degrees, cause it to rain or snow (or stop doing so), or make the sky overcast or clear.

Multiple castings (and expenditures of mana) over multiple days can extend the spell's effect, creating more dramatic shifts in the weather. Note that you do not control the weather's effects. Once you have set it in motion, it follows its natural course.

[h3] Wind Weaving

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Primal	Utility	3 MP

Casting Time: One Minute **Target Number:** 12

Test: None

Requirement: Primal Magic (Novice)

You cause the wind to blow in whatever direction you wish, with a force up to a stiff gust; strong enough to blow out candles and other small open flames, and to scatter light debris like leaves or paper. You can direct the wind for up to an hour, although changing its direction or intensity requires a major action each time you do so.

Among other things, wind weaving is used to propel sailing vessels without the need to rely on the often fickle nature of the weather, and to calm winds that might otherwise prove disruptive.

[h3] Wrack

Magic School:	Spell Type:	Mana Cost:
Blood	Utility	3 MP

Casting Time: One Minute **Target Number:** 13

Test: Willpower (Self Discipline) vs. Spellpower

Requirement: Blood Magic specialization

You extend faint tendrils of entropic energy into the target of this spell, who must be within 2 yards while it is cast. So long as you concentrate, you can inflict terrible, wracking, pain on the subject at will. The victim must succeed on a Willpower (Self Discipline) test against your Spellpower in order to resist answering any questions or otherwise capitulating to your demands.

Wrack is a favored spell for interrogation, as it causes no real physical harm and leaves no signs or marks. Some victims injure themselves, and someone with a weak constitution may die from prolonged use, but otherwise it is far safer and more effective than conventional methods of torture. Tales of this spell and its use are one of the many reasons people fear blood mages and their powers.

[Chapter] Playing the Game

By now, you've probably got lots of experience playing the *Dragon Age RPG*. You no doubt know the basic rules pretty well and the rules for combat inside and out, at least as they pertain to your favored characters. You may even have tried your hand at being the Game Master.

This chapter extends and expands on the material from **Chapter 6: Playing the Game** in Set 1. It picks up where the basic roleplaying advice from Set 1 left off, offering journeyman-level advice for playing the game, roleplaying your character, and helping the GM out. Next, it offers some new options for combat that you can use to achieve a few specific goals on the battlefield in unusual or special situations. It presents some new combat stunts to broaden your options and deal even more prodigious damage to your hated foes. Finally, it adds two new classes of stunts—exploration stunts and roleplaying stunts—to bring the rush of awesome success off the battlefield and into the rest of your *Dragon Age* game.

[sidebar]

[hsb] Introducing New Rules

As you probably noticed when you first started playing *Dragon Age*, the best way to assimilate new information and new rules is to jump right in and give them a try in your campaign. That's still true—the best way to approach the new and expanded rules presented in this chapter is simply to start using them. Don't study and agonize. Just jump in.

If, when you try out some new rule, you get confused or things don't go exactly the way you were expecting, the GM should make a quick ruling and keep the game going forward. Then, after the session, anyone who's interested in re-visiting what happened can talk, with a little bit of distance, about any troubles the group had. You can figure out what you might have done wrong, or, if you just don't dig the rule, you can introduce a house-rule for use in the future. Keep the game going in the moment and debate the rules later.

[/sidebar]

[h1] Power Up Your "Roleplayer" Ability

If you were new to tabletop roleplaying when you started playing the *Dragon Age RPG*, you might have felt pretty confused the first time you sat down to play. Hopefully, you've got the hang of all the basics by now and you feel quite comfortable keeping track of your stats, advancing your character, making all kind of tests, and doing the basic stuff.

Like any other skill, though, you can always get better at roleplaying. This section provides some more tips to help everyone in your gaming group have even more fun in your campaign.

[h2] Playing with Personality

One of the advantages of playing a tabletop RPG as opposed to a computer RPG, miniatures game, or anything else is that it lets you develop a deep and interesting alter ego in the game world. As much as you may like the tactical or mechanical aspects of the *Dragon Age RPG*, don't neglect to take full advantage of the opportunity to give your Player Character an interesting personality.

Creating a great personality for an RPG character is an art, and it's different from creating a well-rounded character in a short story, a drama's wracked protagonist, or a cool avatar for a computer RPG. The paragraphs that follow should help point you in the right direction.

First, it pays to make your Player Character's personality a bit of a caricature. Figure out what the one or two most important aspects of your character's personality are and really emphasize them in play. If your hero is brave, make him more brave than might really make sense. If your hero is self-sacrificing, sacrifice more than you can imagine any real-world person giving up. If your hero is greedy… well, you get the idea. The reason is that there's lots of stuff going on at the game table, and the other players—much less the busy, busy GM—aren't likely to pick up on subtle, actorly clues as much as they are on broad strokes of temperament.

Second, give your character something to want and keep your goals up to date. Specifying goals and ties during character creation is intended to spur you in this direction. As your campaign unfolds, make sure to keep your PC's goals in mind, and as you accomplish them (especially your short-term goals), make sure to evolve your ambitions or choose new aims. Past helping you keep your own eye on the ball,

another important benefit to giving your character fresh goals to chase is that it helps the GM continue to unspool the campaign in directions that will keep your interest. Don't wait for the GM to tell you what your character should want next. Take the initiative instead.

Third, avoid personality traits or goals that are at odds with the rest of the party. Or, if you must create a disagreeable misanthrope, find some way to exempt the rest of the party from your hero's grouchiness, or at the very least, to set it aside when there's arterial spray to deal with. Thedas is dangerous enough without inter-party strife that goes past the requisite friendly kidding and superficial professional rivalry.

Finally, evolve. If you're not having fun with some aspect of your character's personality, change it. You can invent a reason for the change that's organic to the world, or you can not bother. Or, if you're really not digging your character, talk to your GM, retire that character, and start a new one.

[h2] Keep the Game Rolling

There's no way around it: one of the least-fun parts of play is downtime, while you're waiting for your next turn to do something. One of the best ways to make sure everyone keeps having fun is to do your part to keep the game moving.

Part of this is to simply observe common courtesy and common sense at the game table. Don't get up to grab a drink or go to the bathroom right before your initiative is coming up, for example, or everyone will be stuck waiting for you. Don't waste everyone's play time by getting into a long discussion with the GM about some rules issue that doesn't really matter. Don't watch TV or make a phone call while everyone else is playing. Common courtesy; common sense.

But in addition to the obvious things, you can do other, proactive things to keep the game moving and keep everyone having fun. One example is to figure out what you want to do *before* the GM asks you what your actions are going to be. Although you should (of course) pay attention to what the other PCs are doing, that shouldn't prevent you from also making plans in advance.

Another thing you can do is offer suggestions when another player seems to be stuck in figuring out what to do. If your teammate likes one of your ideas, it can get the game moving again. Even if they don't, your thoughts might spur more ideas of their own. What you should absolutely not do, though, is try to take control of someone else'e character. That's just annoying. Think "suggestions" rather than "directions" and you'll find the right tone.

Finally, keep in mind that while your character is in the spotlight, and you're taking your actions and rolling your dice, everyone else is in their own downtime. Help the other players have fun while you're acting by giving exciting, fun descriptions of what you're doing. This draws the others in. If you can make what you're doing exciting to everyone, no one will mind—or even remember—that they're between their own actions. But also: don't grandstand. Do your thing and then get out of the way for the next player.

[h2] Support Your Party

The *Dragon Age RPG* is built on the assumption that the adventures revolve around a whole party of Player Character heroes. Although your character will sometimes be leading the charge—either literally or figuratively—part of the challenge of playing as a group is sharing the spotlight.

When another Player Character is doing his thing, you should be willing to pitch in by taking a supporting role. If you're playing a warrior during a part of the adventure that revolves around some kind of magical research, there's no reason that you can't contribute to the effort by collecting components that your party's mage needs, or simply watching his back while he carries out his rituals.

Think of your party as a team, not an assortment of individual heroes. Be willing to take on a secondary, supporting role from time to time. By doing so, you'll set a tone that will encourage the other players to support *your* hero, too when you're the one in the spotlight.

[h2] Players vs. Characters

Players aren't their characters. It seems so obvious that it doesn't even bear saying. Even so, there can sometimes be friction among the players in an RPG over things that their Player Characters do in the game. The biggest key to avoiding problems based on the differences between players and character is just to remember, always, that there's a difference.

Keep in mind that you can play a character with odious—even obnoxious—personality traits without being obnoxious yourself. (Not only *can* you do this, you *should* do it.) Your joker rogue can antagonize your party's stolid warrior over his stoicism without having that spill over into you antagonizing the warrior's player. It can be a subtle distinction, but it's one that's completely critical.

The obvious way to tell if you're pushing things too far is if you notice that another player has stopped having fun. If everyone's having fun, it's all good. If someone's obviously not having fun, though, take corrective action. Although you don't necessarily want to stop the game dead in its tracks to have a heart-to-heart among the players. If you can quickly get past some problem in the immediate term and postpone a longer talk about it until after the game session, you should do it.

The converse of this guideline is a bit more subtle, but also bears explicit discussion: Don't try to read the tea leaves of another player's character and make assumptions about his real-life beliefs or personality. Roleplaying is escapism, not psychotherapy or divination.

[h2] Give the GM a Hand

The Game Master of a *Dragon Age* game has a lot to do. He did a lot of work prepping the game before you even showed up to play, and at the table, he's controlling the actions of the whole host of enemies and NPCs in the entire world of Thedas while you're just got your one character—and maybe his horse—to worry about.

There are lots of small, subtle ways you can show your appreciation and lend a hand to keep the game running smoothly. Make a copy of your character sheet each week and pass it to the GM even if he doesn't ask. Offer to get them a drink when you go to the fridge. During combat, offer to keep track of everyone's initiative numbers—even the enemy's—so the GM doesn't have to. Most importantly, don't argue with them when you disagree with a ruling. If you must, bring up your objection quickly, and if they still don't agree with you, go along with the GM's interpretation and talk about it after the game.

You should also keep in mind that in many groups, the GM is the one who pays for the books, boxed sets, and PDFs that are helping everyone have fun. While it's not necessarily your responsibility to pitch in cash money, a comment of appreciation is more than most GMs get, and we've yet to meet a GM who wouldn't appreciate having one of the players in his campaign pitch in to cover his share of pizza.

Again: common sense, common courtesy. Games aren't so much different from real life, after all.

[h1] New Actions

The basic actions—both major and minor—presented in Set 1 provide a broad set of building blocks that allow characters to do nearly anything they might want to do on the field of battle, especially given the many ways that different major and minor actions can be combined in a character's turn.

But even so, complicated battles can sometimes call for very specific tactics. Although stunts can allow characters to achieve many special effects in combat, stunts are also unpredictable—you never know in advance when you're going to generate stunt points, and so it's hard to formulate a strategy based on a stunt.

The new major and minor actions given below are available to all characters in the same way as the major and minor actions presented in Set 1. They give combatants a few more options to proactively choose their battle strategies.

[h2] New Major Action

All-out Attack: You attack one adjacent enemy in hand-to-hand combat, throwing the full weight of your Strength behind the attack even though your accuracy will suffer. If you hit, you do +1 damage, but in any case, you suffer −1 to your Defense until your next turn.

[h2] New Minor Actions

Guard Up: You put your skill to use balancing offense and defense. Add +1 or +2 (your choice) to your Defense until the end of this round. However, you suffer the amount you chose as a *penalty* to all tests you make, even opposed tests, for the remainder of the current round as well. (This is a key difference between the guard up and defend actions. Guard up only lasts until the end of the round, where defend lasts until the beginning of your next turn.) If you choose this minor action, you must do it before any major action you take this turn.

Press the Attack: You stand ready to pursue an enemy if he should fall back or flee your blows. Declare an adjacent enemy combatant when you choose this action. Until the beginning of your next turn, if that enemy moves away from you, you can immediately move up to your Speed in yards in direct pursuit of that enemy. This occurs immediately after your foe's movement, before he can do anything else. However, you can only use this minor action on an enemy you have already struck in melee combat this turn (whether you inflicted damage or not). When you make your move, it need not bring you adjacent to that enemy if you can't go that fast. In that case, you simply move as far as you can before stopping. You are free to forego some or all of the movement this action allows when your enemy triggers it, if you wish.

Stand Firm: You lower your weight and prepare to resist any and all efforts to move you from the place where you stand. Until the beginning of your next turn, any enemy who uses the Skirmish or Knock Prone stunts to move you or knock you to the ground must succeed in an opposed test pitting their Strength (Might) against your choice of your own Strength (Might) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) in order to move you or knock you prone. This test can only be attempted after your opponent expends the relevant stunt points, which are nevertheless expended to no effect if you win the test. An opponent who attempts to Skirmish you more than once as part of a single attack (to move you more than 2 yards) only makes a single opposed test against you, with all of the Skirmishing movement hanging in the balance.

New Stunts

The ability of heroes and their adversaries to use stunts in combat adds lots of excitement to battle in Thedas. The **New Standard Combat Stunts** sidebar adds four new combat stunts that can be used by any character for the SP costs indicated. As with existing combat stunts from Set 1, these stunts' costs can be modified by class- or monster-specific powers and abilities.

[table]

[htable] **New Standard Combat Stunts**

The following stunts can be used by any character for the SP cost indicated.

SP Cost	Stunt
1	*Stay Aware:* You take a moment to make sure you're mindful of everything that's happening around you. Make a TN 11 Perception test with the focus of your choice. If you succeed, the GM may either make you aware of some battlefield situation that has so far escaped your notice, or give you a +1 bonus to the next test you make. This bonus can never stack with any other test bonus other than from a focus, must be used on the very next test you make (even if you're the defender in an opposed test), and expires at the end of your next turn even if you haven't used it by then.
2	*Taunt:* You insult or distract one opponent of your choice within 10 yards of you. You must make an opposed test of your Communication (Deception) vs. the target's Willpower (Self-Discipline). If you win, the target suffers a –1 penalty on attack rolls and casting rolls on his next turn. A taunted character cannot be taunted again until after his next turn.
2	*Threaten:* You strike a threatening pose, challenging an opponent of your choice within 10 yards of you. You must make an opposed test of your Strength (Intimidate) vs. the target's Willpower (Self-Discipline). If you win, he must attack you in some way (melee, missile, spell, etc.) on his next turn. A threatened character cannot be threatened again until after his next turn.
5	*Lethal Blow:* You inflict an extra 2d6 damage on your attack. You cannot use Lethal Blow and Mighty Blow with the same attack.

[/table]

Exploration and Roleplaying Stunts

Using stunts during combat and spell-casting are one of the most fun parts of playing *Dragon Age*. When you pull off a stunt, it helps you feel like your character is a real hero, and it gives you choices about what you want to do.

This section brings stunts outside the realm of combat, adding two new classes of stunts: exploration stunts and roleplaying stunts. It's no coincidence that there are three kind of encounters in *Dragon Age*—combat, exploration, and roleplaying. With these two new classes of stunts, the stunt system is now fully rounded.

The basic system for generating and using stunt points to pull off exploration and roleplaying stunts is exactly the same as it is for combat stunts. Whenever you are successful at a test and you roll doubles on two of your dice, you can perform one or more stunts in addition to reaping the benefits of success on the test. You receive a number of stunt points equal to the result on the test's dragon die, and must use them right away to perform stunts.

Just like with combat stunts, except where noted in a particular stunt's description, you can only perform the same stunt once with the stunt points from a single test. As with combat stunts, once you choose which stunts you'll perform, you're responsible for narrating how your hero pulls them off. As with combat stunts, you can perform your non-combat stunts in any order you choose.

The exploration and roleplaying stunts available to everyone are listed in the **Standard Exploration Stunts** and **Standard Roleplaying Stunts** tables. As with combat stunts, encounter-, monster-, and class-specific exploration and roleplaying stunts are also presented in the appropriate contexts.

Roleplaying stunts must always be delivered along with a description of the interaction you're engaged in, and must be consistent with the description you give. You can't have your character deliver a scathing dressing-down via a Communications (Intimidation) test and then say that it turns out to be funny (using the Jest stunt). Or, at the very least, you'd have to propose a really clever justification for why that would work.

GMs should be aware that, in general, exploration and roleplaying stunts will call for more on-the-fly decision-making than combat stunts. This is because of the simple fact that outside combat, there are fewer hard-and-fast rules and statistics to govern what characters can do, how they might feel or react to provocations, where they're standing, and so on. In this way, exploration stunts and roleplaying stunts aren't any different than exploration and roleplaying in the game overall—they're a little more flexible and open than situations where life and death hang in the balance, and so they require the GM's flexibility and interpretation.

To avoid bogging the game down with the need for the GM to make lots of minor, on-the-fly decisions about non-combat stunts, the GM can always decide that any particular non-combat test can't generate stunt points, for any reason or no reason. He can also rule that stunt points generated from any particular combat test can't be spent on exploration stunts or roleplaying stunts. He can even make either of those decisions *after* a test has been made. (Although a good GM will only "take away" stunt points that have already been rolled very rarely. It's usually better to let the players have their fun.)

[h2] Which Stunts Can I Use?

With the addition of exploration and roleplaying stunts, it is possible to generate stunts point from any test. Outside combat, though, different kinds of tests and scenes can bleed into each other, their boundaries sometimes difficult to discern.

As a general rule—and always subject to the GM's decisions to the contrary—you can use stunt points from any test to generate any kind of stunt. Although you will most frequently want to use exploration stunts when doing investigation and use roleplaying stunts when dealing with NPCs because those stunts will make the most sense and be the most useful, you're not restricted that way. You can even use exploration and roleplaying stunts during combat. (Or, for that matter, use combat stunts outside combat, although doing that is likely to *start* a combat.)

So, although there are now combat stunts, exploration stunts, and roleplaying stunts, which parallel combat encounters, exploration encounters, and roleplaying encounters, you are *not* limited, for example, to using combat stunts during combat encounters, roleplaying stunts during roleplaying encounters, and so on. After all, if a fight breaks out during a roleplaying encounter, you'll want to use combat stunts right away! If you're in the middle of an exploration encounter and manage to find a hidden NPC, a roleplaying stunt might be just the thing to cajole him out of his hiding place. If the rule worked any other way, it would be very important for the GM to demarcate the beginnings and ends of scenes with precision that would gum up the whole flow of the adventure.

[h2] Stunt Notes and Test Restrictions

With the addition of exploration and roleplaying stunts, a few restrictions and clarifications bear repetition, and a few new terms must be defined.

You can only roll a test when the GM calls for one. With the potential for great success in some of the new stunts, it will sometimes be tempting to roll for anything and everything in the hopes of generating stunt points that will provide broader-than-normal effects, enduring bonuses, and so forth. In cases where you're obviously fishing for stunt points, especially when you're attempting tasks at which you'd obviously succeed, the GM is well within his rights to disallow a test, and simply say that you've succeeded at your task.

For most tests, players will not know the target number they're rolling for on a given test. They simply roll the dice, generate a total, and tell the GM what it is. The new rules for exploration and roleplaying stunts don't change things by exposing tests' target numbers.

Some new stunt descriptions refer to an "object of your test." This refers broadly to an item or person being searched for, an NPC with whom the player is interacting, or something similar. If an opposed test is being made, the object of the test is always the other party to the test. It will almost always be obvious what the object of a given test is, but whenever it's not, the GM is the final arbiter. And keep in mind that the object of a test may be obvious to the GM but not the player. Most Perception tests are examples of this.

Some stunt description say that some effect lasts "until the time or venue changes." This means that the effect lasts until the focus of play jumps forward in time by any significant amount, or the focus of play changes to some other place. This phrase is meant to approximate the duration of a single encounter, but to be a little more clear to players (since the GM is usually the only one who worries about when encounters begin and end). However, note that when the GM is jumping back and forth between two different groups of PC who're doing different things in different places in order to create drama and excitement, the change of the game-table's focus on one sub-group of the party, and then another sub-group, doesn't count as a change of time or venue. It's just clever technique.

[table]

[htable] Exploration Stunts

The following stunts can be used by any character for the SP cost indicated.

SP Cost   Stunt

1   *Advantageous Positioning:* You make your discovery from an advantageous position of your choice, up to 2 yards away from the place that would normally lead to your discovery with respect to the object of your test. You may wait until the GM describes what you've found, if relevant, before you choose your position. This stunt can be used multiple times on the same test if you have enough stunt points.

2   *Efficient Search:* If resources of any kind are typically consumed in the course of your test, you use only half as much as would be normal.

2   *Speedy Search:* You complete your test in half the time it would otherwise take.

3   *That Makes Me Wonder:* You may immediately make another Perception test, at no additional cost in time or resources, to discover more information about your surroundings, or the object of your test. This bonus test must use a different focus from the first test, however, and doubles on this bonus test do not give rise to stunt points. The two tests are assumed to transpire simultaneously, not one after the other. If there is nothing additional to discover, the stunt is wasted, but the GM will not prevent you from choosing this stunt even when there is nothing additional to learn.

3   *The Object of your Attention:* You receive a +1 bonus to further tests to examine or perceive additional aspects of the object of your test until the time or venue changes.

4   *The Upper Hand:* If your discoveries lead to combat within a moment or two, you receive a +3 bonus on your initiative roll.

4   *Resources at Hand:* Choose a focus that you don't have, that falls under the same ability as the test you're making. You are considered to have that focus until the time or venue changes. The GM may require that you explain how this bonus arises from the environment.

4   *With a Flourish:* The manner of your success is impressive to those who are nearby to watch you. You have a +1 bonus to opposed tests against those who witnesses your brilliance until the time or venue changes.

[/table]

[table]

[htable] Roleplaying Stunts

The following stunts can be used by any character for the SP cost indicated.

SP Cost   Stunt

1   *Bon Mot:* You tag the perfect witty remark onto the end of your action, affecting all those who hear it that much more deeply. If you can't think of one, the rest of the players and GM quickly brainstorm options, and you choose among them. Word of your wit is likely to spread, for good or ill.

1   *And Another Thing:* You manage to weave a second thrust of conversation into the primary interaction that called for the test, if your description supports it. If relevant, you may make an additional test as part of your action, before anyone else has a chance to respond or make any tests or arguments of their own.

2   *Sway the Crowd:* Your interpersonal efforts are so effective that they spill over onto others in the area, and you affect one additional person of your choice past the original target. You may use this stunt multiple times on the same roll. However, if the test that gave rise to this stunt was an opposed test you may not expand the effect to anyone who has a higher ability + focus total than the original target.

2   *Stunned Silence:* You are so impressive that you leave all those who witness your display completely dumbfounded and unable to speak for at least a full round. Outside combat, this lasts, at the very least, for long enough for your character to begin to do something else.

3   *Flirt:* Choose one character who's present and immediately make an opposed Communications (Seduction) vs. Willpower (Self-Discipline) test. If you win, that character becomes enamored with yours. What exactly this means in the moment and how it might play out (or fall apart) in the long run are up to the GM, and depend on how you continue to act, but if you're successful, you've created an opening for romantic opportunities.

3   *Jest:* You turn a phrase, twist your expression, or make some other comic motion that leads those nearby to laugh, or at the very least, stifle their snorts. Any NPC who wishes to avoid laughing must make a TN 11 Willpower (Self-Discipline) test, with the exception—at the GM's discretion—of any NPC(s) who you've made the butt of your joke.

4   *Tower of Will:* Your success gives you a sense of your own brilliance and strength of character. For the rest of the current roleplaying exchange, you will have a +1 bonus to any opposed tests where an opponent tries to put you at an emotional disadvantage, such as by intimidating you, impressing you, bargaining with you, and so on.

5   *Enrage:* You twist the knife, delivering a provocation or insult in such a way that a single NPC you designate must choose between either attacking you or storming away from the scene. If they choose to attack, the assault need not be deadly (although that option is certainly open to the enraged character). A slap or the throwing of a gauntlet may stand in as an "attack" just as easily.

[/table]

Example: *A bann has hired the rogue Gerhard to stop a secret society among the local populace from trying to oust him as their liege. Gerhard has infiltrated a clandestine meeting of the group, but he still doesn't know who, among those assembled, is the agitator behind the movement. The GM assigns Gerhard's player to make a Communication (Investigation) test to try to figure it out as he talks to those present and observes their body language.*

The GM secretly sets the target number for this test at 13. Gerhard has Communication 2, and possesses the Investigation focus. He rolls 4, 4, and 3, with the 3 being the dragon die result. His total is thus 15, which exceeds the target number. The GM tells the player that Gerhard was successful. Since doubles were rolled, the test generates stunt points equal to the dragon die result of 3.

Gerhard's player has lots of options.

He considers using the That Makes Me Wonder stunt in order to try to learn something else about the members of the secret society or the place where they're meeting at the same time he's on the lookout for

the ringleader. However, he knows that the bann is very anxious to learn what Gerhard can find out as soon as possible. Given that, he decides to spend 2 SP on Speedy Search. Using his last 1 SP on Advantageous Positioning doesn't make a lot of sense in this context, so he decides to spend it on And Another Thing. He tells the GM that while he's talking to the conspirators to try to figure out who's in charge, he'll be interjecting the idea that he thinks the secret society should move slowly in opposing the bann, since taking action too quickly could result in half-baked schemes that will fall apart before they can come to fruition. Gerhard figures that slowing down the group's plots will make the bann happy and give him more time, and that his rationalizations will make sense to the plotters.

Because Gerhard was successful at the test, the GM reveals the identity of the shadowy individual who seems to be behind the society, a local cooper with political ambitions. The GM tells Gerhard's player that he manages to make that deduction before the meeting is even half done, giving him the option to slip away immediately, if he wants to. It will be up to the GM to figure out how to weave Gerhard's suggestions that the society should slow things down into the unfolding story, but since the stunt was paid for, the GM takes it as given that the idea was communicated effectively and without exposing Gerhard to suspicion.

[chapter] Running a Campaign

One of the most rewarding ways to play the *Dragon Age RPG* is as a campaign of ongoing adventures featuring the same Player Character heroes. But running a campaign can be difficult in the same way that running a marathon can be difficult. That is, even though playing *Dragon Age* is fun, it takes expertise and stamina to keep it going.

The early sections of this chapter provide ideas about different ways to structure a *Dragon Age* campaign. Later sections give suggestions and advice about how to keep it running like a finely tuned machine, scene by scene.

[non-mechanical sections]

[h1] Encounter Design

Campaigns are made of adventures, and adventures are made of encounters. The *Dragon Age RPG* Set 1 *Game Master's Guide* spends a bit of time, on page 4, discussing how to divide an adventure outline into encounters, and how to classify encounters by type (combat, exploration, or roleplaying). Three sections that follow explore each of these encounter types in greater detail, with the goal of giving you a broader perspective, and more fully-stocked toolkit, for creating encounters of all three types. These sections also suggest tips and tricks that you can employ during your game sessions to keep all three types lively and challenging, and to modulate the emotional tone of the adventure from encounter to encounter—and even round to round or challenge to challenge—to keep everyone's excitement level right where you want it. Before addressing the encounter types, though, a section of general encounter tips discusses goals and obstacles for all kinds of encounters, as well as the moral dimension of creating and running encounters.

[h2] General Encounter Tips

For all types of encounters, the first and most important thing to determine or understand is what the heroes' *goal* in the encounter is. What is it that the heroes are trying to accomplish?

Example goals:

- Gain access to a critical location.
- Secure the cooperation of an important noble who has tools the PCs need.
- Determine where the individual the PCs seek was last seen.
- Prevent a mortal enemy from continuing to bedevil the PCs.
- Talk an enemy's allies out of opposing the PCs.
- Ferret out the secrets contained within a library of ancient lore.

Knowing the goal, you can determine what stands in the heroes' way—their *obstacle(s)*. Sometimes, the goal suggests or outright determines the obstacles.

Example obstacles:

- A band of hurlocks and genlocks who're standing guard at the critical location.
- The functionaries and gatekeepers who defend with great zeal their noble master's time and attention.
- The rain that has fallen for the past week, obscuring the tracks of all who have traveled through the region.
- The physical might—not to mention tenacious character—of the heroes' mortal enemy.
- The long-standing alliance between the heroes' enemies and the neutral party they want to leave them alone.
- The disorganization and dilapidated physical condition of the ancient library, and the array of strange and foreign alphabets in which its information has been recorded.

Sometimes you'll have an idea for an encounter's obstacles before you understand or write down, in concrete terms, the encounter's goals. This can be fine in some cases, but it can also be a danger sign that you're considering or creating a problem without a purpose. Such encounters go wrong by having intricate

tasks that you intend for the PCs to perform—enemies to fight, NPCs to parlay with, areas to investigate—but that lack any compelling need or end-point.

For example, you might have an encounter in mind where the heroes must fight bandits while both sides race through a treacherous ravine on horseback. Such a combat might indeed be exciting. But unless either the heroes or the bandits are compelled to chase the other group in order to further their greater aims, why would they do it? As a roleplaying example, you might want to include in your campaign a fascinating NPC whose backstory is a triumph of determination over misfortune, and who talks with a really awesome accent you've been perfecting for weeks. But if convincing that NPC to do something (or refrain from doing something) isn't the key to the Player Characters' overall goals, why would they talk to that NPC in the first place? As an exploration example, you might map out in loving detail the ruins of an ancient fortress and include in your notes all manner of trivialities regarding its various regions and what they have been used for over the course of the ages. But if the heroes don't need to search the whole place or understand your lovingly crafted history in order to succeed in some critical ambition, you may have had fun, but you've also created a lot of backstory that the players will never learn and never engage on any meaningful level.

To avoid these problems, ask yourself—and be brutally honest—whether the heroes could achieve the goals of the adventure just as easily by ignoring the encounter at hand, or by routing around it in some obvious way. If the heroes could ford the river ten minutes upstream as easily as they could cross at the king's bridge, then the corrupt toll-takers at the bridge aren't much of an obstacle. If the PCs could buy a mule from the next stall as easily as from the one run by the obstreperous merchant, then the difficulties posed by the troublesome merchant are more or less irrelevant.

To solve the problems of encounters whose challenges are divorced from the heroes' goals, figure out how you can orient the intermediate steps that lead to the goal of the adventure so that the obstacles you have in mind absolutely must be overcome in order for the heroes to get there. Perhaps the river can't be forded for leagues on either side of the road, or perhaps the toll-takers have allies among the local populace who alert them whenever they see travelers crossing the river other than at the bridge to avoid paying the king's toll. Maybe the difficult merchant's counterparts only have unsuitable animals for sale, or perhaps all of the local merchants are in collusion to fix prices.

Sometimes tying the obstacles you have in mind to relevant goals is simple, and sometimes it's impossible. In the latter case, its best to realize the problem as soon as possible and simply jettison the encounter from your plans.

When fixing an encounter's goals, one thing to keep in mind is that *your* need (as GM) to understand the PCs' goal in the encounter does not map directly to the *players'* need to understand their characters' goals right away. That is, although it must eventually become clear to the players that they're not going to be able to get to their destination without either paying the toll or convincing the toll-men to let them pass without paying, it's perfectly fine for the heroes to learn this only as they explore other options and see them closed off, one by one. In fact, you can make some encounters much more interesting by intentionally obscuring the heroes' goals, or even actively misdirecting the players, at the beginning of the encounter and then allowing them to see and understand what they must actually do only as their experience of the encounter develops.

[h2] Moral Choices

Part of the *Dragon Age RPG*'s dark approach to fantasy revolves around presenting the Player Characters with moral choices. Moral choices can be incorporated into any kind of encounter; they're not exclusive to combat, roleplaying, or exploration encounters.

For every encounter you create, think about how you can make the heroes' decision points grueling by making all of the options hazardous or distasteful, or by associating unpleasant outcomes with even the obvious good.

Example moral decisions:

- Enemies menace two equally pitiful NPCs. With only enough time to save one of the two victims, which one will the heroes choose?

- In order to secure the non-interference of the local crime lord, the heroes must commit some crime. Will they agree to do it?

- The only way to entice the spirits who have the information the Player Characters need is to offer them a blood sacrifice. Will the heroes kill an innocent for the knowledge they must have?

- The heroes are attacked by noncombatants under the mental domination of evil forces. Will the PCs go out of their way to avoid killing these accidental fighters?

- To convince a bann of their worth, the PCs must publicly repudiate something or someone they hold dear. How far will they go against their deeply held beliefs for the current moment's expediency?

- An ancient scroll is so decayed that to read it will be to destroy it, but the PCs need a certain piece of information it contains right away. Will they destroy a wealth of knowledge to retrieve but a nugget?

The types of moral decisions that work best in *Dragon Age* are those that require the players to choose the lesser evil, or opt for good that's encumbered by the least odious side effect. And the key word, here, is *choice*. As often as you can, prevent the players' die rolls from telling you whether some evil is overcome or some good achieved. Instead, force the heroes to make an actual decision to go one way or the other.

[h2] Combat Encounters

Combat encounters are the most challenging encounters to create in the *Dragon Age RPG* for two reasons. First, combat encounters generally have higher stakes than other types of encounters—the heroes can die! But second, combat is by far the most mechanically complicated aspect of the game, and its many moving parts can be difficult to understand at a glance. Of course, both of these factors also contribute to the game's fun. Players rarely have as much fun as when life is on the line, and many players enjoy the mechanical depth of combat, and the different strategies that come with it.

When creating combat encounters, remember the general rules of encounter creation and always think about the encounter's goals and obstacles. Of the three types of encounters, combat encounters are the types that are most likely to accidentally become de-coupled from goals. Always keep in mind that if the enemy combatants don't stand directly in the way of something the heroes must get or accomplish, the encounter is basically optional.

Introducing obstacles in combat encounters is easy—that'd be the enemy combatants. But don't neglect to create combat encounters that layer in additional challenges. Adding challenges in the landscape of the battle is an obvious option that brings myriad possibilities to the table. The terrain can stand in the way of certain strategies or attacks, or give new life to otherwise marginal tactics. Think three-dimensionally. What possibilities would great heights or dizzying depths bring? Consider the weather and time of day, too. A nighttime fight is different from a daytime brawl. Fighting in the rain makes cobblestones slick, and swinging a big metal sword at the top of a mountain in a lightning storm might prove exceptionally risky.

Fights also become more interesting if there are unusual dangers (or opportunities!) inherent to particular strategies. What about a fight that must be over before the enemies' overwhelming reinforcements arrive, a fight that must be fought in silence lest the sleeping dragon awake, a fight that must be won without inflicting casualties on the enemy, or a fight against enemies whose carcasses have value as long as they remain intact?

Failure to include and vary the complications in the combat encounters you design will lead, over the course of a campaign, to a boring sameness. The players will eventually come to feel that they're basically fighting the same enemy—albeit with somewhat varying statistics—over and over again.

[h3] Combat Math

Goals and obstacles aside, it's important to be able to understand the mechanical impact of a combat encounter on the Player Character group when you're crafting the statistics for the opposition.

There are three mechanical axes you need to consider: the frequency with which you expect a given combatant to land their blows, the amount of damage you expect a given combatant to dish out on a hit, and the amount of damage a given combatant can soak up before dying.

The critical benchmark for the frequency of hitting is easy to understand. A combatant will land blows against an enemy roughly half the time when his basic attack bonus + 10 is within a point or so of his opponent's Defense score. As the gulf between these two factors increases, hits become more and more (or less and less) likely. It's important to note that the bell curve of 3d6 results makes large differences between the attack side of the equation and the Defense side of the equation increasingly overwhelming. That is, a difference of six points is more than twice as bad as a difference of three points.

The amount of damage you can expect a combatant to dish out on a hit is easy to calculate, given an average d6 results of 3.5. Simply do the math to calculate the average damage of a particular kind of attack. (Obviously, this is based on the combatant's weapon, rather than his attack bonus.) It can be helpful to create an average of these averages across the party of heroes. Keep in mind, though, that the more factors you average, the more detail you're losing in the final calculation.

The amount of damage a combatant is likely to dish out per hit is most useful when considered as a percentage of the enemy's capacity to absorb damage. Although it may be impressive for a warrior to strike his enemy for a mighty 20 points of damage, it's going to take him a long time to cleave his way through a foe who has 200 Health.

To factor in both of these elements, divide a combatant's Health by the average damage his foe will dish out on a successful attack. This gives you the average number of rounds the former can withstand successful attacks from the latter. In the example above, it's ten rounds (200 Health ÷ 20 points of damage per hit). To make this a truly useful calculation, though, you also need to factor in the likelihood of successful attacks. For evenly-matched combatants—that is, for combatants whose attack and Defense, as describe above, are close to each other—you can multiply the average number of rounds by two in order to learn how many rounds of combat will be fought, on average, before the defender is vanquished.

Unless you're a real glutton for math (or a real spreadsheet wiz), you probably won't have a lot of fun making all of these calculations for every PC, every enemy, and every combination among the two sides, for every combat encounter you're planning. And that's fine. It's much more important that you understand the general outlines of which statistics are being compared in combat so you can make quick estimates, assign antagonist stats that are in the right ballpark, and move on.

The wildcard that can throw a monkey wrench into the general combat calculations is Armor Rating. Because it subtracts damage from each and every successful hit, its effectiveness over the course of a long fight can be monumental. Heavily armored foes can be nearly impossible to dispatch, and heavily armored PCs likewise. This isn't a factor that it's particularly easy to reflect in simple calculations. Rather, it's a factor to remain aware of in both the PCs and their enemies, and to take into account as Armor Ratings creep into the range where they approach (or exceed) half of any given combatant's average damage-per-hit. You can make any combat encounter significantly more difficult by jacking up the antagonists' Armor Ratings, and you can allow the PCs to become significantly more effective in combat by making good armor broadly available in your campaign.

As a starting point for creating a given combat encounter, assume enemy combatants that are roughly identical to the PCs in terms of their attack scores, Defense scores, Health, Armor Ratings, and strength of numbers. The heroes will win such a fight roughly half the time. Now, you probably want the heroes to prevail more often than that. (Otherwise the players will wind up having to create new characters, on average, after every other encounter!) So, it's good to start by knocking a few points off the antagonists' attack scores, and knocking one or two times the PCs' average damage-per-hit off each one's Health. This skews the fight solidly in the heroes' favor and provides a baseline from which to customize the fight.

Next, start taking into account the kind of fight you want to stage for this particular encounter. If you're looking for a flavor of few-against-many, knock another point or two off each enemy's attack score, reduce their Health by another one or two times the average PC's damage-per-hit, and double the quantity of enemies. On the other hand, if you're interested in a fight where one mighty enemy stands alone against the heroes, jack the opponent's attack scores up by as much as three to five points above the average PC's attack score, double or triple his Health, and consider giving him an Armor Rating that will eat up about half of most of the heroes' average damage-per-hit.

The critical thing to do, once you've arrived a rough estimate of the opposition's combat statistics, is to do a quick reality check. You may discover that you've inadvertently created an opponent that only one of the PCs has a mathematically significant chance of damaging at all. Again, estimates are sufficient; no need to break out a calculator.

For encounters where the goal is something other than simply dispatching the enemy, keep that in mind when you do your reality check. For a running battle, take a moment to think about relative movement rates. For battles involving ranged combat, make sure the ranged combatants have weapons that can fire far enough. And so on.

[h3] Special Sauce

Don't misinterpret the preceding depth of discussion of the mathematics that underly the combat system as a suggestion that you should spend most of the time you use to create combat encounters pushing combatant statistics around a piece of scratch paper, because the fact of the matter is that blow-by-blow levels of falling Health aren't what makes combat encounters memorable.

Remember—and keep remembering—the flavorful obstacles and goals you should have assembled when you first started to consider the encounter. Then, reflect those mechanically in either the enemies' statistics or the special modifiers that will apply in the course of the fight.

A fight in the fog, with an attendant penalty to attack rolls, will tend to prolong a fight. If a long fight isn't what you want, reduce the number of enemies even more or knock a point or two off their Defense scores. Conversely, a fight at the lip of a volcano, where every combatant must suffer damage from the heat each time they act, will shorten a fight. If you're looking to stage a drawn-out battle of epic proportions in such a locale, provide ways the combatants can avoid that recurring damage by clever tactical thinking (by taking and holding a shielded location, perhaps?).

The morale of enemies can be a key way to ameliorate otherwise-difficult combat encounters. Enemies who're likely to break and run when they run up against stiff resistance, or who must make Courage or Morale tests as they suffer casualties, can be overcome more easily than enemies who must be slain to the last combatant. You can also build special opportunities to demoralize the enemy into combat encounters. Perhaps attacking pirates are especially prone to panic and return to their own ship if it's set ablaze, for example. Perhaps Dalish raiders can be driven to despair if some precious relic they carry with them is destroyed, or their beloved leader is slain.

The bottom line is that you should always remember to return to whatever makes this particular combat encounter unique, and always reality-check the mechanics you invent to reflect those elements. Those two steps will do more than anything else to get you to fun, effective combat encounters. Any gap that remains can almost always be closed on the fly by buffing, nerfing, or fudging statistics or die rolls behind your *Game Master's Screen* as the fight progresses at the game table.

[h2] Exploration Encounters

Exploration encounters are relatively easy to create. They have goals and obstacles, just like other encounter types. Their goals are frequently informational. That is, the heroes must learn some piece of information or find some critical object in order to proceed with the adventure. Perhaps they must learn who wrote an incriminating letter, discover the tracks of enemy scouts who're reconnoitering their liege's lands, or uncover the hiding place of an ancient cache of weapons. The obstacles in an exploration encounter typically involve the ways that the critical information featured in the encounter is hidden or otherwise difficult to learn. Lack of access to handwriting samples, a broad area that must be searched, or thick undergrowth are obvious barriers to the example goals above.

The informational goals of some exploration encounters are more broad than the examples given above. Instead of learning some specific clue, they revolve around learning lots of related facts that together paint a larger picture. For example, an exploration encounter might revolve around learning the lay of the land over which some future battle may be fought, or discovering who the key players are in the local underworld and what motivates them.

The method by which the obstacles in an exploration encounter are typically overcome is with tests that the Player Characters must make. For example, perhaps a hidden clue must be found with a Perception (Searching) test, or a pass through the mountains discovered with a Cunning (Cartography) test. Be aware that an exploration encounter that can be successfully overcome with a single test is a very lightweight encounter. Such simple affairs are usually best rolled into another encounter, or beefed up with additional complications—additional tests that must be made, puzzles that must be solved before the nature of the test can be understood, or options that must be discussed to determine the best of several ways forward.

Exploration encounters have a common and grave peril that you should always keep in mind when your'e creating them: Since exploration encounters often deal with the discovery of clues that must be learned in order to keep the adventure moving forward, when you create exploration encounters, you must always give careful consideration to what will happen if the Player Characters fail to discover the information in question. It's unsatisfying (to say the least!) to bring an exciting adventure to a screeching halt because the heroes fail their Perception (Searching) tests to a man.

So, each time you create an exploration encounter, ask yourself what will happen if the PCs fail the critical test. If failure will stop the story in its tracks, the clue in question should probably not require a test to find in the first place, or the test should be re-imagined so that success offers advantageous information, but even failure results in enough information for the heroes to continue moving forward. Or, to avoid such situations entirely, create exploration encounters that can give rise to exciting opportunities if the heroes are successful, but that don't have corresponding show-stopping downsides. An exploration encounter might allow the PCs to find allies in an upcoming fight, for example, without threatening that they'll fail to show up for the fight altogether if they fail some test. It might give the heroes the chance to learn some juicy tidbit of gossip that will give them decisive leverage when negotiating with an NPC later on, but without preventing them from carrying out those negotiations in the first place, when the time comes.

[h2] Roleplaying Encounters

Like other encounters, solid roleplaying encounters revolve around interesting goals and obstacles.

One common goal of roleplaying encounters is to accumulate information from knowledgeable NPCs. The relatively standard briefing encounter is the epitome of this type; the most common version features an important NPC who hires or directs the heroes to carry out the grant task that the adventure encompasses. Interview encounters are another common sub-type of the information-accumulating roleplaying encounter, wherein the Player Characters must draw out information from NPCs who might or might not be invested in the heroes' success, and who might or might not want to actively conceal the facts the heroes want to learn.

Encounters of persuasion are a separate class of roleplaying encounter. In these, one or many NPCs must be convinced to take action—even if the heroes' desired course is simply for the NPCs to look the other way and do nothing.

Like combat encounters, roleplaying encounters go wrong most often by failing to have concrete goals that the heroes must achieve. An alternate but related pitfall can arise when the Player Characters' goals aren't opposed by the objectives or circumstances of the NPCs involved. For example, you may find that you've lovingly crafted an achingly complex personality for some NPC only to realize—as the heroes begin to converse with them—that they don't need anything out of the interaction. The players will quickly move on without learning even a fraction of the detail you spent so much time making up, because they simply don't need to.

The obstacles in roleplaying encounters usually arise from the stances, objectives, and character traits of the NPCs involved.

The NPCs in roleplaying encounters of any type can be friendly, antagonistic, or disinterested in the heroes, or may have mixed stances toward the Player Characters depending on the matter in question. An example of mixed stances might be a captain of the watch who wants to see the city remain safe (and so is willing to assist the PCs in any endeavor that helps make it so) but who secretly failed in his duty in recent days (and so seeks to obscure the PCs' investigations into the matter of his failure). NPCs with different stances toward the heroes on different matters are the most interesting characters you can introduce to your adventures. Interactions with them become minefields of danger that simultaneously carry the promise of critical information or assistance, as long as things don't go sideways.

The objectives of the NPCs with whom the heroes must interact are often the most critical obstacle in a roleplaying encounter. NPC objectives can dovetail with the Player Characters' goals, be at odds with them, run on an unrelated axis, or be a mix of the three. As with an NPC's stance toward the heroes, NPCs with mixed objectives are the most interesting and rewarding participants in roleplaying encounters. Roleplaying encounters featuring NPCs with obstacles that are only and directly at odds with the Player Characters often fail, dramatically, as roleplaying encounters because nothing the heroes can say will convince the NPC to change their mind, and with no common ground, there's no room for maneuvering. Such encounters sometimes degenerate to violence when the players become frustrated with their lack of progress, which can send a situation spiraling toward the tragic, the ridiculous, or both. Would heroes worthy of the name really resort to using deadly force against an obstinate meat vendor? Of course not. It's beneath them, it's inadvertently comedic, and it damages the verisimilitude of the world.

Sometimes, simply determining an NPC's goals can be a roleplaying challenge for the heroes. If an NPC's goal is to undermine some rival in complete secrecy, even Player Characters who might gleefully join the sabotage must find out that they have common cause with the NPC before they can join forces.

Obstacles based on NPC character traits can be interesting, and sometimes memorable, but are typically the least effective sorts of complications in roleplaying encounters. Examples of trait-based obstacles include NPCs who are drunk, megalomaniacal, belligerent, mute, insane, smelly, lecherous… the list could continue forever. The reason that character traits are less effective than other obstacles is that there's rarely anywhere to go with them, after they've been presented. Once the heroes learn that their informant is an anti-elf racist, their strategies for dealing with the NPC are obvious (i.e., to leave the elf PC back at the inn) and their chances of persuading the informant to abandon his odious beliefs are nil. This isn't to say that the NPCs you create shouldn't have interesting—and sometimes difficult—character traits. Simply be aware that these traits are rarely effective as the sole, or even primary, obstacles in a roleplaying encounter.

The best roleplaying encounters involve a rich tapestry of stances, objectives, and traits that all point in different directions. Antagonistic NPCs who have some temporary common cause with the heroes, physically or socially attractive NPCs with odious purposes, truly conflicted NPCs who don't know what to think and change their mind as the wind blows in different directions… these are a very few examples of the multitude of interesting possibilities that can be baked into roleplaying encounters.

Encounters that involve roleplaying with NPCs of friendly stance can benefit the most from the introduction of secondary NPC objectives that are at cross-purposes with what the PCs want, or the incorporation of some odious personal habit. Without these kinds of obstacles to provide texture, encounters with friendly NPCs usually become predictable and boring.

Outside the three primary types of obstacles discussed above, sometimes the key obstacles in roleplaying encounters involve the players' own enterprise or cleverness, or lack of either. In briefing-style encounters, for example, there may be facts about the task at hand, the lay of the land, or the antagonists of the matter that the briefing NPC knows and would happily share if only the Player Characters thought to ask. Think twice when actively employing these types of obstacles when designing roleplaying encounters, and be especially careful when running a roleplaying encounter at the game table. In the latter case, sometimes you can tell that the players are forgetting to ask some critical question, even though it's an obvious question to ask. These become "pants issues." The players don't inform you that their characters have put on their pants in the morning, but even so, all of the heroes are assumed to be wearing them. By the same token, if the players don't explicitly ask their employer about the best route to the place where they've been hired to go, it's not fair to assume that they're actually so stupid as to believe that they don't need to know how to get there. When in doubt, you can ask the players to clarify. "Did you mean to get a map from the bann, or were you planning to ask someone else about the best route?"

Be aware that roleplaying encounters designed to provide critical information or clues that are necessary for an adventure to continue can suffer the same game-derailing problems discussed for exploration encounters in the previous section. These problems are solved in the same way for roleplaying encounters as they are for exploration encounters.

One final thing to be aware of when creating and running roleplaying encounters is the proper place of tests. In general, you should make sure that the players' use of tests to persuade, deceive, seduce, or otherwise influence NPCs in roleplaying encounters dovetails appropriately with the tack they've actually taken in their roleplaying. For example, you shouldn't allow the PCs to mercilessly browbeat some source of information and then make a Communication (Persuasion) test to sweet-talk the skinny out of him. Interpersonal tests are best employed to gauge the success or failure of some already-roleplayed line of coercion, plan of enticement, or other interaction. The player makes his best argument and then the die roll helps you decide exactly what the NPC thinks and how they respond. See the sidebar "Roleplaying and Roll-playing" for further discussion of this sometimes-divisive topic.

[sidebar]

[hsb] Roleplaying and Roll-playing

Central to the whole roleplaying experience is the difference between the characteristics of a game player and the characteristics of the hero they create inside the world of the *Dragon Age RPG*. You wouldn't ask a player to step up from his chair at the game table and fight you in order to determine whether his character prevails in combat against a genlock. That's crazy. (And dangerous!) By the same token, some roleplayers believe that it's silly to limit a silver-tongued character's interpersonal abilities to those possessed by his player. On the other hand, a roleplaying game is a verbal exercise at its heart, and to boil

character-based interactions in the world to nothing more than stat values and tests on dice would rob your game of a mountain of fun.

As GM, when you run a roleplaying encounter you must always walk the line between allowing the players the fun of playing their role directly—of saying what their characters say—and making sure that the results of those interactions reflect the characteristics and abilities that describe their Player Characters in a reasonable way.

The best happy medium usually arises when you work from the assumption that a given PC is more or less as persuasive, seductive, or deceptive (for example) as their player roleplays them, but calling for tests on Communication (Persuasion, Charm, or Deception) whenever a gap arises between the roleplaying and the statistics that stretches the group's suspension of disbelief. That is, when Urbald the Profoundly Ugly puts the moves on that comely bar-wench, it's going to come to a dice roll more often than not, no matter what kind of real-world Casanova his player is.

Keep in mind, finally, that whether you emphasize roleplaying or roll-playing, the dichotomy is a matter of deeply held and sometimes polarizing preference among RPG fans. When in doubt, an open and adult conversation among the players in your game can air out these differences of perspective and make sure everyone continues to have fun.

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[chapter] Adversaries

As *Dragon Age* adventurers progress in level and skill, they face progressively more powerful and dangerous adversaries. This chapter expands on the material found in **Chapter Three** of the Set 1 *Gamemaster's Guide,* giving you additional adversaries to challenge and combat the player characters.

As in Set 1, adversaries are presented here in a standard format, with a description followed by game stats in a "stat block" with abilities, combat ratings, attacks, and powers, including special and favored stunts.

Also as in Set 1, the stats presented are a baseline for an adversary of that type. Feel free to modify them to provide a different (or additional) challenge for the characters. The guidelines for elite and heroic adversaries from Set 1 still apply. There's also an additional guideline:

- **Epic:** To make a Set 1 adversary even more capable, add 3 to one ability, 2 to any two abilities and 1 to any three others, add five focuses, increase the adversary's Health by 20, and increase armor rating by 3. You can also add three additional degrees in talents for NPCs.

[h3] Ash Wraith

An ash wraith is a particularly powerful form of shade (found in *Dragon Age:* Set 1), a restless spirit that has crossed over from the Fade. It forms a body for itself, most often out of the ash of burnt corpses, although it is capable of using dust, powdered bone, mold, or even blood. In spite of appearances, an ash wraith's body is merely a construct; capable of being dispersed and reformed at will. Damaging its body does not harm the ash wraith, the only means of doing so is by magic.

Ash wraiths haunt ancient ruins and mountainous areas. According to legend, the first of their kind may have been followers of Andraste, who sacrificed themselves in flames as their Prophet had perished, so they might safeguard the sacred Urn of her Ashes for all time.

Ash wraiths are dangerous foes, able to drain the life out of creatures, wither them with blasts of flame, and surround them in storms of ash and debris. They also use their ability to disperse and reform to flank their foes and attack from surprise.

Abilities (Focuses)

−2 Communication

0 Constitution

1 Cunning

5 Dexterity (Draining Touch, Flame Blast, Stealth)

5 Magic

2 Perception

−3 Strength

4 Willpower

Combat Ratings

15 Speed

35 Health

15 Defense

0 Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Draining Touch	+7	2d6+4 Penetrating
Flame Blast	+7	2d6+4 Penetrating

Powers

Favored Stunts: Lightning Attack, Surprise Attack, and Whirlwind (4 SP).

Incorporeal: Ash wraiths are incorporeal, forming temporary bodies of ash and debris. They ignore the effects of terrain and non-magical damage, which passes through them harmlessly. Magical attacks (spells and magical weapons) harm them normally.

Surprise Attack: An ash wraith can make a surprise attack by vanishing and rematerializing nearby. This works like a rogue's backstab power (Set 1 *Player's Guide,* page 28), requiring an opposed test of the wraith's Dexterity (Stealth) and the target's Perception (Seeing). If the wraith wins, its next attack on the target has a +2 bonus to hit and inflicts +1d6 extra damage.

Whirlwind: An ash wraith can perform a special Whirlwind stunt for 4 SP. All enemies within 6 yards of the wraith are buffeted by a life draining storm of ash, inflicting 1d6+4 penetrating damage to each.

[h3] Bereskarn   Tainted Darkspawn

Bereskarn are tainted bears, similar to blight wolves and other ghouls. They look like large bears, but with bony spikes protruding from their flesh in various spots. Blood seeps out slowly around their spikes, wetting and matting their fur. Bereskarn are slothful creatures, but fierce and unyielding when they attack.

Abilities (Focuses)

−2   Communication

7   Constitution (Stamina)

−2   Cunning

3   Dexterity (Bite)

−1   Magic

3   Perception (Smelling, Tracking)

7   Strength (Claws, Intimidation, Might)

2   Willpower (Courage)

Combat Ratings

13   Speed

70   Health

13   Defense

4   Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Bite	+5	1d6+7
Claws	+9	2d6+7

Powers

Favored Stunts: Knock Prone (1SP), Quick Bite, and Thunderous Bellow.

Quick Bite: A bereskarn can perform a special Quick Bite stunt for 2 SP following a successful attack. The creature makes an additional bite attack against the same target. Doubles on the second bite attack do not generate stunt points.

Thunderous Bellow: A bereskarn can perform a special Thunderous Bellow stunt for 3 SP. All who hear must make a TN10 Willpower (Courage or Self-Discipline) test or be unable to attack the bereskarn until the end of the next round, though they can defend themselves as normal.

Tough Hide: The bony spines of a bereskarn gives the creature an AR of 4.

[Dev Note: Baargach, from "Where Eagles Lair" in BiF, is an elite-tier bereskarn.]

[h3] Cave Beetle Swarm

Scavengers and carrion eaters, the black hard-shelled cave (or "rock") beetle is little more than a nuissance on its own. Dwarves are even known to roast and eat them out of the shells. However, an entire swarm of cave beetles, such as a stirred up nest, is capable of stripping an animal to the bone in minutes. Such a swarm is relentless, capable of moving quickly along a tunnel floor, wall, or even ceiling in pursuit of prey.

Abilities (Focuses)

−2   Communication

3   Constitution (Stamina)

−1   Cunning

3   Dexterity (Bite)

−1   Magic

2   Perception (Smelling, Touch)

−1   Strength

0   Willpower

Combat Ratings

12   Speed

25   Health

11   Defense

0   Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Swarm	+5	1d6

Powers

Favored Stunts: Knock Prone and Pierce Armor (1 SP).

Swarm Attack: A cave beetle swarm covers an area 3 yards across and can attack all creatures adjacent to it on its turn as a single major action.

Swarm Defense: A cave beetle swarm suffers only 1 point of damage from a direct physical attack. Area attacks inflict their full damage on the swarm.

[h3] Deepstalker

Strange inhabitants of the Deep Roads, deepstalkers are reptilian creatures that run on their powerful hind legs, balanced by an extended tail. Their heads are lamprey-like, puckered mouth ringed with sharp teeth. *Tezpadam,* as the dwarves call them, run or jump swiftly at their prey, and are capable of spitting acid or paralytic venom. Deepstalkers typically hunt in small packs and try to pick off stragglers and lone prey in the Deep Roads.

Abilities (Focuses)

−1   Communication

2   Constitution (Running)

−1   Cunning

5   Dexterity (Bite, Initiative, Stealth)

2   Magic

3   Perception (Hearing, Track)

1   Strength (Jumping)

0   Willpower

Combat Ratings

15   Speed

12   Health

15   Defense

1   Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	*Attack Roll*	*Damage*
Bite	+7	1d6+1
Claws	+3	1d6+3

Powers

Favored Stunts: Pack Tactics, Pierce Armor, and Skirmish.

Pack Tactics: As part of a group of two or more, a deepstalker can perform a special Pack Tactics stunt for 2 SP, allowing another deepstalker to attack the same target as a free action, so long as it is close enough to do so.

Spit: A deepstalker can spit an acidic or paralyzing venom up to 6 yards. Acidic venom does 1d6 penetrating damage each round for three rounds until it is washed off (taking a major action). Paralyzing venom slows the target to half speed until a successful TN 12 Constitution (Stamina) test.

Tough Hide: A deepstalker's leathery hide gives it Armor Rating 1.

[h3] Drake

Drakes are mature male dragonlings. Unlike females, which continue to grow into the winged dragons of legend, male grow vestigial spurs where females develop wings, but otherwise stop developing. Mature drakes seek out the lairs of adult female dragons, joining the female's harem of mates and defending her lair and young and hunting for them.

Drakes fight with their sharp fore- and rear claws along with a crushing bite. They can spit gouts of flame and strike crushing blows with their tails. Drake scales form a tough natural armor and their hides are prized for making suits of armor, requiring the services of a skilled leatherworker.

Abilities (Focuses)

0   Communication

5   Constitution (Running)

0   Cunning

5   Dexterity (Fire Gout, Initiative)

1   Magic

4   Perception (Seeing, Tracking)

5   Strength (Claws, Jumping)

2   Willpower (Courage)

Combat Ratings

16   Speed

30	Health
15	Defense
5	Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Bite	+7	2d6+5
Claws	+7	2d6+5
Fire Gout	+7	3d6
Tail Strike	+7	1d6+5

Powers

Favored Stunts: Pierce Armor, Rake, and Tail Blow.

Fire Gout: A drake can spit a gout of flame as a ranged attack with a short range of 6 yards and a long range of 12 yards. For 2 SP, a drake can spread its flames to cover an area 8 yards across. Targets other than the primary target can make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) test against the drake's Dexterity (Fire Gout) to take only half damage.

Rake: A drake can follow up a successful claw attack with a rake with its back claws as a special stunt costing 2 SP. This second claw attack must be against the same target as the original attack. Rolling doubles on the rake attack does not generate additional stunt points.

Tail Blow: A drake can perform the Knock Prone and Mighty Blow stunts simultaneously for 3 SP by striking a lashing blow with its tail.

Tough Hide: The scaled hide of a drake gives it AR 5.

[h3] Genlock Alpha   Darkspawn

Genlock alphas are the strongest, quickest, and most cunning of their kind, bullying their way into leadership of bands of lesser genlocks. They tend to be slightly taller and more heavily muscled than their brethren, and have more of a commanding presence, although it is more swagger and bluster than cool leadership.

Abilities (Focuses)

0	Communication (Leadership)
3	Constitution (Running)
1	Cunning (Military Lore)
2	Dexterity (Brawling)
2	Magic
2	Perception (Seeing, Smelling)
4	Strength (Axes, Intimidation)
2	Willpower

Combat Ratings

6	Speed
27	Health
11 (13 with shield)	Defense
7	Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Battle Axe	+6	2d6+4
Throwing Axe	+6	1d6+4

Powers

Favored Stunts: Cripple (3 SP) and Dual Strike.

Cripple: A genlock alpha can make a crippling attack as a special stunt for 3 stunt points. The target of the attack suffers a –2 penalty to attack tests and damage and moves at half speed. The –2 penalty is removed after 3 rounds, but the movement penalty lasts until the target is able to take a breather.

Magic Resistance: A genlock alpha gains a +2 bonus on ability tests to resist the effects of spells and other magical attacks.

Tactical Skirmish: When performing the skirmish stunt, a genlock alpha can move itself, its opponent, or another darkspawn under its command up to 2 yards in any direction.

Talents: Armor Training (Journeyman) and Weapon and Shield Style (Journeyman).

Weapon Groups: Axes, Brawling, and Bludgeons.

Equipment

Battle axe, heavy mail, medium shield, and throwing axe.

[h3] Genlock Emissary   Darkspawn

Particularly cunning genlock alphas cultivate skill as sorcerers, mainly in entropy magic. Genlock emissaries are among the only ones of their kind capable of communicating with outsiders. However, emissaries generally only appear during a Blight, acting to rally darkspawn and ensure they fall into line.

Abilities (Focuses)

1	Communication
2	Constitution (Running)
1	Cunning (Military Lore)
1	Dexterity (Brawling)
4	Magic (Entropy)
2	Perception (Smelling)
3	Strength (Heavy Blades, Intimidation, Staves)
2	Willpower

Combat Ratings

6	Speed
27	Health
11	Defense
7	Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Long Sword	+5	2d6+3
Quarterstaff	+5	1d6+4

Powers

Favored Stunts: Knock Prone and Mighty Blow.

Magic Resistance: A genlock gains a +2 bonus on ability tests to resist the effects of spells and other magical attacks.

Spells: Drain Life, Heal, Vulnerability Hex, Weakness

Tactical Skirmish: When performing the skirmish stunt, a genlock alpha can move itself, its opponent, or another darkspawn under its command up to 2 yards in any direction.

Talents: Armor Training (Journeyman) and Entropy Magic (Journeyman).

Weapon Groups: Blades, Brawling, and Staves.

Equipment

Long sword, quarterstaff, heavy leather armor.

[h3] Glowing Slime

This terror of the Deep Roads is legend amongst dwarven miners, who tell tales about lost or wandering workers spotting a faint light in the tunnels. Thinking it a lamp, they go towards it, only to discover the blue-green glow emanates from a shifting slime mold that clings to damp rocks or settles to the bottom of shallow pools. When it senses the warmth of a living creature nearby, it attacks.

Glowing slime attempts to envelop creatures and dissolve them with its acidic secretions. The creature is immune to most weapons and even resistant to magic; dwarves believe this is because the slime leeches small amounts of lyrium from the rocks. Fire is the most effective weapon against it, although large amounts of salt will also destroy a glowing slime. Miners sometimes draw lines of rock salt across doorways and tunnels to bar the creature's passage.

Abilities (Focuses)

−3 Communication

4   Constitution (Stamina)

−2 Cunning

1   Dexterity (Envelop)

1   Magic

2   Perception (Touch)

0   Strength

2   Willpower

Combat Ratings

6   Speed

20 Health

11 Defense

0   Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Acidic Touch	+3	1d6 penetrating

Powers

Favored Stunts: Knock Prone and Lightning Attack.

Envelop: A glowing slime begins to cover its target, burning with acidic secretions. It does 1d6 penetrating damage per round, and only fire or salting can remove it. It can also be scrapped off with a sharp tool or weapon. Any removal method other than fire does 1d3 (1d6/2) damage to the victim in the process.

Immunity: Glowing slime suffers only 1 point of damage from any physical attack (regardless of the actual damage roll). A mighty blow inflicts 2 points of damage. The slime is also immune to any effect targeting a creature's mind, as it effectively has none.

Magic Resistance: A glowing slime has a +2 bonus on all tests to resist the effects of magic.

Vulnerability: A glowing slime takes 1d6 penetrating damage from contact with the equivalent of a handful of salt (half that amount if splashed with salt water).

[h3] Great Bear

The great bear is a rarer, larger, and more powerful type of bear found in the wilds of Thedas. Like their lesser cousins, great bears do not seek to attack humans, but also do not take intruders near their lairs or hunting grounds lightly. They are fierce and attack creatures failing to show them proper deference, or presenting any kind of threat.

Abilities (Focuses)

0	Communication
7	Constitution (Stamina)
0	Cunning
2	Dexterity (Bite)
−1	Magic
2	Perception (Smelling, Taste)
7	Strength (Claws, Intimidation, Might)
2	Willpower

Combat Ratings

13	Speed
65	Health
12	Defense
0	Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Bite	+4	1d6+6
Claws	+9	2d6+6

Powers

Favored Stunts: Knock Prone (1 Sp) and Quick Bite.

Quick Bite: A great bear can follow up a successful attack with its claws with a Quick Bite as a special stunt costing 2 SP. This bite attack must be taken against the same target as the original attack. Doubles on the bite attack roll do not generate more stunt points.

[h3] Halla

The Dalish elves revere the halla, or white stags, ridden by elven knights in days long past. Now the noble creatures mainly draw Dalish aravels in the elves' wanderings. In spite of this, the elves still consider halla proud and noble creatures. Halla horn is a prized material for elven carvings, and jealously guarded from outsiders.

Abilities (Focuses)

−1	Communication
3	Constitution (Running, Stamina)

0   Cunning

3   Dexterity

2   Magic

3   Perception (Hearing, Smelling)

4   Strength (Jumping)

2   Willpower

Combat Ratings

18   Speed

35   Health

13   Defense

0   Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Gore	+4	1d6+4
Kick	+4	1d6+4

Powers

Favored Stunts: Knock Prone and Trample (3 SP).

Trample: Halla can perform a special Trample stunt for 3 SP after a successful attack. The target is knocked prone and struck by the halla's hooves for an additional 1d6+4 damage.

[h3] Hurlock Alpha   Darkspawn

Champions of the darkspawn, hurlock alphas are fearsome warriors and leaders of war-bands, if not entire small armies, of lesser hurlocks and genlocks.

Abilities (Focuses)

2   Communication (Leadership)

4   Constitution (Stamina)

2   Cunning

3   Dexterity (Bows, Brawling)

1   Magic

2   Perception (Smelling)

5   Strength (Heavy Blades, Intimidation, Might)

3   Willpower (Courage, Morale)

Combat Ratings

8   Speed

45   Health

12 (15 with shield) Defense

8   Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Short Bow	+5	1d6+3

Two-handed Sword	+7	3d6+5

Powers

Favored Stunts: Dual Strike, Mighty Blow (1 SP), and Rally (3 SP).

Rally: A hurlock alpha can perform a special rally stunt for 3 SP. The alpha's action is so impressive it inspires his troops: all darkspawn within 10 yards able to see the alpha regain Health equal to the alpha's Communication plus the number of SP spent.

Talents: Armor Training (Journeyman), Two Hander Style (Journeyman), and Weapon and Shield Style (Journeyman).

Weapon Groups: Bows, Brawling, and Heavy Blades.

Equipment

Light plate, short bow, and two-handed sword (or light plate, long sword, and heavy shield)

[h3] Hurlock Emissary   Darkspawn

A cunning hurlock alpha, rather than becoming a fearsome warrior, may learn the arcane arts, becoming an emissary. Hurlock emissaries are among the most feared darkspawn, not only for their magical powers or command over others of their kind, but also for their sinister cunning.

Abilities (Focuses)

2	Communication (Leadership)
3	Constitution (Stamina)
3	Cunning
2	Dexterity (Brawling)
4	Magic (Entropy)
2	Perception (Smelling)
3	Strength (Heavy Blades, Intimidation)
3	Willpower (Courage, Morale)

Combat Ratings

8	Speed
35	Health
12	Defense
4	Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Arcane Lance	+4	1d6+4
Long Sword	+5	2d6+3

Powers

Favored Stunts: Dual Strike and Mighty Blow.

Spells: Drain Life, Heal, Vulnerability Hex, Weakness

Talents: Armor Training (Journeyman), Entropy Magic (Journeyman), and Weapon and Shield Style (Novice).

Weapon Groups: Blades and Brawling.

Equipment

Long sword and heavy leather armor

[h3] Kobalt

In dwarven tales of tunnel and mine collapses, one common theme is the sound of tapping coming from the far side, often long after the buried miners are sure to have perished. The sound is that of the *kobalt*, the restless shades of dwarves—usually miners—who were lost in the depths, their work unfinished, unable to rest.

Kobalt are blamed for luring the unsuspecting into dangerous areas: collapsing tunnels, mineshafts with bad air, or to the edges of crevasses and deep pits. Some hear the rapping of their spectral picks and hammers echoing faintly in the tunnels and caves of the Deep Roads, or hear whispered voices urging them onward towards certain doom.

If an attempt to lure victims to their deaths fails, kobalts go mad with rage, appearing as gaunt, spectral dwarves, wielding mining implements and moaning or shrieking with fury.

Abilities (Focuses)

0   Communication (Deception)

4   Constitution (Stamina)

0   Cunning

2   Dexterity (Brawling)

0   Magic

1   Perception

3   Strength (Axes, Bludgeons)

2   Willpower (Morale)

Combat Ratings

12   Speed

25   Health

11   Defense

0   Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Hammer or Pick	+5	1d6+6

Powers

Favored Stunts: Knock Prone and Skirmish.

Spectral: Kobalt are spectral beings, largely immune to physical harm. Magic and magical weapons affect them normally. An attacker can also perform a special Spectral Attack stunt when attacking a kobalt for 3 SP, inflicting normal weapon damage, but substituting Magic for Strength.

[h3] Ogre   Darkspawn

These massive darkspawn tower twice the height of a human, their bestial, primitive faces crowned with heavy, curving horns. Ogres are dim and savage creatures, prone to dealing with any obstacle—including their own allies—by crushing or smashing it.

Ogres are a rare sight in most of Thedas, appearing only during a Blight as part of the darkspawn armies, although some ogres are believed to lair in the Deep Roads and high mountain peaks, as well as the depths of isolated forests.

Abilities (Focuses)

0   Communication

8   Constitution (Stamina)

−1   Cunning

1   Dexterity (Throw)

1   Magic

2   Perception (Smelling)

9   Strength (Intimidation, Might)

3   Willpower (Courage, Morale)

Combat Ratings

12   Speed

80   Health

11   Defense

7   Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Club	+9	3d6+9
Smash	+11	2d6+9
Thrown Rock	+3	3d6+9

Powers

Favored Stunts: Crush (3 SP), Lethal Blow (3 SP), and Stomp (2 SP).

Crush: For 3 SP, an ogre can perform the special Crush stunt after an unarmed attack. It grabs the target and begins to squeeze, inflicting 1d6+9 penetrating damage. The ogre can maintain the crush as a major action, inflicting damage each round. The target must succeed on a Strength (Might) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) test vs. the ogre's Strength (Might) to escape its grasp. An adjacent ally can also perform a special stunt for 2 SP to free the grabbed victim. An ogre can choose to hurl away a grabbed target as a minor action, inflicting 1d6+9 penetrating damage, but letting go of the target.

Regeneration: An ogre can take a breather any time as a minor action, regaining 5 + Constitution (typically 13) Health. It cannot recover damage inflicted by fire. A dead ogre automatically gains the same amount of Health each round unless it is decapitated or the remains are destroyed by fire.

Stomp: An ogre can perform a Knock Prone stunt against all targets within 6 yards by stomping the ground with great force.

Tough Hide: Their hardened, calloused hides give ogres armor rating 7.

Equipment

Massive club

[h3] Shriek   Darkspawn

These gaunt and animalistic darkspawn are known as the sharlock, but most call them "shrieks" due to their loud, wailing cries. Darkspawn assassins, shrieks prefer to approach under the cover of darkness, using their echoing wails to unnerve and terrorize their prey before they strike. They are swift and deadly, capable of using the jagged blades mounted on their arms to slice a foe to ribbons, and they are known to use poison, distilled from their own tainted blood, on the edges of their weapons.

Abilities (Focuses)

0   Communication

1   Constitution (Running)

2   Cunning

5   Dexterity (Initiative, Light Blades, Stealth)

2   Magic

3   Perception (Hearing, Tracking)

2   Strength

1   Willpower

Combat Ratings

16   Speed

25   Health

15   Defense

3   Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	*Attack Roll*	*Damage*
Arm Blade	+7	1d6+2

Powers

Favored Stunts: Lightning Attack (2 SP), Poison (2 SP), and Shriek.

Arm Blades: The jagged blades on a shriek's arms count as light blades.

Frenzy: Shrieks can perform the Lightning Attack stunt for just 2 SP.

Poison: As a special stunt for 2 SP, a shriek can have a successful blade attack also poison the target. Once per round, for a number of rounds equal to the stunt points, the victim must make a TN 13 Constitution (Stamina) test or take 1d6 penetrating damage.

Shriek: Their namesake screaming and moaning forces anyone able to hear a shriek to make a TN 12 Willpower (Courage) test or suffer a –1 penalty to attack tests and Defense for the encounter.

Tough Hide: Their leathery hide gives shrieks armor rating 3.

Weapon Groups: Light Blades.

[h3] Werewolf

In the Black Age, Ferelden faced the threat of werewolves: ordinary wolves possessed by rage demons and transformed into savage humanoid monsters of unremitting fury and bloodlust. Worse yet, they were capable of spreading their infection, causing some survivors of a werewolf attack to become possessed and transform into werewolves themselves.

The legendary Ferelden hero Dane led a crusade to wipe out the werewolves. While not entirely successful, it greatly reduced them as a threat, and werewolves have never plagued Ferelden with such ferocity since, found only in the isolated wild areas of the land. "Dane and the Werewolf" remains an epic poem of Ferelden lore, and the Ferelden love for dogs also dates to this time, since they have an innate ability to sense werewolves, even in human form.

Abilities (Focuses)

0   Communication

5   Constitution (Running)

0   Cunning

4   Dexterity (Bite)

1	Magic
3	Perception (Smelling, Tracking)
6	Strength (Claws, Intimidation)
3	Willpower (Courage, Morale)

Combat Ratings

16	Speed
50	Health
14	Defense
4	Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	*Attack Roll*	*Damage*
Bite	+6	1d6+6
Claws	+8	2d6+6

Powers

Favored Stunts: Overwhelm (3 SP), Skirmish, and Werewolf's Curse (variable SP).

Overwhelm: A werewolf can perform a special Overwhelm stunt for 3 SP. The creature knocks its opponent prone and pins it, giving the werewolf a +2 bonus to further attacks (this includes the usual +1 for attacking a prone target). The pinned character must make an opposed Strength (Might) vs. Strength (Might) test against the werewolf to escape.

Werewolf's Curse: A werewolf that scores stunt points on a bite attack can inflict its curse upon a victim, who must make a Constitution (Stamina) test against a TN of (10 + the number of stunt points. A failed test means the victim is infected. An infected victim makes a new Constitution (Stamina) test against the same target number each night after the initial infection. If, after three nights, none of these tests have succeeded, the victim becomes a werewolf.

Shaggy Coat: Their thick, shaggy coats give werewolves armor rating 4.

[h3] Wild Sylvan

Not all demons possess humanoid hosts; some seek out animals, or even plants. A wild sylvan is a tree, possessed and twisted by a rage demon into a tainted and hideous humanoid form. The demon corrupts the tree from within, granting it the power to move and to kill.

Wild sylvans are most often found in deep forests touched by taint. They can lay dormant for considerable lengths of time, appearing like ordinary (if somewhat twisted) trees until they surge to "life" at the prospect of fresh prey. Then they take on a vaguely humanoid form, lashing out with branches tripped with crooked, claw-like "hands".

Abilities (Focuses)

−2	Communication
7	Constitution (Stamina)
0	Cunning
2	Dexterity (Brawling)
2	Magic
0	Perception (Touch)
9	Strength (Claws, Intimidation, Might)
2	Willpower (Morale)

Combat Ratings

6   Speed

60   Health

10   Defense

5   Armor Rating

Attacks

Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Claws	+11	2d6+9

Powers

Favored Stunts: Dual Attack, Knock Prone, Root Grab (2 SP), and Stomp (2 SP).

Immunity: Wild sylvans are immune to earth spells and to any that affect only animals (such as walking bomb, which infuses a target's blood, not sap).

Root Grab: The creature can use its roots to grab and immobilize up to three targets within 4 yards of it as a special stunt, costing 2 SP. The targets make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) test vs. the wild sylvan's Dexterity (Brawling). Success means they avoid being grabbed. Otherwise they are unable to move and suffer 1d6 penetrating damage each round as the roots begin to crush them. It requires a TN 15 Strength (Might) test to pull free.

Stomp: A wild sylvan can perform a Knock Prone stunt against all targets within 6 yards by stomping the ground with great force.

Vulnerable to Fire: Made of wood, wild sylvans are highly flammable. Fire attacks ignore their armor and inflict an additional 1d6 damage. Anyone attacking a wild sylvan with fire can also perform a special Ignite stunt for 2 SP, causing the creature to continue to burn for 1d6 penetrating fire damage each round.

Thick Bark: Their woody bark gives wild sylvans armor rating 5.

[chapter] Rewards

This chapter expands on the material presented in the Rewards chapter of the *Dragon Age RPG* Set 1 *Game Master's Guide*. It gives both new ideas for types of rewards that you can give to heroes for their successes as well as expanding on the information given in Set 1.

[h1] Honorifics

The *Game Master's Guide* in Set 1 of the *Dragon Age RPG* describes heroic (as well as other) reputations as one kind of reward that Player Characters can accumulate over the course of their adventures. Honorifics are like the reputations described there, but with a more concrete expression.

Honorifics are sometimes bestowed by some influential noble, institution, or molder of popular taste. In other circumstances, they arise obviously from some great deed. Honorifics can also bubble up from among the general populace in response to a lifetime of deeds.

Unlike reputations, honorifics have a concrete mechanical effect in play. A dozen examples are provided below. Enterprising GMs can invent dozens more by following in the same vein, with the caveat that the effects of honorifics on tests should be social and interpersonal more often than martial or physical, and that the bonuses and penalties they give to tests should rarely exceed ±1, should exceed that threshold only when limited in the scope of the applicability, and should never exceed ±3.

Some honorific descriptions refer to "positive" and/or "negative" social interactions. Positive and negative describes how the individuals involved in the interaction are inclined to view each other prior to the test in question. Communication (Leadership) tests, for example, are generally positive because one usually only attempts to lead those who're inclined to be led. On the other hand, Communication (Deception) tests are typically negative, because one usually does not need to deceive friends and companions. The GM is always the final arbiter of whether a given interaction (i.e., a given test) is positive or negative.

The social benefits of an honorific are limited to those who are aware of the character's status. A Defender of the Weak traveling incognito gains no particular appreciation of the downtrodden while he remains under cover, for example. The martial or physical benefits of an honorific apply regardless.

Arm of Justice: The character is known to risk life and limb to mete out justice, no matter how mighty are the unjust arrayed against it. Criminals—and even those with a guilty conscience—who are pitted against such characters suffer a –3 penalty to Willpower (Morale and Courage) tests made in opposition to the character's appraisal of their moral mettle and retribution.

Beloved of Mabari: The character's life has been saved in spectacular fashion by mabari war hounds, and news of the tale has traveled far and wide. A character known to be blessed in this way receives a +1 bonus to positive social interactions with all Fereldans, who are disposed to assume that anyone beloved by their treasured battle-dogs must be worthy of their respect and good graces.

Beloved of the Maker: The character has been blessed by fortune in a way that seems to reflect the Maker's favor. They receive a +1 bonus to positive social interactions with the faithful, and a higher bonus —up to +3, at the GM's discretion—to interactions with those who are particularly devout, like brothers and sisters of the Chantry.

Chosen of the Age: The character has been visited by or participated in some event in keeping with the nature of the current historical age. In the Dragon Age, perhaps the character survived an encounter with a dragon, treated with a dragon and lived to tell the tale, or was identified in some way by a dragon as being its fated nemesis. One who is Chosen of an Age was often born or came of age on an auspicious date, such as the date of its inception.

Defender of the Weak: The character is known to defend the frail, sickly, destitute, and downtrodden. They receive a +3 bonus when seeking the aid and comfort of those whom they would defend. (Provided it's aid that could actually be given, of course—seeking money from the poor is a relatively pointless cause, for example.) The downside of this honorific is that the weak are forever seeking aid in their trials and travails from those known to be their defenders.

Elect of the Sky: The character, who must be an Avvar, has been publicly favored by the Lady of the Skies—the Avvars' goddess of death—by cheating their demise in some prominent and celebrated way. They receive a +2 bonus to all positive or negative social interactions with all Avvars. Furthermore, any blow in battle that would kill the character is automatically assumed to have been pulled (see "Pulling

Killing Blows" in the *Dragon Age RPG* Set 1 *Player's Guide*). Enemy combatants may deliver a coup de grace in later rounds normally, but this extra action is required to dispatch one who is the Elect of the Sky.

Favored of Fate: The character is famous for one or many staggering events of good-fortune or serendipity. They may add +1 to the roll result of their dragon die once per game session if adding the bonus would result in doubles where there were not doubles before.

Lion of [Location or People] (e.g., "Lion of the Bannorn" or "Lion of Elvenkind")**:** The character is identified with the defense of some region or its people. They receive a +1 bonus to positive social interactions with those under the aegis of the character's protection, and a +2 bonus to positive social interactions with the rightful rulers or leaders of the location or people such as its banns, Chantry leaders, and the like.

Master of Blades: The character is known to be a swordsman without peer. They receive a +1 bonus in positive or negative social interactions with those who respect such mastery. Their enemies in combat suffer a −1 penalty to Willpower (Courage and Morale) tests made to maintain their confidence.

Master of Lyrium: The character is known for the peerless mastery with which they manipulate enchanted items, or craft them. They receive a +1 bonus in positive or negative social interactions with those who respect magic, or a +2 bonus with those who practice it themselves.

Scourge of [Enemy] (e.g., "Scourge of Orlais" or "Scourge of Werewolves")**:** The character is known to have slain prodigious quantities of some fearsome enemy. Enemies of that sort suffer a −3 penalty to Willpower (Morale and Courage) tests made in opposition to the character's manifest might. The character may also, at the GM's option, receive a bonus of up to +2 when persuading, intimidating, or bargaining with those in the class of enemies. This honorific can also take the form of "[Enemy] 's Bane" (e.g. "Darkspawn's Bane").

Unbent by Misfortune: The character is known to have persevered through some adversity—or plague of adversities—of monumental proportions. They receive a +2 bonus to all Willpower (Courage and Self-Discipline) tests, as well as being held in awe by those who see themselves as particularly subject to the cruel winds of fate.

[h1] Masterworks and Superior Items

There is a difference, clearly, between a pitted, rusty longsword on one hand and a longsword new-forged by dwarves from veridium mined from their ancestral vaults on the other. There is a critical distinction between an upside-down cookpot and a helm crafted by a master of the king's armories. And it makes a difference whether one's mandolin was assembled from Dalish wood by a master musician or cobbled together by an itinerant peddler who had one eye on the local fishmonger's wife while he worked on it.

Masterworks are objects crafted by a maker of surpassing skill. Such implements are, simply put, more effective than their counterparts of common provenance. They typically provide test bonuses to those who use them, as well as damage bonuses in the case of weapons. Flamboyant masterworks can also provide a benefit to social interactions with those who are impressed by such things. Superior items, on the other hand, are objects made from the choicest raw materials. These accoutrements are easier to use than their counterparts that are made from inferior raw materials. Such implements usually impose lesser burdens than common items, endure longer in use, and/or provide the benefits of focuses and/or talents that their users do not otherwise have. Unsurprisingly, many masterworks are also superior items. However, masterworks made of common raw materials not unknown, and superior items crafted with only common skill are likewise found in the world.

The following sections detail the concrete benefits of masterwork and superior weaponry, armor, and tools. Masterworks and superior items do not have costs, like items of common quality and provenance do. They are not available for general sale; their acquisition is the province of adventures and stories only. They are given out was rewards at your sole discretion as the GM.

[h2] Weaponry

Masterwork weaponry generally gives a bonus to the attack rolls and/or damage bonuses of those who wield them. Most such weapons give a simple +1 bonus. A rare few give a +2 bonus. A very few legendary treasures of craft give a +3 bonus. Higher bonuses are impossible outside the realm of magic or the blessings of supernatural forces. A given masterwork's bonuses to attack and damage are often different. For example, the hereditary blade of the teyrns of Highever is much more vicious than it is precise—it

gives a +1 attack bonus but a +3 damage bonus. Similarly, it is not unknown or uncommon for a masterwork weapon to give a bonus to attack or damage only.

Superior weaponry can have several different mechanical effects. Nearly all have reduced minimum Strength requirements, even to the point of the weapon's minimum Strength being a negative number. These are the favored weapons of the anemic and unworthy sons of mighty kings, for obvious reasons; many such "warriors" would be shocked and horrified to pick up and be forced to wield a common longsword.

Some superior weapons also give those who wield them the benefits of one (or, in rare cases, more than one) level of increased talent with the weapon style in question. For example, a combatant possessing the talent Single Weapon Style (novice) who fights with a veridium longsword might gain the journeyman benefits of that talent as well, by virtue of the weapon's superior constituents. Even those without any inherent talent can gain the novice benefits of such weapon styles from the virtues of such weapons. A few superior weapons forged or constructed from exceedingly valuable materials can give those who wield them the benefits of having a focus with that type of weapon whether they actually have it or not. (This type of bonus, however, does *not* stack with the bonus a warrior receives from actually possessing the focus in question.) Again, this is of particular benefit to the pampered wealthy who lack discipline and skill of their own.

The table below outlines the general progression of effects that arise from the material construction of superior weapons. These are guidelines only; every weapon is unique and the GM is the final judge of any given weapon's capabilities. Obviously, the table of metals applies to forged weaponry like swords and axes, while the table of wood types applies to wooden weapons such as quarterstaffs and bows, whether crafted for melee or ranged combat.

Material	Reduction in Minimum Strength	Talent Level Bonus	Focus Benefit
Iron	—	—	—
Steel	−1	—	—
Veridium	−2	one level	—
Red Steel	−2	one level	yes
Material	Reduction in Minimum Strength	Talent Level Bonus	Focus Benefit
Elm	—	—	—
Ash	—	—	—
Yew	−1	—	—
Whitewood	−2	one level	—
Ironbark	−2	one level	yes

In addition to the effects described above, the range categories of missile weapons can be affected by construction from superior materials. The table below gives typical effects. The range increase is a percentage of the base range for the weapon's type. For example, a longbow made of yew has a short range of 29 yards (the base short range of 26 plus an additional 10%) and a long range of 65 yards (the base long range of 52 plus an additional 25%).

Material	Increased Short Range	Increased Long Range
Elm	—	—
Ash	—	+10%
Yew	+10%	+25%
Whitewood	+25%	+50%
Ironbark	+50%	+100%

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[hsb] The Social Benefits of Masterworks and Superior Items

Masterworks and superior items that are particularly impressive or flamboyant can give their owners a bonus to social interactions with those inclined to be impressed by such objects. A given item can give a bonus of up to +3, with +1 bonuses being by far the most common, +2 bonuses being rare, and +3 bonuses being very rate.

The GM should consider both the item's form and value when granting such test bonuses, and should feel free to vary them situationally. Soldiers are likely to be impressed with a fine sword whether made by a master or grand master, for example, and a venal merchant by the works of only the most surpassing artisans regardless of whether they're crossbows or candlesticks.

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[h2] Armor

Masterwork armor generally provides an increased Armor Rating with respect to non-exceptional armor of the same type. Most such armor provides a +1 bonus to Armor Rating, rare suits provide a +2 bonus, and extraordinary suits provide a +3 bonus. Some masterwork armor provides a bonus of similar magnitude to Communications (Leadership) tests, and/or a penalty to enemies' Willpower (Morale) tests.

Superior armor generally features reduced armor penalties. The table below provides typical improvements to armor penalties based on the variety of materials from which armor can be made. Drakeskin is useful for improving leather armors; the various metals apply to mail and plate armor. Note that no armor's armor penalty can be reduced below zero.

Note that shields are unsubtle tools. Although they can be made beautiful by the touch of a master's hand, or creation from superior raw materials (and so can provide benefits as described under **The Social Benefits of Masterworks and Superior Items**), shields cannot be made more effective in either of these ways.

Material	Armor Penalty Improvement
Drakeskin	+1
Material	Armor Penalty Improvement
Iron	—
Steel	—
Veridium	+1
Red Steel	+2

[h2] Tools

Masterwork tools provide the same mechanical benefits as weapons—ingenious construction by a master of craft can give bonuses of between +1 and +3 to the test rolls of those using them.

Superior tools—again, like superior weapons—can give the effects of additional talent levels, as well as the (non-stacking) benefits of a focus that the user does not possess on his own. Use the same tables for weapons when considering the statistics of superior tools. Minimum strengths do not apply to tools; although masterwork tools can typically be used over longer periods of time with much less fatigue, these effects are not expressed in mechanical terms.

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[hsb] Thresholds of Benefit

Some masterworks (but generally not superior items) have a threshold of skill that the item's user must meet in order to gain the superlative benefits of the item. This reflects the fact that a novice rogue, say, won't necessarily have the foggiest idea what to do with the strange and subtle lock-picking tools crafted for a stone master of breaking-and-entering. Thresholds of benefit are especially common for tools, but can apply to weapons and suits of armor as well.

Example: *A masterwork costume giving a +2 bonus to Communications (Disguise) tests but having a threshold of 5 requires that the one wearing it have an unmodified test bonus of +5 or better in order to get the further +2 bonus that the masterwork provides.*

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Magic Items

As promised in the *Dragon Age RPG* Set 1 *Game Master's Guide*, the temporary and permanent magic items below are appropriate for characters of levels 6–10.

Temporary Magic Items

Bullseye Arrows

One who takes an aim action when using a Bullseye Arrow receives a +3 bonus to a subsequent attack roll, rather than the regular +1 bonus. The enchantment on each missile is good for one shot, but the enchantment is not used up until the aim bonus is actually used to make an attack roll. That is, it is *not* used up if a subsequent attack is not made, or if a Bullseye Arrow is fired without a preceding aim action.

Healing Potion

Similar to but more potent than a Lesser Healing Potion, a Healing Potion is made from healing herbs enchanted with Creation Magic. Imbibing a Healing Potion requires an activate action and restores up to 4d6 + Con lost Health.

Ink of Splendor

The lyrium contained in this single bottle of ink renders it capable of changing colors both as and after it is applied in order to illuminate, both beautifully and helpfully, even the simplest of messages. It provides a +3 bonus to Dexterity (Calligraphy) and Cunning (Cartography and Writing) tests to write and record information. Construction plans drawn up with Cunning (Engineering) are easier to carry out. Workers following such plans gain a +2 bonus to relevant tests. A full batch of this ink produces 12 uses; roll 2d6 to determine how many uses remain in any given bottle that is found in the course of play.

Lyrium Potion

Similar to but more potent than a Lesser Lyrium Potion, a Lyrium Potion contains a small amount of refined lyrium. Imbibing a Lyrium Potion requires an activate action and restores up to 2d6 + Con lost Magic Points.

Paints of Warding

These war-paints, when applied in fearsome patterns to the face of a combatant such that his enemies can see them clearly in battle, provide a +5 bonus to Armor Rating for as long as they are not washed or worn away. (One who goes to great pains to preserve them might see them last for as long as a week.)

Potion of Fortune and Skill

One who drinks a potion such as this at the beginning of a battle receives two extra Stunt Points (i.e., 1d6+2 SP) each time he rolls doubles, for the duration of the fight. Potions of this type go by many different names.

Seeking Torch

These torches provide typical light, but their flickering illumination also seems to bend around obstacles and even shine through opaque objects to find that which is otherwise hidden from sight. Those who search by the light of a Seeking Torch—even in broad daylight—gain a +3 bonus to Perception (Searching) tests while the torch burns. Each torch burns only long enough for a single search (i.e., for one test).

Permanent Magic Items

Boots of Lithe Speed

These boots—which are stunningly beautiful in addition to being enchanted—add +2 to the Speed of one who wears them. They also give a +3 bonus to Constitution (Running) tests made by their wearer. Their elegance is such they have a base +2 bonus to relevant social tests (see **The Social Benefits of Masterworks and Superior Items**).

The Channel of Entropic Might

This ring is a powerful channeler of entropic magic. A mage who wears it gains a +2 bonus to their Spellpower when casting spells of the Entropy magic school. Similar magic items exist for the other schools of magic, as well, although not all take the physical form of rings.

Dagger of Piercing

This dagger, of the type crafted for off-hand use by a two-weapon fighter, gives the perpetual benefit of the "Pierce Armor" stunt, reducing an enemy's Armor Rating by half, rounded down. Using the Pierce Armor stunt while wielding this dagger can halve an opponent's Armor Rating a second time, quartering it (but apply all halving before any rounding). Although made for off-hand use, this dagger can be used as a primary weapon as well, with the same benefits.

Helm of Paramount Action

This ornate helm, designed to be worn as part of a suit of heavy plate armor, gives the one who wears it the ability to direct their companions in order to maximize their effectiveness in battle by striking when the opportunity is most ripe. At the beginning of each round of combat, the one waring this helm may attempt a TN11 Communication (Leadership) test. If successful, he may add 3 to the initiative number of a single ally for the duration of the current round. The one wearing the helm may not take this bonus himself.

The Ridiculous Ear-horn

Crafted as part of an elaborate joke on a doddering politician in the royal courts of Orlais, this horn, designed to be held to the ear as an aid to hearing, nonetheless provides a +2 bonus to Perception (Listening) tests.

The Gloves of the Lords of Towerby

The ancient lords of Towerby—which no longer exists—were military masters, generals of great renown whose line was brought low by petty politics. The gloves that family passed down among their scions, worn to supple softness by centuries of use, aided them subtly when their armies were in the field. One who wears the gloves receives a +3 bonus to Cunning (Cartography) tests, whether drawing or interpreting maps, and receives a similar +3 bonus to Cunning (Military Lore) tests and Communications (Leadership) tests in the specific situation of communicating a strategy in advance, such as by pointing out critical locations on a map or scratching a hasty battle plan in the dirt.

Shroud of Flawless Concealment

These items, of which there are at least a half-dozen, take many and unpredictable forms: a bracelet, a ring, a hat, a robe, and others. Their function is simple—to prevent one who wears them from being detected as capable of wielding magic. The supernatural means of the Chantry, the Circle, and the Templars are completely ineffective in identifying a shrouded character as a mage. Likewise, it is impossible for one who wears a shroud to accidentally (or even purposefully) admit to being a wizard, or for one questioning such a character from learning the fact. No rolls or tests are required or allowed in any of these cases—learning such information is simply impossible without first setting aside the item. The shrouds are incalculably valuable to apostates, for obvious reasons.

Unbiased Dice

This set of common gambling dice, made of bone, always rolls whatever whatever result that their owner—presumably one of a gambling game's players—visualizes with sufficient clarity. This provides a nearly unbeatable edge in games of chance to the tune of a +5 bonus to Communication (Gambling) tests. The Unbiased Dice last changed hands when a canny gambler who realized how he was being beaten won ownership of the dice themselves mid-game by making a canny and well-timed proposition bet against their former owner on the side. The new owner then proceeded to trounce the original owner, who realized too late and to his chagrin how he had been outplayed. The "Unbiased" label commonly applied to these dice is part joke among thieves and part subterfuge in order to prevent potential marks from becoming wise to the nature of the dice simply by hearing their name.

Superior Consumables and Impractical Treasures

In addition to the empirical benefits of masterwork, superior, and magical items, the treasure hoards of Thedas are rife with objects of great value but less-than-practical benefit. Fine artworks are valued by those with refined aesthetics. Superior wines and foodstuffs —spices, especially—are worth fighting over

among gourmands and the status-conscious. First-class clothing, whether ostentatious or reserved, communicates the taste and refinement of those who wear it.

Any item of equipment or provision can be crafted or purchased in more-excellent versions. These more-worthy versions are usually no more useful than their common counterparts (and are sometimes less useful, given their ornamentation or fragility) but are nevertheless worth a great deal more. Such items often provide a social benefit to interactions with those who appreciate their worth—see **The Social Benefits of Masterworks and Superior Items**—that can exceed the social benefits of practical items by providing a bonus of up to +5, albeit at a preposterous cost**.** The table below provides rough guidelines as to the multiples of price and benefit that can be gained. "Descriptor" is simply a handy label that can be used to describe such items.

Price Multiple	Descriptor	Maximum Social Bonus
x5	Fine	+1
x25	Outstanding	+2
x100	Exceptional	+3
x1,000+	Kingly	+5

Examples: *A fine lamp (base cost: 2 sp) costs 10 silver pieces, an outstanding version 50 sp, an exceptional one 2 gp, and a kingly lamp 20 gp or more. None necessarily illuminates any better than any other. A fine saddle (base cost: 20 sp) costs 1 gp, an outstanding one 5 gp, an exceptional variety 20 gp, and a kingly saddle 200 gp or more. All are equally effective at keeping a rider upon their horse. Fine wine (base cost: 20 cp) goes for 1 sp, outstanding wine fetches 5 sp, exceptional wine costs 20 sp, and wine for the king's table costs 200 sp and up per bottle. Although the rarefied palates of the wealthy and noble can tell the difference, all qualities dull the pain of a hard day with equal sufficiency.*

Items of this nature become better and better rewards for Player Characters as they go up in level. They're often more portable than coin, which can benefit adventurers who acquire them far from home. But for you, as GM, they're also more narratively interesting, and can provide story hooks for further adventures as the heroes are challenged to—for example—"make change" for a candelabra of exceptional quality.

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[hsb] Historical Provenance

Any physical item—whether masterwork, superior, beautiful, or dirt-common—can be imbued with greater value by giving it a history. Items once owned by the outsize figures of past times are valuable to those who know their provenance. Items known to have been present for notable events are likewise valuable because of it—especially if they were involved in pivotal moments. Consider, as just a few examples…

- The common dagger that struck down the Rebel Queen.

- The dented chalice used in the Joining of the first Grey Wardens.

- The ostentatious hat made from the pelt of the last werewolf slain in Ferelden.

- The masterwork—and magical, some say—signet ring worn by the chief among the mages who sought to become gods but were twisted into the first darkspawn.

An item's history can also be tailored to a particular Player Character. The sword carried into battle by a PC warrior's grandfather should have great value to that hero. Likewise, the mirror that once hung in the keep—now ruined—where a hero's forebears ruled should help provide motivation to that PC to see the quest done that would restore his heirs to their rightful throne.

Although such items can certainly be bought and sold, the value of an item's historical provenance is never expressed in terms of coin. Such value can only be expressed in its sale between a particular buyer and seller. This fact makes such items particularly useful to you, as GM, because you can rule that a particularly desperate buyer will pay just enough to allow the heroes to buy some item that the current

quest requires, or, conversely, that there are no buyers in the immediate area who are particularly impressed with the origin of the item in question.

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[hsb] Seeds of Adventure

One easy way to create an adventure is to choose or create some object, figure out who has it, figure out which other group or individual wants it, and then fill in the empty space between with encounters. Such adventures an work regardless of what—if anything—the object is good for as long as the people who want it are convinced it's worth having and there are enough obstacles in the way to make the getting interesting.

In a roleplaying game, the above (i.e., that the object need not have any inherent worth) holds true for the purposes of creating in interesting story, but the mechanical effects of objects take on an extra dimension of motivation for players, who know that their characters will be concretely and measurably more effective as their gear improves. If you ever find yourself at a loss for the subject of an adventure, it's hard to go wrong starting with an object.

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