

THE ELDER SCROLLS IV

OBLIVION

GAMESPOT

GAME GUIDE



By: Matthew Rorie

Design: Kimberley Duval

It's been a long time coming, but the journey from Morrowind to Oblivion was worth the wait. Fans of the Elder Scrolls have had to wait almost four years for a sequel to Morrowind, the sprawling, epic game set in the land of Vvardenfell. Luckily for them, and for anyone interested in quality role-playing games, Oblivion has finally arrived, and it's even bigger and better than its predecessor.

Unlike Morrowind, Oblivion is set in Cyrodiil, the heartland of the Empire of Tamriel, which in turn is just a single continent on the planet of Nirn. With sixteen square miles of land to explore, there's going to be plenty of dungeons to explore, along with a huge number of structured quests, including those found as a part of the game's main storyline, the four main guilds you can join, as well as dozens of other miscellaneous quests you can take part of.

GameSpot's Game Guide to Oblivion features a bevy of information to keep you informed about all things Elder, and many things Scrollish. In addition to a complete main quest walkthrough, we've got character creation tips, tips for combat, stealth, and alchemy, a bunch of general information (want to know where to buy lockpicks? Check the commerce tips), and walkthroughs for all of the Guild and Daedric Shrine quests. Enjoy!

Races

There are ten main races to be found in Cyrodiil, some fairly standard human-esque races, some more traditional fantasy archetypes, and some that are a bit more outlandish. Your choice of race doesn't affect what you can choose to do in the game, but each race does have a few particular strengths, so if you know what kind of character you want to play in the game, such as by focusing on spellcasting or fighting with melee weapons, then you can give yourself a head start by picking a race with complementary skills and ability scores. But, again, your choice of race doesn't close off any paths to you, so if you want to make a Breton but focus on your heavy armor and sword skills, you'll be free to do so; you'll just start a bit behind (skill-wise) Redguard character with the same focus.

Argonian

The reptilian Argonians have an odd collection of skill bonuses, making them a bizarre jack-of-all-trades race. Their primary attributes are Agility and Speed, which make them decent thief/stealth characters, but apart from that they're somewhat undistinguished unless you intend to select the race for role-playing purposes.

Skill Bonuses

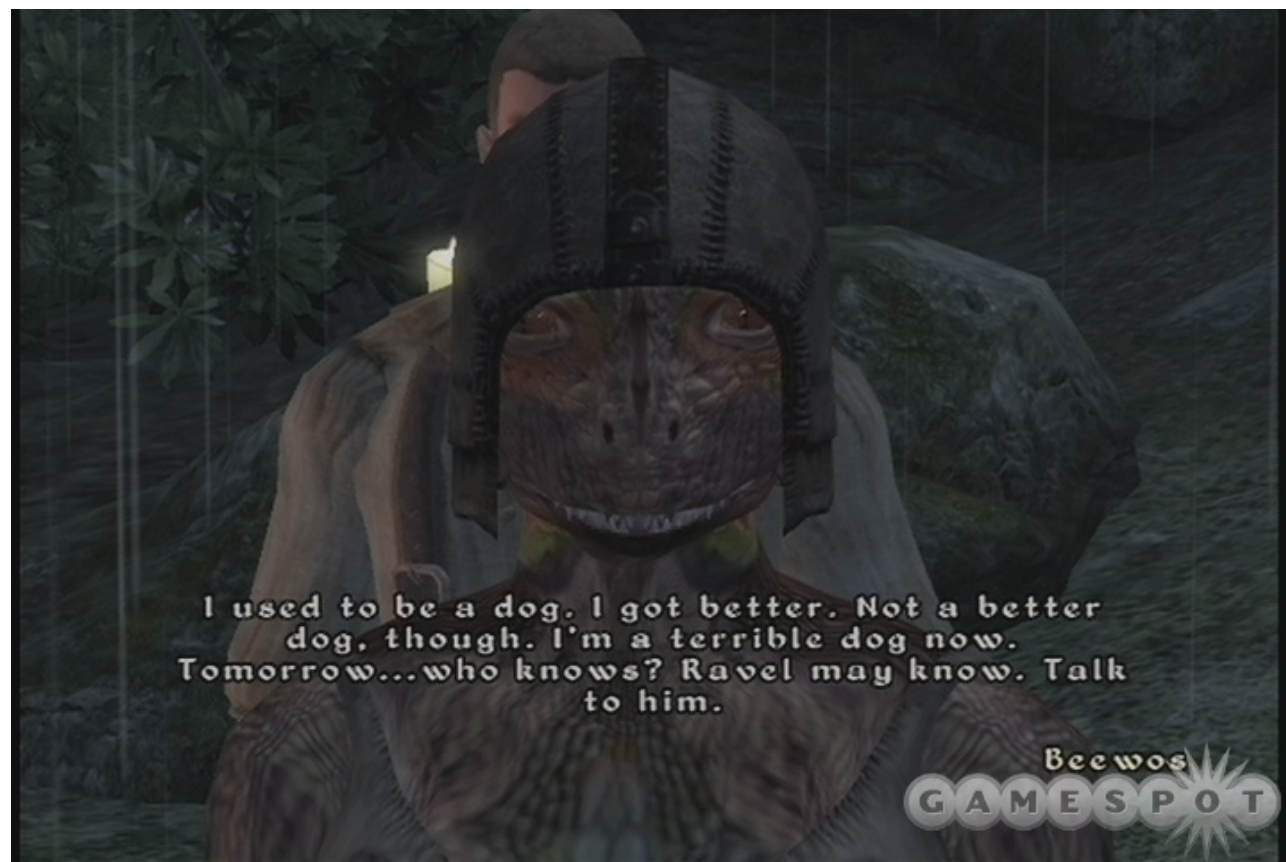
- **Alchemy** +5

- **Athletics** +10
- **Blade** +5
- **Hand To Hand** +5
- **Illusion** +5
- **Mysticism** +5
- **Security** +10

Special Abilities

- Resist Disease (magnitude 75, permanent)
- Immune to Poison (magnitude 100, permanent)
- Water Breathing (permanent)

Breton



Oh so pretty...and oh so crazy.

The Bretonian race is well known as having spawned numerous famous spellcasters, and indeed most of their skills rotate around the magical arts. Breton mages aren't of the fire-and-brimstone type, though, preferring to use subtler magical energies to effect their ultimate goals. As such, the fan-favorite Destruction skill is a no-show in their bonuses, but you'll be able to use all sorts of other spells as you like, with some large bonuses to them to boot. Without being able to emphasize Destruction, though, you'll be a little bit behind offensively when compared to a Dark Elf or High Elf mage. Defensively, however, your ability to Resist Magicka will make most spellcasting enemies a piece of cake for Breton mages.

Skill Bonuses

- **Alchemy** +5
- **Alteration** +5
- **Conjuration** +10
- **Illusion** +5
- **Mysticism** +10
- **Restoration** +10

Special Abilities

- Fortified Majicka (magnitude 50, permanent)
- Resist Magicka (magnitude 50, permanent)
- Shield (temporary physical damage barrier, once/day)

Dark Elf

Dark Elf is an excellent race for players that want to make a character that emphasizes a mix of spellcasting and combat. Most of their bonuses are for combat-oriented skills, including a good variety of weapon skills, with Destruction magic getting a large bonus for when you want to take your opponents down at range. While not as physically powerful as a Nord or a Redguard, the balance between strength and magical abilities makes for a well-rounded combat character. And the Resist Fire ability is a big help against the many fire-wielding enemies in the game.

Skill Bonuses

- **Athletics** +5
- **Blade** +10
- **Blunt** +5
- **Destruction** +10
- **Light Armor** +5
- **Marksman** +5
- **Mysticism** +5

Special Abilities

- Ancestor Guardian (Summon Ghost once per day for 60 seconds)
- Resist Fire (magnitude 75, permanent)

High Elf

The High Elf is arguably the best pure spellcasting race, especially if you're of an offensive bent. With all of the skill bonuses save for Alchemy being focused on spellcasting skills, you're going to have a broad array of magicks boosted, including Destruction for pure offensive combat. Especially noteworthy are the special abilities on offer here; with Fortified Magicka, you'll be able to spend a

lot more time casting spells as opposed to taking on enemies in combat. If you can match yourself up with an appropriate birthsign, you can become an extremely specialized mage character, which can be interesting if you have no interest in stealth or combat gameplay.

Skill Bonuses

- **Alchemy** +5
- **Alteration** +10
- **Conjuration** +5
- **Destruction** +10
- **Illusion** +5
- **Mysticism** +10

Special Abilities

- Fortified Majicka (magnitude 100, permanent)
- Resist Disease (magnitude 75, permanent)
- Weakness to Fire, Frost, and Shock (magnitude 25, permanent)

Imperial

Imperials are fairly run-of-the-mill humans, without any particularly exceptional skill bonuses or special abilities. They're the most personable of all the races, though, typically well-liked by everyone, with the gift of a golden tongue. Although talking your way through the entire game would be a difficult task, to say the least, an Imperial character is probably your best bet if you're attempting to play a character that can Persuade his or her way past characters that are reluctant to help you. You'll probably have the ability to avoid a lot of sticky situations, or just make your trip a bit easier, with an Imperial character that focuses on Speechcraft to help out in conversations. Since you can supplement that with their built-in Voice of the Emperor ability to Charm characters once per day, which can be further supplemented by Charm spells if need be, there should be few critical characters in the game that you *can't* charm off their feet. This is a more subtle skill than being able to crack everyone's head with an axe, but is still valuable nonetheless.

Skill Bonuses

- **Blade** +5
- **Blunt** +5
- **Hand To Hand** +5
- **Heavy Armor** +5
- **Mercantile** +10
- **Speechcraft** +10

Special Abilities

- Star of the West (Absorb Fatigue, magnitude 100, once per day)

- Voice of the Emperor (Charm, magnitude 30, once per day)

Khajit

The Khajit are well-known as a slave race, at least in the lands of Hammerfell. Freed Khajit are appreciated as thieves, with a suite of skill bonuses well-suited to assassin work, as well. They're typically capable of running farther and jumping higher than other races, and with extra Sneaking and Security they'll be capable of infiltrating areas they're really not meant to enter. Wood Elves are usually going to be better in stealth combat than Khajit, but if you want to try a pure stealth avoidance archetype, then a Khajit might be right up your alley. Your Eye of Fear ability will cause pesky or too-powerful enemies to run away, while Eye of Night will let you see in the dark without having to resort to torches, which attract the attention of enemies.

Skill Bonuses

- **Acrobatics** +10
- **Athletics** +5
- **Blade** +5
- **Hand To Hand** +10
- **Light Armor** +5
- **Security** +5
- **Sneak** +5

Special Abilities

- Eye of Fear (Demoralize, magnitude 100, once a day)
- Eye of Night (Night-Eye, 30 seconds, repeatable)

Nord

If you're going for pure melee, then this race from the northern reaches is going to be ideal for you. With the highest strength of any race (for the women, at any rate; several classes start with 50 strength for men), you're going to be able to carry more loot and whack enemies harder than anyone else in Tamriel. Your skill bonuses are also obviously applicable to the heavy work of an armor-wielding warrior, with a bevy of fine bonuses to your core skills and some smaller bonuses to Restoration and Armorer, which come in handy when you're not in the thick of battle.

Skill Bonuses

- **Armorer** +5
- **Blade** +10
- **Block** +5
- **Blunt** +10
- **Heavy Armor** +10
- **Restoration** +5

Special Abilities

- Nordic Frost (Magnitude 50 frost damage, once per day)
- Resist Frost (Magnitude 50, permanent)

Orc

Although Orcs aren't well thought of in Tamriel (the female of the species is the only female member of a race that's actually considered uglier than the male, which is reflected in the exceedingly poor Personality score), they do one thing well: fight. With their Berserk ability, they'll be able to flip on the adrenaline once per day, allowing them to gain extra health, strength, and fatigue, at the cost of a massive agility penalty. While this only lasts for a minute or so, it'll help you take down the tough enemies that charge at you, since you'll be able to stand in one spot and go to town on them. Note, however, that they have the fewest number of skill bonuses, and don't get any extra points in Blade, so you'll be forced to skill it up yourself if you want to be handy with a sword.



If you choose to be an Orc, you'll pay the price, literally; merchants will charge you more than they will other characters.

Skill Bonuses

- **Armorer** +10
- **Block** +10
- **Blunt** +10

- **Hand To Hand** +5
- **Heavy Armor** +10

Special Abilities

- Berserk (Fortify Health 20, Fortify Strength 50, Fortify Fatigue 200, Drain Agility 100, lasts 60 seconds, can be cast once per day)
- Resist Magicka (Magnitude 25, permanent)

Redguard

Another of the melee-oriented races, Redguards are designed for combat and nothing but. While an Armorer boost would probably be preferred over the Athletics skill bonus that they get, the rest of the skills here are welcome for fighters. The Adrenaline Rush ability will give you a huge edge in difficult fights, with no apparent drawbacks, and while resisting poison and disease isn't all that sexy, it'll help you avoid the ill effects of eating Alchemy ingredients while attempting to raise your score.

Skill Bonuses

- **Athletics** +10
- **Blade** +10
- **Blunt** +10
- **Light Armor** +5
- **Heavy Armor** +5
- **Mercantile** +5

Special Abilities

- Adrenaline Rush (Fortify: Agility 50, Speed 50, Strength 50, Endurance 50, Health 25, lasts sixty seconds, castable once per day)
- Resist Poison (Magnitude 75, permanent)
- Resist Disease (Magnitude 75, permanent)

Wood Elf

Wood Elves are among the most skilled stealth warriors in all of Tamriel, and their skill bonuses show it. With huge bonuses to Sneak and Marksman, you'll be creeping up on enemies and felling them from the shadows with your ranged weapons like an assassin. With another large bonus to Alchemy, you'll also be able to supplement your ranged attacks with deadly poisons. Add in some Illusion magic to make yourself invisible, and you'll be one of the deadliest soldiers in the land, of a sort; when it comes to a straight fight, you'll have some problems.

Skill Bonuses

- **Acrobatics** +5
- **Alchemy** +10
- **Alteration** +5
- **Light Armor** +5
- **Marksman** +10
- **Sneak** +10

Special Abilities

- Beast Tongue (Command Creature, magnitude 20, lasts sixty seconds once per day)
- Resist Disease (Magnitude 75, permanent)

Birthsigns

Apprentice

Benefit: +100 Magicka, 100% Weakness to Magicka Double your pleasure, double your risk. Taking double damage from spellcasters and magical monsters will make this a painful birthsign to be born under, but the extra Magicka will definitely come in handy throughout the game.

Lady

Benefit: Willpower +10, Endurance +10 A curious mix of attribute bonuses, albeit perhaps decent for a Battlemage character. Willpower affects Destruction, Alteration, and Restoration, while Endurance affects Heavy Armor, Block, and Armorer. Generally characters like this will be taking one of the magicka-boosting birthsigns instead of something like this, however.

Mage

Benefit: +50 Magicka This is going to be useful across the board, with spellcasting-focused characters obviously getting the primary benefit. Almost anyone can take advantage of extra Magicka, though, especially since it can be difficult to raise your Magicka if you intend to focus on weapon or thief skills.

Thief

Benefit: +10 Agility, +10 Speed, +10 Luck You'll be more proficient at sneaking, picking locks, and wearing light armor when using this skill, making you a master thief. The bonus to Luck will have a large impact on all of your actions, making this a no-brainer for stealthy characters.

Atronach

Benefit: +150 Magicka, 50% Spell Absorption, no magicka regeneration The Atronach ability is

one of the most risky, but rewarding, of all of them. With it, you'll gain a huge, hyoooge boost to your starting magicka, and will be able to absorb incoming spells and convert their damage into more magicka for yourself. The drawback? You don't actually regenerate any magicka on your own, forcing you to actually rely on getting hit by spells in the hopes that you'll absorb them.

Oddly enough, the lack of magicka regeneration will probably make you more hesitant to let loose with spells; you'll never know if the cave you're in is going to be populated with nothing but trolls, making it impossible for you to get your magicka back. Needless to say, you're probably going to be sucking down plenty of Restore Magicka potions when you choose this birthsign.

That said, with a little effort, this can be quite a powerful sign to choose. Even melee-oriented characters can take advantage of the extra magicka abilities, using their higher magic reserves to cast situational spells that would otherwise be too expensive for them, like Cure Disease, while taking advantage of the spell absorption to help mitigate incoming damage.

Lord

Benefit: Can heal for 90 points of health over time, permanent 25% weakness to fire. The heal spell here is always going to be worthwhile, since it is in fact a spell and not a once-per-day ability. It's a very efficient spell, as well, in terms of magicka cost (50) versus health gained (90). (Compare to something like Heal Minor Wounds, which will usually cost 14 magicka for an eight-point heal.) Still, though, mage characters are likely going to be able to just cast something they buy in a store, while fighters and thieves will likely be able to make or buy plenty of Healing or Restore Health potions.

Lover

Benefit: Paralyze once a day for 10 seconds at a cost of 120 Fatigue Paralyzation is one of the strongest combat abilities you can gain in Oblivion, since it'll completely eliminate your target from the fight for the duration of the effect. Most humanoid enemies will fall to the ground when paralyzed, allowing you to deal extra damage to them with melee weapons, or just take advantage of their incapacitation to book a hasty retreat. The large fatigue penalty will make it easier for your enemies to knock you down, however, so this is best used when you and your target are going one-on-one. This is probably best for fighter characters, who can capitalize on the paralyzation with a flurry of blows

Ritual

Benefit: Restore 200 Health once per day; Turn Undead spell An instant 200 health restoration is going to eliminate the need for many characters to actually rest during lengthy sojourns into Oblivion, or will give them an out during fights with boss-level enemies. The Turn Undead ability is more specific, and will probably be of most use to thief and spellcasting characters that can't handle the Skeleton Heroes when they start popping up. It works all the way up to level 25 undead, which means that it'll be handy through most of the game, but then again, it won't actually kill any enemies for you, just make them run away.

Serpent

Benefit: Poisons your target for 20 seconds while casting Dispel and Cure Poison on yourself; costs 100 Fatigue Blah. All of these effects can be replicated with potions and poisons, and the poison on your enemy won't be putting a dent in their health by the time you reach the upper teen levels. We've gotten through most of the game without ever casting Dispel or Cure Poison on ourselves, so you should probably steer clear of this birthsign.

Shadow

Benefit: Can turn invisible for 60 seconds once per day. Plainly useful for all character types, but mostly intended for use in the Thieves Guild or Dark Brotherhood quests. If you're willing to forego those questlines until you're level 10, then the Ring of Khajiit will make this birthsign mostly redundant, since it will offer up a permanent Chameleon ability. If at any point you need true invisibility, that can be supplied through potions or spells. Still, a decent choice for any character that prefers bypassing their problems instead of hitting them in the face.

Steed

Benefit: Speed +20 Um...next? Speed makes you go faster; it has a marginal (at best) effect on how you play the game, besides letting you get around more quickly. It affects the skills of Acrobatics, Athletics, and Light Armor, of which only Light Armor will really be worth taking the time to upgrade, and then only for stealthy characters. There are much better birthsigns available to you.

Tower

Benefit: Open Average Lock once per day; Reflect Damage 5% for two minutes, once per day. Not an incredibly useful birthsign, unless you're role-playing a character that refuses to learn how to pick locks. This might let you get into the boss-level chests that you spot in your travels, but eventually you'll start running into Hard or Very Hard locks, and there's nothing that's going to help you get past them outside of Alteration spells or a high Security skill. The Skeleton Key will also make the lock-opening skill pretty much obsolete. The Reflect Damage ability is a bit too passive for our tastes; not only is it a fairly meager effect, but you'll eventually start finding rings and amulets that offer more powerful Reflect Damage effects on a permanent basis.

Warrior

Benefit: +10 Strength, +10 Endurance More carrying capacity, more damage, more health, more fatigue. All the things a growing warrior needs. This is a safe choice for battle-oriented characters, or anyone who wants more health and the ability to carry a bit more loot.

Skills

There are numerous different skills in Oblivion, all of which you can dabble in or specialize in as is your wont. We're going to leave the character creation aspects of choosing skills aside for now and focus on simply describing the skills and how they affect the game, but suffice to say that you can and probably will want to try your hand at numerous different skills through the course of a game, unless you're role-playing a warrior with a huge disdain for magic, or something like that.

Note that your character has a proficiency number for each skill, with a higher number indicating that your character is more talented in that particular skill. To increase your skill's proficiency, you have to use it over and over again; you can cast repeated healing spells on yourself to increase your Restoration skill, or make a billion potions to increase your Alchemy skill. Each skill also has a rank associated with it, which indicates a different level of power, which in turn lets you unlock new abilities related to that power.

Skill Score Mastery Level

0-24	Novice
25-49	Apprentice
50-74	Journeyman
75-99	Expert
100	Master

For the purposes of organizational clarity, we'll repeat the game manual's classification of skills into Combat, Magic, and Stealth, but these are pretty fuzzy terms. The main area where this taxonomy comes into play is in character creation, where you choose a class that has a "focus" in one of these areas; that area's skills will get an immediate ten point bonus to their starting numbers and will rank up a bit more quickly than other skills will. Again, though, you aren't constrained in your choice of skills, and if you're a Combat specialist that wants to use Alchemy to make potions and Illusion magic to light up dank dungeons, then you'll be free to do so.

Also note that there are special NPCs in the game world that you can pay for training. Each character will accept a certain amount of gold to increase your skill's rating by one point. Training is *expensive*, however, and can only be purchased five times per level. We've noted the general locations of each of these trainers underneath their specific skills. The low-level trainers will train you between ranks one and 40; the mid-level trainers work between 40 and 70; and the high-level trainers work from 70 to 100. The high-level trainers will usually require you to perform a quest of some sort before they'll agree to train you, however.

Combat Skills

Armorer

Relevant Attribute: Endurance

Low Trainers: Eitar, in a house in Leyawiin; Tadrose Helas, Bravil Fighter's Guild

Medium Trainers: Rohssan, A Fighting Chance shop in Imperial Market District; Rasheda in Fire and Steel in Chorrol

High Trainer: Gin-Wulm, wanders in the Imperial Market District much of the time

Armorer is more or less a critical skill for every character to learn, unless you're playing a hard-core pacifist character that attempts to never kill anything, or a nudist character that runs around and beats up everything with his or her fists. Almost every other character, though, will use some kind of armor or weapon, or will take damage from enemy blows, and that results in equipment that gets broken or worn over time.

With the Armorer skill, you can use repair hammers to repair your equipment in the middle of a dungeon, or out in a field, or anywhere else it might be convenient, provided that you actually have the hammers to use. (Early on in the game, the 20 gold or so per hammer will be a big goldsink for you, but they're pretty much necessary.) It's important to keep your equipment in tip-top shape, because as it takes damage, it also loses efficacy. It's not a situation where your equipment is either working or not, in other words; a sword that's been damaged 50% will be doing around 50% of its maximum damage. So you'll want to stop and pause frequently to repair your armor.



Just letting people hit you will be the easiest way to flex your Armorer muscles, but you can also repair your enemy's equipment.

This isn't a difficult thing to do, luckily; if you're a warrior, just bind a repair hammer to one of your hotkeys and pull it up whenever it's convenient. From there, it's just a matter of pressing a button over and over until all of your equipment is repaired. Until you get to Apprentice level, you're going to be breaking hammers like a madman, but after you do hit Apprentice, you should

be able to complete most dungeon jaunts with five-ten hammers and not have to worry too much about running out.

If you set Armorer as a Minor Skill, you'll probably want to train yourself up to level 50 to gain the ability to repair magical items, if you don't manage to get there through normal use of the skill. If you're really desperate to increase your Armorer rating, head into Bandit-infested dungeons, and pick up all of the armor and weapons that they drop when you kill your foes. Keep on doing this until you become overencumbered, then repair everything that pops up in your repair menu and drop anything that isn't valuable enough to keep carrying.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	Cannot repair magical items.
Apprentice	Still can't repair magical items, but hammers last twice as long.
Journeyman	Can repair magical items.
Expert	Can actually make items better by "repairing" them to 125% of their base statistics. This adds damage to weapons and protection to armor.
Master	Never breaks hammers, so you can get by with only one hammer.

Athletics

Relevant Attribute: Speed

Low Trainers: Uuras in Skingrad; Mahei in Leyawiin

Medium Trainers: Hauls-Ropes-Faster, usually found in the Fo'c'sle inn in Anvil's dock district during the day, but you'll have to pick the lock on his room

High Trainer: Rusia Bradus, Anvil's main section

The harsh truth is that very, very few players of Oblivion are going to be hyped up about the ability to pump up their Athletics score. Although it has some subtle benefits for your character, the ability to run and swim faster just isn't necessarily all that sexy. Although you do regenerate fatigue more quickly when you increase your Athletics, that alone isn't going to be worth specializing in the skill, especially since it's pretty much always increasing just from running around and swimming. It'll go up on its own fairly naturally as you play the game.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	Slow Fatigue regeneration while running.
Apprentice	25% faster Fatigue regeneration while running.
Journeyman	50% faster Fatigue regeneration while running.
Expert	75% faster Fatigue regeneration while running.
Master	Running doesn't reduce fatigue regeneration.

Blade

Relevant Attribute: Strength

Low Trainers: Naspia Cosa, Castle Cheydinhal; Right-Wind, Bruma Fighters Guild

Medium Trainers: Sherina, Leyawiin Fighters Guild; Rhano, Anvil Fighters Guild

High Trainer: Alix Lencola, Faregyl Inn, south of Imperial City on the Green Road, on a little dead-end road near the end of a river

Ah, the blade. This is pretty much the classic fantasy role-playing skill, allowing you to use bladed weapons of all makes and models. (Although, not really; note that axes are for some reason considered to be Blunt weapons.)

Increasing your Blade skill lets you deal more damage with bladed weapons. Pretty simple! Note that warrior characters should *only pick ONE* of the three weapons-related skills as a Major Skill, for reasons that we make clear in our chapter on levelling up.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	Basic Power Attack available by holding down the attack button.
Apprentice	Standing Power Attack becomes available; hold down button while standing still.
Journeyman	Left and Right Power Attacks available; hold down attack button while moving left or right. Chance to disarm your opponent. (Grab their weapon immediately, or they'll just pick it up again!)
Expert	Backward Power Attack, chance to knockdown enemy.
Master	Forward Power Attack, chance to paralyze enemy.

Block

Relevant Attribute: Endurance

Low Trainers: Fadus Calidius, Skingrad Fighters Guild; Huurwen, Anvil Fighters Guild

Medium Trainers: Lum gro-Baroth, Chorrol Fighters Guild; Ambroise Canne, Skingrad

High Trainer: Andragil, Bravil



Um...good boy? Block will help you survive against bruising melee opponents.

The Block ability determines your character's proficiency in the art of shielding him or herself from blows. Anything can be used to block, whether it's a bow held sideways across the body, the short end of a warhammer, a shield, or even your bare hands, but the shield is definitely the emphasis here. Shields are generally the most well-armed piece of equipment you can own, and can deflect much more damage than other types of blockable items. The abilities here also emphasize the ability to block with shields. Although characters with two-handed weapons are still technically able to block, if you're focusing on defensive measures, then there's nothing like a good shield at your side.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	Blocking drains fatigue, take full damage when blocking with only your hands.
Apprentice	Blocking no longer drains fatigue.
Journeyman	Weapons and shields no longer take damage when blocking, enemies occasionally recoil when striking your hands when blocking in hand-to-hand combat.
Expert	Can perform a knockback counterattack with shield only, giving chance to stagger the enemy.
Master	Knockback counterattacks have a further chance to disarm the opponent.

Blunt

Relevant Attribute: Strength

Low Trainers: Bugak gro-Bol, Southern Books in Leyawiin; Vigdis, Anvil Fighters Guild

Medium Trainers: Christophe Marane, Brina Cross Inn near Anvil; Azzan at Anvil Fighters Guild

High Trainer: Irene Metrick, Imperial City Elven Gardens District

The always amusingly-named Blunt skill is a favorite of Redman and Method Man, as well as mace-wielding warriors everywhere. Blunt weapons are typically more effective on skeletons than blades, for what it's worth, but deciding between the two is still a mostly personal preference. Even though you should only pick one as a Major Skill, though, you can (and should) still attempt to use the other type of weapon as often as possible, to increase your Strength bonus at level-ups.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	Basic Power Attack available by holding down the attack button.
Apprentice	Standing Power Attack becomes available; hold down button while standing still.
Journeyman	Left and Right Power Attacks available; hold down attack button while moving left or right. Chance to disarm your opponent. (Grab their weapon immediately, or they'll just pick it up again!)
Expert	Backward Power Attack, chance to knockdown enemy.
Master	Forward Power Attack, chance to paralyze enemy.

Hand To Hand

Relevant Attribute: Strength

Low Trainers: Nahsi, Bravil Fighters Guild; Rufrius Vinicius, Anvil Fighters Guild

Medium Trainers: Davela Hlaren, Imperial Bridge Inn, Silverfish River; Ra'qanar, Castle Cheydinhal

High Trainer: Helvius Cecia, Bruma (house or in the Thieves Guild)

Hand to hand combat is the domain of a relatively small number of martial artists in Cyrodiil, but it can still be a powerful tool in the hands of those skilled in it. Or it can just be about running around and punching dudes in the face. Your choice.

The main difference between Hand to Hand combat and the other two weapons styles (Blade and Blunt) is that Hand to Hand also deals damage to an opponent's Fatigue, as well as their health, meaning that you'll occasionally be able to knock your opponent right the hell out and pound on them while they're lying on the ground (which never gets old). You can help this process along by poisoning them with a Fatigue-draining arrow or a Drain Fatigue or Damage Fatigue spell. In trade, you'll probably lose a bit of maximum damage when compared to a real weapons skill, and of course you won't ever be able to enchant your fists with a Sigil Stone or something like that for extra power.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	Basic Power Attack available by holding down the attack button.
Apprentice	Standing Power Attack becomes available; hold down button while standing still.

Journeyman	Left and Right Power Attacks available; hold down attack button while moving left or right. Chance to disarm your opponent. (Grab their weapon immediately, or they'll just pick it up again!)
Expert	Backward Power Attack, chance to knockdown enemy, has a chance to perform a knockback attack while blocking.
Master	Forward Power Attack, chance to paralyze enemy, has a chance to disarm opponent after a knockback attack while blocking.

Heavy Armor

Relevant Attribute: Endurance

Low Trainers: Brodras, Leyawiin Fighters Guild; Bumph gra-Gash, Bruma Guild

Medium Trainers: Varnado, Best Defense shop, Imperial Market District; Valus Odil, Chorrol

High Trainer: Pranal, Roxey Inn, on the road directly north of Imperial Prison Sewer/Vilverin



Like with Armorer, boosting your Heavy Armor skill means getting hit a lot.

Your Heavy Armor skill increases the amount of protection you gain when you wear Iron, Steel, Dwarven, Orcish, Ebony, and Daedric armor. The only way to increase your Heavy Armor skill is to get hit by something while wearing it, so this is a skill that will naturally increase as you engage in firefights. Since you'll likely want to get this as high as possible to take advantage of the added defense, this is a good selection as a Major Skill for most warriors. It'll still go up fairly slowly, but if you want it to increase, you can always let a Mud Crab or Rat hit away at you while using a low-level Restoration skill to restore your health.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	Heavy armor degrades at 150% of the normal rate.
Apprentice	Heavy armor degrades at a normal rate.
Journeyman	Heavy armor degrades at 50% of the normal rate.
Expert	Equipped heavy armor only counts as half its normal weight for the purpose of encumbrance.
Master	Equipped heavy armor weighs nothing for the purpose of encumbrance.

Magic Skills

Note that Magical skills don't really have set benefits or extra powers based on your Mastery Level. Instead, the ability to use new and more powerful spells is dictated by your Master Level. When you're a Novice in Alteration, for instance, you might be able to cast a spell that lets you open Very Easy locks; you'll have to rank up to Apprentice before you can cast a spell that opens Easy locks.

Almost everyone can use magic for simple effects, but although you can definitely increase your skill in a school of magic by simply casting low-level spells over and over again, the higher-level spells will eventually become prohibitively expensive for anyone but magic specialists, since most warriors and stealth characters probably won't have been heavily investing in Intelligence, which is required to obtain enough magicka to actually cast the high-level spells.

Alchemy

Relevant Attribute: Intelligence

Low Trainers: Felen Relas, Anvil Mages Guild; S'drassa, Leyawiin Mages Guild

Medium Trainers: Ardaline, Bravil Mages Guild; Brotch Calus, Bruma

High Trainer: Sinderion, West Weald Inn in Skingrad

Note that much of this information is repeated in our Alchemy Tips chapter. Refer to that for even more information.

First off, alchemy should *never* be a Major Skill, unless you plan to use it solely for the purpose of levelling up, and never intend to actually make potions. The reason for this is that you simply level up too quickly if you actually use Alchemy a lot; you're going to wind up with a lot of ingredients if you pick up whatever you find in your travels, and if you save them up and use a bunch of them at one go, then you can often gain four or five points in alchemy in one sitting, which can cause you to level up before you've managed to gain any points in your primary attributes. This warning can be tempered somewhat for character



Weynon Priory has a good set of novice alchemy equipment, if you can find a quiet time to lift it.

We'll explain the reasoning behind this shortly, but first, a description of what Alchemy is...to begin with, here's a list of what you get for increasing your skill level in Alchemy. Of course, increasing your skill level will also make your potions more effective: they'll have bigger effects that last longer, and so on and so forth.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	Sees only one alchemical properties of an ingredient.
Apprentice	Sees only two alchemical properties of an ingredient.
Journeyman	Sees only three alchemical properties of an ingredient.
Expert	Sees all four alchemical properties of an ingredient.
Master	Can make potions with only one ingredient.

Alchemy is essentially the art of taking ingredients and making them into potions of various effects. In order to perform alchemy, you'll need, at a bare minimum, a mortar and pestle (which counts as one item) and two ingredients which have the same alchemical effect. That'll net you a potion, although it might not be a very good one. If you want to make better potions, you'll want to add more equipment, including an alembic, a calcinator, and a retort. Although it's possible to make a potion with any combination of these equipment pieces (the mortar and pestle is always required, however), it's not too difficult to acquire all of them, and having them all while you make your potions will definitely improve their quality. Unfortunately they can be cumbersome to lug around, with a full set weighing around twenty pounds, so if you intend to partake of alchemical goodness, you'll want to buy a house early on with a storage unit so you can store your

equipment there and use it when you've collected a bunch of ingredients.

Collecting Ingredients

Speaking of ingredients, there are a lot of them. A LOT of them. As you wander around Cyrodiil's beautiful landscapes, you'll find plenty of plants and mushrooms lining the roads or located under the trees. If you look at these ingredients, you'll see a hand icon indicating that you can interact with them; if you do, you'll usually pick up some kind of ingredient from it. (Sometimes you'll be told that you can't find anything when searching a plant; your chance at being successful depends on the plant, apparently.) Ingredients grow back a few days after you search a plant, so you don't have to worry about deforesting Cyrodiil and running out of ingredients.

Other sources for ingredients are creatures and shops. Many creatures will drop ingredients, such as rat meat from rats, bonemeal from skeletons, and daedra hearts from dead Daedra. (Eww!) Shops, such as The Finest Ingredient in the Imperial Market District, will also sell ingredients, sometimes rare ones. You can also find huge amounts of normal food (which acts as a good low-level ingredient for practicing alchemy), such as wheat, bread, fruit, and rice, throughout every city and town in Cyrodiil, especially in storehouses and people's basements. Pick up all of this that you can, make a bunch of potions to increase your Alchemy skill, then sell all of the potions; you win in every way imaginable.

Tip: Note that you can increase your Alchemy skill by simply eating the ingredients that you pick up. You'll gain whatever the first effect they have is, and obviously the item will be consumed. This is a good way to make space in your bag if you're about to go overweight, but is less efficient at increasing your skill than making potions is.

In your travels, you're going to be picking up a lot of ingredients; check your encumbrance every so often. When you're about to stop moving because you have so much stuff in your bag, head back to your house and indulge in a little alchemy to convert everything into potions, then sell off the potions you don't actually want or need.

Making Potions

In order to increase your Alchemy skill, you'll want to make as many potions as you possibly can. At low levels of skill, the easiest potions to make are Restore Fatigue potions. Almost every kind of household food, such as onions, bread, lettuce, and so on, will have Restore Fatigue as their first property, allowing you to loot kitchens all across town and convert your proceeds into Restore Fatigue potions. They won't be particularly good potions, but they'll definitely help increase your skill, and you'll be making so many of them that you'll gain a good amount of money from selling them.



Multiple ingredients means multiple potion effects!

Note that all ingredients that you find will have more than one alchemical property. As you increase your skill in Alchemy, you'll be able to see more of the hidden properties of your potions. At low levels of Alchemy skill, your ingredients basically only have the properties that you can see, so if you want to be able to use a more diverse array of ingredients in your potions, you'll have to rank yourself up, but doing so will help ensure that you'll be able to make the kinds of potions that you want with the ingredients that you actually have. Unlocking more effects will also allow you to use more ingredients in your poisons, adding multiple effects that occur simultaneously.

Note that a lot of ingredients actually have negative effects, such as Damage Health (always popular). Making a potion with a negative effect actually turns it into a poison (which appear in your inventory as green bottles instead of the purplish color of potions). Poisons can't be ingested, so they can't really hurt you. Instead, they can be activated in your inventory and applied to a weapon, allowing you to spread the love to the next enemy you hit, giving you a bit more oomph when facing off against boss-level enemies.

Alteration

Relevant Attribute: Willpower

Low Trainers: Dovyn Aren, Elven Gardens District; Deetsan, Cheydinhal Mages Guild

Medium Trainers: Athragar, Chorrol Mages Guild; Abhuki, Faregyl Inn, south of Imperial City on the Green Road, on a little dead-end road near the end of a river

High Trainer: Tooth-in-the-Sea, on the river's coast just north of Bravil, near the Flooded Mine. If he's not sleeping on his little cot, come back after 7 PM.

Alteration spells aren't really going to make you stop and say "Wow!" when you hear their effects; it'll be more along the lines of "Well, that might be kind of useful." No one's going to specialize in Alteration to the exclusion of other magics, in other words.

With Alteration, you'll be able to temporarily carry more items and heavier items, gain more armor, breathe water or walk across the surface of water, or temporarily gain protection from fire, frost, or electrical attacks. Two of the more notable spell classifications are Burden, which adds to your target's encumbrance temporarily (which can in effect paralyze them and prevent them from moving if you over-encumber them) and Open, which opens locks of various difficulties based on your proficiency in Alteration.

Like we said, not very exciting. Useful, perhaps, but just like no one ever says they want to grow up and be a lab assistant, it's unlikely that an Alteration-focused character archetype is going to be very exciting to play as.

Conjuration

Relevant Attribute: Intelligence

Low Trainers: Sulinus Vassinus, Skingrad Mages Guild; Fathis Aren, Castle Bravil

Medium Trainers: Arentus Falvius, Bruma's chapel; Alberic Litte, Chorrol Mages Guild

High Trainer: Olyn Seran, Shrine of Molag Bal, woods west of the Imperial City

Conjuration is the art of summoning powerful equipment to supplement your battle abilities, summoning creatures to fight for you, and controlling the undead to prevent them from attacking you.

Bound item spells, when cast, cause Daedric armor and items to spring into being, automatically equipped and usable. The Mythic Dawn cultists you see in the game make constant use of these spells, and you see what it does for their abilities in combat. The more skilled you become at Conjuration, the better the items that you'll be able to summon.

Likewise, the more skilled you are, the better the creatures that you'll be able to bind to your cause. While summoning Scamps and Skeletons isn't likely to get your Conjurer homeboys all that excited, the ability to eventually summon in Dremora Lords should cause most of your enemies to shake in their boots. Also note that you can use these summoned creatures as Soul Trap victims, giving you an unlimited and easy supply of souls.

Lastly, the undead powers will let you strike fear in the hearts of undead enemies, making them likely to run away and leave you alone for a little while, as you either make your escape or prepare for their return.

Destruction

Relevant Attribute: Willpower

Low Trainers: J'skar, Bruma Mages Guild; Chanel, Castle Chorrol

Medium Trainers: Marc Gulitte, Anvil Mages Guild; Delphine Jend, Bravil Guild

High Trainer: Andaren, remote shrine in the Imperial Reserve

When most people think of combat mages, Destruction is the school that comes to mind. It doesn't focus on opening locks or lighting up dank dungeons; it's all about causing harm to your enemies. As such, it'll be a mainstay of most pure mages, as their primary tool for dealing damage.



Even if you don't cast Destruction magic, you can expect to see a lot of it come your way through the course of the game.

Most of the Destruction spells are fairly straightforward. As the archetypal mage power, you'll be able to use fire, frost, and shock magic to deal damage to your enemies, making sure to match up your spells with their weaknesses. Zombies take extra damage from fire magic, for instance, while a Flame Atronach will obviously take more damage from frost spells. If you're up against a boss or tough enemy, you can supplement your attack spells with a Weakness spell, which will increase their vulnerability to a certain kind of elemental damage for a short time.

In addition, you can also attempt to drain an attribute of an enemy, which will cause it to steadily deteriorate over a set amount of time, or attempt to disintegrate their weapons or armor.

If you want to become a combat magician, then you might not want to have Destruction as a Major Skill, simply because you'll be using it so often that you may wind up levelling up more quickly than you'd like.

Note that if you want to quickly train your Destruction spell, but can't find any enemies to cast

your spells on, you can use the spell creation device in the Arcane Academy (after you become a member of the Mages Guild) to create a low-level Destruction spell that hurts yourself when cast. If you make something that damages you for one point of health each time it's cast, you should be able to easily cast it over and over to improve your skill without having to engage enemies in combat.

Illusion

Relevant Attribute: Personality

Low Trainers: Jantus Brolus, Bruma; Hil the Tall, Cheydinhal's Chapel

Medium Trainers: Kud-Ei, Bravil Mages Guild; Carahil, Anvil Mages Guild

High Trainer: Martina Floria, Arcane University

The effects of Illusion magic are too numerous to describe in detail here, but for that reason, they're going to be useful to almost every type of character. Stealthy attackers will enjoy the ability to cast Night Eye on themselves to see in the dark, while straight-ahead warriors will opt for the more obvious Light effect to light up dark dungeon corridors without having to constantly bring up a torch. (These effects are so obviously useful that characters probably shouldn't have Illusion magic as a Major Skill; you're going to use them a lot.)

For pure mages, though, the primary benefits of Illusion are those that allow you to manipulate your enemies into not attacking you, whether through paralysis or simply by charming them to the point that they just don't really want to harm you. You can even go so far as to cause your enemies to fight for you with properly advanced magicks.

Beyond enemy manipulation and the effects listed above, though, you'll also be able to cause yourself to turn Invisible with Illusion magic, which will help you sneak past enemies that you don't wish or are unable to fight. The Chameleon effect is also quite handy. The difference between Invisibility and Chameleon is mostly that Invisibility ends if you happen to attack or use an object, whereas Chameleon does not. Chameleon offers less than total concealment, though.

Mysticism

Relevant Attribute: Intelligence

Low Trainers: Angalmo, Chorrol Mages Guild; Druja, Skingrad Mages Guild

Medium Trainers: Boderi Farano, Arcane University; Ita Rienus, Bravil Mages Guild

High Trainer: Dagail, Leyawiin Mages Guild

Mysticism, like Alteration, isn't necessarily a very exciting branch of magic, although it is going to be something that almost every character will have to dabble in, if only for the sake of casting Soul Trap.

First, though, a word on the other effects of Mysticism. Among other effects, Mysticism controls the ability to dispel magical effects (either harmful effects cast on yourself, or beneficial effects cast on your enemy), and the ability to either reflect harmful spells back to your enemy or absorb

them as pure Magicka. The Telekinesis effect will let you manipulate remote objects; this would be a bit more exciting if it let you pick up a head of lettuce and beat someone to death with it. Life Detection allows you to see living objects in your immediate area, even through doors and solid rock, which is helpful for characters that like to sneak through dungeons, or anyone who wants to see where characters in buildings are while you're attempting to lockpick a door while remaining undetected.

The most useful effect for most characters in Mysticism, though, will be Soul Trap, which is going to be required if you want to create new enchanted items or recharge enchanted weapons. You need to be at least an Apprentice of Mysticism to cast Soul Trap, and you'll need around 65 Magicka, as well, so you'll want to buy something like Minor Life Detection when you create a character and repeatedly cast it as you travel around the world. This will both increase your Mysticism skill and allow you to boost your Intelligence score when you level up, even if you're a hearty warrior.

When you unlock Soul Trap, you'll be able to cast it on enemy creatures to steal their soul when they die. The basic sequence of events goes like this: get an empty soul gem and keep it in your inventory. Attack a creature. When it's almost dead, cast Soul Trap on it. Between casting the spell and when the spell wears off (20 seconds at Soul Trap's lowest level), kill the creature to steal the soul. Stolen souls automatically go into the smallest appropriate soul gem in your inventory. (Souls rank anywhere from Petty to Greater, depending on the relative difficulty of the creature you kill.)

When you have a captured soul in your inventory, you can either use it immediately to restore the charges on one of your magical items, or bring it to the Arcane University in the Imperial City to enchant a regular item (this is only an option if you're a Mage's Guild member, however). Magical weapons are going to make your job a hell of a lot easier later in the game, especially as a warrior, so it's in your best interest to learn Soul Trap and get used to capturing the souls of creatures that you kill.

Restoration

Relevant Attribute: Willpower

Low Trainers: Marie Palielle, Skingrad Chapel; Cirroc, Bruma Chapel

Medium Trainers: Marz, Bravil Chapel; Ohtesse, Cheydinhal's Chapel

High Trainer: Oleta, Kvatch Chapel or the camp outside Kvatch

Almost everyone will find something to like in Restoration, if only because it's the skill that'll let you heal yourself up good as new, even if there are enemies around. While everyone can heal themselves completely just by Waiting for one hour, this option won't be available when enemies are too close to your position. While you can often just run back in the direction from which you came to make enough distance between yourself and foes for you to rest, having a healing spell at your disposal will allow you to keep moving on through your dungeon, since magicka regenerates fairly quickly. Note that the lower-level healing spells are generally more efficient than the higher-level ones, by which we mean that they'll typically give you back more health for the amount of magicka that you expend on them. Higher-level spells will obviously heal you more

quickly, but warriors and non-magic specialists can probably get by with casting the lowest-level spells over and over again.

In addition to healing spells, though, Restoration offers up a bevy of other effects, some useful, some not so much. The bulk of the spells here are of the Absorb variety, allowing you to transfer attributes and skill points from your enemies to yourself. Theoretically these are useful, but in most instances we found ourselves killing our foes too quickly to get much advantage from the Absorb spells; if they're going to die within 10 or 15 seconds anyway, you may as well just concentrate on your Destruction spells and kill them straight out.

Beyond that, there are plenty of Fortify spells, which temporarily give one of your primary attributes a small boost. These spells can be handy, especially if you use Fortify Personality to gain the upper hand with merchants or people that have information you need.

Stealth Skills

Acrobatics

Relevant Attribute: Speed

Low Trainers: Ida Vlinorman, Elven Gardens District; Quill-Weave, Anvil

Medium Trainers: Tsrava, Leyawiin (inside J'Bari's House); Ganredhel, Cheydinhal

High Trainer: Aerin, camp east of Azura's Shrine

Acrobatics is something of the ugly stepsister of skills; it doesn't have much in the way of concrete usage in Oblivion, besides the obvious advantages of being able to jump higher and farther than normal. Really, though, jumping isn't all that required in the game, and you're certainly never going to need to attack while jumping around, even if you wanted to.

That said, there's no reason *not* to increase your Acrobatics skill, especially since it's fairly easy to do so; all you have to do is jump around everywhere you go. Just keep hitting that jump button! This will obviously reduce your fatigue to almost nothing, so it's unwise to do in dungeons or in the wilderness, where you might have to engage in combat, but when you're tooling around in a city, feel free to jump the night away and improve your Acrobatics with minimal effort. (Your Fatigue loss may effect your ability to Persuade, though, so be wary of that.)

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	Cannot attack while jumping or falling.
Apprentice	Can make normal attacks while jumping or falling.
Journeyman	Gains the ability to Dodge blows (if you fight Scamps, you'll see them do this a lot).
Expert	Fatigue loss for jumping reduced by 50%.
Master	Gains the ability to jump across the surface of water. Just like in Remo Williams!

Light Armor

Relevant Attribute: Speed

Low Trainers: Olfand, Nord Winds, Bruma; Dul gro-Shug, Elven Gardens District

Medium Trainers: Luciana Galena, Bravil; Ahdarji, Leyawiin

High Trainer: J'Bari, Leyawiin

Your Light Armor skill increases the amount of protection you gain when you wear Fur, Leather, Chainmail, Mithril, Elven, and Glass armor. The only way to increase your Light Armor skill is to get hit by something while wearing it, so this is a skill that will naturally increase as you engage in firefights. Since you'll likely want to get this as high as possible to take advantage of the added defense, this is a good selection as a Major Skill for most thief or stealthy characters. It'll still go up fairly slowly, but if you want it to increase, you can always let a Mud Crab or Rat hit away at you while using a low-level Restoration skill to restore your health.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice Light armor degrades at 150% of the normal rate.

Apprentice Light armor degrades at a normal rate.

Journeyman Light armor degrades at 50% of the normal rate.

Expert Light armor doesn't encumber the user.

Master If all of your armor is Light Armor, you gain a 50% bonus to your overall armor rating.

Marksman

Relevant Attribute: Agility

Low Trainers: Edla Dark-Heart, Bruma (Regner's house); Shameer, Skingrad

Medium Trainers: Reman Broder, Skingrad; Pinarus Inventius, Anvil

High Trainer: Alawen, campgrounds east of Anvil



Oh, yeah...venison for dinner again.

Marksman is the skill that determines the amount of damage you're capable of dealing with bows. As you increase your skill level here, you'll unlock new abilities to use with your bow, such as the handy zoom mode. The biggest benefit, though, will be the simple addition of damage, so keep using your bows to increase your skill and look for bigger and better bows. Like weapons, bows can come with damage-causing enchantments, or can be given them via Sigil Stones or enchantment altars.

If you're at all decent at Sneaking, then you should always try to approach your target in sneak mode before letting loose your first arrow. Doing so will let you take advantage of the 2x or 3x multiplier that you get from sneaking. Just be sure to stand up when the battle is joined, or you'll fire much more slowly than you would otherwise.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	Take fatigue damage while holding back a drawn bow.
Apprentice	Takes no fatigue while holding back a drawn bow.
Journeyman	Can zoom in on targets by holding Block while bow is drawn.
Expert	Gains a chance to knock down an enemy with successful arrow shot.
Master	Gains a chance to paralyze a target with successful shots.

Mercantile

Relevant Attribute: Personality

Low Trainers: Mach-Na, Cheydinhal; Foroch, Gottshaw Inn northwest of Kvatch

Medium Trainers: Seed-Neeus, Northern Goods & Trade in Chorrol; Margarte, Leyawiin

High Trainer: Palonirya, Divine Elegance shop in Imperial Market District

The Mercantile ability affects the price that you get from vendors when you attempt to either sell to or buy from them. The higher your Mercantile score, the better the prices that you'll be able to negotiate.

In order to increase your Mercantile score, you'll have to use the Haggle mechanic while in the shopkeeper interface. When you haggle, you'll be able to continually attempt to ratchet up your selling price for items sold to the merchant. Each time you sell an item at above market price, you'll gain a small amount to your Mercantile score. It's possible to attempt to sell an item for too much cash, though, in which case the merchant will reject your offer and become slightly less favorable to your future offers.

The thing you want to do here is grab a huge stack of something cheap of disposable and attempt to sell them one by one. Arrows are perfect for this, since you'll often find a bunch of them in dungeon crawls, and they don't weigh very much. When you have a large amount of them, find a merchant and start selling them one by one, increasing your haggling percentage by two or three points after each sale. When they reject your first offer, knock your percentage down by two points and start selling selling selling!

Each time you sell an individual item, your Mercantile skill will gain a small increase. Thus, the best way to get big increases in your Mercantile skill are to get huge amounts of arrows and sell them one by one. (Selling them as one stack counts as one transaction for Mercantilism's purposes.) It's laborious, sure, but it works. Since iron arrows are dirt cheap, you can sell a huge stack of them, buy them back, then repeat the process as often as you like to increase your Mercantile score.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	Value of sold items is affected by the condition of the item.
Apprentice	Condition no longer affects value of items.
Journeyman	Can buy and sell any kind of item to any vendor.
Expert	Can invest in a shop, permanently raising that vendor's cash amount by 500 gold.
Master	All shops in the world increase their maximum purchase price by 500 gold.

Security

Relevant Attribute: Agility

Low Trainers: Malintus Ancrus, Chorrol; Samuel Bantien, Talos Plaza District

Medium Trainers: Mandil, Othrelas' house in Elven Gardens District; Dro'Shanji, Bravil

High Trainer: J'baana, imprisoned in Imperial Prison District



Once you get the Daedric lockpick, your Security skill becomes almost irrelevant.

Security denotes your character's proficiency at picking locks. Locks in Oblivion are represented by a mini-game, wherein you have to attempt to pick the lock with a flimsy pick by flipping the tumblers within. If you don't flip a tumbler correctly, though, you'll break your pick and will likely wind up resetting a few of the lock's tumblers. Locks are rated anywhere from very easy (one tumbler) to very hard (five tumblers).

In order to flip a tumbler, you have to first tap it upwards with your pick, then hit another button to snap it into place as it hits the top of the lock. Each tumbler, when lifted, will either move up swiftly or slowly. What you want to do when attempting to pick a lock is keep tapping the tumbler over and over again until you notice it taking the slowest path upwards; when it just hits the top of the lock, tap the button to snap it into place, and it should remain in position, allowing you to move onto the next tumbler. If you attempt to lock it when the tumbler is moving too fast, you'll usually snap your lockpick and drop a few of the tumblers, requiring you to start over from near the beginning of the lock, depending on your skill level.

As you increase your skill in security, tumblers will rotate more slowly, making them much more easy to snap into place, and fewer tumblers will drop if you do happen to screw one of them up. Note that, at level 10, an item becomes available through one of the Daedric quests that makes lockpicking much, much easier; it's worth seeking out as soon as you hit that milestone.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	As many as four tumblers fall when a pick is broken.
Apprentice	As many as three tumblers fall when a pick is broken.

Journeyman	As many as two tumblers fall when a pick is broken.
Expert	As many as one tumblers fall when a pick is broken.
Master	No tumblers fall when a pick is broken.

Speechcraft

Relevant Attribute: Personality

Low Trainers: Alga, Bruma (Honmund's house); Uravasa Othelas, Bravil's Chapel

Medium Trainers: Varon Vamori, Bravil; Gruvand Garrana, Cheydinhal's Chapel

High Trainer: Tandilwe, Temple of the One, Imperial City Temple District

Speechcraft denotes your character's ability to persuade and influence other NPCs through the Persuasion interface. With a high Speechcraft score, most characters will respond more favorably to you in conversation, and you'll have a better chance of increasing their disposition towards you when attempting to Persuade them, and you'll be able to raise their disposition higher than a character with a low Speechcraft score.

In order to raise your Speechcraft, you just have to attempt to use the Persuasion mini-game as often as you can. Even getting negative results will raise your skill in Speechcraft, so try to take the time to Persuade anyone you meet that offers you the opportunity to do so, even if they're just an average joe that doesn't have anything important to tell you.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	Can offer bribes to most characters to increase Disposition.
Apprentice	Once per Persuasion, can rotate wedges without selecting a response.
Journeyman	Disposition decays 50% slower during Persuasion minigame.
Expert	Disposition loss from most negative reaction in Persuasion reduced from 150% to 100%.
Master	Cost of bribes cut in half.

Sneak

Relevant Attribute: Agility **Low Trainers:** Glistel, in Malintus Ancrus' House in Chorrol; City-Swimmer, Bravil **Medium Trainers:** Othrellos, Elven Gardens District; Mirabelle Money, Anvel Waterfront (Fo'c's'le) **High Trainer:** Marana Rian, Temple District

Sneak is going to be a critical skill for stealth characters. With a high Sneak skill, you'll be able to avoid combat, deal massive damage to enemies before they're aware of your presence, and make your way into heavily-guarded areas. Sneaking won't turn you invisible, but if you can remain undetected, then you'll gain some large advantages in combat.



It's dark and I've got Chameleon on. Even these ghosts won't be able to detect me! Heck, even I can't detect me.

To sneak, enter sneak mode, and your primary cursor will be ringed with an eye icon. While the eye icon is bright, someone is either watching you or is aware of your presence; if it's greyed-out, though, you can rest assured that you're temporarily undetected. Remaining that way requires you to stay out of your enemy's line of sight (which doesn't necessarily mean that you have to stand behind them all the time) and to stay quiet. The amount of noise you make depends on the weight of the boots that you're wearing and how fast you're moving. Wearing heavy armor boots while attempting to run while Sneaking will let people hear you from a good distance away, while walking slowly while wearing light armor boots or (preferably) no boots at all will let you make much less noise. You should also stick to the shadows whenever possible, as the amount of light cast on you will directly affect the chance that your enemies will detect you. Invisibility or a Chameleon effect will likewise greatly reduce the chances of detection.

Mastery Level Ability

Novice	When undetected in Sneak mode, one-handed and hand-to-hand attacks deal 4x damage, bow attacks deal 2x damage.
Apprentice	When undetected in Sneak mode, one-handed and hand-to-hand attacks deal 6x damage, bow attacks deal 3x damage.
Journeyman	No penalty to detection chance when wearing boots.
Expert	No penalty to detection chance for moving while in Sneak mode.
Master	Opponent is considered to have no armor when struck while undetected and in Sneak mode.

Character Creation and Levelling Up

One of the most unique aspects of Oblivion is the way it handles experience and levels. While in most RPGs, you want to level up as quickly as possible to gain an advantage over your enemies, that's not always going to be the case in Oblivion. In fact, the game can become quite difficult if you simply attempt to level up as quickly as possible, because of one simple fact: as you level up, so do your enemies.

Levelling Effects

Here's a small list of things that are affected when you level up. There are probably more effects than these, but these are the important ones.

- Enemies increase in level. You'll run into harder enemies the higher level you are, with better spells and equipment and more health. Their skills will increase as well, so Sneaking and Speechcraft will become more difficult if you don't consistently improve these skills between levels.
- Loot and treasure is better quality. At level one, it'll be difficult to find magical items, but they become more common as you level up.
- Quest rewards are increased in quality. If you complete a quest at level five in one game, then play again and complete it at level 15, you'll get better quest rewards for the same quest. (Although some quests, like the Daedric quests, have rewards that are always the same.)
- Locks on chests and doors become more difficult. A door that had a two-tumbler lock at level five might wind up having five at level fifteen.

The biggest effect, though, is the effect that levelling has on your foes. If you charge through the game's main storyline and attempt to gain levels as quickly as possible, you'll probably start encountering enemies that are going to be very tough to beat. You can still level up quickly if you wish, but it's more important to level up *smartly*.

How Levelling Works

When you create a character in Oblivion, you choose a class (or create one) that has seven skills as Major Skills. These skills, when improved, cause your character to gain levels. You can contrast this to the system in most games, where you have to run around and kill monsters to gain experience, which then causes you to level up; in Oblivion, it's not who you kill that matters, it's what you do. (Although what you do will probably still involve killing a whole mess of enemies.)



Constant use of your Major Skills, such as Blunt and Heavy Armor, which are about to get a workout in this screenshot, will cause you to level more quickly.

Anyway, so you have these seven Major Skills. In order to gain one level, you need to increase them by ten points total, spread out through any number of the skills. Let's say that you're a warrior character, and thus you have Heavy Armor, Blunt, and Block as Major Skills, along with a few others. If you increase Heavy Armor by ten points, then you'll gain a level; if you increase Blunt and Block five points each, then you'll also gain a level, and so on. Note that, unlike Morrowind, your Minor Skills have no impact on the rate at which you level, no matter how much you raise them between levels.

The crux of the matter here is that increasing your skills also allows you to raise your attributes when you level up. When you rest and level, you'll be given the opportunity to raise your attributes by anything from one to five points. The number of points by which you can increase an attribute depends on how many points you increased the skills that relate to that attribute.

Skill Points Gained in Skills Related to an Attribute	Number of Points You Can Raise the Attribute At Level-Up
0-1	1
2-4	2
5-7	3
8-9	4
10+	5

Obtaining Maximum Attribute Points at Level-up

Now, here's where things get kind of complicated. Although raising your Minor Skills doesn't count towards your levelling rate, it does count towards the attribute gain you can add when you level up. The best way to explain this is through an example, or perhaps multiple examples.

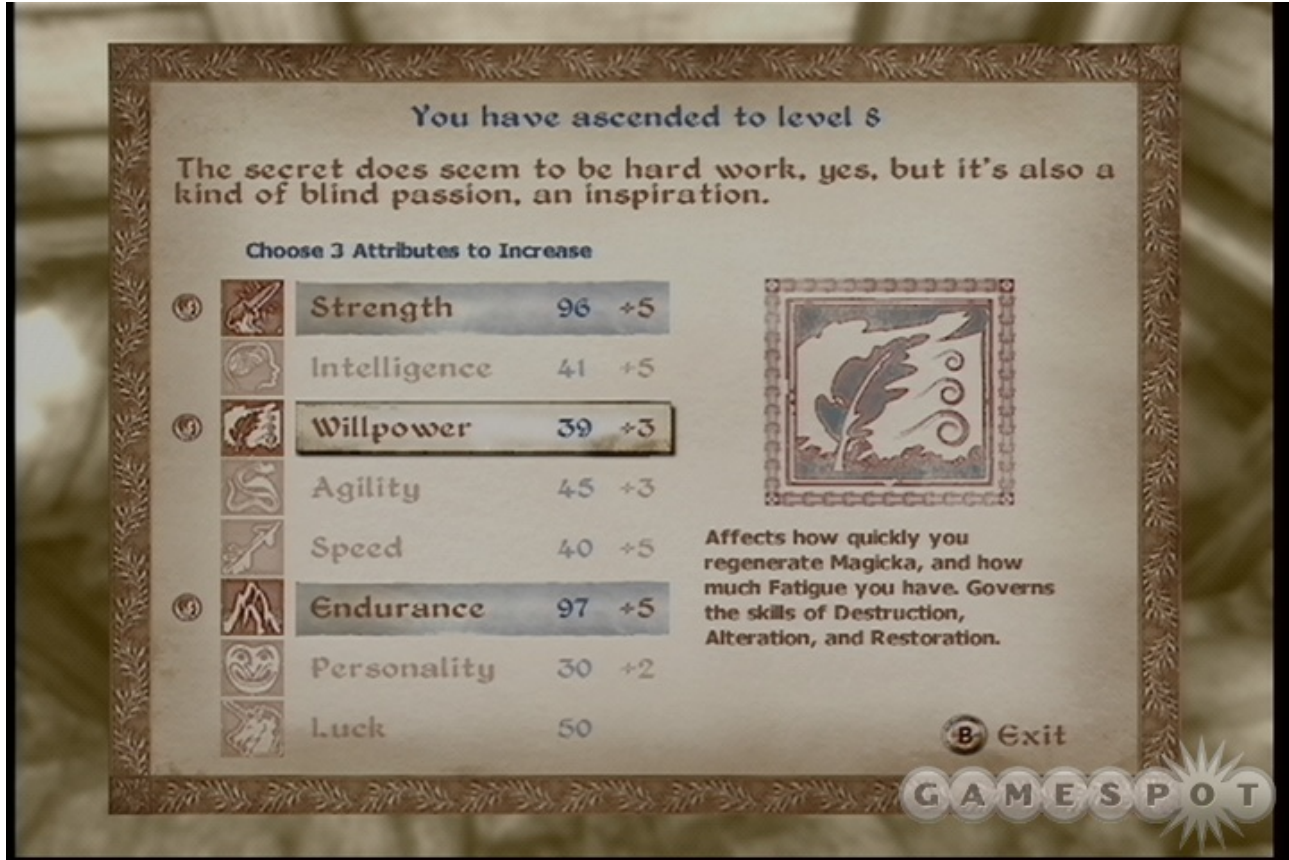
Let's suppose that you wanted to raise your Strength attribute by five points at your next level-up. The related attributes for Strength are Blunt, Blade, and Hand-To-Hand. In order to get the full five points at your next level up, then, you'll have to increase those three skills by a combined ten points. This can be done in a number of ways, obviously; if you're focusing on bladed weapons, then you can increase Blade by ten points, or you can spread those ten points out between all three skills.

Note that this is true regardless of whether your Blunt, Blade, and Hand-To-Hand skills are Major or Minor skills or a combination of both. Even a pure wizard can raise his or her Strength by five points at each level-up if they devote enough time to raising these skills. Strength is more important for warriors, though, who'll want to make sure that they manage to get four or five points added to it at each level up. The balance you have to strike here is between having levelling up rapidly, which occurs when you consistently use all of your Major Skills quite often, and gaining large attribute bonuses, which occurs when you slow down your levelling and spread out your skill point increases.

Things become even more complicated when you consider that most characters will have at least two attributes that they'll want to increase at each level up: wizards will be focusing on Intelligence and Willpower; thieves on Agility and Speed; and warriors on Strength and Endurance. If you're going to try and increase both of these attributes by a full five points each, that means you'll have to increase the relevant skills by 20 points. Since you can only increase your Major Skills by 10 points between each level-up, that means at least some of those skills are going to have to be Minor Skills.

Power-Levelling In Action

We're going to give you an example of how all this comes together, drawn from our warrior character. His Major Skills were Blade, Heavy Armor, Alteration, Conjunction, Destruction, Mercantile, and Security. His two favored attributes were Strength and Endurance.



With a little effort and some slow leveling, you can consistently raise your major attributes by five points at each level-up.

The basic process to increase both of these attributes by five points per level went something like this. We almost never used bladed weapons at all, preferring to stick to blunt weapons. For long portions of the game, we used a two-handed mace weapon, switching to Hand-To-Hand combat for weaker enemies. Thus, for our Strength attribute, we used Minor skills exclusively to increase it, with Blade seeing occasional use when we found powerful swords. Since we were attempting to level up slowly, though, the fact that Blunt and Hand-To-Hand didn't count towards increasing our level made them preferable, and it wasn't difficult to get at least eight or ten points in both of them between each level, allowing us to consistently raise our Strength by four or five points.

Endurance was a bit easier, since Armorer was a Minor Skill. Even though Minor Skills increase a bit more slowly than Major Skills do, if you use something as often as you do the Armorer skill, you're going to be increasing it naturally quite a bit. Heavy Armor also went up fairly quickly as a Major Skill, since we almost always used heavy armor and took quite a bit of damage in melee combat. It didn't go up so rapidly that we thought we were levelling up too quickly, though. Block is the third Endurance skill, and as a Minor Skill, we could use it as often as we liked to without worrying about levelling up because of it.

The rest of the Major Skills that we chose were either never used (such as the magical skills; we still used Illusion for things like Light and Mysticism for Soul Trap) or were used to let us gradually gain points towards the next level, without going too fast, as in the case of Mercantile and Security.



With a smooth levelling curve, you won't have to be frightened the first time you see a Frost Atronach. Well, ok, maybe not AS frightened...

So, in our experience, if you want to level up quickly, you can add all of the skills that you want to use most often to your Major Skill category, but the drawback to this is that you won't be able to raise your attributes as high when you do level up. If you don't mind levelling up a bit more slowly, you can shift your most-used skills into your Minor Skills selection, increase them between each level-up, and gain four or five points in your primary attributes each time you level. Doing so will keep you fairly strong in relation to your enemies as you proceed through the game.

Caveats

Keep in mind that each of your attributes is capped at 100, so if you increase your levels slowly but with high attribute additions at each level-up, you'll probably cap out an attribute or two at around level 10. After this point, you'll still be able to increase your skills (and they'll still count towards your levelling-up if they're Major Skills), but you won't be able to add to the attributes that they relate to. At this point, you might find it enjoyable to focus on some of your other minor skills and attempt to start playing around with magic or thieving abilities, or learn how to use a bow, or something like that, if only to start gaining higher additions to attributes that you've been neglecting.

Also note that levelling slowly will mean that you won't find much magical loot until you hit level three or so. Still, if you've off-loaded your most-used abilities into your Minor Skills category, you should be able to raise them enough to make yourself much more powerful than the foes you face. For instance, a Blade specialist can get through much of the early game and reach Cloud Ruler Temple while still at level one, and use the Akaviri Katana to cut through the bulk of the

enemies you face for the next few hours of gameplay. Spellcasters can likewise advance through the ranks of their chosen professions, with the only limitation being the amount of magicka available to them. It's not unheard of for casters at level two or three to become capable of summoning Dremoras to do their fighting for them.

Character Archetypes

Most of these character archetypes are just suggestions; one of the joys of Oblivion is making a custom character and seeing how they work. Generally speaking, these characters are designed to allow you to control the speed at which you level by shifting back and forth from your Major Skills to your Minor Skills as you play. In most cases, though, your primary damage-dealing skills will be Minor Skills, which will allow you to rank them up so that you can add five points to each of your primary attributes when you level up. See our Character Creation and Leveling Up section for more details on this theory - suffice to say it's not something that everyone will agree on. If you want your character to level up more quickly, then pack his or her Major Skills with things that you're going to be using all of the time. The benefit of quicker leveling is that you'll get better equipment and magical items more quickly; the drawback is that it'll take longer to maximize your attribute scores.

Thus, in our opinion, it's best to have a couple of Major Skills that you use constantly, a couple that are used with less frequency, and a couple that are rarely used at all. This will let you level up at a modest pace, but allow you to hopefully maximize the number of points that you put into your attributes when you do level up. If this all sounds complicated, then you're not alone: Oblivion's skill and leveling system is a bit intricate, and penalizes you somewhat for leveling up too quickly. If you level up fast, the enemies that you face will get tougher and tougher, and you won't be able to increase your attributes quickly enough to keep pace in most instances.

Anyway, there isn't a "perfect build" in Oblivion - there's only what you enjoy playing. On the flipside, it is possible to create a character that's spectacularly ill-suited to your play style, but with a little work you can make something that's enjoyable and powerful at the same time.

Note About Stealth Characters

There's nothing wrong with making a stealthy character from the outset of the game, but it's worth noting that it's far easier for a warrior or a mage to obtain a good degree of proficiency in Sneak and Security (arguably the two centerpiece skills of a good thief) later in the game than it is for a stealth-oriented character to suddenly decide to start throwing spells or going toe-to-toe with a two-handed weapon.



Even characters that have been straightforward warriors for most of the game can become excellent stealth characters later on.

This is mostly due to the fact that there are an awful lot of ways in the game to add to your Sneak skill (the Ring of Khajiiti, the Dark Brotherhood light armor and robes, vampirism) and Security skill (Skeleton Key), but also due to the fact that adapting to a stealth-oriented style of gameplay requires few equipment changes beyond the ones listed above for other types of characters. Warriors can continue to wear heavy armor while they sneak around, so long as they have the Ring of Khajiiti on, and will still have a good chance of remaining undetected. Obtaining the Skeleton Key makes any lock in the game surpassable by simply hitting the auto-attempt key over and over again, since it can't break.

So if you want to play as a thief or a stealthy assassin, feel free to do so, but keep in mind that your character might have a little more versatility if you start out as a warrior or mage and then shift over to sneaking around later on.

Fast-Leveling Mage

Race: Male High Elf

Birthsign: Mage (or Apprentice for extra dangerous action!)

Specialization: Magic

Favored Attributes: Intelligence, Willpower

Major Skills

- Illusion

- Destruction
- Conjunction
- Restoration
- Security
- Mercantile
- Alchemy

You're going to be leveling up rapidly with this build, especially if you play around with Alchemy too much. Alchemy, Conjunction, and Mysticism will all cause you to gain a bunch of Intelligence when you level up, but if you want to increase both Intelligence and Willpower, be sure to constantly cast low-level Restoration or Alteration spells on yourself. Alteration is left as a minor skill to ensure that you'll be able to increase it for the purposes of extra Willpower at level-ups; just cast some Novice-level Shield spell over and over again so that you gain a few levels in it between each level, and your skillups in Restoration and Destruction should be able to get you up the rest of the way.

Be careful with Alchemy here, as going to fast with it can cause you to level too quickly. You'll gain a bunch of Intelligence at each level-up here, but making too many potions in a short period of time will make it difficult to gain Willpower when you level-up. It's best to wait until you're two or three points away from leveling, then return to your storehouse, grab all of your ingredients from your storage chest, then make a bunch of potions until you level up.

Slow-Leveling Pure Warrior

Race: Male Nord, Redguard, or Orc

Birthsign: Warrior (+10 Strength and Endurance)

Specialization: Combat

Favored Attributes: Strength, Endurance

Major Skills

- Blunt (or Blade)
- Conjunction
- Heavy Armor
- Block
- Security
- Mercantile
- Speechcraft

This is a pure melee warrior class, with the intent to rush up on your foes and bash them in the head. The goal here is to level up slowly, so pick either Blade or Blunt as your Major skill, but pick the one that you don't want to use most often. If you pick Blade as a major skill, use blunt weapons for most of the game. That'll let you skill it up a lot between levels (since increasing that skill won't contribute towards advancing towards your next level), which in turn will let you add a lot to your Strength score when you hit a new level.

Of the rest of these skills, Heavy Armor will be in constant use, but increases at a fairly moderate pace itself. Between it, Block, and Armorer (which starts off low but will rapidly gain points as you use it), you shouldn't have a problem adding a lot of Endurance to your character at low levels, when it's most important to do so. (Endurance added at higher levels doesn't retroactively add to your health.)

Conjuration, Security, Mercantile, and Speechcraft are all examples of skills that will advance fairly slowly, to ensure that you don't level up before you have a chance to gain at least a +4 or +5 modifier to your Strength and Endurance at each of your early level-ups. (With that said, feel free to trade them out for other skills you think you might find more useful.) After you manage to max out Strength and Endurance (which should occur around level 10), you can become a bit more freeform and start working on your minor skills, such as spellcasting or stealth.

Stealth should be easier to increase later on in the game, thanks to items like the Ring of Khajiiti and the light armor given to you in the Dark Brotherhood initiation. This character will always be deficient in magicka, barring something like a backup set of clothes enchanted with Intelligence bonuses, but if you use Conjuration enough and pair it with a dabbling in Alchemy, you should eventually be adding five points of Intelligence at each level up, after you've maxed out Strength and Endurance.

Thief With Magical Support

Race: Male Khajiit **Birthsign:** Mage **Specialization:** Stealth **Favored Attributes:** Agility, Intelligence

Major Skills

- Sneak
- Conjuration
- Light Armor
- Blade
- Illusion
- Destruction
- Security

A good variety of skills to supplement your chosen attributes. With a combination of Sneak and Illusion, you should be a master of disguise fairly early in the game, and be able to sneak past enemies that would otherwise be difficult to kill, which is a good thing, since you won't be capable of dealing supreme amounts of physical damage, even if you do practice with your Blade skill. You'll be able to Conjure up a Bound Dagger whenever you need a little extra oomph in combat, though, at least until you start finding magical weapons. You'll also be able to create distractions with summoned creatures, which will let you get your attacks in while your enemies hopefully go after your pets.

The Destruction magic here should be used as a followup to your opening sneak attacks. You may have a hard time increasing your Willpower enough to increase the efficacy of the spells, so be

sure to pack low-level Alteration or Restoration spells and cast them repeatedly so that you can increase your Willpower when you level up.

Note that you can also replace Blade with Marksman if you so choose. That could fit in with your Conjuraton skill, as well, as you summon in enemies to distract your foes while pelting them with arrows.

Combat Tips

One of the less subtler ways to get through a game of Oblivion is as a melee-focused warrior with high Strength and Endurance. Although you'll run into some scraps now and again, the large health reserves and high armor rating you'll have will allow you to go toe-to-toe with multiple enemies without taking much damage, especially as you start wrapping together that set of Daedric armor when you hit level 20.

Luckily for everyone concerned, the awkward missing-a-dude-from-a-foot-away combat system from Morrowind is gone, replaced by a much more sensible combat system that will allow you to hit an opponent every time you swing at them, assuming you're close enough to do so. So even a lowly mage will be able to hit his or her opponent with an axe...but in order to actually deal damage, you'll need to have a lot of Strength and a high skill ranking with the weapon that you're using.

Two-Hand or Not Two-Hand

Personal preferences aside, we'll come out and make a recommendation: you're generally going to be better off with a one-handed weapon and a shield than you will be with a two-handed weapon. The reasons for this are multiple.

First off, although two-handed weapons generally deal more damage than one-handed weapons do, and have a slightly longer reach, they're also slower and drain more fatigue when swung. If you have to fight a couple of enemies back to back, you're going to be in danger of running out of fatigue, which will reduce the amount of damage you do and also have you run the risk of getting knocked down, which is always humiliating.

Secondly, you're going to lose out on the armor bonus given to you by shields when you wield a two-handed weapon. Shields are generally going to have a higher boost to your armor than any other piece of armor from the same set, including the cuirass, all other things being equal, so the loss of armor here is substantial. Note that this armor increase is constant; you don't necessarily have to actually block with the shield to get it, just have it equipped. The loss of a shield is also the loss of another enchantable piece of equipment, which, by the time you're finding Grand Soul Gems with Grand souls in them, means that you're basically missing the chance to gain a 10-point bonus to one of your attributes, like strength.



The ability to sneak attack with one-handed weapons make them all but indispensable for most characters.

Lastly, you can't sneak attack with two-handed weapons. (Technically, you can, but you only get a 1x damage multiplier.) That alone is pretty killer, unless you're role-playing a foolhardy Orc that can't wrap his or her head around the concept of stealthy play. Even characters that don't start out practicing their stealth can still get back in the game with a little practice, and by the time you're level 10 or so, you can start finding equipment that makes sneaking much easier. Getting a six times damage bonus from a sneak attack more than eliminates the difference in damage between a one-handed and two-handed weapon, and you'll rack up your fair share of one-shot kills, as well, especially when dealing with necromancers and conjurers, letting you get past your opponents without causing a ruckus.

We're not saying that you should *never* use a two-handed weapon; they can be fun to play around with. In our opinion, though, the slight damage disadvantage of a one-handed weapon is more than offset by the advantages outlined above.

What About Hand To Hand?

Hand to Hand is an amusing option, but one that won't be able to really match the choice of either one-handed or two-handed weapons, in our opinion. If you want to add a little more challenge to the game, then it might be worth attempting to max out your hand-to-hand skill and take your James T. Kirk fighting skills to the wicked Dremora, but you're going to be losing out on a lot of advantages when you specialize in hand to hand, such as the armor bonus given by your shield, the ability to poison your weapon, and the ability to enchant both your shield and your weapon.

We're not saying that hand-to-hand is a nonviable choice, but you're going to have to give up a lot in order to make it work. Spellcasters or stealthy characters probably won't have the strength to really make it viable, but pure warriors might find it fun to try out. It's also noticeable for having an awesome sneak attack animation, especially when you land a one-hit kill.

Magical Weapons

As you progress in level, you're going to start finding magical weapons in the game world and as quest rewards, as well as become able to make them yourself with the Altar of Enchanting in the Mages Guild (which every warrior should gain access to, no matter what) or via the Sigil Stones you obtain in the Plane of Oblivion. There are a number of different effects that you can obtain on magical weapons, with the following being some of the most important to look for.

Fire, Ice, Shock Damage: You can obtain weapons that deal anywhere from five to 25 magical damage per strike, with the highest ranks becoming available in Sigil Stones from Oblivion after you reach level 17. Although you'll have to recharge these fairly often, it's still worth having one on your character at all times. Just remember that most undead creatures, as well as trolls, are weak to fire, while Dremora are weak to shock damage.

Damage Health: A more direct kind of enchantment, and one that occurs only rarely, although you can make it with the Altar of Enchantment in the Mages Guild. A good basic choice for an enchanted weapon, since it'll work equally well against enemies that have resistances to elemental damage.



Umbra does a supreme amount of damage, besides having a Soul Trap enchantment.

Soul Trap: If your magicka reserves are absolutely pitiful, then enchanting a weapon with Soul Trap can help you safely and securely trap some souls. Just place it on a powerful weapon, use it as a sneak attacking weapon, then switch to your elemental damage or Damage Health weapons to kill your foes before the timer wears off.

Silence: Having a weapon capable of silencing your foes is incredibly useful. When you're able to enchant something with this, do it, but be sure the silence effect lasts at least ten seconds, if possible. When used on spellcasting enemies, such as necromancers and conjurers, they'll often have no recourse but to draw their little daggers or maces and run towards you, where you'll (usually) easily overpower them. Our warrior character benefitted greatly by having this on a bow; you just plink a spellcaster and all they can do is charge in, where they're drastically overmatched. If they have a staff or scrolls, however, they'll usually use them before attacking you.

Paralyze: One of the rarest weapon enchantments, and one of the most expensive in terms of number of uses and charges - you shouldn't expect a weapon to be capable of doing more than a few seconds of paralyzation, and you'll have to recharge it frequently, even for that. Still, paralyzation is an often hilarious effect to pass on to your target, not to mention useful.

Weakness to Fire, Ice, Shock: A Destruction-oriented spellcaster might want to indulge him or herself and enchant a bow with this enchantment. Tailor it to match your favorite spell; if you've made a huge fireball spell, enchant a bow with 50% Weakness to Fire with a 20 second duration, and you should find your enemies dropping with much less magicka expended on your part.

Finding Armor

Unfortunately for heavy armor wearers, most of the enemies you'll be encountering in the game will either be Bandits, who wear light armor, or Necromancers and Conjurers, who don't wear any armor at all. When you reach a level where new armor starts to drop (generally at the first, fourth, eighth, twelfth, sixteenth, and twentieth), it can be a pain to try and track it down, unless you know where to look.

And where might that be? Well, what you're looking for are Marauders. (Or vampires, to a certain extent, but they won't all be wearing heavy armor, and will infect you with prophyric hemophilia to boot.) Unfortunately, Marauders are pretty rare and don't show up in many dungeons.

Of course, they do show up in some dungeons. For a short jaunt through a Marauder camp, you can head to Fort Blueblood to the southeast of Leyawiin, near the "B" in the word "Blackwood" on your map. This is a pretty quick jaunt, and doesn't feature a boss-level Marauder (who usually has the best items and armor on his or her person), but you should be able to find plenty of armor to suit your needs.

If you just hit one of your fourth levels, though, you're probably going to find it helpful to visit the Infested Mine, up to the southwest of the "The" in "The Colovian Highlands" on your map, which is itself to the west of Chorrol. This three-level dungeon is large, but there is indeed a boss-level enemy on the third level, who'll usually be wearing at least one piece of equipment from the latest set of armor goods as well as a magical item or two.

Stealth Tips

A stealthy approach to the game's dungeons and battlefields will let you sneak attack opponents, pick their pockets, or avoid them entirely. While advancing in the arts of the thief will slow your progress a bit (because sneaking around is slower than running), you'll be able to use it to compensate for the overall lower melee damage that you'll likely be dealing due to the fact that you've been working on stealth skills instead of your combat or magical skills.

That said, almost anyone can take advantage of sneaking to deal extra damage, especially when you factor in equipment bonuses.

To Sneak

The basic thief skill is Sneak, which allows you to move around in the game world while remaining hidden from the prying eyes of guards and enemies. When you enter sneak mode, a golden eye will appear around your cursor. Most of the time this will be a bright gold color, which indicates that someone can see you or is otherwise aware of your presence. Your goal is to become hidden, which will turn the icon a translucent grey color.

The point of sneaking? If you stay hidden, then there are all kinds of things that you can do that would otherwise land you in jail or get a pack of guards on your butt. You'll be able to steal items from under the nose of a shopkeeper, pickpocket a guard to nab a key, tresspass through sensitive parts of a castle, or deal huge amounts of damage with a sneak attack.



With a high enough Sneak skill, you'll be able to hide in plain sight.

That said, in order to sneak well, you need to know what factors take part in whether or not a nearby person can see you or otherwise detect you. In no particular order...

Sneak Skill: All characters and creatures in the game have their own Sneak skill ranking, which goes up as they increase in level. (Which, in turn, means that it goes up as you level.) If an enemy has a higher Sneak skill than you do, it'll be more difficult to bypass them or sneak up on them.

Movement Speed: The faster you move, the easier it'll be for enemies to detect you. On the 360, you can move slowly by gently tilting the analog stick.

Light: The more light that's falling on you, the harder it'll be for you to stay out of sight. Keep to the shadows if you want to remain hidden, put away your torches, take off that Light-enchanted ring, etc. Also note that most spells will result in a temporary burst of light when cast, so be careful not to cast them while someone's looking at you. **Enemy Line Of Sight:** If the enemy you're trying to sneak up on is looking in your direction, you'll have a harder time getting close to them undetected than if you were to approach from their rear.

Weight of Boots: You can sneak in any kind of armor, from regular clothing to heavy armor. However, the heavier your boots are, the more noise you'll make when you move. It's best to go without shoes until you hit Journeyman in Sneak, which eliminates this penalty.

Invisibility: If you have an active Invisibility effect on you, then sneaking is almost child's play, since no one will be able to see you. You'll still make noise, however, which will allow enemies with high Sneak skills to detect you and attack. Even if they don't detect you, you'll lose your Invisibility as soon as you interact with an object or attempt to make an attack, so this is at best a temporary boost.

Chameleon: Chameleon is essentially a less effective form of Invisibility, with differing percentages indicating precisely how concealed you are. The reason it winds up being better than Invisibility is that it doesn't go away when you interact or attack someone; it's more or less permanent until its duration ends. Thus, if you can find a ring enchanted with Chameleon (say, through the Daedric quest for Meridia), you can keep it on for a large bonus to your sneaking abilities.

Bold-Faced Thievery

Sneaking is more or less required to commit most of the crimes available in the game, such as lockpicking, trespassing, and theft. At heart, if you commit a crime while in Sneak mode, it essentially didn't happen.

For instance, if you're inside someone's home and see a locked chest with a red bag icon, attempting to pick the lock while someone's watching you will ensure that you're met by a guard

and hauled off to jail, probably before you're even able to leave the house, regardless of whether you actually took anything out of the chest or not. If, however, you're successfully in Sneak mode (i.e. the icon is grayed out), you'll be able to pick the lock and loot the chest without any ill effects. The same goes for grabbing loose items on tables and shelves.

Thus, masters of Sneaking will have a large number of homes and shops to burglarize and loot, whereas characters that haven't boned up on their Sneaking ability will find themselves getting followed around in shops and homes when they make their presence known to the inhabitants. Low-Sneak characters will also have a harder time creeping around sleeping characters, who are more likely to be awoken by the noise made by a poor Sneaker.

Cleaning The Place Out

If you see a shiny object in a store or home that you just have to have, but can't quite afford, you can always attempt to steal it. The problem will usually be the pesky fact that the law kind of frowns on thievery. If you so much as grab an item that doesn't belong you to, anyone who sees you do so will immediately call for the guards.

In private residences, this problem can often be countered simply by getting away from any prying eyes before sneaking. Heck, if you can get a solid door between yourself and the people who live in the home, then you probably won't even need to enter sneak mode; just steal away. In shops, though, most shopkeepers will follow you around and attempt to keep you within line of sight, making thievery a difficult proposition at best.



If your hand icon is red when you're hovering over an item, you'll be charged with a crime if anyone sees you.

The solution? Enter in the middle of the night. It's much easier to sneak around people if they're unconscious when you do it, and most shopkeepers will be well away from their goods when they're sleeping, since they'll usually sleep in closed bedrooms upstairs. If you can pick the lock from the street without being spotted by a guard (which, in all fairness, is often difficult; these are heavy-duty locks), then you should have the run of the place and won't have to worry about getting detected. Best of all, sneaking around while someone is asleep nearby will still help you increase your Sneak ability.

Just be sure to enter between midnight and six o'clock in the morning. Most civilians in the world will be sound asleep during these hours. Although most shops don't open until nine o'clock, many shopkeepers will be up and awake for a couple of hours before the doors are unlocked.

Telekinesis: A Thief's Friend

The Telekinesis spell and its variants are accessible early on, and will be helpful in your efforts to rob people blind without getting caught. Although taking items into your inventory is a crime, as is "grabbing" a red item and moving it around, telekinesis isn't considered a criminal act. With a little finesse, you can use it to move valuable items out of the line of sight of their owners, then steal them when they can't see you.

For instance, if you spot a rare reagent or an emerald necklace on a shelf near a citizen, you can pick it up with telekinesis, move it to another room, then nab it out of the air when no one's looking. The process is a bit trickier with shopkeepers, who'll follow you around their shops in an effort to keep you in sight. If you pick up an item with Telekinesis, though, you should be able to run around a corner fast enough to get out of their sight for a second or two and let you grab the item you want without having to pay for it.

Sneak Attacking

When you attack while remaining in Sneak mode, two things happen: your attacks do a great deal more damage than they normally would, but also occur much more slowly. Still, with a high enough Sneak skill and a good amount of skill with weapons, you can often either kill an enemy or severely wound them with one powerful blow.

Sneak attacking isn't all that much more difficult than regular Sneaking; if you can get close enough to an enemy to hit them with a bow or a weapon, then you can perform a sneak attack. They're done automatically when you attack from the Sneak position. (Note, however, that only bows and one-handed weapons are capable of sneak attacking; two-handed weapons get no bonus from a sneak attack.) At the lowest level of Sneak proficiency, Novice, you'll get twice as much damage from bow shots and four times as much damage from melee shots; when you hit Apprentice level, those bonuses will increase to three and six times damage, respectively.



Yeah...just your eyes playing tricks on you...don't worry about me and my little sword here....

Note that only the physical damage dealt by the weapon seems to be multiplied; if the weapon you're using is also enchanted with magical damage, that's still applied but doesn't appear to be multiplied. Note also that you're only going to be able to get one sneak attack in on a character. After you hit them the first time, they'll immediately detect your presence and come after you, usually alerting any nearby enemies as well. Of course, if you kill them in one shot, then they'll fall to the floor, and any other nearby foes won't be alerted at all, even if they see the corpse flop around in front of them - they'll only be alerted if they happen to see you. You can also use this to get away with murder; if you manage to kill a civilian in one good shot, they'll keel over dead without having time to call the guards, meaning that you get away with it scot-free.

Alchemy Tips

Ah, alchemy. Although this is only one skill among many in Oblivion, it's one that almost everyone can take advantage of, no matter what your level is, and no matter what your chosen character archetype. It's a great way to make lots of money by selling potions, or to increase your efficacy in combat by producing useful potions and poisons. This chapter is intended to help you get the most out of your alchemical experiments.

Equipment



It'll take a while for you to get up to Master-level equipment, but as you upgrade, you'll notice your potions getting better and better.

At its root, all you need to perform alchemy is a mortar and pestle (which counts as one item). Real alchemy, however, will require a mortar and pestle, an alembic, a retort, and a calcinator. Alembics reduce negative effects of ingredients on your potions, while retorts and calcinators improve the efficacy of your potions. You don't need all four pieces of the puzzle to make a potion, but they're relatively easy to find, at least in the beginning of the game.

The catch is that there are different levels of equipment, ranging from Novice to Master. Most of the items you'll find in the game world will be Novice equipment, with a few Apprentice pieces here and there. If you want Journeyman equipment or higher, you'll have to find them in loot, usually in boss-level treasure chests deep within dungeons. Since these are randomly generated based on your level, you won't be able to head off to a dungeon at level one and find a set of Master-level alchemy equipment. Note, however, that you can mix and match equipment from different levels without a problem; if you have a set of novice equipment, but find a journeyman mortar and pestle, you can drop your novice mortar and pestle and use the journeyman M&P instead. It'll work just fine with the novice equipment you already have.

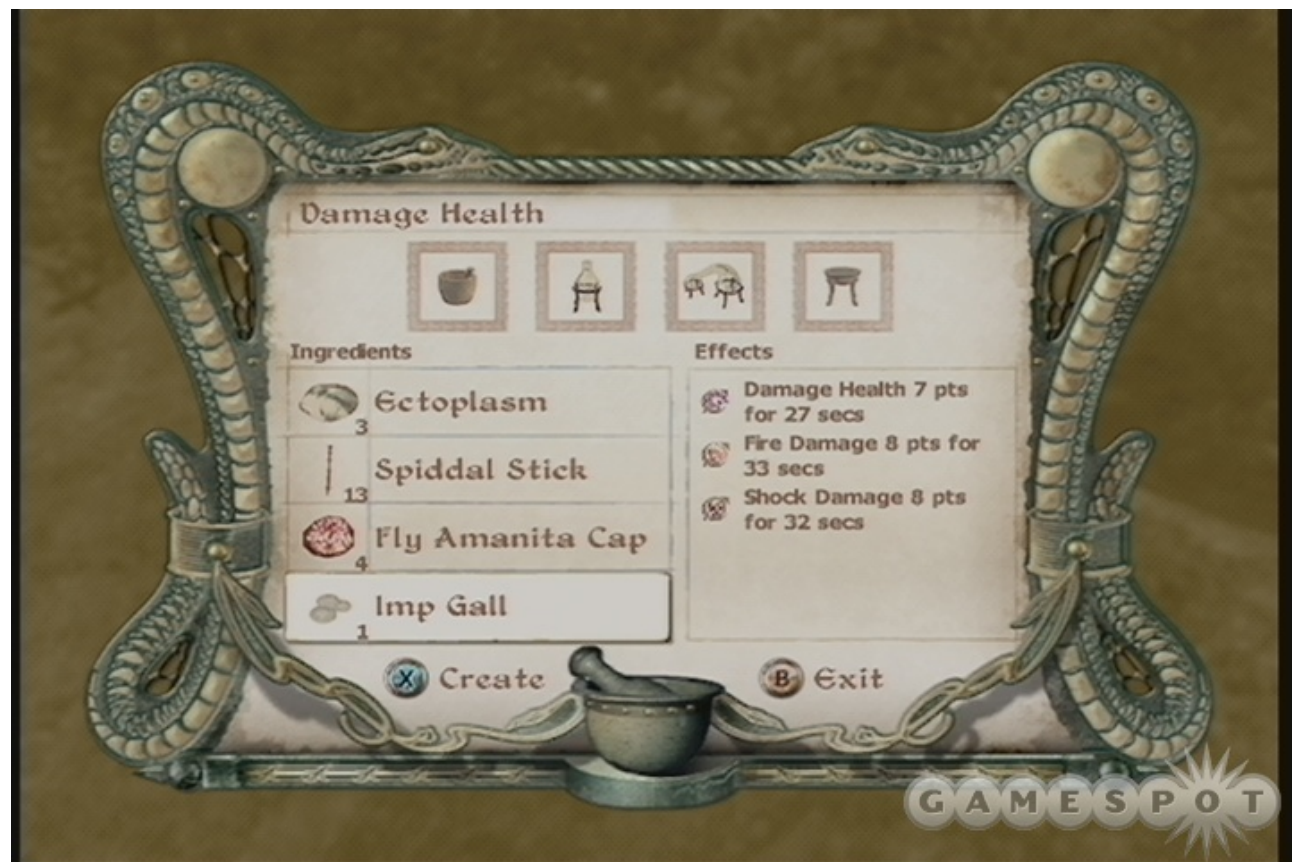
If you're looking for a set of novice equipment, join the Mages Guild at any of the local branches at the beginning of the game. This will let you pick up any equipment you find in the guildhalls, which will usually include a full set of alchemical tools. As you level up and want to find more advanced equipment, you can usually check in either a Necromancer-inhabited lair, or in the upper levels of Oblivion plane citadels. The loot is randomized, so it won't always be around, but these are both good places to check for them.

Tip: Fort Linchal, to the north of the "H" in Kvatch on your map, is a good place to poke around in

if you're looking for equipment. If you head inside, then take a right at the first fork in your path, you'll head into the Fort Linchal Hall of Knights, where a boss-level Necromancer (and a boss-level chest) will be waiting for you. This is about as quick a trip to a boss chest as you're likely to find in the game, and can be repeated every few days of game time, after the enemies respawn.

Ingredients

Ingredients are everywhere you look in Oblivion: in the towns, out in the wilderness, on the bodies of your enemies, in containers, on people's kitchen tables, etc. For the most part, though, if you want a lot of ingredients, you'll probably have to harvest them from plants in the wilderness. You can find plants all over the place, so just run outside and look! Anything that looks even the least bit out of place or distinct from the usual trees and grasses can probably be harvested. Just run over and point your cursor at the plant, and it'll probably turn into a hand icon. If you get the prompt to activate the plant, attempt to do so.



Whenever you visit a safehouse, be sure to dump your ingredients into one of your treasure chests. Unless you have a huge Strength score, there's no point lugging them around everywhere.

At this point, you'll usually get a message saying that an ingredient has been delivered into your inventory. We say "usually" because it's not guaranteed. Most plants will give you a 20% chance to fail in your harvesting, which will result in you "using up" the plant and not gaining anything, but some plants can have a failure rate of up to 50%. Wisp Stalks and Cairne Bolete mushrooms, both found in caves, have dismal failure rates of around 75%, meaning that you'll only get an ingredient once in every four tries.

Many monsters also have ingredients on their bodies when killed. Rats and crabs will drop their meat for you to harvest, ghosts will drop ectoplasm, vampires will yield dust, and the dreaded Dremora will actually let you pick up their hearts. Mmm-mmm good!

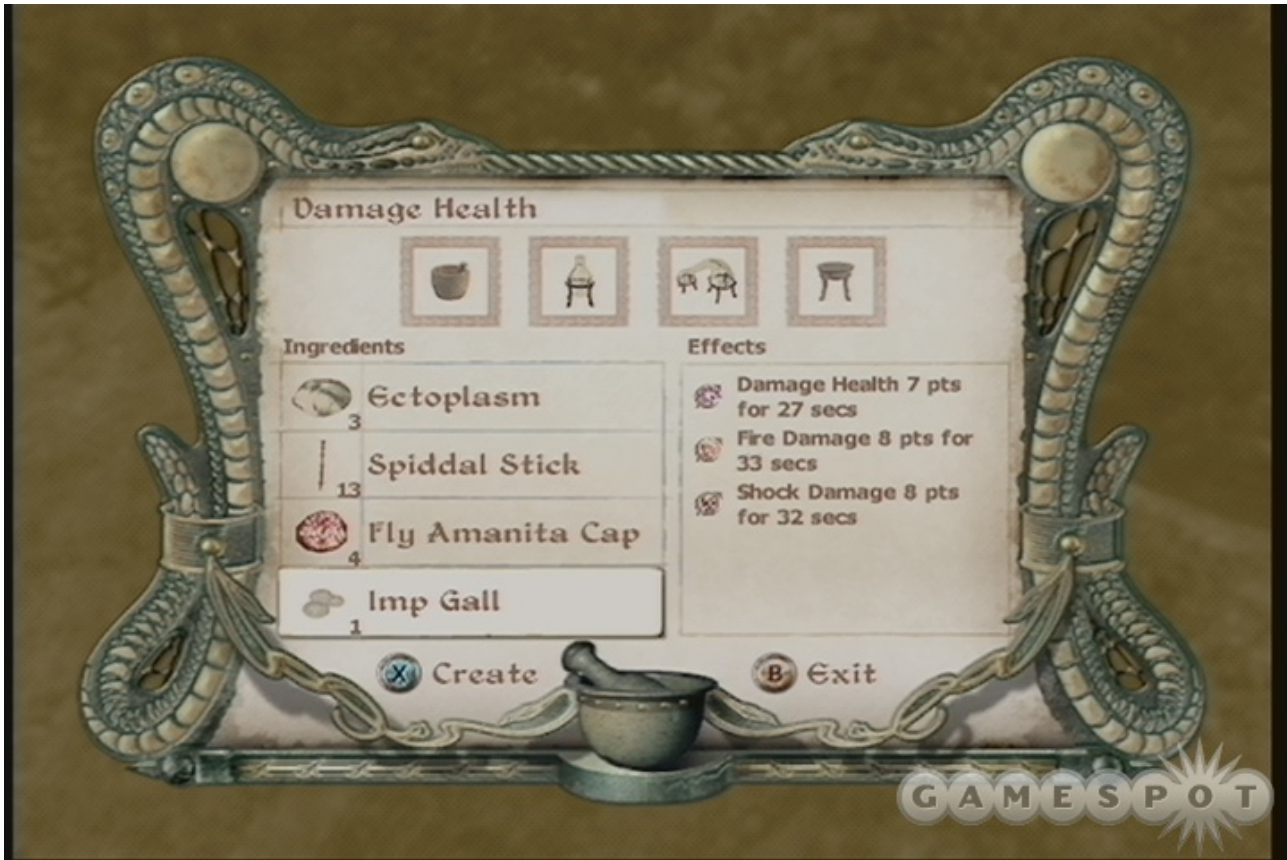
What we usually like to do is have a storage place for all of our ingredients. Doesn't have to be anything fancy. We used the house for sale in the Imperial City (in the slums on the waterfront), which, when upgraded a bit, had three treasure chests to use. Since chests have an unlimited amount of storage space, you can dump all of your ingredients into one of them, along with your alchemical equipment, and come back to it for large potion-making sessions.

Tip: Note that you can increase your Alchemy skill by simply eating the ingredients that you pick up. You'll gain whatever the first effect they have is, and obviously the item will be consumed. This is a good way to make space in your bag if you're about to go overweight, but is less efficient at increasing your skill than making potions is.

In your travels, you're going to be picking up a lot of ingredients; check your encumbrance every so often. When you're about to stop moving because you have so much stuff in your bag, head back to your house and indulge in a little alchemy to convert everything into potions, then sell off the potions you don't actually want or need. Although potions won't initially be worth very much, you're going to be making enough of them to eventually make quite a bit of money off of them when they're sold.

Making Potions

In order to increase your Alchemy skill, you'll want to make as many potions as you possibly can. At low levels of skill, the easiest potions to make are Restore Fatigue potions. Almost every kind of household food, such as onions, bread, lettuce, and so on, will have Restore Fatigue as their first property, allowing you to loot kitchens all across town and convert your proceeds into Restore Fatigue potions. They won't be particularly good potions, but they'll definitely help increase your skill, and you'll be making so many of them that you'll gain a good amount of money from selling them.



You can mix up your ingredients to make some especially deadly poisons, after you have all of the ingredients available to you.

Note that all ingredients that you find will have more than one alchemical property. As you increase your skill in Alchemy, you'll be able to see more of the hidden properties of your potions. At low levels of Alchemy skill, your ingredients basically only have the properties that you can see, so if you want to be able to use a more diverse array of ingredients in your potions, you'll have to rank yourself up, but doing so will help ensure that you'll be able to make the kinds of potions that you want with the ingredients that you actually have. Unlocking more effects will also allow you to use more ingredients in your poisons, adding multiple effects that occur simultaneously.

Note that a lot of ingredients actually have negative effects, such as Damage Health (always popular). Making a potion with a negative effect actually turns it into a poison (which appear in your inventory as green bottles instead of the purplish color of potions). Poisons can't be ingested, so they can't really hurt you. (Some poisons will have both beneficial and harmful effects, though.) Instead, they can be activated in your inventory and applied to a weapon, allowing you to spread the love to the next enemy you hit, giving you a bit more oomph when facing off against boss-level enemies.

What Not To Make

Now, just because you have a huge number of different effects you can make with potions and poisons doesn't necessarily mean that you *should* be making them. Trying to think too hard about your potions will lead to a cluttered inventory, full of stuff that you will probably never use. Here are some examples of potion possibilities that we never really found to be all that useful.

Burden: Theoretically, you can use this poison to over-encumber an enemy and root them in place. The problem is that most spellcasters will be able to attack from a distance with spells, while many warrior characters will have more strength than they need and thus won't be affected. Go for paralysis instead; it's more difficult to find ingredients for, but will have a much more pronounced effect.

Damage Attribute: While there are plenty of potion combinations that can result in an enemy having their Luck or Speed damaged, in most cases these poisons are going to be all but useless in combat. Most fights will last less than 20 or 30 seconds, meaning that damaging an opponent's Personality score for a few seconds won't make all that big of a difference. Even if the benefits were substantial, most fights won't last long enough for these to really be worthwhile.

Resist: On some occasions, resist potions can be worthwhile. If you know you're going to be going up against a bunch of Flame Atronachs, for instance, a Resist Fire potion might be worth taking. Most of the time, though, the uses are too narrow and too short-lived to be useful. You can take a Resist Disease potion when fighting against vampires, sure, but it wouldn't be guaranteed protection and you'd have to take it again every couple of minutes. Or you could just plan ahead and take a Cure Disease potion at the end of the cave.

Cure Poison: Very few enemies use Damage Health poisons, so stocking up on Cure Poison potions won't do much for you. In general, when you are poisoned, it'll wear off within 30 seconds anyway, so just finish your fight and let it fade away.

Damage Magicka: When you damage an opponent's magicka, you'll be able to drain their ability to cast spells, sometimes for a significant amount of time. You can go this route if you wish, but it's usually better to just be a bit more ornate and create a Silence potion, which you can use at the beginning of a fight to prevent them from casting anything at all. Most spellcasters will draw a weapon and rush you when silenced, meaning that you'll be able to chop them up before the silence effect wears off.

The Weighting Game

Here's a factoid: when making a potion, the weight of the potion bottle is the average weight of all of the ingredients that were put into it. If you make a potion with ingredients weighing 0.1 and 2 pounds, then the resultant potion would weigh one pound apiece.

Now, for most characters, the last thing you're really going to want is to make a bunch of potions that weigh a pound apiece. Spellcasters, especially, won't have the strength required to lug around a huge number of heavy potions. Thus, it's generally best to look through the table of ingredients available to you and choose the ingredients which weigh the least when making potions, insofar as that's possible. Yeah, that Boar Meat and Daedra Heart potion will restore your health, all right, but each potion will weigh two pounds, whereas a Cairn Bolete Cap and Fly Amanita Cap potion will do the same thing while weighing only 0.1 pounds.

So, generally speaking you're going to want to make all of your potions with ingredients that weight 0.1 or 0.2 pounds, just to keep the resulting potions as lightweight as possible. Luckily,

most ingredients are, in fact, this light, with a few exceptions, such as daedra hearts, minotaur horns, clannfear claws, and ogre's teeth. Although some of the heavier reagents might be worth a good amount of money when sold, they're rarely going to be that much more useful than lighter-weight reagents.

Potion and Poison Recipes

Since the number of recipes you'll be able to make will depend on your skill level, we've broken down a few of the more common recipes that you'll be able to construct based on your proficiency at alchemy.

Novice

Basically, all you're going to want to be making at Novice level are Restore Fatigue potions. Just steal as much food as you can from people's homes and basements and farms, and whip through as many Restore Fatigue potions as you can make before selling them all. You should be able to get to Apprentice level in no time.

If, however, you want to make some actual potions, here are some ideas.

Restore Health: daedra heart, venison, cairn bolete cap (any two)

Damage Health: harrada + spiddal Stick (Oblivion special), wisp stalk cap, nightshade

Cure Disease: mandrake root + clannfear claws (clannfears won't appear until you're in the low teen levels, though)

Apprentice

With two effects available on most items, the varieties of potions that you'll be able to make will become much more diverse.

Restore Health: New ingredients include aloe vera and ham.

Damage Health: Plenty of new ingredients, including dragon's tongue,

Silence: rice, vampire dust

Cure Disease: mandrake root, clannfear claws, elf cup cap

Night Eye: carrot, daedroth teeth, viper's bugloss

Journeyman

With three effects available, it becomes easier to make multi-function poisons. Mix and match as you like!

Restore Health: The main new ingredient here is fly amanita cap, which grows in almost every city, but especially in the Imperial City. Grab as much as you can, and you'll be making plenty of restore health potions over time.

Damage Health: Common new ingredients are strawberries, scales, and imp gall.

Chameleon: bloodgrass, radish

Fortify Strength: elf cup cap, arrowroot

Paralyze: Daedra venom, clannfear claws

Damage Health + Fire Damage: spiddal stick, harrada, fire salts (the Oblivion special)

Damage Health + Fire Damage + Damage Magicka: spiddal stick, harrada, steel blue entoloma

Expert

All ingredient effects are possible at Expert level, allowing you to customize your potions to no end.

Damage Health: Many common ingredients can be added to Damage Health poisons at this point, including apples, flax seeds, grapes, onions, and pears. After you get to Expert alchemy, you should be able to make enough poisons to hotkey them and add them to every attack, if you wish.

Fortify Speed: pear, wisp stalk cap

Damage Health + Shock Damage: ectoplasm, spiddal stick, fly amanita cap (add imp gall for fire damage as well)

Paralyze: This effect is added to harrada, milk thistle, and fennel seeds at Expert level, allowing you to make more of these powerful potions. Try adding ingredients like vampire dust and wisp stalk caps for added effects.

Vampirism

Anyone who played Morrowind should remember the fun times that came as a result of becoming a vampire in that game. (Sorry, the lycanthropism of the expansion packs isn't included here - presumably it'll be in whatever expansion pack Oblivion eventually receives.)

To become a vampire, simply find a vampire lair and fight a few enemies within. (You can find a vampire lair in the Memorial Cave, to the east of the Arcane University, just across the water of Lake Rumare.) After a few good fights, your character will contract what's known as Prophyric Hemophilia, a disease that drains your Fatigue by five points. No big deal, you'll say to yourself, but if you let the disease stew a bit, then go to sleep in a bed, you'll wake up with a peculiar craving for human blood. Welcome to the world of vampirism.



Get ready for a lot of comments on your paleness if you become a vampire.

Note that while vampirism shouldn't ever prevent you from attempting quests, so long as you periodically feed, it can be inconvenient at times. The quest for a cure is a lengthy and difficult one, especially when your character is at low levels, so if you don't want to become a vampire early on, be sure not to sleep before you can take a Cure Disease potion to get rid of your Prophyric Hemophilia.

Feeding

When you become a vampire, you'll initially only find that there are benefits to be had from the condition, which we list below. As time goes on, though, you'll rack up disadvantages as well, so long as you refrain from feeding. To feed as a vampire means that you have to sneak up on a sleeping human character and activate their body; you'll be able to choose between feeding and either pickpocketing or waking them up for a chat, depending on whether you're in stealth mode or not.



You can only feed when your victim is asleep.

Finding a sleeping character will obviously be easier at night, when most characters will be at home asleep. Beggars can be found in most cities, sleeping away the night hours in parks or alleyways; if you have some kind of long-range Life Detect ability, you can easily discern them on the lifeless streets of any of the towns. Mages and Fighters Guild houses will likewise have a bunch of easily-accessible sleeping characters for you to latch on to.

Note that feeding has no ill effects for your target; they don't die or become a vampire themselves, so feel free to pick your targets liberally. Feeding will be considered a crime if you're witnessed, though, so be sure that you close the door before heading inside.

Good Effects of Vampirism

To begin with, as soon as you become a vampire, you gain a 100% percent resistance to Disease and Paralysis. In addition, you'll gain bonuses to a host of different skills and attributes. Each of these gets a bonus of five points per day that you go without feeding, up to a maximum of four days. So the first day you're a vampire, you'll gain +5 to all of the following attributes and skills. On the second day, they'll all be +10, and so on, up to the fourth day, when they all gain +20.

Here's a list of the affected skills and attributes.

- Strength
- Willpower
- Speed
- Acrobatics

- Athletics
- Destruction
- Hand-To-Hand
- Illusion
- Mysticism
- Sneak
- Protection from Normal Weapons

Suffice to say, whether you're a warrior, a wizard, or a thief, you're going to find that these bonuses are general enough to be useful to your class. By the fourth day without feeding, your character will be significantly more powerful than he or she was before.

Vampiric Abilities

Each day that you go without feeding, you'll gain a new vampiric ability. These can be selected and activated from your spell menu.

Day One: Hunter's Sight

Hunter's Sight is a lesser power, meaning you can use it as often as you like. For 30 seconds after casting, you'll gain Night-Eye and a Detect Life spell that stretches out to 100 feet from your position. Useful for scamping around in dungeons, or for finding sleeping beggars in the streets of a city when you want to feed.



I'm technically only un-dead, baby.

Day Two: Vampire's Seduction

Once per day, you can cast a 50-point Charm spell on any target. This becomes most useful on the fourth day without feeding, oddly, since that's when most of the characters in the game stop talking to you. If you really need to get back on the good side of a questgiver or merchant, and don't want to have to feed to do so, use your Seduction power to temporarily charm them, then get whatever you need from them before the effect wears off and they go back to shunning you.

Day Three: Reign of Terror

Once per day, you can cast a 60-second Silence in a 20-foot radius around the target you touch. Useful for demolishing high-powered spellcasters, such as the bosses in Conjuror or Necromancer dungeons. This is paired up with a Demoralize effect, which may cause your target to run away, but it only works on targets up to level six, so that aspect of the power likely won't be useful to you after you've leveled up a few times.

Day Four: Embrace of Shadows

Last but not least, the infamous Vampire ability of invisibility becomes yours on the fourth day without feeding. (If you fight vampires in their various lairs, you'll run across this ability multiple times.) In this instance, you get a 90-second Night-Eye ability along with 180 seconds of Invisibility. While it's unlikely that you'll ever actually use all 180 seconds of Invisibility (due to the fact that it goes away when you interact with an object or attack), it can profitably be used to maneuver past too-tough enemies (although there won't be many of these by the time you hit your fourth day) or escape from a tough group of enemies.

Bad Effects of Vampirism



I'm not touching you...does this bother you? ...still not touching you.

With that said, though, there are plenty of drawbacks to being a vampire. As soon as you become a vampire, you'll obtain a small but noticeable weakness to fire damage, which grows more severe as you proceed without feeding. By the fourth day, this vulnerability maxes out at 50%.

On the first day of your vampirism, you and your pale skin won't necessarily feel any ill effects from sunlight, apart from making some itchy flaking. On the second day, though, one point of damage per second of exposure will be meted out. This increases to four damage a second on the third day, and eight damage a second on the fourth. (For the game's purposes, "day" is considered to be any time between six AM and eight PM.) This constant damage prevents you from waiting while outdoors or using fast travel. (If you attempt to wait while outdoors so that you wind up waiting through some sunlight hours, don't be surprised if you end your wait period and instantly die.) Overcast skies or rain will reduce this damage somewhat, but you'll still usually find yourself making a mad dash for an indoor area to wait out the sunlight. (Luckily, your enhanced speed will make this easier for you.)

On the fourth day of vampirism, your appearance will have changed enough to make your affliction clear to the rest of the world. While you won't be attacked outright or assaulted by guards, most of the characters in the game will simply refuse to speak to you, or at best tell you to get the hell away from them. You can overcome this once per day with your Vampire's Seduction power, or perhaps with other charm spells if you happen to have some Illusion abilities.

Cure For Vampirism

When infected with Vampirism, help can be difficult to come by. As your disease progresses, more

and more people will recognize you for who you truly are, and most of them will refuse to speak to you. If you want to start on your quest for a cure, you'll need to speak to a chapel priest, all of whom will direct you to Raminus Polus, one of the uppermost members of the Mages Guild. Speaking to him will lead you to the main questgiver here: Count Hassildor in Skingrad, who is himself a vampire.

Speak either to Hal-Liurz to be granted an audience with Hassildor, or just bust into his living quarters and speak to him directly. He'll spin you a tragic tale: he and his wife were turned into vampires over fifty years previously. While Hassildor eventually saw the advantages of such a position, his wife unfortunately did not, and refused to feed on the unsuspecting to prolong her life. Without blood, her body eventually shut down, resulting in a coma from which she's never awoken. He agrees to help you find a cure, if you share the secret with his wife, so that she can finally live out her life in peace. He'll point you in the direction of the only person he knows of that may be able to make a cure.

Grand Soul Gems

The witch that Hassildor implicates lives in the eastern section of Cyrodiil, in a small hut on the Corbolo River. Seek Melisande out in her hut to learn her terms for helping: five empty Grand Soul Gems.

Now, finding five empty Grand Soul Gems is difficult, no matter what level you are, but it'll be especially taxing at levels 10 and below, when GSG's won't drop as loot. There are empty GSGs in the world, however, so tracking them down will let you proceed with the quest. The first is actually in the immediate vicinity: if you look at your local map, you'll note that there's a secondary door in Melisande's hut, which leads into her basement. The trapdoor is hidden away in her fireplace, so head down to her little workshop and grab her bag full of soul gems. One of them will be an empty GSG.



Melisande's basement is a good place to start your hunt for soul gems.

Other places to look for Grand Soul Gems include Mages Guild guildhalls. Many guildhalls will have a merchant that sells items (as opposed to spells), and you'll be able to search their inventories for Grand Soul Gems. If you're high enough level, they may even occasionally get more GSGs in stock. We found three from the merchant in the Chorrol guild, although we were fairly high level. The Mystic Emporium in the Market District of the Imperial City also sold one when we checked.

Loose GSGs are rare, but not impossible to find. There's one in the Chorrol Guild, in a locked display case; note that taking from this case is stealing, whether you're a Mages Guild member or not, so be sure no one's looking when you bust in there. Another one can be found in the Mages Quarters in the Arcane University. We also managed to pickpocket one off of Felen Relas in the Anvil Guild, although he might not always carry one.

When you have the five Grand Soul Gems required by Melisande, return to her to learn the ingredients that she'll need to create the potion.

Ingredients

Melisande has a good number of items she requires before she'll be able to make your vampirism cure. In no particular order:

- Six cloves of garlic
- Two shoots of Bloodgrass
- Five nightshade leaves
- Blood of an Argonian

- Ashes of a powerful vampire



Look for cloves of garlic in the basements of Skingrad.

Some of these are going to be easier to find than others. Bloodgrass grows all over the place in Oblivion, so just pop into an Oblivion gate and pick a couple of them. Garlic is more difficult; although it's a food item, it's rarely found on tables, and is generally easiest to find on stalks in people's basements. There's a stalk on a tent at the bandit camp outside Vindasel, the Ayleid ruin to the northeast of the Imperial sewer exit you used at the very beginning of the game, as well as a pair in All Things Alchemical in Skingrad. (There's also a loose clove on a table on the ground floor in that shop.) More stalks can be found in the basement of Lazare Milvan's house, across the street from All Things Alchemical. You can also find loose garlic in the Weynon Priory, in a bowl on a shelf near where Jauffre sat when you first met him.

Nightshade can also be somewhat problematic, as it's not quite as commonplace as other alchemical ingredients are. You can find three plants of it behind the Skingrad Mages Guild, and there should be some tucked away in the Arcane University alchemical garden, should you be a member. You can also buy it at most reputable alchemy shops, such as All Things Alchemical in Skingrad or The Main Ingredient in the Market District. You can also find it in the wild between Bravil and Skingrad if you look hard enough.

Argonian Blood



With a little luck, Hindaril won't even see you coming.

Melisande gives you a special blade that's enchanted with a spell that makes your target bleed a bit. All you need to do here is hit an Argonian with it; any Argonian will do. You don't need to kill your target, just hit them once. No need to get too clever here, honestly. Just head to one of your homes or a drop box, get rid of all of your stolen gear, then find an Argonian and slice him or her up. You'll get a bounty and become wanted by the guards, but you can just pay the fine, then bring the knife back to Melisande to turn it in.

Ashes of A Powerful Vampire

Melisande says she needs the ashes of a vampire to complete the potion. Not any old vampire, though: she needs the blood of a special vampire, someone older and more powerful than the run-of-the-mill vamps that hang out in caves and talk about Neil Gaiman a lot. She has one in mind, in fact. Hindaril was an ancient vampire who was so damn strong, they couldn't actually kill him; they just locked him up underground and threw away the key.

Tip: If you find yourself blocked by a locked door in Redwater Slough, head through the submerged passage nearby and search all of the treasure chests in the next room to find a key.

Check your map marker to see where he's hanging out northeast of Leyawiin, then head on down for a duel. Redwater Slough is, predictably enough, full of undead, so bring along some fire magic if you have any. When you find Hindaril, you may be surprised to note that he's not all that tough to fight. He's unarmed, for one thing, and doesn't have a particularly huge stock of health, so sneak up behind him and sneak attack him if possible before finishing him off. If you have any fire-enchanted weapons, those will do the trick nicely.



Um, thanks, Janus...but that's kind of inappropriate at the moment, don't you think?

Making the Potions

With all of the ingredients either in hand or turned in to Melisande, return to her and inquire about the cure. She'll tell you that it'll take her 24 hours to create it, so find some place to lie low for a while and wait it out before returning to her. She'll give you two doses of the cure, enough for you and for Countess Hassildor.

Return to Skingrad and speak to Hal-Liurz, who'll escort you to a previously inaccessible part of the castle, the Chamber of the Lost. All you can do here is hand over the Vampire Cure to Hassildor and watch the drama play out. When it's over, Hassildor will ask you for 24 hours to get his affairs in order, and ask you to speak to Hal-Liurz at the end of that time period. Do so, and you'll net your reward: a good sum of gold. (Despite the lines that Hassildor speaks, you get gold regardless of whether you're a vampire or not. Note also that, as of this writing, you can repeatedly select "Reward" from his dialogue options, and he'll continually give you more and more cash, for as long as you care to keep clicking. Expect this to be patched out as soon as the game's first patch is released, though.) Of course, you've been able to cure yourself of vampirism, which is itself a fairly major reward for the quest.

General Tips

This is just a compendium of general (and sometimes specific) tips that you may find useful. We'll update this section with more goodies as we uncover them!

Magic And Magical Item Tips

Buying New Spells

If you want to achieve better effects with your spells, you'll need to buy more and better spells as you play through the game. Doing so can be accomplished at most of the Mages Guild houses, but each has its own specialization. Here's a list of where you need a specific kind of spell:

Alteration: Cheydinhal Mages Guild

Conjuration: Chorrol

Destruction: Skingrad

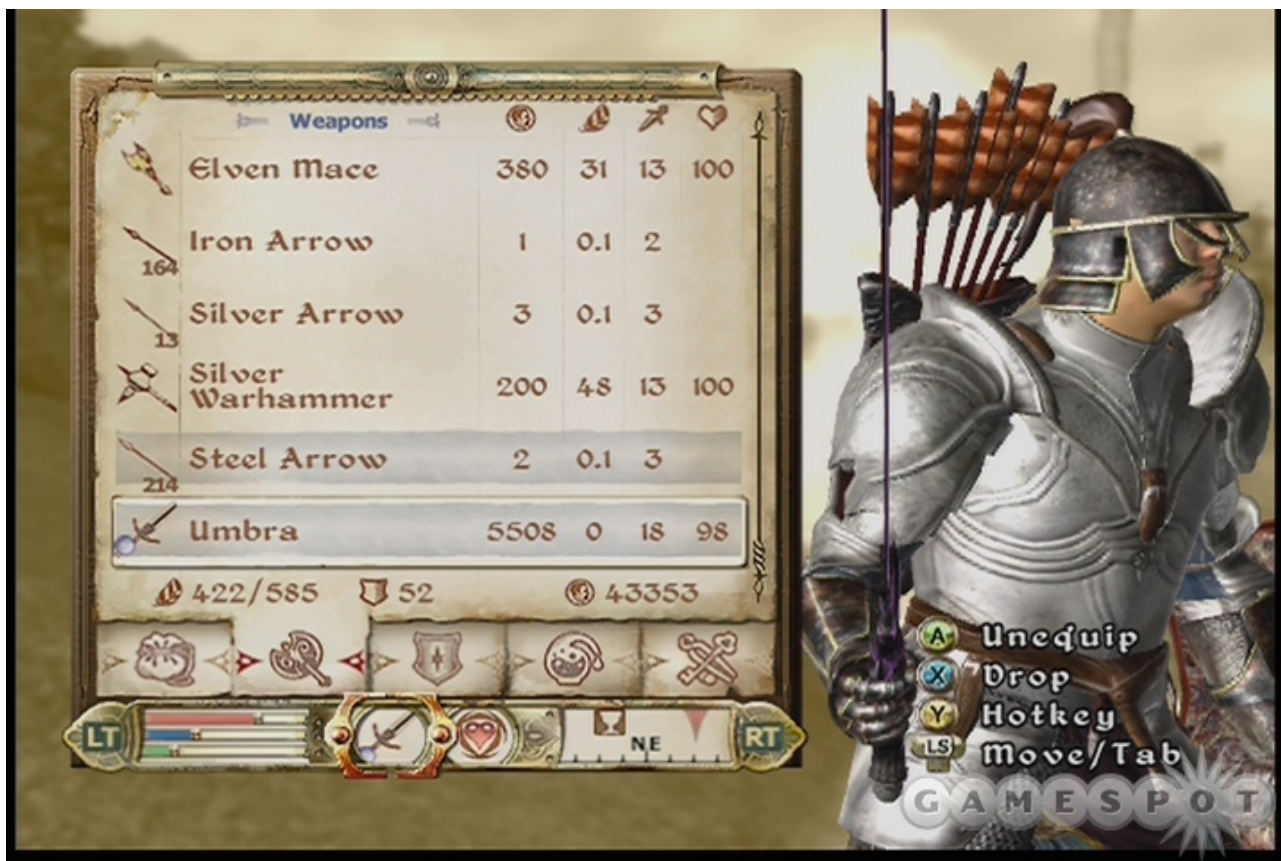
Illusion: Bravil

Mysticism: Leyawiin

Restoration: Anvil

In addition to these choices, the Bruma Mages Guild will have spells from most of the schools on display. Many of the clerics in the Chapels in each of the smaller cities will also have Restoration spells for sale.

Recharging Magical Items



If you can obtain the Umbra sword, then you won't have any need for Soul Trap; it casts it upon your target with each hit.

As you level up, you're going to find more and more magical items. Warriors and archers will find

magical weapons to be especially helpful, as they'll let you deal extra damage, absorb stats and skills from your opponents, or produce any number of harmful magical effects. The catch? Magical weapons come with a certain number of charges, and when those charges run out, your magical weapon will be just another hunk of metal.

In order to recharge your magical weapons (and staves, for you wizards out there), you're going to need two things: the Soul Trap spell, and a Soul Gem large enough to hold the soul of the creature that you're going to kill. You can find Soul Trap at the Leyawiin Mages Guild, and Soul Gems are fairly common pickups in dungeons or in magically-oriented shops throughout the land. There are five varieties in all, ranging in size from Petty to Grand. Each creature that you encounter (you can't capture souls from humanoid characters or Dremora, unless you're practicing some pretty dark Necromancy) also has a certain-sized soul, ranging from Petty (Rats, Mudcrabs) to Grand (Liches, Minotaur Lords).

If you cast Soul Trap on a creature prior to killing it, its soul will automatically be placed in the smallest available Soul Gem in your inventory. If you Soul Trap a Rat and have a Petty Soul Gem in your inventory, then, it'll go into that. If the only Soul Gem you have is a Grand Soul Gem, though, it'll go into that, essentially wasting the extra space in the Soul Gem. (Soul Gems can't be reused after they're used, and a soul can't be removed when it's inserted.)

Tip: If you don't want to have to keep finding and destroying Soul Gems to recharge your magical items, you can use Azura's Star, which you'll likely find as a part of the game's main quest. Azura's Star is a Grand Soul Gem that isn't destroyed when used; you can fill it up with any kind of soul, charge an item, then fill it again. Lather, rinse, repeat.

When you've captured a soul into a Soul Gem, you can "equip" the Soul Gem in your inventory to use it to recharge a magical item. Depending on the size of the soul, you'll get a set number of charges to restore, with larger souls being worth more charges. Of course, the more powerful your weapon, the more charges it'll take to completely restore it, so as you gain more powerful items, you'll have to capture larger souls just to stay even.

Armor and jewelry cannot be recharged, because their magical effects are constant and ongoing. They don't fade over time nor can their effects be reduced.

Random Generation of Magical Items



Saving your game before the room that leads to the Sigil Stone will let you reload until you find one that you like.

Here's something you may not know: the loot that you find in most dungeons is randomly generated when you enter a level. Most dungeons of two or three levels have a "boss" encounter somewhere near the end, with a harder-than-average enemy nearby, as well as a chest that offers up a chance to find significantly better loot than you normally would. Since the items in these chests are randomly made when you enter the level, you can give yourself an opportunity to play through a level multiple times with the game's save/load system and see if you can't find something that appeals to you more than whatever you get the first time through.

As an example of this, take the Sigil Stones at the top of citadels in the Planes of Oblivion. Each citadel has numerous rooms leading up to the top, but the top room that contains the Sigil Stone is always the same configuration, consisting of a set of bone stairs leading up to a fleshy ramp to the Sigil Stones. The Sigil Stones themselves are often of considerable power, offering anyone, even non-magicians, the chance to enchant equipment with some powerful effects. You can add magical damage to a weapon, or add a Strength buff to a piece of armor, and so on. They're powerful items, but the effect you get when you pluck the Sigil Stone is randomized among around 20 different possible types of stone, so you'll sometimes get something that might not be of much use to you.

The solution to this little riddle is save your game just before you head into the citadel's final room. If you make a save just outside the door, you can run into the final room, check the treasure chests (which themselves often have great items) and nab the Sigil Stone. If you don't like what you get, just reload your savegame and try again! It's important that your savegame occur before you enter the room, though, as that's when the loot is generated. (Actually, the Sigil Stone is randomly generated as soon as you click on it, allowing you to save your game just

before you grab it if you want to reload, but since any treasure chests in this room usually contain boss-level loot, you may find it useful to still save before the door, especially as you get above level 20 or so and find most of the useful sigil stone configurations.)

This can be applied to any dungeon, really, but most dungeons and caves have somewhat larger last levels, making it more of a pain to reload your save and play through the content that you skipped. Used judiciously at the top of citadels, though, it can let you get some killer Sigil Stones with which to enchant your equipment.

Commerce Tips

How Do I Sell Stolen Goods?



Ongar will sell you an almost unlimited number of lockpicks.

One thing you'll notice as you play through Oblivion is that most merchants will refuse to buy your stolen goods, which are denoted in your inventory with red hand icons by them. It's not a matter of them refusing to buy the items; they simply don't show up in your sell list at all.

Well, again, the Thieves' Guild is going to be your answer to this problem. If you've got "hot" goods that you wish to "move" at a "fence", then "peep" Ongar in "Bruma". You only have to complete one of Armand's quests to unlock bartering with Ongar, and he'll buy almost anything, stolen or not. If you sell a lot of stolen goods to him, though, he'll pass along word of your good deeds to Armand, which will in turn unlock new missions for you. The more expensive the items you sell, the more advanced quests you'll be able to perform for the Thieves' Guild.

Another benefit to selling stolen items to Ongar is that you'll be able to immediately buy them back from him. You'll lose plenty of money on the transaction, obviously, but selling and re-buying will strip the stolen status from the goods that you do this with. So if you have a nice piece of equipment that you want to use, but are afraid of having it taken from you if you get captured by guards, simply sell it and buy it back. This will eliminate the paper trail of ownership, allowing you to keep it even if you get run into jail.

Getting More Lockpicks

Whether you're playing as a thief, a warrior, or a mage, or something in between, lockpicks are going to be pretty handy to you. While Alteration mages might be able to pop open locks with a simple spell, most other characters are going to need to pick their way through the many locks that stand between you and sweet, sweet loot.

Unfortunately, learning the intricacies of picking locks can lead to a whole lot of broken lockpicks, especially early on in the game, forcing many players to bypass locked doors and chests in dungeons. Since most merchants won't sell lockpicks, you'll need to find an alternate source for these valuable tools.

In the early game, there are two relatively easy ways to obtain lockpicks. One is off the bodies of vanquished foes. If you explore the countryside a bit, you'll find many caves, forts, ruins, and the like. When you stumble across a location that's infested with bandits, then you can kill them to grab the occasional lockpick off their bodies, but the enemy of choice for lockpicks are goblins, which will be much more likely to die with lockpicks on their corpses.

Tip: If you want to do away with the need for lockpicks altogether, you can perform the Daedric quest at the Shrine of Nocturnal when you're level 10 to obtain an unbreakable lockpick. You can find the shrine along the road northeast of Leyawiin.

A much simpler way to get lockpicks is to obtain them from the Thieves' Guild or Shady Sam. The Thieves' Guild can be difficult to find, but there are a couple of ways to join. You can either be caught stealing something, then spend a night in jail, after which you'll be approached with a membership offer, or you can read one of the Wanted: Gray Fox posters scattered around the Imperial City, then speak to a beggar while their Disposition to you is above 70, and they'll tell you how to reach a Thieves' Guild contact.

Regardless, you'll likely wind up meeting Armand Christophe at midnight in the Waterfront district of the Imperial City. He'll assign you a task that must be completed before you can join the Thieves' Guild. (If you need help with this task, bribe a beggar until you reach Disposition 70 or higher and ask them for help - or just wait for our walkthrough for the Thieves' Guild quests.) Although you're not technically a member of the Thieves Guild yet, Armand will agree to sell you lockpicks at five gold apiece, and he appears to have an unlimited number of them. You will, however, have to buy them one at a time, which can be a pain.

When you do complete Armand's task, though, he'll point you to the location of Ongar the World-Weary in Bruma, one of the Thieves' Guild fences. Ongar should have a replenishable supply of

100 lockpicks for your purchasing needs.

Shady Sam is a better choice for characters that wish to obtain lockpicks without joining the Thieves Guild. He can be difficult to find if you don't know where he is, though. To track him down, travel to the Chestnut Handy Stables outside of the Imperial City. From there, walk north outside of the Imperial City's walls. Shady Sam is standing in one of the alcoves formed by the walls abutments just north of the stables. When you find him, he'll offer to sell you up to 30 lockpicks at six gold apiece, as well as offer up samples from his large supply of poisons.

Gold Glitches

As of this writing, there are a few different glitches to take advantage of in Oblivion in order to obtain almost unlimited gold. These are likely to vanish in the PC version of the game after the first patch is issued, and it seems likely that the 360 version of the game will also eventually obtain some form of update. For the meantime, though, you can take advantage of these to obtain a good amount of gold early in the game, when you need it most.

One of the easiest methods to obtain unlimited gold is to approach a merchant while riding on horseback. If you're on horseback while you talk to a merchant, you'll be able to sell them your equipped weapon over and over again; you'll gain the cash, but the weapon will remain in your inventory to sell again. The easiest place to do this is in the camp outside of Kvatch. The female orc merchant there is one of the few merchants in the game that dwells outside of a city's walls, and is thus one of the few merchants you can actually speak to while on horseback. She only has 200 gold to offer you for your weapon, but if you repeatedly sell it to her, that should fill you up as far as you want to go in no time at all.

The second method, which is a bit more complicated and involves an actual crime, takes place in the Talos Plaza District of the Imperial City. Scout around a bit, then check your map to find Dorian's House, just to the south of the central plaza. Head inside and speak to Dorian himself, then bribe him with as much gold as you can. When you can't bribe him any more, kill him, then loot his body. Don't select the Take All option, though; take each item individually, leaving the gold for last. When you try to take the gold off of him, you'll receive it, but the gold will remain on the body, allowing you to take it as many times as you like. Who knew a little murder could be so profitable...

Lastly, if you become a vampire and complete the quest to find a cure for a certain NPC, you can repeatedly highlight the "Reward" option in that NPC's dialogue menu and click it to obtain the reward he offers you as many times as you like. The amount of gold you get per click depends on your level, but it's worth noting that this quest is difficult to complete until you have access to Grand Soul Gems.

Item Storage

As you progress through Oblivion, you're probably going to pick up an awful lot of stuff that you want to keep, but don't necessarily want to carry around with you all the time. These items can be

anything from alchemy ingredients that you're saving, a quest item that you know you'll need later on, or heavy weapons that you don't need at the moment. You'll need a safe place to store this stuff...but where?

Unlike in Morrowind, items you drop on the ground will usually remain there for quite a while, but they won't stay there permanently. (Although the time it takes them to disappear, even when dropped in heavily-trafficked areas like the Market District, may be as good as forever for most cases.) So if you can find an out-of-the-way spot and need to dump some items for short-term storage, feel free to dump away.



Feel free to dump your stuff on the street if you like - it takes a while for it to disappear.

Treasure chests and crates are a tempting source of storage, but you have to be careful; if you take the items inside a chest, they'll respawn within a few days or so, which may overwrite whatever you deposited into the container.

Merchants are another good source of temporary storage, albeit a conceivably expensive one. If you have a bunch of cheap items that you need to have held for you for a while, just dump them at a merchant and buy them back when they're needed. You'll lose money on both the sale and the buy-back, though, making this an unattractive choice for anything besides very cheap items.

In the end, your best bet for storage will be to buy your own house. You can buy a house in most of the cities on the map by speaking to the Count or Countess when their disposition is high towards you, but the cheapest is in the Imperial City's Waterfront district. If you speak to the woman in the Office of Imperial Commerce in the Market District, she'll offer to sell you the house for 2,000 gold. It isn't much to look at, but if you buy a Storage Area from the Three Brothers

Trade Goods store, you'll get three chests which can hold an unlimited amount of items.

Combat Tips

Enemy Weaknesses

Keep in mind that some enemies are resistant to certain types of damage or weapons. Here are some of the most common enemies and their special weaknesses:

Ghosts, Will-O-The-Wisps: Cannot be harmed by normal weapons; use silver or magical weapons.

Zombies, Liches: Weak to fire.

Dremora (Humanoid Daedra): Weak to shock.

Skeletons: Blunt weapons.

Trolls: Weak to fire.

Umbra

One of the most powerful weapons in the game is in the hands of Umbra, a soldier located in an Ayleid ruin to the southwest of the Imperial City. If you explore the countryside, you should be able to find Vindasel on the shore directly to the southwest of the Waterfront district, near where the road forks. Heading into this single-level dungeon will let you meet up with Umbra face to face.

Umbra is part of the Clavicus Vile Daedric quest that will become available when you hit level 20, but most of the time you'll probably want to kill her and keep her sword for yourself, which you can (attempt to) do at any level. The Umbra sword is arguably the most powerful weapon in the game in terms of pure attack power. It doesn't have any magical damage effects to add to its damage, but it does have a very useful Soul Trap enchantment which will automatically cast Soul Trap on anything you hit, making it easy to capture souls, especially if you have Azura's Star along for the ride.



Umbra is a fierce threat, but she offers great rewards.

The catch? Umbra (the sword and the warrior have the same name) can be monstrously tough to defeat. She's decked out with the sword itself, which is obviously going to be doing a lot of damage to you, as well as a full set of ebony armor. So, how do you beat her?

Killing Umbra

Well, there are a variety of tricks to use. Some players have had success beating her as low as at level one, by attacking her, then quickly escaping the ruins (and we mean *quickly*; she's one of the fastest characters in the game) and leading her back to the Talos Plaza District of the Imperial City. The guards there will usually interpret her as a threat and kill her (but not before she finished quite a few of them off). This might land you in jail, however, leaving you with nothing to show for your efforts.

If you're a warrior, then you'll probably need to wait until you're around level nine or so to go into straight combat with her. Bring along a good shield and a one-handed weapon enchanted with a +15 magical damage Sigil Stone (or better), along with as many health potions as you can find. Bring along any powerful scrolls you have, especially anything that can disintegrate armor or weapons; this is going to be a long fight, so spells like these will actually be useful for once. When you've opened up with your most powerful attack, settle in for a slugfest. Block her attacks so that she recoils, hit her a couple of times, then repeat as often as it takes for her to go down, using health potions as needed to stay alive.

Tip: Don't forget that the game has a difficulty slider. If you're having an obscenely difficult fight with Umbra, but really want her loot, consider shifting the difficulty slider all the way to the left.



Jumping atop this pillar here will let you fire at Umbra without her touching you.

Mages and archers will have a harder time taking Umbra down, since she's so damn fast and hits so damn hard. Your best bet here is to simply become inaccessible to her, by jumping up onto the broken pillar before attacking her. Doing so is tricky, but can be accomplished if you grab the wicker basket near the table and place it atop it, then jump from the ground and attempt to quickly jump off the basket onto the pillar. If you attack Umbra from there, she won't be able to reach you, allowing you to do your damage over time.

If you're looking for a bit of an edge, you can try to purchase the Apotheosis staff from Rindir's Staves, which does 99 magical damage in one shot. It should only take one or two blasts from the staff to off Umbra, but of course buying the Apotheosis will be prohibitively expensive for most players until you're well into the game. A less expensive option is the Greater Staff of Ruin, which will disintegrate Umbra's sword completely with a couple of applications, which should hopefully prevent her from dealing quite as much damage as she normally would, but you'll have to repair it afterwards, which can cost a pretty penny if you're not skilled in the Armorer ability.

Miscellaneous Tips

Vampirism: Stamp It Out

Those of you who played Morrowind may have had the unfortunate experience of becoming a vampire, and the same situation is available in Oblivion. Contracting vampirism can either be a blessing or a curse, according to your play style.

If you're interested in playing around with vampirism, then the first thing you'll need to do is to contract porphyric hemophilia, which can be done by fighting with any current vampire. You'll encounter a few vampires in the game's main storyline, and there are also other vampire lairs out in the wilderness. Like goblins and bandits, they'll have taken up residence in caves, Ayleid ruins, and the like, but they appear much less frequently than other types of enemies.

If you fight a vampire long enough, you'll get the porphyric hemophilia disease, which will temporarily weaken you. If you don't want to become a vampire, then simply use a Cure Disease spell or potion on yourself as soon as possible. If you want to become a creature of the night, though, you can simply let the disease run its course, wait a few days, then go to sleep. When you wake up, you'll be a vampire.

Becoming a vampire will have a few benefits, such as bonuses to some of your attributes and skills. You'll also be able to feed on sleeping characters, draining their blood to stay somewhat sane. This is obviously considered to be a crime, though, so be sure no one's watching.

If you feed, then you'll remain incognito as a vampire, but if you go a little while without feeding, then you'll gain more special abilities, as well as further bonuses to your attributes and skills. Unfortunately, the longer you go without feeding, the more vampiric you'll look, to the point that no one will want to speak to you, making it difficult to gain quests or engage merchants in bartering.

We'll have a full chapter on Vampirism in the next section of this guide, but for now, know that if you ever wish to embark on the quest to cure Vampirism, you should talk to one of the priests at a chapel. They'll refer you to Raminus Polus at the Arcane University, or you may be able to cut to the chase and speak directly to Count Hassildor of Skingrad. We'll detail the specifics of the quest in the next part of the guide, but hopefully this pointer will get you where you need to go if you seek a cure for your affliction.

Main Quest Walkthrough

Imperial Prison



Those Rats just knocked down a wall! They're super-Rats! Get the hell out of there!

You begin your journey through the land of Oblivion as a prisoner. Although your origins are humble, you'll be hobnobbing with Emperors soon enough...just let the initial conversations take their course, and be ready for a fight when it comes your way.

After the Emperor arrives with his guards, follow them down the steps until they get ambushed by a group of Mythic Dawn assassins. There isn't much you can do to help the Blades here, but feel free to get punchy with your fists if you like. Captain Renault goes down no matter what you do, leaving behind a shortsword on her body and Renault's Akaviri Katana. Pick this latter weapon up and equip it; it'll be a fine weapon for the bulk of the upcoming dungeon. (If you're more skillful at Blunt weapons, be sure to check the attributes of the other weapons that you find as you proceed and equip one of them.)

When the Emperor and the Blades move on, you'll get your first taste of combat, as some Rats burrow out of a wall and attack you. From here on, you're going to have a long trip to reach the end of this first dungeon, with plenty of tutorials to guide you. We're not going to walk you through every single thing that occurs, but we will point out interesting events that will occur.

In the first rat-infested room, you'll find a number of chests, as well as a skeletal body with a bow, a shield, and some leather armor. Equip the armor and grab anything else of interest to you. There'll still be rats in the area, so a shield will help you block their attacks and counter with your own. If you're looking to be a marksman, then of course the bow will be right up your alley; be sure to equip the arrows as well, though!

Grab everything you possibly can, and try your hand at the lockpicking game to improve your Security skill. The Goblin Shaman by the door has a number of items, including the key that will

let you into the Imperial Substructure. He also likely drops a magical staff, which anyone can use. You'll likely drain the charges on it pretty quickly if you make heavy use of it, though, so you may be better off just holding onto it and selling it later on.

Imperial Substructure

You'll be taught how to hotbind spells and cast them in this section. Even warriors need spells on occasion, so bind both your Flare and Heal Minor Wounds spells for easy access and make use of them when necessary. Pure melee characters won't have much Magicka to rely on, but they'll still be able to make use of Heal Minor Wounds.

Continue on the path until you come to the scattered debris underneath the sewer grate. The skeleton here possesses an Iron Warhammer, which'll be handy if you're looking for a large blunt weapon. There's also an iron helmet in the debris, along with a bunch of vegetables. Feel free to eat all of it if you're looking to increase your Alchemy score. You can also attempt to harvest the mushrooms near the exit from this area.

Natural Caverns

The Sneak tutorial is first up here. Activate sneak mode and wait for the Goblin in front of you to reach the fireplace. He'll have his back turned, so if you want some easy skill points, just stay in sneak mode and walk around behind his back. These probably get erased at the end of the dungeon, though, so don't spend too long feeling good about yourself.



He'll never see it coming....

Since the goblin can't hear you, though, feel free to stay in sneak mode and get behind it before whacking it with your weapon or bow. Sneak mode attacks get damage multipliers. Be sure to grab the Mortar and Pestle near the goblin if you intend to work on your Alchemy skill. Feel free to select it in your inventory and use it to try and make some rudimentary potions or poisons. Not everything you make will be all that great, but you'll eventually be capable of creating some powerful potions if you hone your skills.

There are a few traps in this area, including a log trap that you can use to kill a couple of goblins at the bottom of a ramp. After that, you'll come out to a larger cavern with multiple Goblins in it, including a Goblin Shaman. Kill everything in sight, and poke around for chests. The Shaman's staff is a particularly noteworthy prize, as it's worth almost twenty times its weight.

Imperial Subterrane

You'll meet the Emperor again here, and be tasked with choosing a birthsign. Don't sweat over this choice overmuch at the moment; you'll be able to change your mind again in the future if you don't like what you selected.



D'oh!.

The Sanctum

Your primary goal here is to just stick with the Emperor. There's nothing you can actually do to protect him here; although you're backed up into a corner with him, someone will walk out of the wall behind him and stab him in the back before you can even move. Fun! Before he gets axed, though, Septim will hand you the Amulet of Kings and give you your first major storyline quest:

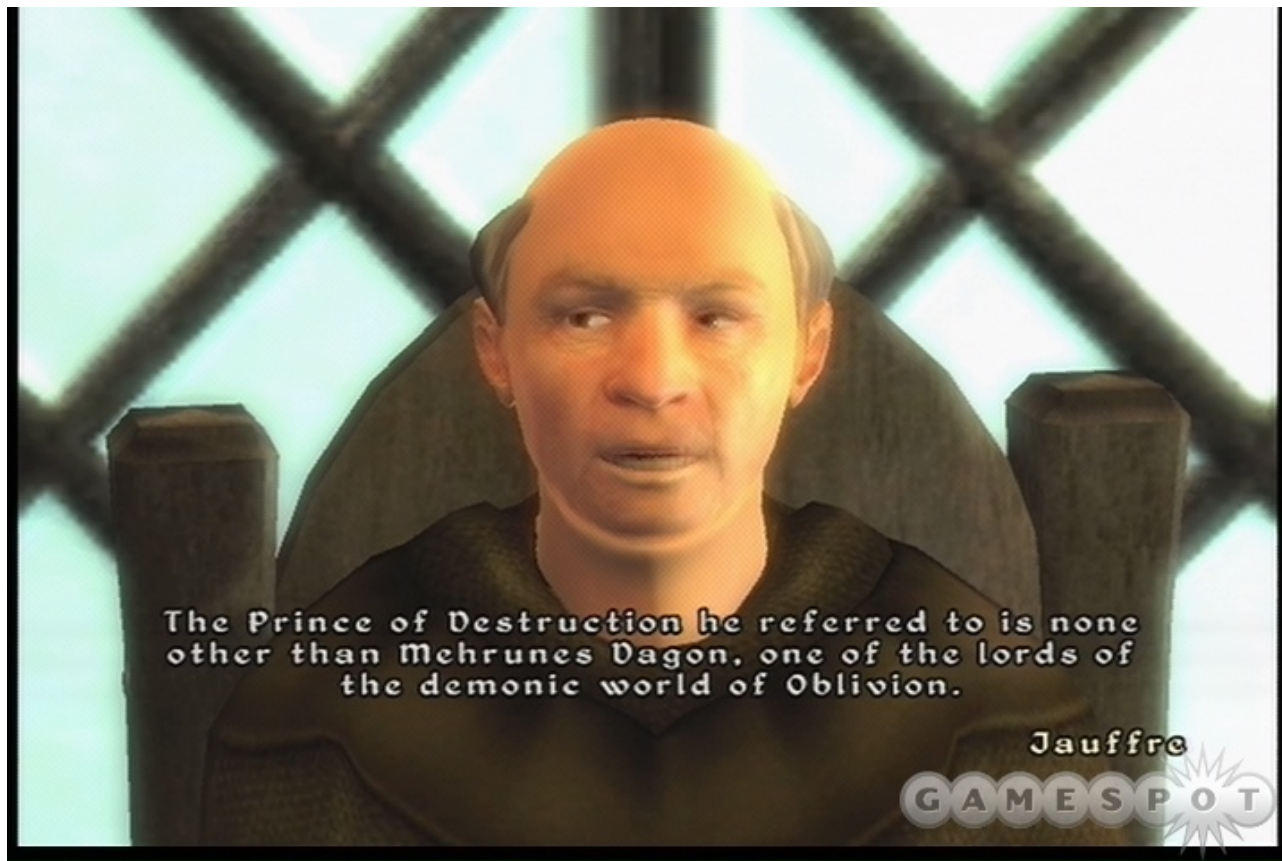
Deliver the Amulet.

After grabbing the Amulet of Kings, talk to Baurus to get more details on the quest. He'll unfortunately take the Akaviri Katana from you, but hopefully you have another weapon on you regardless.

The Sewers

Kill your way through the sewers until you reach the sewer gate. But it is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you save your game *before* you hit the gate leading outside. (It's in a cylindrical pipe with a little bit of light at the end of it.) Since you get the chance to re-choose your race, class, and birthsign here, you can load a save at this point, make an entirely new character each time, and be able to skip all the tutorial stuff without worry. If you *like* playing through the tutorials, then by all means feel free to start over from the beginning, but if you intend to play through the game for a little while before deciding your permanent character archetype, then a savegame here will be all you need to do so.

Quest: Deliver the Amulet



Prince of Destruction, huh? Doesn't sound like he's all that.

Well, here you are, alone in the big bad world. You're now free to go anywhere, do anything, see anything...intimidating, isn't it? There's plenty of stuff to do, some large cities to explore, and a quest to be undertaken.

If you're interested in heading directly along the questline, then by all means, head straight to Weynon Priory to find Jauffre. You can either walk there and work on your skills in the meantime (by casting low-level spells, jumping around to buff your Acrobatics, fighting anything you see to start working on combat skills, or just exploring to see what pops up), or you can just warp directly there with direct movement, which is accomplished by opening your world map, finding the Priory (which is near Chorrol on your map, to the west of the Imperial City), and selecting "Travel".

If you want to travel around a bit, then you may want to check out the Imperial City Market District. There are plenty of shops to visit, and if you have a little Security skill, you should be able to lockpick your way into a lot of storerooms and private quarters above and below the shops to see what kind of loot you need. You can sell all of the stuff that you lugged out of the sewers, as well, or attempt to get a particular merchant to like you with the Persuade and Speechcraft options. If you wait until two or three in the morning, then you may be able to lockpick the shops themselves and steal the loot they have on display.

Weynon Priory

When you reach the Priory, head into the Weynon House (the large building with the tunnel running through it) and find Jauffre. Depending on the time of day, he may move around the house, but most of the time, he'll be upstairs behind his desk.

After talking to Jauffre and delivering the Amulet into his caretaking, Jauffre will task you with finding Martin, the Emperor's illegitimate son. Since Septim's three legitimate sons were all killed at the same time as the Emperor, Martin is the heir to the throne, even if he himself is unaware of his origins. Jauffre will task you with traveling to the Chapel of Akatosh in the city of Kvatch and tracking down Martin, then bringing him back to Jauffre in the Weynon Priory.

Before you leave, ask Jauffre and the other brothers in the chapel for Assistance in their dialogue. They'll all have items to give you, with Maborel offering up his horse, of all things! You can use it to make your way to Kvatch, if you wish; or you can just use quick transit to warp directly to the camp outside the city.

Quest: Find the Heir

Kvatch



The large spike here was where they opened a Great Gate. The one in front of you is actually fairly small in comparison.

However you get there, you should approach Kvatch via the road to the south. You'll pass through Bellefor's Folly, a small camp set up on the road leading into town. If you talk to the civilians here, you'll learn of frightful events: apparently Daedra from Oblivion have begun their assault on Tamriel. Portals opened around the city in the night, and it fell hours later. Some few civilians managed to escape the sacked city, and have set up a base of operations in the camp. One of the guardsmen, Savlian Matius, is convinced that he can hold the road and prevent the Daedra from reaching the lowlands, but his companions are...pessimistic, to say the least.

Subquest: Breaking the Siege of Kvatch

Presumably Martin was the target for the Daedric assault, but if you speak to Savlian at the top of the hill, he'll tell you that the last he saw of Martin was when the priest was leading a group into the Chapel inside the city. Unfortunately, Savlian and his men can't counterattack into the city due to the Oblivion gate that has been constructed directly in front of it. No matter how much you try to tell him that you can just walk around the gate and walk up to the city and head inside, he won't listen! Stubborn fool...

It's time to take your first step...into Oblivion. Your adventure here can take a while, so if you need to, now would be a good time to head back to a shop and stock up on Repair Hammers or any other critical items.

Plane of Oblivion



Ilend is quite unlikely to survive your adventures in Oblivion, unfortunately.

After defeating the few Scamps near the portal here, you'll come across Ilend Vonius, one of the soldiers dispatched to shut down the Oblivion gate. You can choose to send him back immediately if you wish, or keep him along for the ride; he seems to automatically heal himself when he's struck, so he'll be a handy ally should you choose to keep him around. He'll tell you about another member of his party that was dragged off to the nearby tower; it's up to you to rescue him!

Since you don't really have anything more specific to do here, take Ilend up on his task. The direct way to the tower, across the bridge, has been barricaded, so head to the west and follow the path there. Note that there is one trap that Ilend will usually fall victim to. When you hit the long, tilted bridge, just past the first Fleshy Pod, tell him to "Wait Here", then move ahead until you trigger the landslide. When all of the rocks have fallen, get Ilend to follow you again and move on.

As you make your way towards the base of the tower, watch out for landmines; small, circular objects that stick up out of the ground. When you trigger one of them, it'll explode, and probably kill Ilend, as we found to our dismay. You can trigger them from afar by hitting them with a Flare spell, or perhaps an arrow.

Tip: Note that there are some unique alchemy ingredients in Oblivion, such as bloodgrass, harrada, and spiddal sticks. Collect anything you see, as these aren't available in Tamriel, except for rare plants of bloodgrass outside Oblivion Gates.

The main tower is in the center of the plane, but if you're running low on good equipment, you can head south and poke around the southern tower there, the Blood Well. Inside, you can ride the corpse smasher up to the upper levels, then flip the switch at the top of the tower to unlock the main gate that was closed earlier. Doing so will let you access the corpses of the remaining

Kvatch soldiers and loot their equipment, and will also let you easily reach the Oblivion gate again, should you need to return to Tamriel for supplies or to rest up to gain a level. There's also a Sump of Misery on the northern end of the island, but there's nothing critical inside.



This guy seriously needs a good astringent.

When you're ready to move on, enter the Blood Feast area in the central of the three connected towers. Be sure you're at full health, though, as there are a pair of Scampers within, as well as a Daedra Churl. The Churl will attack with damaging lightning spells, then rush in with his heavy mace, so be ready for both types of attack.

Although there are two doors here, they both lead to the same place, so head up into the Corridors of Dark Salvation. Both of the Citadel Hall Doors here are locked, so take the door back to the Plane of Oblivion, which leads to Reaper's Sprawl.

Head to the top of the Reaper's Sprawl to find Menien Goneld, who knows a bit about how this place works. Apparently the Dremora nearby has the Sigil Keep Key, so kill him and nab it off his body. Return to the Corridors of Dark Salvation. The locked door on the south end of the room, near the spike trap, leads to some gold, but the door on the north is the one that leads further up the tower.

If you follow this path away, you'll come to a door leading back to the Blood Feast. You can head into it, or follow the path to its end to find a door leading on to the third tower (which has nothing in it). Head into the Blood Feast's upper levels, use the runed portal to warp higher, and keep going until you reach the Sigillum Sanguis. At the top of this chamber is the Sigil Stone; activating it will shut down the Oblivion gate and instantly warp you back to Kvatch.



Kill them all! For Kvatch!

Heading Into Kvatch

With the Oblivion gate out of the way, Savlian Matius will want to immediately head into Kvatch and rescue any citizens left alive inside the city. You can head right in, if you'd like, but you'd be wise to wait for a little while if you're not fully healed. The fight inside the city can be difficult, as there are plenty of Clannfear Runts that will be attacking you while Scamps and a Dremora Churl will be fighting from a distance, but Savlian is a powerful fighter and should be capable of handling anything you can't. You may want to focus on the Clannfears while he takes on the Dremora.

When you reach the church, you'll find Brother Martin inside. If you let Savlian talk to the female soldier inside, he'll tell her to round up the civilians and head down to the camp at the base of the cliff. If you let her complete her orders, Brother Martin will be relocated to the camp, and you'll have to walk down to find him. Alternately, you can just talk to him before he leaves and get him to come along with you.

Quest: Weynon Priory

Brother Martin does accompany you if you choose to instantly travel back to the Priory, so that would be a good first place to go. When you warp in or otherwise approach, you'll learn of terrible deeds: you've arrived just in time to interrupt a Mythic Dawn attack on the Priory. These cultists seem to know an awful lot about the workings of the Empire and of the Blades. After killing the cultists, you'll be asked to head into the chapel to rescue Jauffre.

Tip: If you want to take the opportunity to loot the Priory, tell Martin to wait outside and enter the building before rescuing Jauffre. There's little of value, but Alchemists can find a retort, alembic, and calcinator on Jauffre's shelves.

Head into the chapel to find Jauffre. After killing the cultists, he'll ask you to head back into the chapel with him to find the Amulet of Kings. Unsurprisingly, it's gone. With that information in hand, he'll ask you to take Martin to the Cloud Ruler Temple, near Bruma, an ancient and secretive Blades fortress.

Both Jauffre and Martin will head to the stables at this point and hop on horseback. If you wish to ride with them to the Cloud Ruler Temple, feel free to do so. They'll both dismount and attack anything that attempts to attack you, but neither of them will accompany you into dungeons, so you won't be able to zerg your way through any longish quests while they're along. You can also, of course, just instantly warp to the Temple, should you wish to do so.

However you do it, get Martin to Cloud Ruler Temple. Speak to him and Jauffre after the welcoming ceremony. Jauffre will welcome you into the Blades, and tell you to find Baurus in the Imperial City to see if he has any leads on the assassins. You need to retrieve the Amulet of Kings so that Martin can restore the Dragonfires if you want to have any chance of stopping the Daedric incursions into Tamriel!



You'll have a rude awakening when you reach the Priory again.

Feel free to wander around the castle and loot everything you see; nothing is considered stealing here. There's plenty of armor and weapons in the west wing, and there's an armory in the basement of the east wing. The east wing also has a bit of a library; check the Modern Heretics

book for some map waypoints of Daedric shrines.

Quest: The Path of Dawn

When you're ready to track down Baurus, head to the Elven Gardens district and find Luther Broad's boarding house, near the center of the zone. Baurus is sitting at the bar, with a big smile on his face. Sit down next to him, and he'll tell you that he's being followed...and he wants you to follow the follower! Time to make a box.



Take out the Mythic Dawn agent to plan your next move.

Well, the pursuit won't last too long, as Baurus just heads to the basement. If you follow the follower, he'll eventually change into his Mythic Dawn raiment and attack. Kill him and grab the book on his body, and show it to Baurus. He'll tell you to visit the scholar Tar-Meena at the Arcane University and show the book to her.

If you do so, Tar-Meena will give you Mythic Dawn Commentaries, Volume 2, to go along with the Volume 1 that you already possess. According to her, you'll need all four volumes to track down the secret Dagon shrine of the Mythic Dawn; she'll point you to the First Edition shop in the Imperial Market District for a lead on locating them.

When you visit the First Edition, Phintias will tell you that he's holding a copy of Volume Three for a customer, who's actually late to pick it up... If you're willing to Persuade and bribe Phintias up to a high-level relationship, above 80 or so, he'll offer to sell you the book for 100 gold. Otherwise, you can wait for Gwinas to appear and find out what he knows about the Mythic Dawn. Phintias doesn't know anything about Volume Four, however.



More Oblivion Gates are opening in the wilderness at this point. Feel free to explore them if you wish.

The way to play this is to talk to Phintias, then wait for one hour for Gwinas to appear. Wait for him to buy the book and start to walk away before talking to him. You may want to try Persuading him a bit before launching into your conversation on the book. Ask him about the Mythic Dawn, then tell him he's in way over his head. If you tell him that the Mythic Dawn were the ones that assassinated the Emperor, he'll be so flustered that he'll give you the book for free and pass along a note detailing the location of a meet he had set up to purchase Volume Four, as well.

Read the three volumes in your possession, if you wish; when you want to pick up the fourth volume, head to the Elven Gardens and head back to Luther Broad's boarding house. Baurus should be outside and waiting for you; after speaking to him, he'll offer to accompany you to the sewer entrance.

The Elven Gardens Sewers



Do your best to gang up on the same target with Baurus here.

You're going to have to walk for quite a while before you reach the meeting point, but at least Baurus knows the way. Stick close to him to ensure that he doesn't fall behind. When you reach the doorway leading to the Sunken Sewers, Baurus will tell you that there's both a door leading to the meeting place, as well as a set of steps leading up to a vantage spot overlooking the meeting spot. If you want to try out both options, save your game before selecting one.

Regardless of your choice, actually, you're probably going to have to get into a fight. If you choose to sit in on the meeting, Raven will talk to you, but Baurus will be detected by a couple of his cronies; if you choose to observe, then it'll be the other way around. If you want both yourself and Baurus to survive the fight, you should probably choose to observe. If you're good at sneaking, you can land a powerful blow on Raven from behind, perhaps with a poisoned arrow or something similar. Otherwise, you can just drop down when he comes out the door and have you and Baurus gang up on him while the two other Mythic Dawn cultists are still rushing to the fight. Raven is a powerful fighter and can take a bunch of damage, so it'll be best to take him down quickly if at all possible. If you're lucky, you can sometimes kill him before he can change into his Daedric armor.

(Note that stealthy thieves have another option here. If you tell Baurus that you're going to watch his back, you can then follow him through the bottom door and enter sneak mode while standing behind where Raven comes to speak to him. A little pickpocketing should net you the fourth Mythic Dawn Commentary. Doing so will let Baurus run away; you should obviously make haste to do the same.)

Regardless, you're going to have to kill Raven and his two guards if you want to move on. Technically, it might not be necessary to kill all of them - you may be able to kill Raven, grab his

book, and then run away - but killing the three of them isn't impossible. Baurus has a limited ability to heal himself, but he will die if he takes too much damage. If possible, try to gang up with Baurus and hit the same target he's hitting to take down your foes more quickly than you would be able to separately, preferably starting with Raven, as he's the toughest of the trio.

If you poke around the rest of the sewers, you'll find the hidden Mythic Dawn base, where there's a small amount of stuff to steal. Don't worry about the chest here too much; for a Very Hard lock, there isn't much inside of it.

With the Sunken Sewers key that you obtained from the Mythic Dawn cultists, you can open the gate to the Talos District Sewers. There are lots of goblins here, so if they overwhelm you, you can just backtrack through the path you and Baurus took to reach the sewers to re-emerge in the Elven Gardens. If you do go through the Talos sewers, though, keep an eye on the red mark on your compass and you'll eventually find a path leading up to the surface again.

Back To Tar-Meena

Return to Tar-Meena with the fourth book. She doesn't have much to say immediately; she simply recommends that you read the books carefully and see what you can find out about the Mythic Dawn cult. She also lets you know that if you return in a day's time, she'll have a hint for you. Feel free to try and decipher the code that is embedded into the book, if you wish; otherwise, just wander around and adventure for a day, or just wait for 24 hours or so, then speak to Tar-Meena again.

When you do, she says that she thinks that the first words in each paragraph link together to form a hidden meaning. If you examine the books' first words of each paragraph, you'll receive the following messages.

- Greetings reader, enter every night enter my palace endlessly roaring offering red-drink
- Whosoever answers your whisper hides enraptured recorded enslaved
- The oath-breakers woe every reader that once understood chim he endeth starlight
- May I deathlessly deny all your suns under nothing

Well, that's pretty much nonsense, but if you take the first letter of each paragraph and make a message out of it, you'll receive the sentence "Green emperor way where tower touches middle sun". That might not mean much to you if you haven't been exploring, but Tar-Meena will clue you in: you should go to the Green Emperor Way at noon and see what happens.



This tomb will clue you in to the location of the Lake Arrius Caverns.

Imperial Palace

Head to the cemetery here and check your compass for a tomb that'll be marked in green. (If you don't have a marker, find the Tomb of Prince Camarril, just to the south of the western entrance to the district.) If you wait around until it's noon, the markings on the tomb will light up, and you'll be able to click them to reveal the location of the hidden rebel base - er, the hidden Mythic Dawn shrine - on your overland map. It's up near Cheydinhal, so head to the West Gate of that city and walk outside to pick up your horse.

If you wish to add the Shrine of Azura to your list of teleport locations, it can be found in the hills to the north of the Lake Arrius Caverns, where the Mythic Dawn shrine is located. It's tough to find if you don't have the map marker, but if you poke around to the north of the "N" in the word "County" on your map, you may be able to locate it.

Quest: Dagon Shrine

After entering the shrine, you'll be presumed to be an initiate of the Mythic Dawn - after all, who else would be likely to wander into this remote cave?

The doorkeeper will let you in to speak to Harrow, one of the mucky-mucks in the cult. Now, at this point, you have a couple of options: you can hand over all of your possessions to Harrow, who'll give you back a Mythic Dawn Robe to wear, or you can start chopping heads and work your way into the cave to retrieve the Amulet of Kings the old-fashioned way.

Violent Way



Get everyone's attention from here, then drop down and grab the book before making a break for it.

So you want to kill a whole mess of cultists? Well, have we got an opportunity for you. The goal at this point is to just start chopping: kill the doorkeeper, Harrow, then walk into the caves behind them and start dealing with all of the cultists in the small chambers beyond. Note that the Acolytes don't change into full armor when you attack them, but also that they'll run away when they're near death. Annoying, that. Feel free to loot the Mythic Dawn's storehouse if you can pick the Hard lock; there isn't anything tremendously exciting.

When you exit into the Dagon Shrine, no one will initially be on your case, so feel free to sneak around a bit. Your goal is to disrupt the sacrifice meeting here, steal the Mysterium Xarxes (since Mankar disappears into Oblivion when he spots you), and make it out alive. Then you must defeat the dread Xenium Kinneget and replace the Scepter Rune of Obnoxium! Well, no, we're kidding about that last part.

If you sneak around to the southern overhang that looks over the cultists spread out below, you can get their attention with a Flare spell or something similar, wait for the bulk of them to run up the stairs to the north and circle around to get you, then drop down to the floor, free the prisoner on the altar (optional, but the Right Thing to do), grab the book off the podium, and head out the north exit to the Shrine Living Quarters. Obviously, things are going to start moving pretty fast, so now would be a good time to take off all your heavy armor and take any potions or cast any spells that add to your speed or fortify your health.

When you grab the Xarxes, all of the cultists that you distracted earlier on will be back on your case, and probably coming down the steps. If you don't want to run directly past them, try hiding behind the shrine here and waiting for the bulk of them to approach. They'll zap you with lightning, obviously, but if you wait for them to get close you'll have an easier time getting up the stairs and heading to the Living Quarters exit, which was locked before, but will be open to you now. When you pass through to the Living Quarters, re-equip all of your armor and weapons and turn around, facing the door. Usually, no more than two of your pursuers will follow you through the door; if they're Acolytes, you stand a good chance of killing them or forcing them to run, which might give you a breather you can exploit and let you take your time when traversing the Living Quarters and making your way to the exit.

Undercover Option

If you decide to go undercover, there's something you can do to prevent Harrow from taking all your loot: drop it. In the exterior area before the doorkeeper, just drop everything you own on the ground, including your armor, weapons, potions, etc. Most of the stuff should be easily pick-up-able later on, but especially small items, like rings, should be dropped somewhere separate from the rest of your loot, preferably in a well-lit area of the room, since they'll be tough to find later on. With all of your stuff on the ground, you can talk to Harrow, give him a whole bunch of nothing, then walk back to your loot and pick it all up.

The only thing that Harrow will keep in this instance is...drumroll...*all* of your gold. You'll be able to kill him later to get it back, but this can be difficult, especially if you're a stealth character, so if you're worried about your roll getting taken permanently, invest it beforehand in something, like expensive equipment or training.

They'll Never See You Coming...



'Do you MIND? I'm trying to speechify here!'

If you go undercover, then feel free to loot the area through which you initially walk, then follow Harrow into the Shrine. After Mankar disappears, you'll be approached by his daughter Ruma and told to offer the red-drink to Dagon, by killing the sacrificial victim that lies on the altar. Good or evil, tell her you'll do it and grab the silver dagger on the podium.

This is where the decision trees start blossoming. You can choose to kill the victim, if you wish, which will cause the cultists around the shrine to disperse and make the job of stealing the Xarxes much easier, but that's kind of mean. What did he ever do to you? It's a perfectly valid choice if you don't mind role-playing an evil character, though; the act doesn't appear to add to your Infamy or anything like that.

Otherwise, you can attempt to free the prisoner and grab the Xarxes before making your escape, at which point things start playing out similarly to the course described above in the violent option. If you choose to do this, the same rules apply: try to get on top of the rocky overlook here, attack the cultists to get them to follow you, drop down and grab the Xarxes, then make a break for it through the Living Quarters. If you have any magical weapons capable of dealing extra damage, it might be worth your while to try and quickly kill Harrow to grab your gold off of his body before making your escape.

Living Quarters Escape

If you don't manage to shake your escape, then it'll be one heck of a run through the Living Quarters to get free, as there are plenty more cultists and acolytes waiting to disrupt your progress. If you do turn around and kill your pursuers, though, then you may be able to actually

wait an hour or so if you kill the first guard that you run across in the Living Quarters. Doing so will be a big help to your health, and will let you repair your armor as well; you may even be able to return to the Shrine and kill Ruma Camoran, Markan's daughter. There's no special point to doing so, but she does drop a nice Staff of Frost that sells for a bunch of cash.



It's going to be tough to get out of the Caverns with all this pursuit.

Regardless, start making your way through the Living Quarters. (We're going to assume that you're able to take your time and fight your way through, but if you're unable to shake your pursuit, just get the hell out of there and try to stay alive while running.) There will likely be a bunch of Acolytes nearby, who aren't difficult to kill, but have an annoying tendency to run away when you'd most like them to stay and die. If you want to try and prevent this, note that there's a door near the entrance from the Shrine; if you lure the Acolytes through, then close the door, you may be able to wedge them into the first small room and prevent them from escaping.

Check around the first little storeroom to try and find any magical items that you might like; one of the crates on the floor will often have a magical ring or necklace in it. The path here branches off in two directions, one to the southwest (towards another little storeroom with more chests and crates in it), and one to the northwest, which leads towards the exit. You should be able to fight most of the way through the area without running into more than two guards at a time, but the kitchen area will likely have a few Acolytes in it. If you get into a scrap, try to hit the Acolytes enough to convince them to run away before dealing with the guards.

Continuing past the shrine will lead you to the mess hall, where an intimidatingly large number of foes are arrayed against you. Most of them are Acolytes, though, so feel free to goad them into running away before taking on the guards. There are two exits from the area, with one leading to the Antechamber and one leading back to Lake Arrius Caverns. The Antechamber is an optional

exit, since you won't be able to make it out of the caverns from there; if you head to the Cavern exit, you'll be able to flip a switch to open a secret door and escape from there. Regardless, if you've been fighting your way through the bulk of the enemies thus far, you've probably cleaned out most of the cavern; feel free to go back and kill any remaining enemies if you like. Some of the Acolytes will drop nice magical jewelry, and one of them will drop the key to the storehouse in the Antechamber.

After escaping with the Mysterium, one way or another, return to the Cloud Ruler Temple and give it to Martin. He'll take it and begin translating it, and tell you to speak to Jauffre, who has a new quest for you.

Quest: Spies



Jearl and Saveri aren't exactly subtle about their Mythic Dawn leanings.

According to Jauffre, suspicious folks have been sighted on the roads near the Cloud Ruler Temple. The Blades lack the manpower to search out these spies, so he leaves the matter in your capable hands. If you speak to Steffan, upstairs in the West Wing, he'll tell you that the spies are often spotted near the runestone at dusk. Jauffre will also tell you to speak to Captain Burd in Bruma, the nearby city.

If you head to the runestone on the road outside of the castle (it should be marked on your map), then advance your clock to a dusky hour, say 11:00 PM, the cultists Jearl and Saveri Faram will appear and attack you. Killing them both will net you some items, as well as a Basement Key and Jearl's Key. No more clues are apparent after doing so, though, so you'll have to head to Burd. He's located in the Bruma Castle, on the west side of town. Follow the markers on your map until

you reach him.

Burd will tell you about Jearl, which gives you the prompt to tell him that she was a Mythic Dawn agent. (If you missed her at the Runestone, presumably you'll have to track her down and kill her at this point.) He'll give you permission to head to her house, so track it down, search it, then head down into the basement with the key you picked off of her body. You'll find a document marked Jearl's Orders there; grab it and pick it up. You can head through the Bruma Caverns nearby to reach the exterior again, or just head out of the house. Either way, get back to Cloud Ruler Temple and talk to Jauffre.

Quest: Blood of the Daedra

Martin is going to attempt to open a portal to Mankar's Paradise, but in order to do so, he'll need some ingredients. First on the list is a Daedric artifact. Martin can't tell you where to get one, but he will clue you into the fact that a Daedric cult would be the best option for tracking one down. Unfortunately, there are only 15 Daedric artifacts in the game (each accompanied by a specific quest), and whichever one you wind up with will be destroyed by Martin's ritual. If you want to go along with the game's suggestion, you can find the Star of Azura and offer it up to Martin. Unfortunately, the Star of Azura is somewhat too awesome to really sacrifice in this manner; if you want to use magical weapons or equipment, then you're definitely going to want to hold onto it. We recommend obtaining the Wabbajack from Sheogorath and offering that to Martin, but this will require you to either pickpocket someone successfully or pick a Very Hard lock.

Tip: Short walkthrough for Sheogorath: Get Ri'bassa, the shaman, above disposition 60 and ask him about the three plagues. Either pickpocket the innkeeper while she's asleep for the key to the display case while she's asleep, or just pick the lock and grab the large orange piece of cheese. Place it in the pot above the fire outside and wait for the plague of rats, then wait a little while before picking up the rat poison that gets placed on the stairs and putting that in the trough in the sheep pen. When all of the sheep are poisoned, you've effectively beaten the quest.



A plague of dogs is one of the weirder things you'll encounter in Sheogorath's quest.

If you read the book *Modern Heretics* in the library (it's the large purple book on the third bookshelf from the left, but may also be near Martin), it will tell you the location of the Shrine of Azura, a much more modest shrine than was found in *Morrowind*. Talk to some of the followers there to learn that you'll need to offer Azura Glow Dust in order to speak to her. If you're attempting this quest as part of the game's main storyline, then you should be able to walk north from the shrine a bit to find some Will O The Wisps, at least in the nighttime hours, which drop Glow Dust when killed. Alternately, you may be able to find it in a shop inventory, say at the *Finest Ingredients* shop in the Imperial City.

As mentioned, though, there are 14 other Daedric artifacts to be found, and while many of them are powerful, not all of them will be useful to you. Here's a short list of what you can do and what they offer you in return, as well as whom you can speak to to find the location of the Daedric Shrine required to start the quest. You couldn't have spoken to them before now, as the options to get the Shrine locations were unlocked when you read the *Modern Heretics* book.

Shrine	Location Giver	Requirements for Worship	Reward
Azura	Modern Heretics Book.	Glow Dust; Level 2	Star of Azura (reusable Grand Soul Gem)
Boethia	Bora in Bora's Goods shop in western Cheydinhal.	Draeda Heart, level 20	Goldbrand (fire-enchanted sword)

Clavicus Vile	None - shrine is southwest of Imperial City, in one of the loops formed by the Red Ring Road.	500 Gold, level 20	Masque of Clavicus Vile (+20 Personality Mask)
Hircine	Ontus Vanin, southwestern Talos Plaza.	Wolf or Bear Pelt, level 17	Savior's Hide (magical Light Armor)
Malacath	Thaurron in Mage's Guild of Anvil.	Troll Fat, level 10	Volendrung (Paralyze, Drain Health hammer)
Mephala	Ontus Vanin, or Luther Broad at his boarding house in Elven Gardens District.	Nightshade, level 15. Nightshade is difficult to find, but if you visit Camoran's Paradise in the main quest you should find some.	Ebony Blade (sword with Silence and Absorb Health)
Meridia	None, found west of Skingrad.	Bonemeal or ectoplasm, level 10	Ring of Khajiiti (Chameleon, Fortify Speed)
Molag Bal		Lion Pelt, level 17	Mace of Molag Ball (Drain Strength and Magicka)
Namira	None, found east-southeast of Bruma.	Personality under 20. (Find or buy a lot of Cheap Wine to reduce your score here. There's plenty in the Chapel Hall in Bruma.) Level 5	Ring of Namira (Reflect Damage and Reflect Spell)
Nocturnal	Alves Uvenim, Leyawiin Mages Guild	Level 10	Skeleton Key (unbreakable lockpick, adds 40 to Security score)
Peryite	None, and difficult to find. Lies along the southern bank of the Silverfish River, to the east of Bravil.	Level 10	Spell Breaker (shield with Reflect Spell enchantment)
Sanguine	Fadus Calidius, Skingrad Fighter's Guild.	Cyrodiilic Brandy (can be bought at the Main Ingredient in the Imperial Market District) Level 8	Sanguine Rose (staff that can summon Daedra)
Sheogorath	Around halfway between Brasil and Leyawiin. Follow road south from Brasil, cross the river, then head off-road, southwest of Camp Nowhere.	Lettuce, Lesser Soul Gem, and Yarn; Level 2	Wabbajack (Staff that can transmute creature into any other creature for 20 seconds)

Vaermina	Ontus Vanin in southwestern Talos Plaza yet again.	Grand Black Soul Gem (very difficult to come by unless you take part in the Mage's Guild Quests), Level 5	Skull of Corruption (staff that creates a clone of a target that is hostile to your target)
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Now might be a good time to actually do a few of these quests and gain the items given to you as a result of completing them, depending on the level you have currently obtained. The Skeleton Key from Nocturnal is incredibly useful, as you might imagine. If you do want to go ahead and do Azura's quest only, though, here's a short walkthrough for it.

Azura



Killing all five vampires will be difficult, but it's definitely doable.

Azura's quest is alluded to in the main storyline, during the Blood of the Daedra quest given to you by Martin. If you wish to perform it then, then feel free to do so; otherwise, you can get another Daedric item and use that for the ritual instead.

Azura, when summoned with Glow Dust between the hours of five and seven (either in the morning or at night), will tell you a tale of five of her followers who slew a vampire, but were infected with vampirism themselves. Reluctant to share their gift with the rest of the world, they shut themselves into the vampire's mountain cave, where they've presumably lived ever since. Azura wants you to track down her followers and release them into the afterlife.

The Gutted Mine is further up the mountain to the northwest, so find it and head inside, but be ready for some tough, tough fights: bring healing potions, and preferably have some magical

weapons charged up and ready to go. Three of the vampires are going to be wielding heavy melee weapons and will be doing heavy damage to you, so if you find yourself overwhelmed, try coming back later on. That's not even mentioning the fact that these guys are frickin' vampires, and can infect you if they hit you enough. Vampirism in its early stages is considered a disease, so be sure to bring along some Cure Disease potions if you head inside.

When all five of the vampires have been destroyed, loot their bodies and return to Azura's Shrine to nab Azura's Star, an infinitely reusable Grand Soul Gem.

Quest: Blood of the Divines



The undead Blades should all have nice magical equipment.

After obtaining the Daedric Artifact for Martin (or after enough time has passed since he gave you that quest), he'll tell you of another item he'll need to open the gate: the blood of a divine. Gods don't normally shed blood, but at least one of them was once mortal: Tiber Septim, the founder of the Empire. His armor is enshrined in the catacombs of Sancre Tor, as Jauffre will tell you when you ask. You'll have to go there and find the armor, even though no one has ever visited the catacombs and come out alive....

Get to Sancre Tor. It's probably easier to head north from Chorrol than it is to leave from the Cloud Ruler Temple, but either way you're going to have to get pretty high up on a hill, so bring a horse along. (If you find yourself crossing a lot of wooden bridges way up in the mountains, odds are you're heading towards Hermaeus Mora's Daedric shrine, which you're exceedingly unlikely to be able to use at this point.) When you reach the castle, take the stairs near the door to search the chests upstairs, then head inside. Be sure to bring along either a magical or silver weapon

when you enter Sancre Tor, as there'll probably be ghosts inside, depending on your level.

(Maybe it was just us, but the dagger by the skeleton immediately after you enter the tomb was magical in our case, so be sure to check it out before moving on.) Fight your way through your enemies until you reach a Skeleton Blade, who wields Blades weapons and armor. Kill him to free his enslaved ghost, which will tell you of the vicious Underking, who rose and defiled the temple in the tomb. In order to cleanse the temple and pay homage to Tiber Septim, you'll have to free the spirits of the other Blades trapped in their skeletons. Search all of the treasure chests in the area before heading into the Entry Hall.

Free the Skeletal Blades

There are three more cursed Blades scattered around Sancre Tor, so track them down (they appear in red on your radar) and free them all by killing them. Be sure to check their equipment to see if it's magical before moving on, as much of it will be if you're beyond level five or so.



Jearl and Saveri aren't exactly subtle about their Mythic Dawn leanings.

When you've killed all of the Blades, head to the Catacombs, where their spirits will open the way to the tomb of Tiber Septim. There's nothing special you have to do here; just grab the armor and get the heck out of dodge. If you like, feel free to wear the armor yourself; it weighs nothing and looks pretty snazzy. Give the armor to Martin and he'll refer you back to Jauffre for your next quest.

Quest: Bruma Gate

As promised, an Oblivion Gate has opened outside of Bruma, and Jauffre wants you to help the Bruma guard shut it down. Not much to say here: you're going to have Burd along, as well as a couple of grunts, but the grunts are unlikely to make it through the experience alive, and Burd himself will probably also bite it eventually, although he can heal himself like many other important characters. Beyond that, there's nothing mysterious here, and nothing you haven't probably done already: just take the path around to the base of the tower, enter it, head to the top, and grab the Sigil Stone before getting out of town. Nothing to it!

Afterwards, return to Jauffre and give him the update. He'll ask you to find some Aid for Bruma.

Quest: Aid for Bruma

This is a multi-objective quest. Your goal is to speak to the leaders of each of the other major cities in Cyrodiil, as well as the Elder Council in the Imperial City, and ask them to aid Bruma with extra troops so that they can withstand more Daedric assaults. Obviously enough, most of the leaders of the cities have their own problems, so you shouldn't expect this to be a simple matter of just talking to different people and having that be that.

Elder Council

Speaking to the lead counsellor (Orato?) doesn't actually lead anywhere; he explains that the Imperial army is tied up in the provinces, and asks you to go to the cities and gain their aid directly. Since you've already been doing that, resist the urge to strike him down and simply walk away.

If you go to the leaders of Anvil, Skingrad, Chorrol, Bravil, Leyawiin, and Cheydinhal, they'll all tell you the same thing: they'd like to help, but they've got their own Oblivion Gates right outside of town. In order to win their support for Bruma, you'll have to head into each of the gates, grab the Sigil Stones, and shut them down. You should've done this a few times by now, so just get into the central towers (which can sometimes be a tall task), scale them, and shut the gates down, then return to the various Counts and Countesses to enlist their aid for Bruma.

Some of these planes are a bit more difficult than the others; we've described them below.

Cheydinhal: The Wayward Knight

Cheydinhal's gate has a subquest that goes along with it, so we'll go ahead and discuss it here. If you speak to Amminus Gregori outside the Oblivion Gate, he'll tell you that the Count's son passed through the gate with a group of wannabe adventurers and hasn't returned. If you're heading into the gate anyway, maybe you could keep an eye out for the kid?

Inside the gate here, you'll pass through two sets of Daedra caves, lovingly called "The Bowels", before you reach Farwil and his much more sensible friend Bremman, all that remain of the Knights of the Thorn. Farwil won't hear any talk of retreat, and insists that you lead the way to the

citadel of the plane so that you can capture the sigil stone and shut the gate down. There are a lot of Dremora in the citadel here, so you'll probably need their help; just try to rest every so often to let Farwil and Bremman get their health back. The goal is to keep them alive, so save often and reload if they happen to bite it. Both of your wards can move quite quickly, though, so be careful not to hit them in the back when they run past you towards an enemy.



So all your friends are dead...why are you smiling?

After you rescue Farwil, speak to the Count again, and he'll offer you either a sword or a staff as a reward. If Farwil dies, you can bring back his signet ring to the Count as proof of his death, but presumably you won't be rewarded for doing so. Regardless, you've shut the gate, and that's all that really matters.

Chorrol

Your goal in Chorrol is to close the Oblivion Gate that's popped up outside of town. Note that the central tower in this plane of Oblivion can be kind of weird; apparently you are supposed to enter one of the smaller sub-towers surrounding the main citadel, then use those towers to open a bunch of gates that'll let you access the central citadel's lower level, but we found it easier to scale one of the minitowers, head across to the citadel, then jump over the railing of the platform you're on and drop down to the platform below you. This will place you on the path to the citadel's rooftop, via the Rending Halls.

Note that immediately after you enter this Plane of Oblivion, though, there'll be a large tower half-melted in the lavapit behind you. If you head northwest from the Oblivion Gate and find the fallen gate that spans the lava pit, you'll eventually be able to reach the Fume Vaults, which will let you

access the fallen citadel, which has some nice loot if you explore it a bit.

Skingrad

Find Mercator Hosidus in the Skingrad County Hall and speak to him; the Count of Skingrad will be inaccessible to you behind some difficult locked doors, but if you speak to Hosidus, he'll alert the Count and grant you an audience. Again, your task here is to exit the city, look for the Oblivion Gate, and shut it down.

Now, these planes could be random, so don't fret if the advice here seems misleading, but for us, the Skingrad Plane of Oblivion had one large tower that was initially inaccessible, and two slightly smaller towers with broken bridges leading to it. If you unlock the switches at the top of the two smaller towers, the bridges about halfway down the smaller towers will extend to the larger tower, allowing you to head outside and reach the top of the tower directly to shut down the Gate.

Kvatch: The Battle for Castle Kvatch

Now, this is odd: while you have Aid for Bruma as your active quest, Kvatch will be marked on your map, indicating that you have something to do there. The Battle for Castle Kvatch quest will still be active, if you didn't perform it after rescuing Martin from the Chapel of Akatosh earlier, so we'll cover it now.

After clearing out a few of the enemies from the courtyard in front of the castle, you'll be tasked by Savlian to head back to the chapel and find a key to the Guard House from Berich Inian. Inian has the key, but he doesn't give it to you; instead, he offers to take you to the Guard House himself. You'll have to head through the Chapel Undercroft to get there. (There may also be some Imperial guardsman in the chapel by this point, so feel free to invite them along for the ride, if you wish.)



You'll have plenty of help in the battle for Castle Kvatch.

Fight your way through the Undercroft and Kvatch to reach the guard tower; there's some heavy resistance, so be sure to wait for an hour whenever possible to let the guardsmen regain their health. Feel free to look around the city if you like, but there's very little in the way of loot until you reach the passageway into the Castle, which Inian unlocks for you. Head through the small underground passageway, take the ladder up to the guardhouse, then open the gates to let Savlian and his men head into the castle courtyard. Clean it out, rest, then head into the castle proper.

Castle Great Hall

After defeating the enemies in the Great Hall, speak to Savlian again. He very courageously offers to hold the area while you go and track down the Count. Big of him.

Head into the Great Hall itself to start clearing out some of the enemies. (One of the books near the entrance, on the table to your right, is *A Dance In Fire*, which adds to your Acrobatics score.) There isn't much to see in either the Dining Hall or Sleeping Quarters, but check them out if you wish before heading into the Count's Quarters. Unfortunately, the Count is dead, so all you'll be able to do is grab his Signet Ring and return it to Savlian. In exchange for your help, he'll give you some magical armor, and you'll also be able to talk him into sending aid to Bruma.

With all of the cities on your side, speak to Jauffre in Cloud Ruler Temple to finish this quest. It'll be an anticlimactic ending, but you should be able to speak to Martin to learn about Miscarcand.

Quest: Miscarcand



Sunday Sunday Sunday: It's Mayhem in Miscarcand!

One of the last pieces that Martin needs to open the gate to Oblivion to retrieve the Amulet of Kings is a Great Welkynd Stone. You've probably found plenty of normal Welkynd stones during your trips into Ayleid ruins, but there's only one Great Welkynd Stone rumored to still exist, in the ruins of Miscarcand. You'll have to travel there, find the stone, and return it to Martin.

Head to Miscarcand, which is indeed quite sizable. Follow the green arrow until you find the entrance, then head inside. It appears that there's been some kind of undead/Goblin war going on in here, so don't be surprised if you run across both kinds of critters as you proceed. The exit from the first level is locked away behind a gate; to open it, you'll have to drop down into the large room nearby, find the stairs leading up, then press a button inset into the wall near a pair of Goblins and their treasure chests.

On the second level, Sel Vanua, help the goblins defeat the skeletons, or vice versa, then finish off any remainders before hitting the switch on the wall to obtain the Varla Stone. Heading down the stairs will lead you to another large room, where more goblins and skeletons are duking it out. Watch them from above as you wend your way across the walkway. Taking the steps at the terminal of the walkway will lead you to a little passage from which you can access the room; there's also a small switch in this passage's wall that will open the passage leading to the third level, the Morimath.

The Great Welkynd Stone

In Morimath, head down the first set of steps, then start clearing out the level's zombie

population, or whatever happens to be present in your case. Be sure the level is cleared of enemies (and that you're at full health) before grabbing the Great Welkynd Stone, as things start to happen afterwards...

By "things", we're referring to the appearance of the King of Miscarcand behind you, and a couple of undead on the floor beneath the area. The King is a fearsome spellcaster that's highly resistant to damage and magical effects, so when you grab the Stone, drop down to the floor first and take out his undead helpers, then turn your eye on the King himself.



Try hitting the King with fire magical or fire-enchanted weapons for maximum damage.

The King will pursue you if you attempt to run away from him, but only until you get into line of sight, and at that point he'll attempt to zap you with spells, usually resorting to lightning and fire damage. He's a Lich, so obviously he's going to be handy with the spells, but he can resist quite a bit of your effects, as well; we've noticed him being capable of resisting Draining poison and frost damage, although he doesn't appear quite as able to resist fire damage, so that may be a key to help killing him. Alternately, you might want to try hitting him with a Silence poison and closing to melee range before taking him out. He doesn't have an obscene amount of health, so if you can take him on one on one and dodge his spells, then you should be able to end him relatively quickly.

Grab the key and the staff from the King's body and head into the portal from which he came to exit the level; the entrances you came from have been locked with five-tumbler gates. The whole little path available through the gate that the key unlocks will wind up seeing you exit near the entrance to the entire facility, so you'll be able to quickly make your escape and return to Martin.

Quest: Defense of Bruma

After completing both the Miscarcand and Aid for Bruma quests, speaking to Martin again will net you the Defense of Bruma quest. The ingredients you've obtained thus far are not enough to open a gate to Camoran's Paradise: you also need a Great Sigil Stone, and Great Sigil Stones can only be found inside Great Gates, such as was opened at Kvatch. Martin's plan? Allow the Mythic Dawn to open the Great Gate outside Bruma. Martin will lead the defense of Bruma while you head into the Great Gate and find the Sigil Stone.

He asks you to head to Bruma and inform the Countess of his decision. Well, he's just giving you all the plum assignments today, isn't he? "Oh, well, could you go and grab the Great Sigil Stone and place yourself in unimaginable peril? But before you go, go and tell the Countess that we're probably going to get her city destroyed."

Head to Bruma, the streets of which are now littered with the soldiers from other towns. Speak to the Countess and tell her about Martin's plan. Although she's upset, she'll agree to speak to Martin in the Chapel. You'll have to walk her there, but when you do finally unite Narina and Martin, they'll agree to the plan, which will have Narina's troops cease destroying the lesser Oblivion Gates around the city. In order to open a Great Gate, the enemy will have to open three smaller gates.

Tip: Note that you're about to enter a realm where you can't rest at all. If you're normally reliant on resting to restore your health, bring along extra healing potions.

Escort Martin out of town to meet up with the Imperial defense squadron. How many soldiers does it take to defend a city? Apparently the answer is thirteen.

Defending The Town



If you get swamped by Daedra, you're unlikely to survive the battle here.

When you first exit the city, there'll only be one lesser Gate open. Soon enough, though, two more will pop open, and all of them will start discharging Daedra, and plenty of them. Ostensibly, your job here is to protect Martin until the Great Gate opens up, but really, most of the enemies here are going to make a beeline for you, so your real objective should be to just stay alive.

Do so by remaining behind the main line of battle and keeping your blocking up, preferably with a shield. The numerous soldiers in the area will be able to handle the foes that attack you, allowing you to loot their bodies and see if they've dropped anything magical. Just be sure to heal yourself when you take damage, as the number of enemies that will be attacking will multiply with each successive gate that opens up. The Dremora will be particularly painful to you if you let them get close, so just avoid them as best you can while the soldiers in the area cut them down.

As soon as the Great Gate opens up, book it for the entrance and pop inside.

Quest: Great Gate

After entering the Great Gate, you'll have fifteen minutes to reach the top of the citadel and shut down the gate. Why the specific amount of time? Because the daedric siege engine is crawling towards the gate! After fifteen minutes, it'll emerge from the gate, and even if you shut down the Gate, it'll still be able to destroy most of Bruma. Thus the fifteen minute timer. Save your game as soon as you enter the Plane, then. You should be able to get past most of the enemies and scale the tower (it's slightly smaller than most citadels) within the timeframe, but if not, then you'll be able to reload and try again.



With a running start, you should be able to make this jump.

At the outset of the level, the large gate in front of you will open up, revealing the siege engine off in the distance and a couple of opponents in the foreground. The siege engine will begin firing Flares at you, so keep your weapons sheathed (and preferably unequipped) while you run past your enemies into the tower on your right, to the northeast. (It should be highlighted on your compass in red.) Ignore your foes if they follow you into the tower; just ride the Corpse Smasher up to the walkways and walk all the way to the top of the tower here, killing anything in your path. The door at the top of the tower will lead you over a walkway to the next tower to the north.

The top level of this tower has two doors; one heading south (through which you just entered) and one heading west. Ignore the western one and head down to the mid level of the tower, just above where the Corpse Smasher would normally reach its maximum height. There's another door here leading north, and that's the one you want to come to. It leads to what will probably appear to be an intimidatingly long jump, but it should be doable for almost every character, if you can get up enough speed. You need to jump from the platform you're on to the one farther ahead. If you unequip your weapon (and we mean actually putting it in your inventory, not just sheathing it or slinging it onto your back or whatever) and all of your armor (especially if you're wearing heavy armor), then you should be able to make the jump. Just be sure to save your game before attempting it!

Tip: If you're really having a hard time making this jump, return to the tower behind you, head to the top, take the western door, go to the tower there, then exit out the north. It leads to the same place, but takes a bit longer.



Save your game after grabbing the Great Sigil Stone and reload if the Stone you get back in Bruma isn't worth picking up.

After making the jump here, make your way to the tower directly north of you; you'll probably have to circle behind it to reach the gray road that leads from east to west. This last minitower features a switch at the top of it, so scale the tower, flip the switch to open the gate, then return to the bottom of the tower and exit. The gate nearby will be swinging open, revealing the path to the Citadel.

After killing the Sigil Keeper on the first floor and grabbing his key, head into the Vaults of End Times. Flip the switch after reaching the top of the ramp to drop the blade traps in front of you, then run under them as they're rising. You'll come to three doors: to your right (north) is a door leading to a treasure chest; to the west are a pair of magicka and health regenerators, and to the south is the exit to the upper levels of the citadel.

We said that the citadel here was small, and indeed, the next interior section you'll enter will be the Sigil Stone sanctuary. Kill the guards (or just run past them, but don't neglect to check the Punished for treasure), then get to the Great Sigil Stone and activate it.

Tip: Although you can't use the Great Sigil Stone to enhance your weaponry or armor, you will be getting a Sigil Stone from this quest after you teleport back to Bruma. Save your game after activating the Great Sigil Stone so that you can reload if you don't like what you've obtained.

After you reappear in Bruma, survey the battlefield. The siege engine, cut in half by the collapse of the Great Gate, collapses itself, discharging a Sigil Stone onto the battlefield. Martin, who now has everything he needs to complete the portal to Cameron's Paradise, asks you to meet him in Cloud Ruler Temple when you're ready to go. Jauffre may have died, no matter what you do in

the Plane of Oblivion, so feel free to mourn him before looting his corpse. Old coot didn't even manage to carry any magical items.

Quest: Paradise

Although the entrance to Camoran's Paradise isn't the end of the game, you won't be able to return through the portal to the "real world" for a while, so before you head through, you should take your time to explore a bit, if you wish, build some skills, or do anything else you like before you head through. Once you enter Paradise, you're going to be there for a bit, so now's the time to take care of anything that's nagging at you.

When you're ready, head up to the Cloud Ruler Temple, where Martin is charging up the portal. Speak to him, and he'll open it up for you, allowing you to step through to another Daedric portal of hellacious heat and lava.



'Fight back! C'mon, you can take him!'

Savage Garden

Only...not so much. Camoran's Paradise really is a paradise! It's got lush grasses, blue water, a few naked slaves that get beat up on by monsters, and so on. A guy could really make a home for himself here.

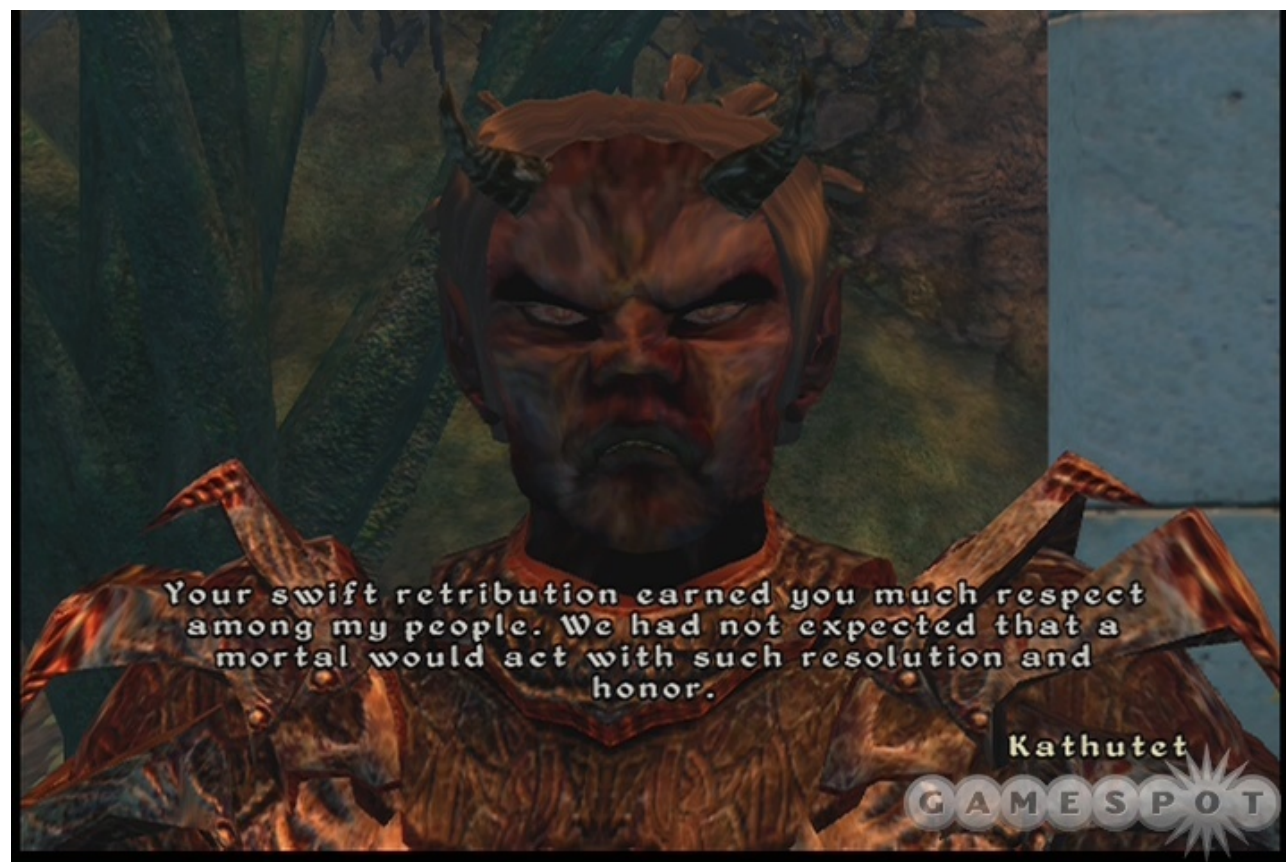
If you speak to one of the Ascended Immortals (who are really Mythic Dawn cultists transported here to be "tempered" to prepare them for the eventual rule of Tamriel), you'll learn a bit about

the geography of this place. You're in the Savage Garden now, and to reach Mankar, you'll have to pass through the Forbidden Grotto (after you obtain the Bands of the Chosen), to the Terrace of Dawn, which in turn leads to Carac Agaiador, Mankar's palace.

You can follow the path near your starting point here to move on, but if you're at all interested in alchemy, take some time to explore; there are numerous little gardens of plants that you can pick. There are going to be plenty of enemies, as well, though, so be sure to rest often.

As you make your way to the northeast (either heading north or east from the starting point will get you there), you'll come to a single bridge that's watched over by a Dremora named Kathutet, who holds the Bands of the Chosen. You have a choice: you can kill him to take the Bands of the Chosen (he's not difficult), or perform a service for him in exchange for the item.

Freeing Anaxes



We can see why these guys never take off those cool-looking helmets.

If you choose to perform the service for him (which is slightly more interesting than just killing him, which you'll be able to do later anyway), he'll tell you of a Xivilai named Anaxes, who was trapped in a cave by the Ascended Immortals in the area. Follow the marker on your compass to the cave and head inside.

To free Anaxes from his trap, activate the two logs that are holding the boulder nearby into place. That's all that's required to free him. If you want to get the Bands of the Fallen, return to Kathutet and tell him of your deed, and he'll (presumably) hand them over. We admit to taking a scorched earth policy here; we killed Anaxes ourselves after freeing him, and when Kathutet heard of this,

he attacked us as well. His Bands of the Chosen give him a 50% weakness to fire damage, so whip out something with that attribute and pop him but good.

With the Bands of the Chosen in your inventory (don't equip them just yet), head into the cave behind Kathutet and listen to Mankar's little spiel while you chop your way through the enemies within. When you reach the door to the Forbidden Grotto, equip the Bands of the Chosen to get inside. You're unable to unequip them for the moment, leaving you with a 50% weakness to fire for the moment.

Forbidden Grotto

As you travel through the Grotto, you'll meet Eldamil. Tell him about your intent to kill Mankar, and he'll offer to help you: he says he knows how to take off the Bands of the Chosen, which now act as a kind of tracking device which *prevents* you from leaving the Forbidden Grotto. Since you can't take them off yourself, they'll act as a kind of prison for you.

Now, if you wish, you can just kill Eldamil, kill his Dremora overseers and grab the keep off of Orthe, then make your way to the exit and pop through, where Eldamil will be waiting for you and pop the Bands of the Chosen off, as if nothing had happened. Guess they're not called Immortals for nothing!



If you kill off Orthe and his friends, you can grab their weapons. It'll be good to have a non-magical weapon for an upcoming fight.

If you want to do things the Right Way, though, agree to Eldamil's plan, which will see you hopping into a lava pit. Eldamil will save you from your death at the last minute, though, and open

a passage which will let you avoid Orthe and his two lieutenants. If you wish, you can jump back across the lava pit and use Eldamil's diversion as an excuse to attack the Dremora and steal their equipment, if you wish.

Regardless, make your way to the end of the area to reach the next level of the Grotto. Eldamil will take your Bands of the Chosen off at this point, so equip your normal wristguards. Eldamil will ask to accompany you on your quest to kill Cameron, so feel free to bring him along if you like, although he's unlikely to survive very long. But hey, he's immortal, so one more death isn't going to bug him overmuch. In fact, if he does die, he'll regenerate a short while later.

Kill the Xivilai near the exit and get your loot before return to Paradise. Another small portion of exterior world awaits you before you enter Carac Agaialor, so feel free to pick up as much Nightshade and other herbs as you wish before speaking to Ruma and Raven (if you happened to kill them earlier) and entering the castle.

Carac Agaialor



Mankar and his cult have been killing people for centuries, and even managed to off the Emperor. Time to repay the favor.

Finally - your shot at Mankar Camoran. As you enter the temple here, he'll be seated on his throne, and his children will move to flank him. Feel free to listen to his little spiel, if you wish; when it's over, he'll sit down, and his children will move to attack you.

If you've been acquiring magical items and working your way up through the levels steadily (but not too quickly), then Ruma and Raven should be mere appetizers for you. Raven will shift into his

Mythic Dawn attire when attacked, while Ruma will prefer to wield spells or a dagger if pressed. Deal with them both, and Mankar will pop up from his chair, apparently only mildly irritated that you've killed his kids - again.

But hey, why should he care? They'll come back to life a few seconds after they're killed, making this a race against time. After you kill his children, you have to immediately move on Mankar and take him out as well, or the kids will rejoin the fight. If you kill them multiple times, then you'll be able to loot their bodies as often as you like, but things can get a bit tricky between Mankar, both of the kids, and the Dremora that Mankar will be summoning in. Mankar is highly resistant (or reflective) of magical damage, so you may want to use non-magical means of attacking him.

With Mankar dead, loot his body, grab the Amulet of Kings and his robe, and wait for the portal to kick you out to the Cloud Ruler Temple, where you'll be able to give the Amulet to Martin.

Quest: Light the Dragonfires!



As per usual, you'll have a phalanx of guardsmen to help you out, so take advantage of their willingness to go into battle.

In order to prevent a wholesale invasion of Tamriel, you have to get Martin to relight the Dragonfires in the Imperial City. Doing so will prevent the opening of further Oblivion Gates, shut down any that have already been opened, and prevent Mehunes Dagon from retaking Tamriel. Note that you're going to have some very tough encounters coming up here. It'll be worth your time to buy (or make) some healing or magicka potions, as well as stock up on repair hammers if you happen to need them.

When you think you're ready for a fight, warp with Martin to the Green Emperor Way and speak with Captain Steffan outside the Palace. Head inside after Martin and speak to Ocato. Before anything can actually take place, though, Ocato will be interrupted by a soldier bearing grim news: the final Daedric assault has begun, and Oblivion Gates have been opened directly inside the Imperial City. With an Emperor and the Amulet of Kings, though, you can still light the Dragonfire again; you just have to get Martin to the Temple of the One!

Through The Streets

As you and the Imperial Guard escort Martin through the streets, you're going to be besieged by Dremora and other daedra desperate to halt your progress. There isn't much you can do here; there are going to be far too many enemies for you to really handle yourself, but luckily there'll be plenty of other soldiers around to do you bidding. While the game presumably ends if Martin takes lethal damage, he'll be capable of healing himself, like most critical characters, so this probably won't occur. As in the fight outside of Bruma, try to stay back and keep your shield up while the other soldiers deal with the Daedra. In Green Emperor Way, at least, their numbers are not infinite, so stay back and let your allies deal with the Dremora that are attacking. When everything is dead, the men will confer with the Emperor and agree to help escort him to the Temple of the One.

After you into the Temple District, immediately save your game: things are going to get somewhat tricky here. Two Oblivion Gates are open in this area, and both will be issuing forth daedra as you attempt to maneuver through the area. The key here is speed: don't bother fighting the enemies or worrying about Martin. Just sheathe your weapon and head around the circular path to the right, where you encounter...Mehunes Dagon!



'No! Those guards were three days from retirement!'

That's right, the dark Daedric prince of destruction and the bloody scourge has finally come home to roost. As soon as you notice him and get the journal entry regarding his presence, Martin will make a beeline towards you and attempt to speak to you. His plan? Well, the Dragonfires won't help now that Mehunes has entered Tamriel, but Martin has an idea. It still involves getting into the Palace of the One, however.

Unfortunately, that involves getting past Dagon himself, and the guy isn't exactly easy to maneuver past, since he's around 50 feet tall and can deal an exceedingly large amount of damage with his axe or by stomping on you with his feet. Before you attempt to run past him (on the left), be sure you're at full health. If you've got a good amount of Endurance to begin with, then you might not need to do anything other than just run past him. It's unlikely that he'll be able to kill you in one hit, so just unequip your weapon and blast past him, using a potion of speed if you happen to have one.

Tip: If you don't find yourself capable of running past Dagon, then you can attempt to stagger him by hitting him with a Power Attack or some kind of powerful spell. It's difficult to actually land a weapon attack on him, though, so warriors are better off just running past him.



'Dammit! What'd I say about hickies?'

Dagon will attempt to stomp on Martin, too, as he runs past, but with his auto-healing mechanism in place, he should survive the blow. With that done, go into the Temple and let Martin do his thing. From this point on, the game is on auto-play, so enjoy the "ending"!

Obviously enough, the final cinematic doesn't mean that you have to stop playing; there are probably still plenty of quests to undertake out in the world. What it does mean is that the game's main storyline has been completed, and that all of the Oblivion Gates in the world will have shut permanently; no more Sigil Stones or Daedra Hearts for you!

If you're looking for more information on the various side-quests in Oblivion, then stay tuned to GameSpot; we'll have details on many more aspects of the game in the coming weeks.

Xbox 360 Achievements

Unlockable

Apprentice, Fighters Guild (10)
Apprentice, Mages Guild (10)
Arch-Mage, Mages Guild (50)
Assassin, Dark Brotherhood (10)
Associate, Fighters Guild (10)
Associate, Mages Guild (10)
Bandit, Thieves Guild (10)
Bloodletter, Arena (10)
Brawler, Arena (10)
Cat Burglar, Thieves Guild (10)
Champion of Cyrodiil (110)
Champion, Arena (10)
Champion, Fighters Guild (10)
Closed an Oblivion Gate (50)
Conjurer, Mages Guild (10)
Defender, Fighters Guild (10)
Delivered Daedric Artifact (50)
Destroyed the Great Gate (50)
Eliminator, Dark Brotherhood (10)
Escaped the Imperial Sewers (50)
Evoker, Mages Guild (10)
Footpad, Thieves Guild (10)
Gladiator, Arena (10)
Grand Champion, Arena (50)
Guardian, Fighters Guild (10)
Guildmaster, Thieves Guild (50)
Hero, Arena (10)
Journeyman, Fighters Guild (10)

How to Unlock

Reached Apprentice rank in the Fighters Guild.
Reached Apprentice rank in the Mages Guild.
Completed the Mages Guild Questline.
Reached Assassin rank in the Dark Brotherhood.
Joined the Fighters Guild.
Joined the Mages Guild.
Reached Bandit rank in the Thieves Guild.
Reached Bloodletter rank in the Arena.
Reached Brawler rank in the Arena.
Reached Cat Burglar rank in the Thieves Guild.
Completed the Main Questline.
Reached Champion rank in the Arena.
Reached Champion rank in the Fighters Guild.
Closed an Oblivion Gate, Main Quest.
Reached Conjurer rank in the Mages Guild.
Reached Defender rank in the Fighters Guild.
Delivered Daedric Artifact, Main Quest.
Destroyed the Great Gate, Main Quest.
Reached Eliminator rank in the Dark Brotherhood.
Escaped the Imperial Sewers, Main Quest Beginning.
Reached Evoker rank in the Mages Guild.
Reached Footpad rank in the Thieves Guild.
Reached Gladiator rank in the Arena.
Completed the Arena Questline.
Reached Guardian rank in the Fighters Guild.
Completed the Thieves Guild Questline.
Reached Hero rank in the Arena.
Reached Journeyman rank in the Fighters Guild.

Journeyman, Mages Guild (10)	Reached Journeyman rank in the Mages Guild.
Listener, Dark Brotherhood (50)	Completed the Dark Brotherhood Questline.
Located the Shrine of Dagon (50)	Located the Shrine of Dagon, Main Quest.
Magician, Mages Guild (10)	Reached Magician rank in the Mages Guild.
Master Thief, Thieves Guild (10)	Reached Master Thief rank in the Thieves Guild.
Master, Fighters Guild (50)	Completed the Fighters Guild Questline.
Master-Wizard, Mages Guild (10)	Reached Master-Wizard rank in the Mages Guild.
Murderer, Dark Brotherhood (10)	Join the Dark Brotherhood.
Myrmidon, Arena (10)	Reached Myrmidon rank in the Arena.
Pickpocket, Thieves Guild (10)	Joined the Thieves Guild.
Pit Dog, Arena (10)	Joined the Arena in the Imperial City.
Protector, Fighters Guild (10)	Reached Protector rank in the Fighters Guild.
Prowler, Thieves Guild (10)	Reached Prowler rank in the Thieves Guild.
Shadowfoot, Thieves Guild (10)	Reached Shadowfoot rank in the Thieves Guild.
Silencer, Dark Brotherhood (10)	Reached Silencer rank in the Dark Brotherhood.
Slayer, Dark Brotherhood (10)	Reached Slayer rank in the Dark Brotherhood.
Speaker, Dark Brotherhood (10)	Reached Speaker rank in the Dark Brotherhood.
Swordsman, Fighters Guild (10)	Reached Swordsman rank in the Fighters Guild.
Warder, Fighters Guild (10)	Reached Warder rank in the Fighters Guild.
Warlock, Mages Guild (10)	Reached Warlock rank in the Mages Guild.
Warrior, Arena (10)	Reached Warrior rank in the Arena.
Wizard, Mages Guild (10)	Reached Wizard rank in the Mages Guild.

Fighters Guild

If you wish to join the Fighter's Guild, you'll need to have a hearty sense of adventure, the ability to swing a weapon, and a desire to see the world. Apart from that, there isn't much to it! All you need to get started on your career is to speak to either Vilena Donton in Chorrol, Azzan in Anvil, or Burz gro-Khash in Cheydinhal. All of these characters spend most of their time in those city's respective Fighters Guild buildings, of course, but Vilena Donton, at least, has her own house apart from the Fighters Guild that she sleeps in.

We're going to note these quests in the order in which we attempted them. Generally the quests from Vilena in Chorrol are given to you after you've attempted the quests from the other two quest-givers, so if you don't find that one is available, head to one of the other towns first.

First-Tier Quests

Cheydinhal: The Desolate Mine

Speak to Burz gro-Khash in Cheydinhal, who will waste no time in giving you your first quest: he asks you to deliver a set of steel weapons to the Desolate Mine, just northwest of the Desolate Mine. Luckily, these weapons don't weigh anything, so you can accomplish this task with any sort of character.



These guys shouldn't be a problem for you.

Head out to the Mine and speak to Rienna, who'll take the bow off of you. Give the sword to Elidor and the hammer to Brag. At this point, the three soldiers will run off and start bashing in some goblin heads, letting you follow them and join in on the fun. There's not much else to say: just follow the soldiers and try to get your licks in before all the goblins are dead. Whenever there's a lull in the fighting, try to rest; this will restore the health of your teammates. If they all survive, you'll get a larger reward than you would otherwise.

This is going to be the only quest Burz has for you at the moment; he'll refer you to the Anvil Fighters Guild for more tasks.

Anvil: A Rat Problem



Make sure Quill-Weave doesn't see you when you follow her! Stay far away and in Sneak mode.

Azzan in Anvil will refer you to Arvena Thelas, who's having problems with rats in her basement. It's not quite what you think, though; she's worried about the fact that something's actually been killing the rats. If you head down to the basement, you'll discover the culprit: a starving mountain lion. Kill it, loot the basement for food if you're into alchemy, then return to Thelas, who asks you to find Pinarus, a local hunter, and determine the source of the lions. She could just, you know, fix her horribly busted wall, but instead she seems intent on killing anything that might possibly enter her basement.

Follow your compass to Pinarus' house and speak to him. He'll offer to take you hunting, and then start walking slowly out of town. You'll have to follow him for a while until he leads you to a nest of mountain lions in the wilderness. When you do finally reach it, kill all four of the mountain lions. Problem solved!

Not so quick...if you return to Arvena, she'll tell you that another lion is stalking around in her basement! Head down there and kill it, then speak to her again; she'll let you know about her suspicions of Quill-Weave, a woman who lives nearby. She wants you to follow her at night and see if she's doing anything to bring her rats to harm.

If you wait around until 8:00 PM or so, you should be able to follow Quill-Weave as she sneaks behind Arvena's house and leaves meat outside the hole leading into Arvena's basement. When confronted, she'll ask you to keep her involvement secret, in exchange for some Acrobatics training.

At this point, you'll be able to choose between letting Arvena know about Quill-Weave's

involvement or lying to her. Arvena will give you a point in Speechcraft vs. Quill-Weave's Acrobatics. If you want our authorial judgement, get the Speechcraft. It'll be a lot more useful to most characters.

Anvil: The Unfortunate Shopkeeper

Norbert Lelles, a shopkeeper in Anvil, has been having problems with burglary lately, and has hired the Fighters Guild to put a stop to the break-ins. Head down to the Docks and find Lelles' store to speak to him.

Lelles tells you about the break-ins, which only occur at night, after he's gone to sleep. He asks you for a simple favor: stay in the shop overnight while he heads to a nearby inn and tries to get some rest. Doing so is a fairly simple task: just wait around until two or three in the morning, and you should spot three thieves in various kinds of light armor skulking around the interior of the shop. Your task? Kill them!



If you can't handle the thieves, take the fight outside for a little help.

Doing so can be complicated, depending on the type of character that you're playing. Three soldiers against a mage will be difficult, but luckily, if you're unable to manage the fight on your own, all you really need to do is head outside. The guards and civilians on the docks will turn on the thieves when they follow you out, making your job much easier.

When the thieves are dead, return to Lelles and tell him of your success. A small reward is in order, and his Disposition towards you increases as well. Lelles is a decent catch-all merchant for selling goods, since he has a couple hundred more gold to spend than does the general goods

merchant in the Imperial City. Feel free to loot all of the armor and weapons off of the thieves and sell them right to Lelles to increase your haggling skill with him.

Chorrol: Unfinished Business

If you speak to Vilena in Chorrol, she'll point you to one Modryn Oreyne and ask you to inquire about any duties you may be able to perform for the Fighters Guild.

If you speak to him, you'll learn that indeed there is something for you to do. Modryn wants you to track down one Maglir, a low-ranking Fighters Guild member who defaulted on a contract. That's not a good thing to do if you want to gain prestige in the Guild, so far as we can tell. Anyway, you're to inquire as to the reasons behind this and report back.

Head to Skingrad and track down Maglir, who's probably staying in the West Weald Inn. He'll relate that he didn't so much default on the contract as simply refused to perform his duties. The sniveling little guy can't be bothered to enter a cave and find Brenus Astis' Journal, so he hands the task off to you. Resist the urge to beat him down and head out to Fallen Rock Cave, where the journal is supposed to be located. It all sounds rather ominous, but hey, just because this weakling can't finish his work doesn't mean you won't be able to.

When you reach the Fallen Rock Cave, head inside and find out what spooked Maglir so badly: undead. Woo-hoo. Kill anything that dares attack you, find the journal and pick it up, then return to either Maglir or Modryn to finish the quest. You can tell Modryn that Maglir actually did complete the task, if you wish; you'll gain the same amount of cash either way.

Chorrol: Drunk and Disorderly

Modryn will tell you about three members of the Leyawiin guild who've been causing a ruckus. Dubok, Rellian, and Vantus Prelius have been making a habit of getting drunk and making trouble down south, so head down there to get on their case.

If you ask anyone at the Leyawiin Fighters Guild, they'll tell you to head to the Five Claws Lodge and speak to the troublemakers. Head over there and speak to Vantus Prelius, who'll tell you the origin of their discontent: the Blackwood Company, a gang of mercenaries, has set up shop in Leyawiin and has been undercutting the Fighters Guild in their bids for contracts. They want you to either deal with the Blackwood Company, or find them work. The Blackwood Company will come into play in the future; for now, it's time to get some jobs for these poor, downtrodden folk!



These guys are real professionals.

Speaking to any of the civilians in the area, such as the bartender at the Five Claws, will net you another lead: Margrete. This local alchemist should have some work for your men. If you track her down, she'll tell you of her need for Ogre Teeth and Minotaur Horns. Before she gives you the contract, though, she'll request five portions of ectoplasm. You'll be personally responsible for tracking down these items for Margrete before she agrees to send you her business.

Ectoplasm drops off of Ghost enemies, of course, but these only appear if you're above level five or so. If you've seen Ghosts in your travels, just head out to an undead-infested dungeon and kill a few of them to gain the needed Ectoplasm. Otherwise, you can try to find it from magic or alchemy-oriented shops in Cyrodiil, such as The Main Ingredient or The Gilded Carafe in the Imperial City. These shops' inventories are usually randomized, though, so it may be difficult to find on your first try.

When you have the ectoplasm, return to Margrete and give it to her. She'll let you know that the Fighters Guild is now her exclusive supplier for her alchemical needs. If you head over to Vantus and tell him the good news, he'll promise to behave himself from now on. Pat him on the head and head back to Chorrol to finish off the quest by speaking to Modryn.

Second-Tier Quests

After finishing off Drunk and Disorderly, you'll be told by Modryn to head back out to Anvil or Cheydinhal for more "seasoning" before moving up in the ranks of the Fighters Guild.

Cheydinhal: Amelion's Debt

Amelion is way down south near Leyawiin, so warp there and head up to the Water's Edge settlement to find her. She'll explain her situation: her father ran up an extreme amount of debt, which has passed to her in his absence. She needs you to retrieve the enchanted sword and armor of her grandfather's in order to pay the debt, but it's in a tomb which she's probably wise not to explore herself. You have the option to simply pay her debt right now, if you like, which will deduct 1,000 gold from your coffers but offer you the opportunity to apparently skip the quest.

Head over to the Amelion Tomb and pop your neck in. You'll find Brusef Amelion's Cuirass and Sword in the second area of the tomb, but there are also other pieces of the armor lying around, as well, including the Gauntlets, which are lying on the floor in the first section of the tomb near where a cave-in occurs, and his helmet, which is behind some Wisp Stalks near a treasure chest in a small room just beyond the Cuirass and Sword. You can pick them up if you want, but the lady Amelion won't accept them, so they're just heavy, bad armor.

With the sword and armor in your possession, return them to Amelion and get her gratitude before returning to Cheydinhal for your reward.

Anvil: Den of Thieves

Azzan will tell you about a den of thieves that's been operating in the area. The Fighters Guild has been contracted to deal with the problem, so it's up to you to track down the thieves in their hidey-hole and wipe them out. Your sidekick for this mission is Maglir, whom you dealt with earlier.

Unfortunately, Azzan doesn't know the location of the thieves, and tells you to ask around for more information. Speaking to any friendly character will point you in the direction of Newheim the Portly, who's apparently been conducting his own investigation into the matter....



Let Maglir take some damage here. He can't die, and besides, it's fun!

Track Newheim down and speak to him, and he'll tell you that he thinks the thieves are located in Hrota Cave, not far from Anvil. He'll also give you the subquest Newheim's Flagon. If you can find his cup and bring it back to him, there might be a little something in it for you.

Hrota Cave is, as promised, just north of town, and contains numerous thieves of various sorts, from archers and mages to pure fighters. Maglir, for his sake, seems to be incapable of dying (which usually means he'll be playing some kind of major role in the later stages of the game, or at least in this guild's quests). Instead, he'll just fall unconscious when he takes lethal damage, so don't worry about protecting him.

Use the walls and corridors here to your advantage, luring the fighters back away from the archers so that you have an easier time of killing them. Divide and conquer, as per usual. When all of the enemies here are dead, flip yourself so that Newheim's Flagon is your active quest and use the compass pointer to track down his heirloom, which is on a table in a little cave depression at the rear of the cave.

With the thieves dead and Newheim's flagon in your possession, hand the heirloom back to Newheim for a few special potions you might find handy, then head to Azzan to complete the quest.

Chorrol: The Master's Son

When you speak to Modryn again, you'll receive a "mostly off the record" mission. You're to take Viranus Donton, the son of the guildmaster, out into the field to find Galtus Previa in the Nonwyll

Cavern near Chorrol. Galtus was looking for gems, but apparently never made it out of the cavern after heading in, so it'll be up to you to take Viranus out there, complete the mission, and get him back alive. Modryn is concerned that Vilena has been holding her son back, preventing him from getting the field experience necessary for advancement in the Fighters Guild.

Head on over to the Danton household to find Viranus, then grab him and take him up to Nonwyll cavern. He'll follow you if you fast-travel to any nearby marker, so go ahead and do so and walk to the cavern from anywhere that's convenient to you.

The first level of the cavern is fairly small, with two entrances to the ominously-named Chamber of the Titans. Viranus isn't necessarily the best fighter, though, so try to keep yourself between him and the enemies, and be sure to rest as often as possible to give him an opportunity to restore his health. He's likely invulnerable, as Maglir was in the last quest, but still, he'll be more useful to you if you can keep him on his feet.

When you find Galtus Previa's corpse, pick up the shield near his body and return it to Modryn. If you poked around in Leyawiin during the Drunk and Disorderly quest, you may recognize the make of the shield, even if Modryn isn't interested in talking about it just yet.

Chorrol: More Unfinished Business

After receiving your reward for the Master's Son quest, return to Modryn for your next assignment. Looks like it's time to babysit Maglir again; he's defaulted on yet another contract. It's your turn to clean up the mess and make sure the contract gets done properly.

Travel to Bravil as quickly as possible and find the Fighters Guild there. Speaking to anyone here will point you towards the Lonely Suitor Lodge, where you'll find Maglir, who's quit the Guild and has moved over to join the Blackwood Company, which, we have to say, has some pretty damn cool-looking armor. Anyway, if you were nice enough to give Maglir credit for completing his earlier botched assignment, he'll be kind enough to give you the name of the contract which he defaulted on; if you told Modryn the truth, he'll be standoffish, and you'll have to return to Modryn for the name of the quest-giver. Alternately, you can just search out Aryarie in the Bravil Mages Guild and approach her directly.



Imps ain't so tough, unless you're fairly low-level.

When you seek out Aryarie, she'll tell you of her need for Imp Gall, which can only be found on the bodies of Imps. Depending on your level, you may not be encountering Imps yet, or they may be awfully rare because you're above their level. Luckily, though, Aryarie will point you to Robber's Glen Cave, where Imps are to be found in abundance. There should be slightly more than 10 Imps inside, so feel free to cut them down as you like. Since all Imps prefer to fight with ranged spellcasting, feel free to take advantage of the uniformity of your enemies by practicing some spellcasting of your own or by fighting them with a bow. Either way you go, get your cull on and grab some galls.

When you have the ten Imp Galls, you'll get a popup message indicating that you can return to Aryarie. Do so for a small reward and to complete the quest. When you do so, return to Modryn and discuss the Blackwood Company with him. He'll bump you up in rank, and ask you to meet him at his house after dark to discuss the Company in more detail...

Chorrol: Azani Blackheart



It's kill or be killed in Atatar.

If you speak to Modryn in his house in Chorrol, he'll tell you of suspicious goings-on with the Blackwood Company. Apparently, the Fighters Guild took a force of 20 men to a place called Arpenia in an attempt to procure an artifact for a wizard, and saw most of them killed. The Blackwood Company went in and finished the job, which makes Modryn suspicious of their methods. If you agree to his request to help him look into the Company - and you can say no - he'll tell you to meet him in the Leyawiin Fighters Guild.

Meet him there, and he'll tell you that he'll follow you to Arpenia, an Ayleid Ruin that was the site of the disastrous mission. A cursory examination will reveal that the Blackwood Company likely paid off the target of the mission, allowing them to appear victorious while actually doing almost nothing. Those rotten scoundrels...Modryn will insist on visiting another nearby Ayleid Ruin, but you can feel free to explore the rest of Arpenia if you like before leaving.

Walk with Modryn to Atatar and try to avoid going out of your mind from boredom. Modryn will stop walking if you get too far from him, meaning that you can't walk ahead of him and wait for him at Atatar; you just have to stick with him until you both reach the ruins.

Atatar is a fairly simple ruin without too many twisting turns and the like. There are bandits inside, however, many of whom appear to enjoy poisoning their weapons. Luckily, you don't have to worry about Modryn overmuch, since he can't die; he'll just fall unconscious when he's taken enough damage.

Azani Blackheart is the sole inhabitant of Atatar Loria, the fourth level of the dungeon. He wields the Sinweaver sword, which drain your fatigue and deal extra fire damage to you with every strike. He's got plenty of health, so if you have any poisons banging around in your inventory, now

would be the time to apply them. Take him down, loot his body (being sure to pick up his ring) and the nearby rooms for goods, then give the ring to Modryn, who intends to use it as proof that the Fighters Guild was the one to kill Azani. He'll take off at this point, letting you make your own way back to Chorrol.

Third-Tier Quests

Cheydinhal: The Fugitives

If you speak to Burz in Cheydinhal, he'll tell you of a prison break in Bravil, where a group of fugitives is preying on the local populace. It's up to you to find the convicts and put them down for good: a little hard justice, Cyrodiil style.

Head down to Bravil and ask around about the fugitives. Most of the locals will be hesitant to talk about the matter with an outsider, so you'll probably need to either bribe or Speechcraft your way until your Disposition with one of them is above 60, then ask again. Doing so will net you the info you seek: there are four fugitives, and they're probably hiding out in Bloodmayne Cave.

After checking out the cave, you'll discover that there are indeed four fugitives inside. They've spread themselves out throughout the cave, though, so you'll be able to take them on one by one. For the most part, they'll be fairly easy to beat, although Enrion (the unarmored one) can cast plenty of spells, so you may want to hit him with a Silence poison or something similar before fighting him.

Beyond that, though, this is a straight-up slaughter. There shouldn't be any other creatures in the caves besides the odd Rat, so take all of the fugitives down before returning to Burz to turn the quest in.

Anvil: The Wandering Scholar

Azzan will give you a contract to track down and protect Elante of Alinor, a scholar who's interested in studying Daedric Shrines. She's holed up in Brittlorock Cave north of Anvil, so head on up and see what she needs.

Now, as you might imagine, the cave with the Daedric Shrine in it is going to have a lot of Daedra running around. If you're worried about keeping Elante alive, your best bet is to run ahead of her after reaching the cave and start taking down the enemies on your own. As in most escort missions, she'll stop moving after you get a bit ahead of her, so take advantage of that to move into the cave and take out any monsters that are in your path. Note that there are two levels of the cave, but that Elante will only need to reach the shrine on the first level. She doesn't go down to the second level, so if you don't want to explore, don't bother.



Trolls...why'd it have to be trolls?

When you've cleared out the entire level, return for Elante and walk her down to the shrine. She'll repay the favor by giving you a book that bumps your Blade skill upwards by one point. You can then return to Azzan to receive your gold reward.

Chorrol: Trolls of Forsaken Mine

When you reach Modryn again, he'll give you a sensitive quest: Viranus was sent to the Forsaken Mine to clear it out of trolls, and hasn't checked back in yet. You're to go there, and find out what happened to Viranus.

Before you set out for the mine, nab a fire damage weapon from your stash, if need be; trolls are primarily weak to fire. With that accomplished, warp to Leyawiin; the Forsaken Mine is located just south of there. A cursory examination of the opening areas will reveal the depths to which things sunk. The corpses of Fighters Guild members litter the caves, along with a solitary corpse of a Blackwood Company member. Hmmm....

You'll find Viranus in the Lost Passages section of the mine...or his body, at any rate. Gather the Bloody Journal from it as proof of what transpired, then exit the mine and bring it to Modryn. And that's the end of the quest!

Fourth-Tier Quests

Cheydinhal: The Noble's Daughter

Bruz tells you of an orcish nobleman who lives in the hills north of Cheydinhal, one Lord Rugdumph gro-Shurgak. His daughter is apparently missing, and he's contracted the Fighters Guild to help find her.

Head to Rugdumph's estate and let yourself inside. Speaking to the Lord will net you some information: he believes that his daughter might've been abducted by ogres, and asks you to track her down. This is a pretty simple matter, all told: just head out to the spot marked on your map, and you'll find a trio of Ogres. Rugdumph's daughter won't be able to help you fight, though, so you'll have to take them all down yourself. Ogres aren't pushovers, so come stocked with poisons or restorative potions to help you kill off the three baddies.



These ogres can be a handful. Split them up and take them down individually, if possible.

When all of the ogres are dead, escort the daughter back to the estate and speak to Lord Rugdumph to earn your reward. Rugdumph's sword casts Silence when it hits, meaning it'll completely shut down many spellcasting enemies if you use it against them.

Cheydinhal: Mystery at Harlun's Watch

For once, Bruz has a pair of quests to give you back to back. This time, he wants you to head out to Harlun's Watch, a small village just outside of town, to investigate a series of disappearances that have occurred there. Go out and speak to Drarana Thelis, who tells you a tale of "strange lights" that have been seen in the swamp to the southeast. When the villagers went out to investigate, they never returned. Sounds like Will-o-the-Wisps to us.

Investigation of the Swampy Cave will indeed reveal that Will-o-the-Wisps are the problem. Mages and spellcasting-oriented characters are going to have problems here, since Wills primarily drain or damage your Intelligence and Willpower, but Wills are never easy enemies, so regardless of your character class, you may want to bring along a quick-striking weapon with as powerful a magical damage enchantment as you can find.



Trolls like bones. Who knew?

In the end, though, this winds up being another kill-anything-that-moves mission. Luckily, the interior of the cave doesn't possess any Wills; only trolls populate it. When you find the corpses of the villagers, you'll be told to put the rest of the trolls out of their misery. Doing so will let you return to Drarana, who sounds a bit unemotional at the news that half the village has been killed. She will let you have a powerful Mind and Body Ring, though, which grants you a Strength bonus and damage reflection. You can then return to Bruz for your gold reward, and be sure to stop by the chapel to cleanse yourself of any attribute damage inflicted on you by the Wills!

Anvil: The Stone of St. Alessia

Azzan makes it clear that this is his last contract for you, so it sounds like your membership in the Fighters Guild is about to be advanced yet again. He wants you to travel to Bruma, where an important religious artifact, the Stone of St. Alessia, has been stolen from the Chapel there. Your goal? Get it back!

Talk to Cirroc in Bruma's chapel to learn that a group of bandits was responsible for the theft. They've been spotted leaving the city and heading east, so you'll just have to follow them and put a stop to their nefarious dealings.



'Yeah, I hate your life, too. That's why I've come here to end it.'

Head out of town and track down K'Sharr, the last remaining survivor of the bandits. Apparently they were jumped by ogres on their way out of town, and K'Sharr suspects that they've holed themselves up in Sedor, an Ayleid ruin far to the east. You can kill K'Sharr if you wish, but there's no point in doing so.

Travel to Sedor and head inside, having prepared yourself for battle with ogres beforehand, bringing along poisons if you don't think you're going to be able to take them down with magic or might. Sedor is a one-level ruin, so you shouldn't have any problems making your way around. To reach the Stone of St. Alessia, stand on the pressure plate to the southeast of its little cell, then travel west until you find the crosswalk above the gate; pressing the button here will open the doorway, allowing you to grab the stone and make your escape.

Return to Cirroc in Bruma and hand off the Stone to complete the quest, then speak to Azzan for your reward. You should, at this point, be promoted to Champion of the Fighter's Guild, which is as high as you can go without being running the damn place. Hmm....

The Endgame

Information Gathering

If you speak to Modryn after being promoted to Champion, he'll give you a new quest: you're to enter the Glademist Cave and "capture" one of the Blackwood Company leaders, a mage named

Ajum-Kagin. Exactly what this capturing entails isn't made clear, but supposedly you'll have some way to subdue the mage before bringing him back to Chorrol for questioning.



These guys aren't playing around!

After tracking down the Glademist Cave, save your game and head inside, but be ready for some badass fights. The Blackwood Company isn't some group of bandits playing at thievery; they're well-equipped and will put up a tremendous fight. Bring poisons and potions, as well as plenty of charged soul gems to power up your magical weapons, since there aren't any creatures that you'll be able to Soul Trap inside.

At any rate, your goal here isn't too much different than it has been for most of these quests: just kill anything and everything that you see. You need to clear out all of the guards before you can find Ajum-Kagin, who'll helpfully agree to follow you out of the cave. Make your way back out, then warp back to Chorrol and head to Modryn, who'll tell you to begin the interrogation yourself.



Bangup job on the frisking there, Modryn.

Now, at this point, you have a couple of options. Ajum won't talk initially, but if you either bribe him and increase his Disposition towards you, or start pounding away with your fists, he'll eventually reveal the size of the Blackwood Company, and the name of its leader. When you ask the secret behind its strength, though, he chooses self-immolation rather than tell you any more.

Infiltration

With the name of the leader of the Blackwood Company ringing in your head, Modryn gives you one more dangerous task: infiltrate the Blackwood Company and find out the secret behind it. Head down to Leyawiin and find their company HQ to enter the belly of the beast...

Find Jeetum-Ze in the Blackwood Company headquarters to apply for a job. No matter what your stats are at this point, he's going to assume that you're not strong enough to run with the big dogs, but will still take you on as a provisional member. Meet him in the training area in the basement of the hall for more details.



Wait a minute...goblins don't attack villages....

When you meet up with Jeetum and the rest of the clan, he'll fill you in on the company's secret sauce: something called Hist Sap, which, when imbibed, apparently gives you increased prowess in battle. Legal? Maybe, maybe not, but you'll have to drink it if you want to complete the mission. Despite your misgivings, suck it down and head out to Water's Edge.

After the short goblin skirmish here, head into each of the three houses and clear them out as well. These guys shouldn't give you any trouble at this point. When you're done, you'll be quite jarringly transported back to Modryn's house; he has a new assignment for you. He worries that the Blackwood Company might've attempted to take over the Water's Edge settlement. Why they would necessarily care about some podunk village is difficult to know, but apparently he's convinced that they are!

Anyway, return to Water's Edge and speak to Marcel Amelion, the sole surviving inhabitant of the town. Apparently, in your Hist Sap trance, you saw the entire population of the village as goblins and slaughtered the lot of them. Personally, we say that that's their fault for not being more unambiguously human, but hey.

The Hist

It all comes down to this: you have to infiltrate the Blackwood Company headquarters, find the Hist tree, and destroy it. Only Ri'Zakar will have the key to where it's locked away, though, so you'll have to obtain it somehow. The Company members aren't going to be happy to see you, though, so come loaded for bear: bring poisons, potions, charge up your magical weapons. Do anything you think you might need to do to get ready for a tough fight.

I'm Going In As soon as you enter the facility, you'll come face to face with at least three enemies, with Jeetum-Ze likely upstairs. With any luck, he'll get stuck on the stairs and not be able to reach you for the fight, which is a very good thing. If you walk in while he's downstairs, however, you'll have a four-on-one fight. At any rate, you can't walk in and just attack, or you'll rack up a murder bounty; instead, you have to wait for Ja'Fazir to approach you and tell you that your life is forfeit before the festivities can begin.

Here's a basic run-down on your enemies in this room: Ja'Fazir is a two-handed weapon warrior; Rana is a staff-using mage; Jeetum-Ze is a warrior that will cast some kind of Conjunction spell to summon in an extra fighter; and Geel, an archer who'll attempt to get some distance and fire away at you. Now, three of the enemies here are going to be Argonian, meaning that they'll be highly resistant to poison; if you're relying on Damage Health to get the job done, then you might have problems.



Start off with some poison on Ja'Fazir.

Ja'Fazir is the exception here; as a Khajiit, he won't have any resistance to poison, so feel free to hit him with whatever you've got. If you don't have any poison, then skip him and head for Rana first, since she appears to have the smallest amount of health. Try to engage the melee fighters in the dining room area, since Geel won't be able to hit you with arrows while you're in there. When you've eliminated Rana, go after Jeetum-Ze and Ja'Fazir, using potions to keep your health up, then exit the dining room area and take down Geel. Be sure to search him for arrows; he should have quite an assortment on him, depending on your level.

Kill The Hist! When everyone's dead, search Jeetum's body for Ri'Zakar's Key. As the name indicates, this guy's another Khajiit, so feel free to poison up your weapon before heading inside.

Kill him quickly, or his magical axe might do you in. Grab the Basement Key off of his body, then head downstairs and enter the basement, where the Hist Tree is being overlooked by two Argonians. Both of these guys have the capability to Conjure in helper creatures, so take them down quickly, then examine the tree. You'll need to find some way to destroy it....



You're like a Cyrodiilian Eliot Ness up in this place.

If you look around, you'll find two Loose Pipes. If you pick these up, then activate the Sap Pumps, they'll both be destroyed, which in turn will set the tree ablaze. Mission accomplished! Unfortunately, on your way out, Maglir will assault you, claiming that you finally wrecked his life. Although he's been complaining about the dangers of running contracts while having a family, you don't have many choices but to make some orphans here. Cut him down!

Now Look Who's Running The Place

Long story short? Returning to Modryn will net you the Helm of Oreyne Bearclaw, which will have some nice Agility and Endurance fortifications on it. He'll tell you to speak to Vilena. No matter what you tell her, she'll promote you to Guildmaster, and tell you that you'd be wise to bring Modryn back into the fold as your second-in-command.

After this point, there's little for you to do with the Fighter's Guild. If you need cash, you can tell Modryn to focus on getting contracts, but by this point in the game, you'll likely want to tell him to focus on recruitment, which will net you more magical items in the Master's Chest upstairs in the guildhall in Chorrol.

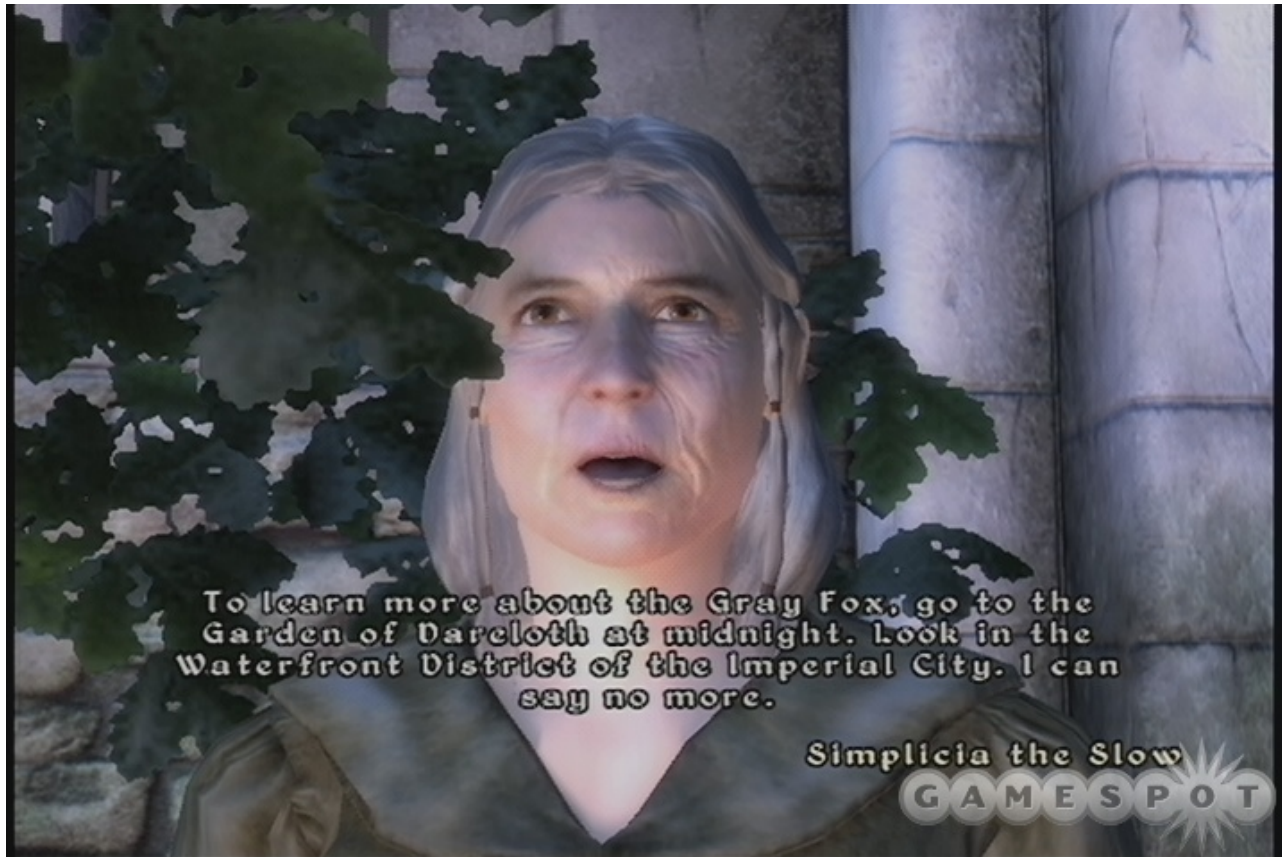
Thieves Guild

Ah, the Thieves Guild. As you might expect, your objectives here will require the utmost skills in the art of Sneaking and Security, so if you're not playing a pure thief character, you might want to wait until you're level 10 before joining. At level 10, you'll be able to get the Ring of Khajiiti from the Shrine of Meridia and the Skeleton Key from the Shrine of Nocturnal, both of which will make your progress here much, much easier. If worst comes to worst, you can also contract vampirism, which will eventually add 20 points to your Sneak ability, as well as most of your other abilities, in addition to giving you a reusable 120-second invisibility power.

Joining The Thieves Guild

The Thieves Guild is a bit more difficult to join than the Mages Guild or the Fighters Guild. Unlike those guilds, there aren't any fancy recruitment centers, and you won't get any directions from the guards on how to join. Instead, you'll just have to stick your nose in the dirt and find them yourselves.

There are a couple of ways to earn the invite into the Thieves Guild. The first is fairly simple: get caught stealing something and go to jail. This isn't difficult, obviously; just walk into a shop and pick something up while the storekeeper can see you. Make it something cheap, preferably, and be sure that you don't have any other stolen items on your person when the guards come looking for you, as they'll be confiscated. Choose to go to jail to serve out your sentence, then sleep the night away. When you pop out, you'll be contacted by a Thieves Guild member who'll clue you in to a secret meeting in the Imperial City's Waterfront District at midnight. (It's best to commit your crime in the Imperial City, or it can take the thief a good bit of time to find you.)



Thanks for the tip, granny.

Alternately, you can let it be known in certain circles that yes, you want to make more money - sure, we all do! Read one of the Wanted: Grey Fox posters that are scattered around the city, usually near one of the entrances to each zone. If you then speak to any beggar (who wander the streets during the days and curl up on bedrolls at night), you can bribe or Speechcraft them above 70 Disposition, they'll also tell you of their adherence to the Gray Fox, and let you know about the meet in the Waterfront District.

If you head to the Waterfront at midnight, you should be able to find Armand Christophe, one of the Thieves Guild mucky-mucks, standing in the gardeb behind an abandoned shack in the slum section of the zone, starting around 11:30 PM. A couple of other wannabe thieves will also be nearby. Note that Armand will need a decent level of Disposition before he'll agree to give you a chance to join the guild.

Armand Christophe's Quests

May The Best Thief Win

Armand's first task for you can be difficult to complete, unless you know precisely what to do. You and the two other prospective thieves are told to seek out and steal the diary of one Amantius Allectus and get it back to him, without killing him or either of the other prospective thieves. He tells you that the beggars might be able to spur you on the correct path to Amantius.

Grabbing The Diary If you intend to complete the quest correctly, follow the green arrow on your compass to Puny Ancus, a sleeping beggar on a bedroll just to the north of the garden. If

you speak to him about Amantius, and offer him five gold, he'll tell you where Amantius lives: on the eastern side of the Temple District!

If you fast-travel to the Temple district and follow the markers on your compass, you should be able to find Amantius' house near the exit to the Arboretum. If you want the diary, pick the lock on the door, then find the wooden desk (it'll be called "Desk" when you move your crosshairs over it) in the main room of the house, which you should be in. Inside is the diary.

Stealing from Methredhel Now, note that Methredhel seems to know precisely where the diary is located as soon as Armand gives out the quest, and it's quite possible that she'll beat you to Amantius' house before you can make your way there yourself, and if she does, she won't hesitate to nab the diary and keep it for herself. This will take no more than an hour or so of gametime.



He who steals last, steals best. Or something like that.

If this occurs, then your next objective will be to steal the diary back from Methredhel's house. You can bribe a beggar to get the location, or you can just check your map: it's right next to the garden where you're meeting with Armand. You can probably sneak in and steal the diary in the middle of the night, when the inhabitants are sleeping (it's in the chest inside), or you can just wait until Methredhel is out and about in the afternoon and steal it then. Either way, you'll have the diary and will be able to turn it in to Armand to finish the quest.

In terms of time and effort, this is probably the easiest way to complete the quest. When Armand tells you to get the diary, simply wait for two hours, and you'll get the popup telling you that Methredhel has stolen the diary. You can then enter her home (she shouldn't be inside yet), pop the chest, grab the diary, and finish the quest, all within a few minutes of playtime.

Last But Not Least If you manage to really screw up and let Methredhel not only steal the diary, but also turn it in, then Armand will give you one last shot at getting into the guild. You need to head to the A Fighting Chance shop in the Market District and steal a special sword from the proprietor. When that's done, you can bring it to Armand and finally join the Thieves Guild.

Independent Thievery

This is a pretty free-form quest: there are some special tasks that Armand can give to you, but he needs to know that you're going to be a decent thief before he'll assign anything. How can you show him your chops, you ask? Well, you need to move a certain amount of stolen merchandise through one of the Thieves Guild fences. After 50 gold's worth of stolen goods have been moved through Ongar, a fence in Bruma, you'll be able to talk to Armand again and get your first quest.

At this point, you can sit back, relax, and let the thieving begin. While you only need 50 gold for the first quest to be unlocked, you're going to need an awful lot of stolen loot to get through the entire quest line: 1,000 gold's worth of merchandise, all told. Generally speaking, you can steal from almost anywhere, but in general, shops are going to be the best place to get high-quality, high-cost merchandise with a minimum of trouble. You can ply your wares at the shops in the Imperial District, if you wish; the jewelry shop is a great way to find that first 50 gold's worth of stolen goods. Just be sure to head into the shop between midnight and six AM or so, and be sure no one sees you picking the lock.

Since your fence is in Bruma, though, you may find it more convenient to just head to Bruma and do a little thieving there. A good first target is the Hammer and Axe shop on the north side of town, near the Mages Guild. If you bust in after midnight, you should find the usual assortment of weapons and armor: good value, but a bit heavy. If you look in all the cupboards, however, you're likely to find a decent number of potions and scrolls. Lightweight, very pricey. Selling them to Ongar will net you a pretty penny in profit, and likely pave the way for you to accept a few commissions in a row from Armand, who will only appear in the garden in the Imperial City at midnight. You might find him wandering around at other times, but he will refuse to discuss business with you unless it's at the proper time and place.

Untaxing The Poor

After fencing 50 gold worth of items, return to Armand to get your first Thieves Guild quest. It appears that Heironymous Lex, one of the captains of the Imperial Guard, made a point of taxing all the residents of the Waterfront, presumably as a punitive measure for their complicity in the ways of the Thieves Guild. Armand wants you to find where the tax money is being held, steal it, and also take a ledger that details who paid what, so that everyone can get their money back.



Be careful when you're in the Undercroft; you've got both a ghost and a guard to deal with.

Now, you can ask a beggar if need be, but your destination is marked on your map from the get-go. You need to head to the South Watchtower, which can be reached from either the Temple District or the Arboretum. You'll want to wait until mid-day to attempt this quest, though, as entering at night will mean that Heironymous will likely be present in his room, and if you head in while he's awake, he'll immediately bust you.

Anyway, this isn't a very difficult mission. Just head into the South Watchtower and start climbing ladders. When you reach the second set of barracks, you'll technically be trespassing, so you'll want to be sure that no one sees you when you attempt to pick the lock leading up to Lex's office. We entered this room at around 11:30 AM, and all the inhabitants were sleeping on their beds, allowing us to make a stealthy entrance. When you do reach Lex's office, find the desk in one corner of the room, then take the ledger and the gold and return to Armand at midnight to complete the quest.

The Elven Maiden

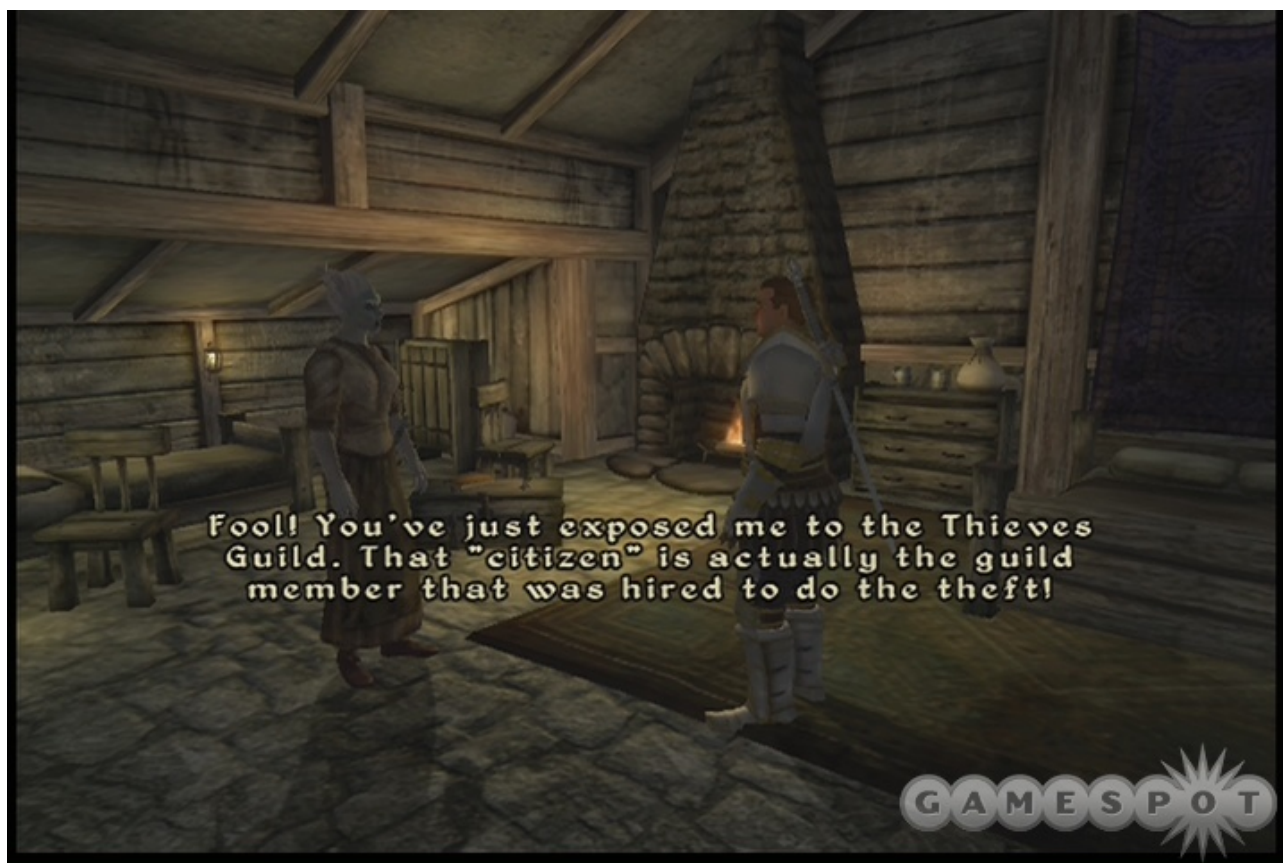
Fencing Requirement: 100 Gold A simple thieving mission: your goal is to acquire the state of Llathasa Indarys, former Countess of Cheydinhal, from that particular city. If you head to Cheydinhal and speak to one of the beggars there (one should be noted on your compass), you'll learn that the bust has been placed in the Chapel Undercroft, which may be haunted. This calls for more investigation...

Head to the Grand Chapel of Arkay and sneak inside. If you head into the Chapel Undercroft,

you'll note that there is indeed a guard on patrol down here. She walks a pretty consistent route, though, and one that takes her well away from the bust, so you shouldn't have a problem avoiding her and grabbing the statue. Note, however, that attempting to loot the tomb here will cause a vengeful ghost to spawn in and attack you, which will make it more difficult for you to escape undetected. If the guard does spot you, you'll have a bounty on your head, and will probably lose the sculpture if you don't resist arrest and run out of town. With a high enough Sneak skill, though, it shouldn't be a problem.

Return to the Waterfront Unfortunately, there is a problem when you return to the Waterfront: it's crawling with Watchmen, all of whom are looking for Armand. You won't be able to meet with him here, and in fact are told to search out another member of the Thieves Guild to inquire with. If you see Carwen walking around, then she'll be a good one to speak to; otherwise, you can cut to the chase and head straight for Methredhel's house, who'll fill you in on the goings-on.

Apparently, Armand never did receive a commission to obtain Llathasa's bust; he was merely using its acquisition as an excuse to root out an informant within the Thieves Guild. If you speak to Methredhel, she'll give you a name: one Myvryna Arano, who lives on the Waterfront. To eliminate her from the guild, your task is to sneak into her house and plant the bust in her cupboard, then go to Hieronymous Lex, who's making a show of personally attending the rousting in the Waterfront, and tell him where to find it.



Sucks to be you, babe.

Sneaking into Myvryna's house is easier than typing her name, so long as you attempt to do so in the dark of night. Just stand by her door in sneaking mode and wait for the guards to look away from you, then head inside and activate her cupboard; the bust will be placed in there automatically. Sneak back outside without waking her.

If you speak to Heironymous after planting the bust, you'll be able to tell him where it is. Unfortunately, he won't believe you unless your Disposition with him is above 70, so you'll have to either bribe him or Speechcraftify your way up to the upper reaches of his good esteem. When he trusts you enough, though, your tip will persuade him, and he'll enter Myrvryryryrna's house and nab her for the crime. After that, you'll have to wait for Armand to show up at next midnight, then turn the quest in. He'll bump you up in rank, and refer you to S'Kriiva in Bravil for more assignments.

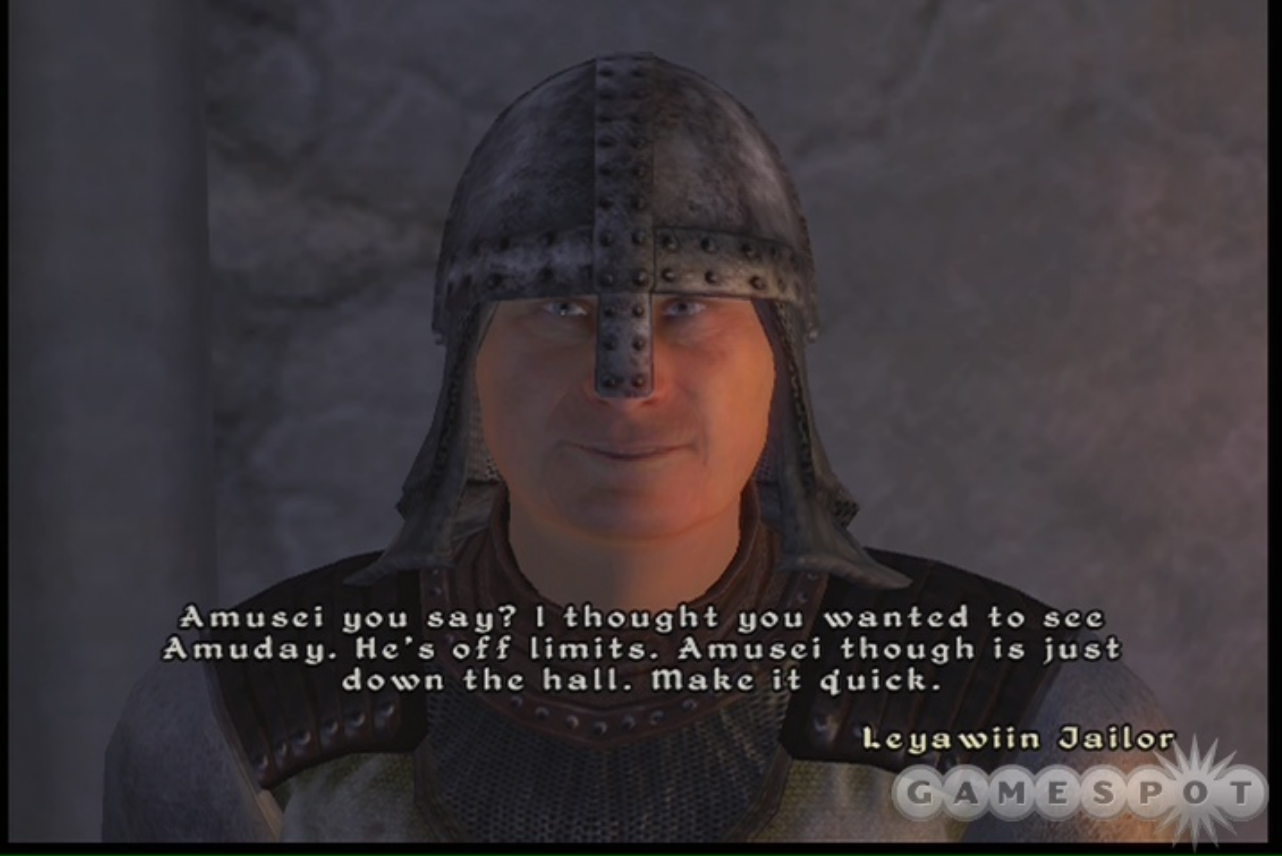
S'Krivva's Quests

Ahdarji's Heirloom

Fencing Requirement: 200 Gold

A widow of a Thieves Guild member has had an item stolen from her, and S'Krivva wishes you to travel to Leyawiin and retrieve the item for the woman. Sounds simple enough!

If you travel to Leyawiin, you can either find Ahdarji's house on your own, or ask a beggar for the info. Speak to the widow, and she'll tell you who you're looking for...and ask that you make him suffer for his crime. Speak to a beggar again to learn that Amusei has been arrested, and is currently rotting away in the Leyawiin jail. You'll need to bribe a jailor if you wish to speak with him.



Amusei you say? I thought you wanted to see Amuday. He's off limits. Amusei though is just down the hall. Make it quick.

Leyawiin Jailor

GAMESPOT

A little bribery goes a long way in Leyawiin.

Head into Castle Leyawiin and find the Dungeon within. If you spot a Jailor, stop him or her and bribe them with 20 gold coins; that'll refresh their memory as to Amusei's whereabouts. Head down and speak to him. You'll need to bribe Amusei, as well, before he'll tell you about the ring. Hand over a single lockpick, and he'll tell you that the ring that Ahdarji's husband gave her must've originally been stolen from the Countess of Leyawiin, who has reclaimed it as her own! Things aren't so simple after all.

If you speak to a beggar, Ahdarji, or bribe one of the castle guards up above 70 disposition, you'll be referred to Hlidara Mothril, the Countess' attendant. She'll tell you what you've probably been suspecting thus far: the Countess wears the ring constantly, except when she sleeps. (Note that it's impossible to pickpocket the ring off of the Countess, so don't even try.) It's probably going to be necessary to sneak into her rooms in the middle of the night and take the ring from the jewelry box.

Tip: If you want to be really sneaky, head into the Castle Basement and look around for a lever in a busted barrel along the southern wall. Pulling it will let you access the Secret Room, which connects to the Private Quarters.



Avoid this one guard, and you should be able to steal the ring without a problem.

Wait around until one or two in the morning, then save your game and enter the Lords' Manor Private Quarters section of the castle. There should only be one guard on patrol, who'll walk a route leading from the Countess' room to the entrance to the Private Quarters. Now, if you're really unlucky, you'll enter the Private Quarters just as the guard is walking up to the door, meaning that you'll instantly be caught. If he's on patrol, though, head down the hallway past the door leading to the Countess' chambers, wait for him to pass, then sneak around to the Count's room. Bust open the jewelry box and grab the ring, then read the Warrior book on one of the

nearby bookshelves to increase your Block skill. With that done, all you have to do is avoid the guard and make your way out of the castle to collect your reward.

When speaking to Ahdarji, tell her that Amusei attempted to sell the ring back to the Count, and she'll let slip what her own uses for it are, as well as double the payment offer that she made earlier. Give the ring back to her, and head back to S'Krivva for your next assignment.

Misdirection

Fencing Requirement: 300 Gold

Apparently Hieronymous Lex and the Imperial Watch are rousting the inhabitants of the Waterfront District, one of Gray Fox's bases. It's up to you and Methredhel to coordinate the Thieves Guild's response to this infraction.

Your first goal here is to just find Methredhel, who's hiding away somewhere in the Imperial City. Head there and speak to a beggar to learn that Methredhel is hiding in Dynari Amnis' house in the Talos Plaza district. Head over there to speak to her. Her plot? You need to take part in a high-profile heist, one of five that will be carried out simultaneously. If all goes as planned, the concurrent thefts will draw Lex away from the waterfront as he scrambles to catch the thieves, one of whom will be you. Crystal Meth here wants you to invade the Arcane University and steal Hrormir's Staff from the Archmage, who sleeps from one until seven in the morning, every morning. Sounds like a plan.

Off To See The Wizard Actually stealing Hrormir's Staff isn't all that difficult. Just wait until one in the morning, then enter the bottom level of the Arcane University. You're not considered to be trespassing - yet. Wait for a few moments until any residents of the room leave, then step on the platform nearby to reach the Arch-Mage's Tower Council Chambers.

At this point, if you're detected, then you might want to reload your last autosave, since you're technically trespassing and whomever caught you will likely follow you up to the Arch-Mage's Quarters. You may be able to warp ahead of them and quickly grab Hrormir's Staff before they follow you, but still - it's probably not worth the risk.

When you're alone with the sleeping Archmage, grab the staff off of his chest of drawers, then sneak the note you were given into his nightstand. If you want to poke around a bit in the room, feel free to do so. The nightstand itself can't be opened without a key, and the only way to obtain the key is to pickpocket the Archmage himself, but there isn't anything of worth in the nightstand. Regardless of what you do, take the Staff and return to Methredhel.

Spying on Lex Now that you've returned the Staff, Methredhel has a new task for you. Since when did she become your commanding officer, anyway? In all likelihood, you managed to steal that dude's diary out from under her nose and got into the Thieves Guild first. Saucy wench, bossing you around...



Even the Mages Guild summon Dremora when it suits them.

Anyway, she wants you to spy on Lex, staying close enough to overhear his conversations, but far enough to not be detected. She's sure he'll eventually be ordered to return the guards to their normal postings, and wants to know the moment it occurs.

Head back to the Waterfront District and hop up onto one of the houses near where Heironymous has stationed himself. You don't necessarily need to remain hidden during this little stakeout; just don't get in Lex's face is all. Within minutes, a Dremora will appear bearing a note for Lex, ordering him to move off of the Waterfront. Wait for him to walk away, then grab the note off of the ground and return to Crystal Meth.

Returning the Staff To stay in the good graces of the Mages Guild, Meth wants you to return Hrormir's Staff to them, but not to where you stole it - far too dangerous, that. Instead, you're to take it to Ontus Vanin's home and put it into one of his chests, where he'll find it before too long.

Ontus' home is elsewhere in the Talos Plaza district, so you shouldn't have a problem finding it. This should be the easiest part of the entire quest: just pick the lock on Ontus' home, sneak up to his living quarters, find the chest, and drop the staff inside. With that, you're done. We went in at eight AM to find that he wasn't present, but you can likely also enter in the middle of the night to catch him sleeping.

Lost Histories

Fencing Requirement: 400 Gold

According to S'Krivva, a thief named Theranis was sent to Skingrad to obtain a special book for the Gray Fox himself, entitled Lost Histories of Tamriel. He's gone missing, however, so you're to follow up on the task, find out what happened to Theranis if possible, but above all else find the book and return it to S'Krivva. Before you leave, though, be sure to buy or make a Cure Disease potion.

Head out to Skingrad and speak to a beggar to learn that Theranis has had a trip to the dungeon, courtesy of his loose tongue. You'll need to break into the dungeon if you want to speak to Theranis, so head on up to Castle Skingrad and find the entrance to the dungeon in the Courtyard.

If you speak to the Jailor in charge of the dungeon, he'll offer to lock you up when you attempt to bribe him, so that method of getting into the dungeon is out. Even if you pick the lock, or pickpocket the key from him, Theranis isn't actually in the dungeon at this point, so there's no real reason to enter yet. If you inquire with the jailor about a job, though, he'll point you in the direction of Shum gro-Yarug, the Count's butler, who's apparently hiring.

Slop Drudge Head on over to the County Hall and speak to Shum, who has the perfect job for you: he needs you to take food to the prisoners. Well...that'll work. Accept the job, return to the dungeon, then head inside and speak to Larthjar.

Larthjar has an interesting tale to tell, regardless of whether you help him escape or no. He speaks of Theranis and how he was locked up with an Argonian, who were both then taken away by the "Pale Lady". Apparently she comes to take away the prisoners periodically. Some return... some don't. If you know what the Count does late at night, you probably have an idea of what's been happening.



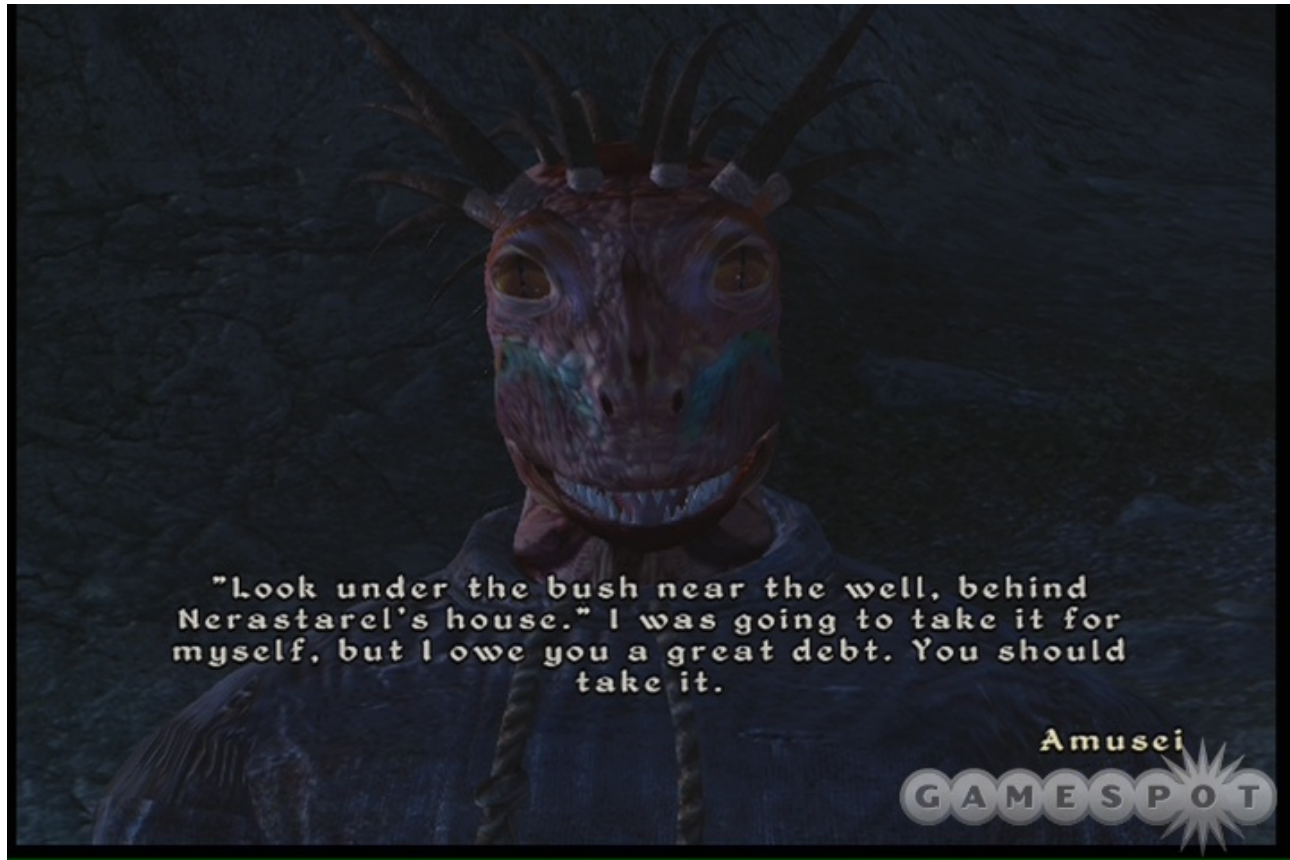
There's plenty of blood to follow in the Skingrad castle.

Following The Trail According to Larthjar, the Argonian was taken away fairly recently, and was bleeding profusely at the time. If you follow the blood spattered on the floor, you'll find that it leads to a dead-end. Activating the Strange Candle on the wall, though, will reveal a secret passage leading on to another sub-section of the castle, and from there to the Wine Cellar. Note that the Wine Cellar is off-limits to you, so you'll be given a bounty if you're caught. Wait until after midnight to head inside.

When you do enter the Wine Cellar, follow the passage that's revealed to you until you come to three large casks of wine. If you can find another Strange Candle on the easternmost side of the room, the middle cask will open, revealing a hidden passage. The Pale Lady awaits you at the end of it. She is, of course, a Vampire, and will attack you on sight. She's not overly tough, though, so lay the smack down and hope you don't contract Prophyric Hemophilia.

Rescuing Amusei Theranis lies nearby, dead on the ground. Apparently the Pale Lady has been taking prisoners and using them to fill bottles of blood, presumably for both her and the Count's consumption. He's not going to be any help to you, but the recurrent Amusei will be. He's locked up nearby, and offers to tell you where the book is hidden if you manage to get him out of the castle.

Now, so long as it's fairly late at night, say around 3:00 AM, you should have a clean run to escape the castle without being detected. Follow the markers on your compass to reach the Dining Hall, which in turn will lead you to a small section of the County Hall, which will lead you to the Courtyard. If you can get from there to the door leading to the West Weald, you should be able to run like hell across the bridge to reach safety. If you do spot a guard, try to avoid them; being spotted escaping isn't necessarily an automatic bounty, so as long as you don't talk to them you might avoid any entanglements. When you're on the bridge, then, just run as fast as you can across it. Amusei luckily isn't one of the escorts that'll stop moving when you get too far away; he'll eventually catch up even if you outpace him.



Amusei is pretty grateful, for a thief.

Finding The Book Amusei, when rescued and spirited away from the castle, will tell you precisely where Teranis hid the book: behind a bush, near Nerastarel's house in town. Use your compass pointer to track it down, then return it to S'Krivva for your reward.

Taking Care of Lex

Fencing Requirement: 500 Gold

It's time to eliminate Heironymous Lex once and for all. You're not going to murder him, though; that's a job for the Dark Brotherhood. Instead, you're to ensure that Heironymous is transferred to a station in Anvil, where he'll be well out of the way and will be unable to do the Thieves Guild any significant harm.

The plan is thus: a letter has arrived in Castle Anvil with a list of recommendations for Countess Umbranox's personal guard. You're to steal the letter, have a forgery made that highly recommends Lex for the position, sneak into the Imperial Watch, seal the forgery with the legion commander's seal, then deliver it to Countess Umbranox personally.

Into The Castle Head to Anvil and speak to a beggar. They can't give you any specific tips, beyond vague warnings of "secret" things about the castle, and a recommendation to find the castle Blacksmith. Make your way into the castle and find the door leading to the Smithy. It's there that you'll find Orrin, who's apparently on the Thieves Guild payroll; he'll unlock a secret passage for you that should let you get close to Dairihill's office without being detected.

The passage to the Living Quarters is marked in red, so be sure to have full Sneak gear on before heading in. If you enter while Darihill is out and about, such as between 8:00 PM and 10:00 PM, you shouldn't have a problem breaking the locks on the door and the desk and stealing the list of recommended officers. Get out of the castle and head back to Anvil to confer with your beggar contacts yet again; it's time to find a forger.

It's A Forgery! Speaking to any of the beggars will put you on the track to speak to the enigmatic Stranger, who's apparently the only one that can make the kind of forgery you need. He lives in an abandoned house in Anvil, so visit him and give him the letter. He'll need a full day to prepare the forgery, so feel free to let loose and explore a bit in the meantime, maybe shut down an Oblivion Gate or two.

When a day has passed, bring The Stranger's fee (500 gold) to him to receive the forged letter. Now all you need is to impress it with the Imperial Watch Commander's seal, and you'll be home free.



Lex doesn't quite understand the transfer...but go he will.

Impressive...Most Impressive This part's as easy as could be. If you travel to the Imperial Prison district, wait around until midnight or so, then break into the Imperial Legion Offices, you'll find that it's deserted. The Commander's seal is lying atop his desk, so simply use it to seal the forged letter, then bust out of there, but not before re-checking his chest next to the desk, which should be chock full of spicy equipment you can steal and sell to raise money for the rest of the quests in the Thieves Guild.

At this point, you're basically home free. Hand the forged letter off to Umbranox, get the transfer orders from her, then track Lex down in the Imperial City and hand them off to him. Off he goes

into the sunset, leaving you only to return to S'Krivva to hand in the quest.

Gray Fox Quests

Well, you've grown in stature in the Thieves Guild, enough so that the Gray Fox himself will soon be calling on you. When you have 600 gold fenced off, wait around in one of the cities of Cyrodiil for a messenger, and you'll soon meet up with the man himself...

Turning A Blind Eye

Fencing Requirement: 600 Gold

When you get the note that the Gray Fox is looking for you, head to the Imperial City (any district will do), wait an hour or two, then just put your controller down and stand still for a little while. Methredhel is coming to find you, but she's walking fairly slowly, so you need to give her time to reach you without dashing about all willy-nilly. When she does make contact, she'll tell you to head to the homd of Helvius Cecia in Bruma. Do so, dressed in your Sunday finest, to meet with the man himself.

Do your best not to laugh at the Gray Fox, despite his uncanny resemblance to Dumb Donald from Fat Albert. He'll give you a tall order: travel to the Temple of Ancestor Moths, a monastery far in the mountains in the northeast of Cyrodiil, and retrieve Savilla's Stone. You should have the monastery marked on your map, near Azura's Shrine. It shouldn't be difficult to get to, especially if you're on horseback.

Talking To The Monks When you reach the Temple, head into the Monk's Quarters nearby and speak to Brother Holger. If you speechify or bribe your way into his good graces, he'll offer to walk you into the nearby Ancestor Moth Crypt. (Note that this is completely optional, and if you want to bypass the monks altogether, you can just pick the lock on the crypt and head inside.)



Feel free to slaughter the monks, should you wish to do so.

When you reach the Temple of the Moth Halls, your Blood Price restriction for Thieves Guild quests, which prevents you from slaughtering anyone who gets in your way, is suddenly turned off. You can kill any of the Blind Moth Prelates you happen to encounter from here on in, if you wish, or you can just sneak past as many of them as you can, if you want to leave them be. They're not really doing anything evil, after all; they're just trying to protect a holy artifact. Still, if you want to bring righteousness to the temple, feel free to get bloody. Note that the monks do a good job of backing each other up, though, so even if you think you're only taking on one, you're likely to draw in any other monks nearby to the fight. So if you can't handle your big fights, sneaking is the way to go here. You'll have to pick more locks if you sneak (due to not getting keys off the priests' bodies), but hey: you're in the Thieves Guild.

Anyway, make your way through the Halls and the Catacombs until you reach the Caverns of the Moth. Make your way past the traps and the undead, collecting the useful Damage Health-affecting Wisp Stalk Caps along the way, until you reach the Shrine, the centerpiece of the temple. You'll notice Savilla's Stone lying atop a slab in the center of the shrine, so kill its defender, then take the Stone. There are plenty of treasure chests in the area, so feel free to loot all of them, then make your way to the northeast, where a ladder will lead you back up to the surface.

Tip: You might want to grab the "Instructions: The Gray Cowl" page from the nearby chest before hitting up the ladder; it'll offer a hint as to why the Gray Fox wanted you to infiltrate the Temple.

With the Stone in hand, return to Cecilia's house in Bruma and hand it off to the Gray Fox. If you picked up the note in the chest, you'll be able to question him about the cursed Nocturnal's Cowl that he wears. Regardless, hand him the Stone to complete the quest.

Arrow of Extrication

Fencing Requirement: 700 Gold

Your next meeting with the Gray Fox will be in Chorrol, at Malintus Ancrus' house there. The Gray Fox needs you to find the Arrow of Extrication, which is in the possession of Bravil's court wizard, one Fathis Aren. You can kill Fathis if need be, so long as he doesn't die in the castle itself. Gray Fox seems to be playing hard and fast with the rules here....

Tip: If you want to access some semi-hidden sections of the upcoming areas, bring along either a water-breathing amulet or some potions with a waterbreathing effect.

Head to Bravil and interrogate a beggar. After getting your Jack Bauer on, they'll let slip that Fathis has a tower outside the city walls, where he keeps his most valuable possessions. It's locked up tight, though, and only Fathis has the key. Apparently there's some kind of secret passage leading from the castle to the tower, though. Time to root around a bit.

Searching The Tower Enter the castle and start following the red dots on your compass. Head into Lord's Manor North Wing and start rooting around. (Note that you'll probably need to do this during the day to avoid getting caught by the guards.) You'll see a green arrow on your map, indicating your destination, but you may want to explore the Count's rooms to the southeast, where you can find a jewelry box, as well as a book on the shelves that'll increase your Marksman skills.

After entering and searching Fathis' room, you'll note that there's not much loot of a magical nature in the area. Time to start looking for that secret passage...if you examine the rest of the room closely, you'll note that one of the arches on the north side has a Moveable Pillar outside of it. Activate it to reveal a hidden door leading to the Wizard's Grotto.



Be ready for plenty of Daedra in the Wizard's Grotto.

El Grotto Flip yourself back into action mode when you enter this area, as there are a few monsters roaming the halls, including perhaps a Dremora. Apparently Fathis is a conjurer, or at least has conjurers on staff, and indeed you'll eventually run into one of them on the northern side of this little dungeon area, near a locked door. Nearby, you'll come across a deep, deeeep pool of water. There's a dead end on the far side of it, leaving you nowhere to go but down. If you poked around in the little area the conjurer was in, you probably found a Potion of the Sea; now would be a good time to suck it down and get some waterbreathing.

Now, there are actually two exits from the pool of water here. The first lies along a small passageway on the north side of the pool, twenty or thirty feet under the water level; you can check your map to see precisely where this is in relation to the cavern's dimensions, then just head down the water and check the sides of the pool to find the passageway. This is the correct way to move on if you're looking for Fathis' tower entrance. If you head down alllll the way to the bottom of the pool, though, you'll run across a Giant Slaughterfish with some amusingly weird stuff on its corpse, as well as an exit that leads out to the middle of Niben Bay, out in the middle of the water. There's nothing to find when you exit into the bay, though, besides a small chest. Still, it's interesting!

Anyway, when you find the northern passage underneath the pool, follow it along and start exploring the eastern section of the Wizard's Grotto. You'll eventually come to the door to the Wizard's Lair, which you can rampage through to reach Fathis Aren's Tower.

Aren's Tower When you reach Aren's tower, you have two options: kill him, or let him live. No matter when you enter the tower, Fathis is likely to be around and waiting with a gaggle of Daedra to discourage interlopers from entering the tower. There'll probably also be a conjurer

nearby, as well, so you're going to have a bunch of free-standing Daedra to deal with, two wizards, and the conjured creatures of those two wizards. Fun.



Aren's got a host of creatures around to do his bidding.

If you're playing a thief character, then your best bet is to just dash up to the second-highest level of the tower, find Aren's chest, grab the Key-Shaped Arrowhead and Aren's Tower Key, and then drop back down to the first floor to exit the Tower. If you want to kill off Aren and his helper, then you'll probably be best off heading to the very top floor of the tower and jump across to the inaccessible ledge; this will prevent the conjurers from reaching you, and will also block off any Daedroth or Clannfears, if you're of a high enough level to make them appear. From the ledge, you can poison your arrow shots and attempt to hit both Aren and his helper, or just kill them normally.

Regardless of your choice, you need to get the key-shaped arrowhead from Aren's chest before you leave. You can pick the lock if you don't want to fight him, or just kill him and grab the key off of his body.

Returning the Arrowhead to Gray Fox will net you your 500 gold reward, as well as access to the best fence in the Fighters Guild, Fathis Ules. Note that Fathis is usually bugged and won't give you the option to buy or sell. PC users can download mods to unlock his bartering abilities, but 360 users will likely have to head back to the fence in Bravil for their bartering needs.

The Boots of Springheel Jack

Fencing Requirement: 800 Gold

Head to Ganredhel's house in Cheydinhal for your next meeting with the Fox. He tells you to head to the Imperial City, where a man named Jakben lives. Note that upstairs in Ganredhel's house, you can find the Dance In Fire, Chapter I book, which will increase your Acrobatics skill by one.

Apparently Jakben is the latest descendent of Springheel Jak, a famous thief who died hundreds of years ago. Gray Fox needs the thief's boots for his master plan, but doesn't know where Jak was buried, so you're off to see if you can't find the burial site. Time for some graverobbing!

Tracking Down Imbel Head to the Imperial City and hit up a beggar for more info. Jakben Imbel has a house in the Talos Plaza district, keeps to himself, and only goes out after dark. (Vampire ahoy!) You can break into the house either during the day or during the night, honestly. If you go in during the day and brace Jakben, he'll offer up the key to the family crypts, which are under the house, in no time flat. (What a wuss! Maybe he's not a vampire after all.) In fact, this is the only way to enter the catacombs; if you enter at night, then Imbel won't be at home, and there don't appear to be any duplicate keys for the Catacombs.

Key in hand, head to the basement and find the entrance to the Catacombs. After entering, you'll come across...vampires! There should be three of them altogether, including a powerful Vampire Matriarch. Do your best to take them down without contracting the Vampire disease, then head into the tomb of Springheel Jak and open the chest. The boots aren't in there, but you will find a diary which, when read, reveals that Springheel Jak and Jakben Imbel are one and the same. And be sure to watch out...because he's right behind you!!!!!!!



Jakben does his best to finish you off, but even he can't stand up to your thieving prowess.

Not joking, either; Jakben will come down and start swinging away at you as soon as you open the crypt. As a vampire, he's fairly powerful, and he packs some nice levelled equipment, as well. Take him out as best you can, then grab Springheel Jak's boots off of his body. Done, and done.

This might be a good time to take off and adventure a bit before returning to the Gray Fox. The Boots of Springheel Jak aren't necessarily going to make the game any easier, but the ability to leap tall buildings in a single bound can lend some interesting aspects to dungeon crawling, especially for marksmen. You can often jump up onto ledges and other parts of the dungeon geometry to become unhittable by melee opponents, letting you snipe away without fear of getting pounded.

The Ultimate Heist



Much like the Ark of the Covenant, this powerful magical artifact is kept locked up in a basement.

Fencing Requirement: 1,000 Gold

Meet up with Gray Fox in Othrelo's house in the Elven Gardens district for your ultimate assignment. And it's a doozy! According to the Fox, you're to enter the Imperial Palace via the sewers, activate the Glass of Time, use the Arrow of Extrication to unlock a door, kill a priest, burn an Elder Scroll, fall to your death, then become reborn again as the Avatar of Azuna. Wait, that's not it...well, the whole plan is a bit beyond summarizing, so let's just get to work!

Stuff you'll probably want before you embark on this quest: Cure Disease potions (or the spell). Plenty of arrows, even if you haven't been using a bow thus far. Potions of Invisibility can be

handy, especially if your sneak skill isn't very high. (We got through with a Sneak skill of 75 or so, plus the Ring of Khajiiti's constant Chameleon effect.)

Part One: Entering the Palace

The first segment of the heist is simple. Head to the Imperial Palace and take a left after entering. You'll come to the door to the Basement of the Palace before long, so sneak inside when no one's looking. Your compass will point you to the Glass of Time, a huge hourglass, so sneak past the single guard on patrol and activate it.

Part Two: Finding the Old Way



Make room for the undead, because there'll be plenty of them in the Old Way.

After sneaking back out of the Basement, make your way to the Arboretum district, where you should have a compass marker. Follow it to find the entrance to the South East Tunnel, which will take you into the Imperial Sewers. Make your way past those vicious rats once more until you reach the Beneath the Blood Works area, where you'll encounter undead and perhaps a Vampire or two. Unlock the door leading to the Palace Sewers and head inside. The journey to the Old Way is a relative short one.

When you reach the Old Way (which is more or less identical in feature to the dungeon you passed through at the beginning of the game), you'll have to start exploring a bit. You can just follow the markers on your compass, if you want, which will lead you on in the correct direction. Regardless, these are small, linear levels (despite the three doors that connect them), so make your way through them until you reach the Lost Catacombs.

Keep pressing through the Catacombs until you reach what appears to be an Ayleid Ruin. The jump that Gray Fox mentioned would be impossible without your Boots of Springheel Jak is here, on a broken set of steps along the northern side of the wall. Equip the boots, make the jump, then press both of the buttons up top to unlock the passage to the Hall of Epochs.

Part Three: Hall of Epochs

When you enter the Hall of Epochs, you'll notice a huge statue on the eastern side of the room. There's a door here, but no way to open it - yet. You have to find some place to use the Arrow of Extrication.

On the south side of the room, you'll find a doorway leading to another room. Pick the lock, then hit the button to the left of the door; that'll open a path down below to another zone, also called Hall of Epochs. In this zone, head north through the large room near the entrance (you may be able to find a Blade-increasing book in one of the chests on the western side of the room), and walk to the end of the zone to find a Push Block that you need to hit. It'll be guarded by a powerful undead, but at the very least you'll get some good loot out of the casket nearby.

When you pop up the Push Block, return to the first section of the Hall of Epochs, where the two large blocks will have descended, allowing you to reach the center of the walkway between the two magical torches. Some more enemies will have appeared, as well, including a skeleton with a bow. If you don't already have a bow and arrows, then pick up what this guy drops!



Aiming right here, and holding the arrow back for a few seconds, should let you hit the target.

When You Gonna Let Me Hit That? Stepping on the pressure plate between the two torches will spin the statue across the way and open up the small blue portal that you need to hit with the Arrow of Extrication. As the game suggests, you should definitely take the time to practice your shots with normal arrows before attempting to fire the Arrow of Extrication. You don't necessarily only get one shot with it, but you can fire the Extricarrow so that it lands on a ledge of the platform and doesn't drop to the floor, which will force you to reload your game. (Needless to say: save your game before firing it!)

Keep in mind that the length of time you hold back the bow will increase the power of your shot, which in turn will decrease the amount of arc that your arrow travels through. If you practice with normal arrows, you'll hear a sharp, striking sound in your ears when you actually hit the target. We found it easiest to aim so that our crosshairs were lined up with the sword above the target, with the horizontal line lying across the hilt of the sword. When everything's lined up, draw back your bow, hold down the attack button for a few seconds, then let go. If all goes as planned, you should hear the tone indicating you hit the target (or at least be able to adjust your aim based on the puffs of smoke), and you'll be able to equip the Arrow of Extrication (without moving your aim!) and fire away.



Aw, I read this one already - this is the one where Hal Jordan becomes Green Lantern again.

When you get the Arrow of Extrication into the slot, the statue rises, revealing a hidden door. The two Ayleid Guardians on either side of the statue will also animate, so poison them from afar and then outrun them to finish them off, or just chop them down with weapons if you're a melee-oriented character. If the Arrow of Extrication fell to the ground, don't pick it up; you won't be able to fire it or get it out of your inventory ever again.

Part Four: Imperial Palace

As the game implies, you should head through the doorway here in full stealth gear and in stealth mode; you're going to pop right into the Palace Guard barracks, meaning that you could find yourself pinched as soon as you exit. If you want to ease the task of sneaking around, just wait until one or two in the morning before heading through the door. Despite appearances, this is a one-way trip, so you won't be able to come back when you do go through.

Sneak past the sleeping soldiers when you emerge, then take a left and head up to the Elder Scrolls Library. Sneak around to the entrance to the Library (marked in red) and pick the lock to enter. Tension's building!

There's a Blind Moth priest sitting here, looking at a gate. Sneak behind him and flip the switch nearby to open the wooden door on the other side of the gate, then retrace your steps and recircle the area to find the door you just opened. There's a chair here, right by the fire, so sit down, then read the Elder Scroll that is delivered to you. Take it into your inventory, and start looking for a way out of this joint!

Part Five: The Great Escape

First off, check the library here for any skill books you might've bypassed earlier. There are also some jewelry boxes you can pick, should you so desire.

Next up is the ascent up the library steps here. There are going to be two or three Moth Priests here, and although they were nice enough to you before, they'll immediately be hostile if they detect you or hear any footsteps up top, so sneak past them. Might be worth saving your game before you attempt to do so, as hostilities here will make your extrication from the Palace much more problematic. If you're really having troubles, this would be a good time to bust out a potion of invisibility.



Evangeline will be difficult to avoid, but even if she does spot you, all you need to do is run to her fireplace to get away.

Regardless, leave the library and head left to reach the Monk Priests' Quarters, and pass through there to the Imperial Battlemage's Chambers. Here's another good spot to save your game, as the Battlemage in residence, one Evangeline Beanique, has a very high Sneak rating compared to the chumps you've been bypassing thus far. If you're lucky, she'll leave her quarters, allowing you to just pause for a second and wait for her to walk out to the hallway. When she's far enough away from you, her Sneak skill won't matter, and you'll be able to move around in her apartment, looking through her goods and so on. There isn't much of tremendous value, although the bookshelf in her bedroom does have a 2920, Second Seed book which will improve your Speechcraft.

Part Six: Capital!

After clicking on Beanique's fireplace, you'll find yourself dropping down the ash chute underneath it back to the Old Way. This is the fall that the Gray Fox alluded to earlier, that the Boots of Springheel Jak would help you survive, and indeed they will. If you have them on while you drop, you shouldn't take more than 30 or 40 damage at most, but the catch is that the Boots will be destroyed. You should save your game while falling and see if you can survive the fall without the Boots on. With a moderately decent Acrobatics skill (44), our character took 140 damage from the fall, which should be survivable for most characters. If you absolutely can't survive the fall on your own, though, you'll just have to kiss the Boots goodbye. Sob!

By hook or by crook, get the heck out of the sewers and return to the Gray Fox in the Elven Gardens. He doesn't offer any immediate reward for your derring-do; instead, he has another task

for you. He wants you to bring a ring to Countess Umbranox of Anvil, and record her reaction, before reporting back to him.



Stop saying that!!!!

If you now head to Anvil and give the ring to Umbranox, a series of events will unfold that culminate in your taking over the Thieves Guild, obtaining the very, very nice Gray Cowl of Nocturnal, and being able to access the Thieves Guild Guild Hall in the Imperial City. Wha - huh? Guild Hall? That's right, folks - through the magical mystery of mysterious magic, you now have a small home to call your own. It works well as a home, in fact, especially if you haven't bought one for yourself yet. There's also a Lockpicking skill book on the desk in the Guildmaster's Quarters.

Note that the Cowl of Nocturnal, while an incredible item for thieves, will cause most guards to attempt to apprehend you on sight, since they'll assume that you're the Gray Fox. If you accidentally wear it into a town, you'll have to choose to resist arrest, but that's no big deal; just unequip the Cowl, then block and activate the guard to attempt to yield to them. They'll always accept the yield, in our experience, which will wipe out your bounty and let you get on with your business.

Dark Brotherhood

The Dark Brotherhood is the most obscure of guilds, only approaching you with an invite to join if you perform the heinous act of murder, specifically of a murder against someone who bears you no ill will and belongs to a non-evil faction. This can be almost anyone: a shopkeeper, a guard, a beggar, etc. Almost anyone will do, although you of course don't want to kill someone who will be critical to the game later on. Of course, bandits and random humanoid enemy spawns won't

count. If you want an easy target, we'd recommend heading to an out-of-the-way hamlet or an inn out in the game world, waiting until the middle of the night, then sneaking into a home and murdering the inhabitant in their sleep. (You might be able to claim a murder by killing someone at a Daedric shrine, assuming you've already completed the quest at that shrine.) Just make sure it's not someone that gives a quest. You can tell whether or not they'll eventually be important by looking at your cursor as it's placed over their body; if it comes back as a crown, they'll figure into a quest at some point. Truly critical characters can't even die; they just go unconscious.

After your murder is performed, sleep in a bedroll, such as the one in your home or outside the Vilverin ruin, and Lucien Lachance, a Speaker in the Dark Brotherhood, will appear and offer you the opportunity to join the guild, which is essentially the Assassin's Guild for Oblivion. If you refuse him, then he'll never bother you again, but if you accept, he'll offer you a task: an initiation murder, if you will.

A Knife In The Dark

Your first task for Lucien is to kill Rufio at the Inn of Ill Omen, on the road northwest of Bravil. If you inquire about Rufio there, you'll learn that he's in a set of private quarters downstairs from the main establishment. You can find a little trap door leading downwards underneath the stairs.

Now, Rufio somehow manages to remain asleep for most of the day, so he's not exactly going to be much of a threat to you. If you don't wish to kill him without knowing why you're killing him, you can wake him up and talk to him - he'll imply that he himself happened to kill someone at some point in the past. Alternately, if you want to take advantage of an easy way to increase your Sneak skill, feel free to enter Sneak mode and rubber band your controller into place, or place something on your movement key, so that you're constantly moving into the wall. You'll constantly gain Sneak while you do so, and since Rufio rarely wakes up, you'll be able to just let the game run and gain mad amounts of Sneak ability while you do so.



Poor Rufio. He'll never know what hit him.

Regardless, there's no escape for Rufio, so kill him in whatever manner you see fit, then return to a safe location and hit the sack to speak to Lucien again. When you do so, he'll point you towards the city of Cheydinhal, where this cell of the Dark Brotherhood is located. If you pick the lock on the boarded-up home that's on your marker, then head into the building's basement, you'll find the entrance to the Dark Brotherhood hideout. Say the phrase that Lucien gave you (it won't appear as an option unless you spoke to him) to enter.

Looking Around The Sanctuary

Speak to Ocheeva inside the Sanctuary to get a run-down and some very nice light armor, then start poking around. In one corner of the main room, you can find a Wolf Queen, Volume 6 book which will increase your Sneak skill by one point. In the Training Quarters, you can find Ahzirr Trajjazaeri, which increases Hand to Hand. In the treasure chest in that room, you'll find The Rear Guard (Light Armor) and The Gold Ribbon of Merit (Marksman).

It's in the Living Quarters that you'll find the best loot, though. Keeping in mind that one of the Five Tenets of the Brotherhood is to not steal from fellow members, you can break into the chests for each of the members in your little clan to steal their goods, if you wish. Teinaava's chest has some interesting archery equipment, including The Black Arrow, v2, another book that'll add to Marksman, while Gogron gro-Bolmog's chest has some heavy weaponry. Obviously enough, you don't want this to occur while anyone's around to see you, so either sneak amongst the sleeping guild members or come when there's no one in the room. We found this occurred around midnight to three in the morning.

If you are caught stealing or pickpocketing, then you'll find yourself facing off against...a loading screen? That's right; by breaking one of the tenets, you're immediately expelled from the guild, and supposedly escorted off the property. You'll have a chance to get back in, but hey - might as well do things right the first time.

Note that M'raaj-Dar, who often hangs around in the living quarters, sells a host of interesting items, including Poisoned Apples. If you slip one of these into the inventory of a player, they'll eventually die. Muahaha.

Vicente Valchieri's Quests

Vicente is in the lowest level of the Sanctuary. If you speak to him, he'll tell you of his vampirism, and offer you the first contract for the Dark Brotherhood. He'll also tell you to get into the habit of asking your fellow brothers about your contracts, as they may have some insight into your tasks.

A Watery Grave

Your task here is to board the Marie Elena in the Waterfront district of the Imperial District and kill the captain, one Gaston Tussaud. There's no chance for a bonus for this first quest of yours, so no need to worry about that. Just head to the Waterfront district, and bring along some potent weaponry.

When you reach the waterfront, find the Marie Elena, but don't speak to any of the pirates here. If you wish to take a stealthy approach to boarding the ship, head to the end of the path and find the open shipping container. You can hide inside of it and sneak on board that way. Alternately, you can just hop onto the ship and try to find a passage inside, but doing so will cause all of the pirates near the ship to become hostile to you. If you do choose this path, wait until an Imperial Guard is walking past, as they'll help defend you.



Jumping across to this balcony on the ship will let you easily kill the captain.

Alternately, you can try to reach the entrance to the Captain's Quarters at the very rear of the ship, but getting to the little balcony will require you to jump from atop the open crate. You'll also have to pick a five-tumbler lock, but heading in this way will position you directly behind Tussaud, allowing you to sneak attack him, or just slip a Poisoned Apple into his inventory and wait for him to keel over.

If you do decide to sneak on board via the crate, though, you'll have to kill a pair of pirates before reaching Gaston. You may want to wait for their conversation to cease before doing so, as that will allow you to kill them in their rooms and possibly sneak attack them.

Regardless of how it happens, when you kill Tussaud, two of his pirates will burst into his room. They won't detect you if you're sneaking, allowing you to avoid them as you wish. You can nab Tussaud's key from his body, allowing you to open his booty chest, as well as the rear door if you wish to escape out of it. All of the pirates near the ship are now hostile to you, though, so be ready for a fight when you leave! It's best to do this quest in the middle of the day, since guards are more likely to be present then. If you find the pirates to be too much to handle, run to another district and let the guards eliminate them.

Accidents Happen



Watch out for Gromm, who stands vigil over the corpse after you leave it.

Return to Vicente and grab another quest from him. Your target this time is Baenlin, who lives in Bruma. To earn the bonus for the quest, you've been asked to enter a crawlspace above where Baenlin and loosen the bolts holding fast a mounted head that's fastened above where Baenlin eats dinner. Doing so between the hours of eight and 11 PM will cause the head to fall on Baenlin and kill him. If you kill him in any other manner, or if you kill the manservant Gromm, then you lose the bonus.

If you want to have a good chance to loot the house before killing Baenlin, enter in the middle of the night, around two AM or so. You can enter through the basement door at the rear of the house, if you wish; there are plenty of food items in the basement with which to make Restore Fatigue potions, if you're looking to increase your Alchemy skills. Explore the house, stealing anything that you like, then sneak upstairs and look around. There's a jewelry box on Baenlin's dresser. The crawlspace entrance is in Gromm's room, though; open it, head in, then close it behind you. Wait until 8:30 or so, then loosen the fasteners to drop the head onto Baenlin.

Now, when you kill Baenlin, Gromm will move to the body and stand there. He doesn't really move, making it a hopefully easy matter to sneak past him to the entrance to the basement and leave the building. Even if he detects you and attacks, you should be able to keep the bonus to your mission by exiting the building right quickly.

Return to Vicente for your reward: the Sufferthorn dagger, with Drain Strength and Damage Health enchantments.

Scheduled For Execution

Vicente's next task for you is a doozy: he wants you to infiltrate the Imperial Prison and kill a Dunmer named Valen Dreth. To facilitate your entrance, he'll give you a key to the Imperial Prison Sewers, which you used to escape from the prison lo those many weeks (months? Years?) ago. If you've returned to the sewers since you first popped out of them, you will have noticed that they've been locked up tight since then. Luckily, Vicente has a key for them, allowing you to head back inside from whence you came.

The first thing you'll notice when you enter the sewers is that the door on your right has been opened. Heading through it will lead you to another part of the sewers, one you didn't visit previously, so head that way. Eventually you'll come to a four-tumbler locked gate. If you can get through it, it's the shortest way to where you're going; if you can't, presumably you'll have to backtrack and take the path you originally took through the sewers to reach the destination. Don't forget that the Black Band that you just received from Vicente will give you a bonus to your Security skill.

Tip: This whole section of the sewers should be populated with nothing but Rats and Mudcrabs, regardless of your level. If you've proceeded a bit through the game since you were last in the sewers, this is a great opportunity to level up your Sneak and Marksman skills. All of the enemies are level one, so they will have a hard time detecting even poor sneaksman, and they'll likewise have much less health than most of the enemies you'll be facing in the wilderness.

When you find the ladder leading up to the Sanctum, head on up. Close the door in front of you when you reach the next level, and wait for the two guards here to get done with their longish conversation. You're going to have to sneak around a bit to get past them, so now would be a good time to make a game save; if they get on your case you're going to have precious few opportunities to get away, and they are automatically hostile to you.

If you can sneak around past the guards, try to reach the small cell in the southern end of the Sanctum, where Captain Gepard Montrose is sitting at a table. If you can pickpocket him successfully, you'll be able to get both the Imperial Prison Key and Valen Dreth's Cell Key.



Bypassing this guard will require either some excellent acrobatics, or an Invisibility effect.

Killing Dreth Moving on from this location can be a chore, due to the fact that there's a guard near the stairs leading on. If you have good Acrobatics, you can stay in sneak mode and jump onto the lower ledge of one of the pillars nearby, then jump to the upper level of the room, but this can be difficult. Getting past the guard without jumping around will likely require a Potion of Invisibility or something similar.

Make your way through the Imperial Subterrane, avoiding the guard as he makes his rounds, and infiltrate the Imperial Prison. Creep up the stairs until you overhear Dreth and his captor talking. Wait until their conversation is over, then wait for the guard to head up the stairs nearby. You can find both the Imperial Prison Key and Valen Dreth's Cell Key on the table in the hallway here, so open up the cell and kill Dreth before booking it out of the prison.

Tip: If the guard doesn't move away from Dreth's cell, you can finish him off with an arrow through the cell's door. This usually won't even alert the guard.

With Dreth out of the way, you can either attempt to backtrack through the dungeon and the sewers, or just walk up to the door leading to the Bastion. There are more guards here, but this is public territory, so they won't be hostile if they see you, meaning you can just walk straight out the door.

If you return to Vicente, he'll let you have the Scales of Pitiless Justice, which increase your Strength, Agility, and Intelligence by two points each at the cost of a two-point Personality penalty. This isn't an equippable item; you get the bonuses merely by having the Scales in your inventory.

Side Quest: The Renegade Shadowscale

If you find Teinaava at this point in the game, he'll offer up an alternate quest for you. This doesn't affect your relationship with either the Dark Brotherhood or Vicente, but hey: it's another quest. Teinaava asks you to help him kill one of his old friends, who has refused to continue in his path as a royal assassin and has thus brought shame to Teinaava, or something like that. Anyway, sounds pretty straightforward. To find the target, a Shadowscale named Scar-Tail, travel to his camp in the swamps southeast of Leyawiin.

When you find Scar-Tail, he'll offer to cut you a deal. If you let him live, he'll tell you where his gold stash is, and offer to let you take the heart of another Argonian assassin that already attempted to dispatch him. If you agree to let Scar-Tail live, loot his gold, then find the body of the assassin beneath a tree to the west, within spitting distance of the camp. The heart there can be given to Teinaava, if you wish. Or, of course, you can just kill Scar-Tail, take his heart, and give that to Teinaava. Either way works. When you do return to Teinaava, he'll reward you with the Boots of Bloody Bounding, which boost both your Acrobatics and Blade skills.

The Assassinated Man



Real subtle, Francois.

Vicente's next contract for you is an odd one. Francois Motierre, who lives in Chorrol, is in over his head with debt, and his debtors have sent an enforcer to kill him. Don't they know that they'll never get their money that way? The sensible thing for them to do is sit down with Francois, work out a monthly payment system, and help the man get his life back on track while hopefully

avoiding personal bankruptcy. Murder is not in anyone's financial self-interest.

Regardless, Francois needs the Dark Brotherhood's help. Your task is to stage his death by stabbing him with a special knife while the enforcer is present. The poison on the knife will mimic death, hopefully fooling the enforcer into thinking that Francois actually is dead, allowing him to make a clean getaway.

Head to Chorrol and track down Francois' house. When you enter, Francois will immediately find you and speak. When you're done interrogating him, hide in another section of the house, but keep the Languorwine Blade equipped.

After the Argonian assassin shows up, let he and Francois speak for a bit, then just slash Motierre with your knife. He'll "die" instantly, and the Argonian will begin attacking you. Since you want the assassin to report back to his superiors, leave him alive and leave the house, then leave Chorrol altogether through one of the gates.



Go, Francois, go! Beat that zombie down!

The Waiting Game Your goal now is to wait 24 hours, so that Francois can be discovered and placed on display in the Chapel. You won't get a quest update when you've waited long enough, so just hit your Wait button, set it to 24 hours, then return to Chorrol and head to the chapel. You may hear some talk of Francois' death if you listen in on some of the NPC conversations here.

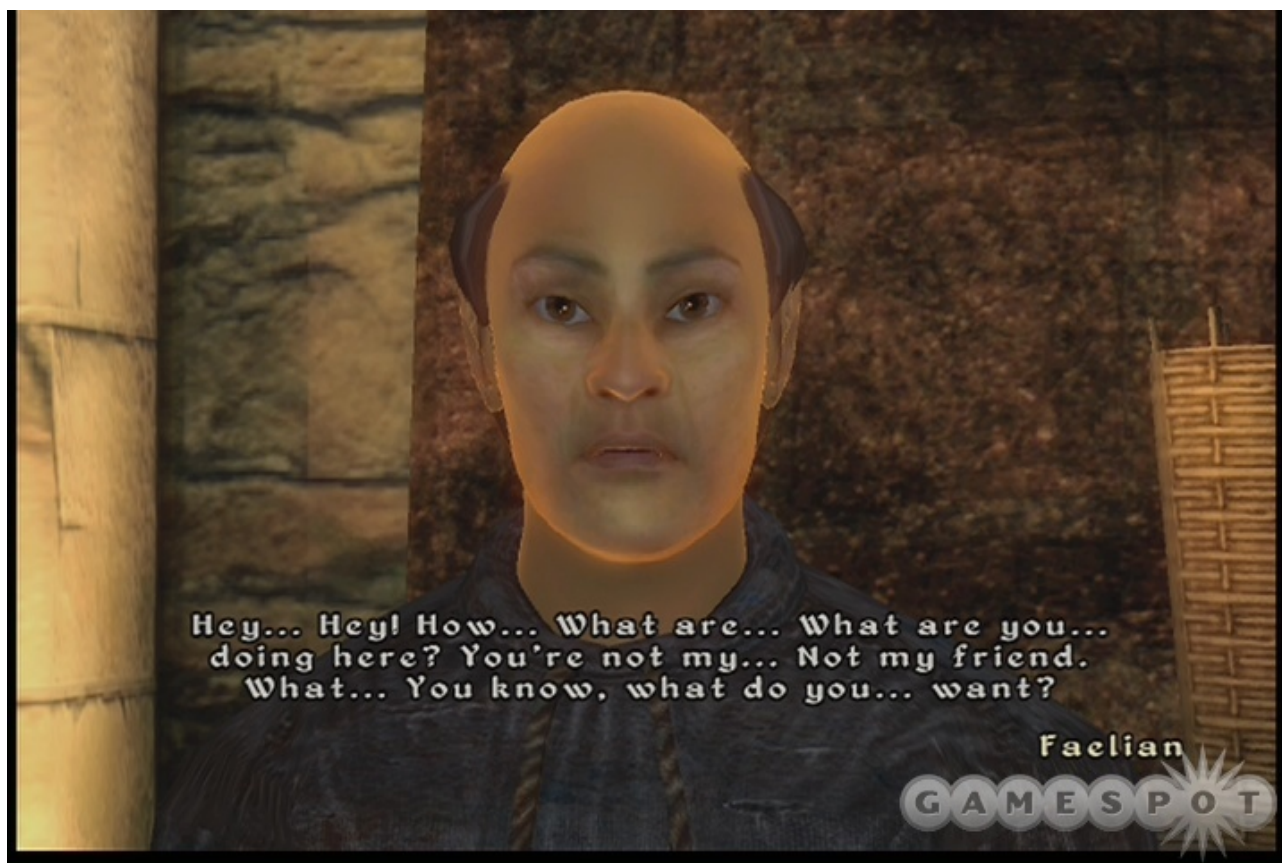
Head to the Undercroft beneath the chapel and "talk" to Francois. You'll automatically apply the antidote to him, and he'll wake up. After this point, you'll have to fight off the zombieified remains of his family, who see this whole affair as a desecration of their resting grounds! They're tough,

for zombies, but not so tough that you should really have many problems here. Just be sure that you don't hit Francois too often during the fight, or you could wind up killing him.

When you're out of the Undercroft, escort Francois to the Grey Mare Inn, elsewhere in town. Oddly enough, no one seems to recognize him. When you reach the Grey Mare, the quest ends, and you're home free. You can return to Vicente for the really handy Cruelty's Heart amulet, which boosts your Willpower and Strength while worn. He'll also offer to turn you into a Vampire, should you wish to do so.

Ocheeva's Quests

The Lonely Wanderer



Yes, Faelian...friend...me friend...you die!

Vicente gives you no more quests after The Assassinated Man; instead he points you to Ocheeva, who offers you the Lonely Wanderer quest. There's a High Elf named Faelian in the Imperial City who needs to be taken out. There's some shoddy intelligence on this one; the Brotherhood doesn't know where Faelian lives, just that he likes to take long walks. Because of the Imperial Guard presence in the city, this has to look like a simple murder: kill Faelian indoors, without any witnesses to the act.

When you reach the Imperial City, you'll need to find an Elf to talk to. Wood Elf, High Elf, Dark Elf; it doesn't seem to matter. You will probably need to have a high Disposition with whomever you speak to, though. When you find one, they'll point you to the Tiber Septim Hotel in the Talos Plaza district.

Speak to Augusta Calidia at the Tiber Septim while it's open, and she'll gladly tell you all about Faelian and his problems with skooma. Not a very discreet hotelier, this one. She'll also let slip about Faelian's galpal Atraena, who also stays at the Tiber Septim. Speak to her, and she'll freely tell you about an abandoned house in the Elven Gardens district that Faelian visits every day. This is almost too easy.

Tip: If neither of these characters offers up the information described here, you'll need to get their Disposition higher and try to talk to them again.

The house Faelian rests up in is called Lorkmir's House; it should be marked on your map after speaking to Atraena. Faelian isn't always here, but he should be present if you wait for him at noon. Kill him!

This is the easiest path to completing the quest, but note that if you're looking for a lengthier journey, you can wait for Faelian to leave the hotel, then follow him around to see where he's going. You'll have to offer him some skooma before he'll tell you where to meet him. Either way, you'll wind up in Lorkmir's House and kill him there. Killing him anywhere else will lose your bonus, a nice Shadowhunt bow.

Bad Medicine



These guys drop huge number of arrows if you let the Daedra kill them.

Your next quest involves finding and killing Roderick, the leader of a band of mercenaries. He's already deathly ill, but whomever wants him dead wants to speed up the process a bit. Your task?

Infiltrate his compound, Fort Sutch, switch his medicine with poison, and escape undetected. If you're spotted - by anyone! - the poison plot will fail and you'll have to kill Roderick in some other fashion, preferably with a blunt instrument.

Needless to say, this is one quest that you should prepare for beforehand. Be sure to have your Shrouded Hood and Shrouded Armor ready to go. If you haven't obtained the Ring of Khajiiti from the Meridia Daedric Quest, now would be a great time to pick it up. Lastly, bring along any Potions of Invisibility that you might require, as a weapon of last resort.

If you speak to Teinaava, he'll give you a tip on the Fort. Apparently, there's a ruined Abbey near the aboveground portion of Fort Sutch. Although it appears separate, the two locations are actually connected underground. If you were to enter via the Abbey, you may be able to infiltrate the Fort undetected.

Fort Sutch If you get this tip from Teinaava, then the main entrance to the Fort will be marked on your map with a green arrow. It's not easily detectable; it's just a trap door laid into a large block of stone that lies flat on the ground. Either way, this is the main way to get into the Fort; the more subtle way is in the bottom of the large tower nearby.



This is a sneak-intensive mission, so wear all of your sneak-boosting equipment.

When you enter Fort Sutch, go into full sneak mode and start poking around. We'll assume that you enter through the main entrance for the purposes of this little walkthrough, but again, either way will work. The first person you're likely to see when you get past the flooded passages will be Laenafil. If you can sneak up behind her and pick her pockets, you'll obtain the Fort Sutch Gate Key, which will open up the two locked gates nearby. These can't be picked, so if you can't get the key, you'll have to follow the other ramp downwards and sneak past anyone who happens to be

down there. An orc will likely block the way, forcing you to ingest an Invisibility Potion.

Regardless, your goal here is to get to the middle level of the facility and head to the north, where the dungeonesque halls will lead you both to Roderick's bed and his medicine cabinet. Try to do this as quickly as possible, before Laenafil and the Orcish guard are done with their conversation, because when they are, they'll move to this area, making it more difficult to sneak up on the medicine cabinet. When you do reach the cabinet, take out Roderick's Medicine and replace it with Roderick's Poison. After doing so, all you need to do is exfiltrate as quickly and as quietly as possible, and you'll have beaten the quest. Return to Ocheeva for The Deceiver's Finery, a nice little cloak that fortifies Speechcraft and Personality. Perfect for marathon selling sessions.

Whodunit?

Well, this should be interesting. According to Ocheeva, someone has hired you to infiltrate a party, then kill all of the guests, without any of them witnessing a single murder. Guess someone at Bethesda enjoys playing How To Host A Murder. Or Clue.

Divide and conquer is the name of the game here, as well as blending in - before you enter the house in Skingrad, be sure to take off your armor and weapons, and don some kind of normal clothing. The Deceiver's Finery will be perfect for the job, but otherwise, you can probably steal clothes from any random house in the city.

When you're set up, looking suave and proper, head to Skingrad and find the house. Fafnir will provide you with the key to the house, meaning that you're going to be the only one who can get in or out.



'Oh my, someone's been murdered...this is a perfect time for a nap!'

The Killing Game Now that you're inside the house, you'll have to find a way to kill all of the other five guests without being detected. What this basically means is that you have to get them into a room for a little one-on-one time, close the door, then kill them, preferably in one blow. Luckily, there are three rooms on the top floor of the house, each with beds in them. If you periodically check the rooms, then you'll often find one of the houseguests sleeping.

If you're unwilling to go the murderous route, either bribe or Speechcraft your way to get a disposition of at least 70 with each guest. This will unlock additional conversational interactions with each of them, allowing you to manipulate them to your own ends, at least in theory. (If you don't have a lot of cash, feel free to bribe them anyway; everyone's going to die, after all, and you'll get it all back.) You can start with the Dunmer girl, if you wish, who's sweet on one of the other guests. If you can convince her to wait upstairs in his room, you'll be able to follow her up, close the door behind you, and finish her off. Try to get sneak attacks with melee weapons; most of the guests should go down in one hit.

The one guest that's difficult to isolate is the Nord, but if you manage to kill three of the other guests, including the Dark Elf girl, he'll usually choose to fly into a rage and kill them, asking you to back him up. If the last remaining guest is the Redguard, he'll outfit himself in all of his Legion finery and fight back - he may even be suspicious of you, though, so it's best to ensure that he's one of the first guests to go down.



'Yeah, it's just you and me now. Hey, what's that over there?'

Anyway, when it's down to just you and the Nord, finish him off as quickly as possible. Since there are no more witnesses to worry about, you can kill him in straight combat. Note that all you have

to worry about when murdering people is their line of sight; if one guest is in the dining room of the main room, and another one is downstairs, then you should be able to kill either of them without losing your bonus for stealth kills. Just be sure to kill them as quickly as possible, preferably with melee stealth kills.

When you complete the kills and return to Ocheeva, she'll reward you with the Night Mother's Blessing, which gives you a permanent +2 bonus to Blade, Acrobatics, Sneak, Security, and Marksman.

Permanent Retirement

It's time to put an end to Adamus Phillida, the Imperial Legion officer who's given the Dark Brotherhood such pains in the past. He's recently retired to Leyawiin, far from his cronies in the Imperial City. You've been tasked with taking him out in whatever fashion you wish, although you've been given a special arrow that will kill him instantly if it strikes him while he's unarmored. That will complete the mission; to achieve your bonus, you need to grab the finger from his body and place it in the desk of his successor in the Imperial Prison.

Killing Phillida If you head down to Leyawiin, you should be able to find Phillida via the pointers on your compass. If you follow him around for a while, you'll be able to plan out his daily routine. Talking to his bodyguard will also elicit a few details about what he does everyday; he says that all he manages to fit into a 24-hour period is a visit to the Coast Watch outside the city and a short swim.

He'll typically leave the Inn at around 9:00 AM and head from there to the Coast Watch, arriving around 10:30. This may sound like an opportune time to kill him, but he doesn't remove his armor while he's here, making it difficult to kill him with the Rose of Sithis you've been given. If you want to blast him with a poisoned melee shot or hit him with a powerful staff or something, though, now would be a good time to do it; you'll be able to kill him and his bodyguard and then run away. He'll hang around at the Coast Watch until 1:00 or so, then leave and head to take his daily swim.



Phillida's little dip in the pool here will be the last thing he ever does.

He'll wind up swimming at the small pond in the middle of the city, just to the west of the City Watch Barracks. If you head there before he arrives, you'll be able to sneak behind the rocks by the pool, notch up the Rose of Sithis, and hopefully hit him while remaining stealthed. Regardless of whether or not you are stealthed when you kill him, though, you're almost definitely going to pick up a bounty for killing him in this manner, but at least you won't have any problems getting to the body and looting it. If you're also in the Thieves Guild, you can use your contacts there to wipe away your bounty before heading to turn in the quest.

Optionally, you can attempt to break into the City Watch Barracks and kill Phillida while he sleeps, but this will require you to somehow kill him, loot the body, and escape from under the noses of eight or nine guards. Not fun! Again, though, it doesn't matter how you kill him, so long as you loot the body and get the finger. Be sure to get all of his keys, as well, including the Imperial Watch Office Key.

Give Him The Finger With the keys and the finger in your possession, head to the Imperial Prison in the Imperial City. If you get there during the day, wait around until it's past midnight, to clear out the Imperial Legion Offices, on the western edge of the zone. The specific door you need to get through should be marked on your map.

If you pop the door open with the key, then the Imperial Legion Commander's desk should be right in front of you, with the *On Morrowind* and *History of the Empire* books lying atop it. Pick the lock on it, then place Phillida's finger inside to complete the bonus section of the quest. Don't forget to check the Legion Commander's Chest, right next to the desk, as it'll likely have some nice weaponry hidden away inside of it. Even if you don't want to use it, it can be handy to pick up to sell to a Thieves Guild fence to build up your reputation for them.

Heck, that's about the only reason to do this portion of the quest. If you've advanced into the game a good clip, the 500 gold bonus will be a poor reward for the effort of getting into the Imperial Legion and out again.

Lachance Quests

Of Secret And Shadow

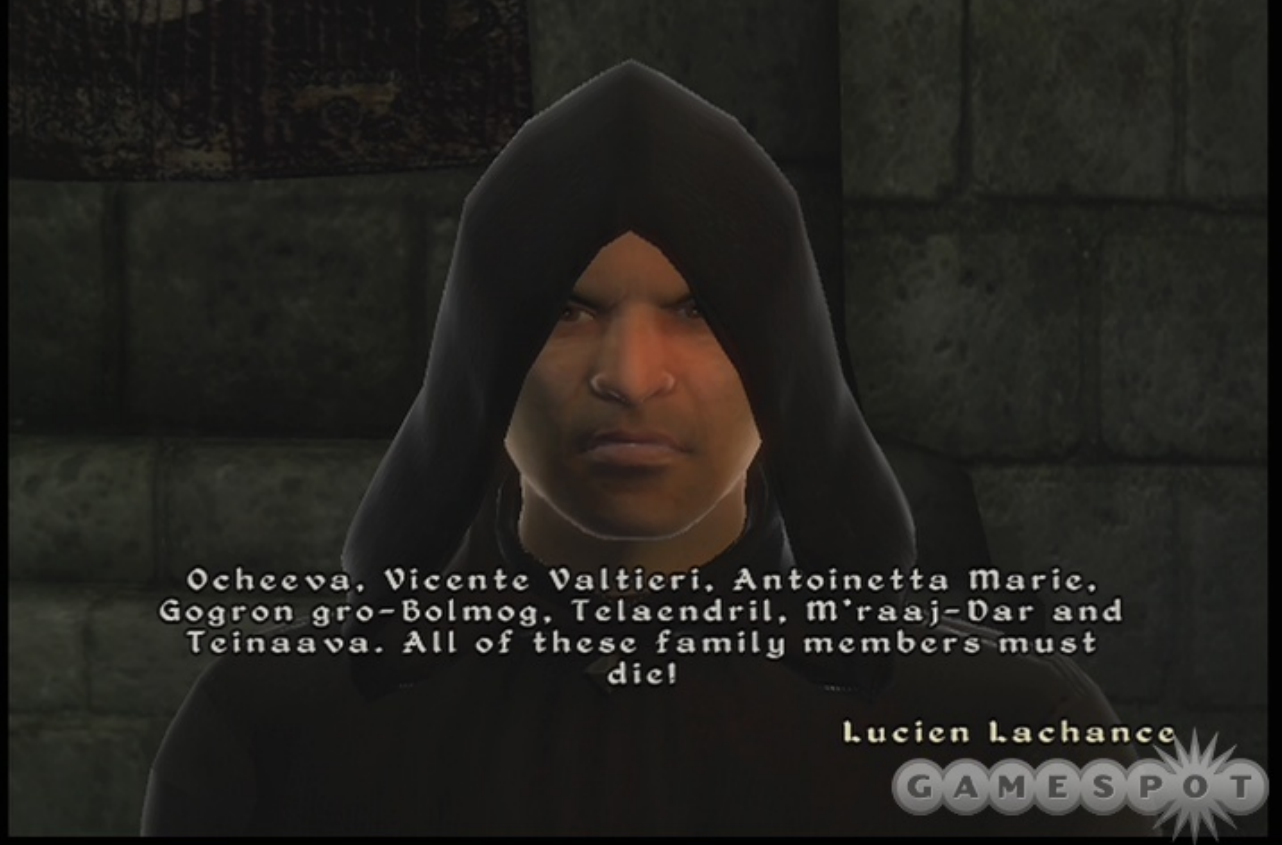
Your next quest is a bridge of sorts. When you hand in the Permanent Retirement quest to Ocheeva, she'll give you a letter from Lucien, who will tell you to meet him at Fort Farragut, northeast of Cheydinhal. You have a special assignment waiting for you...

Farragut will be marked on your map when you leave the Dark Brotherhood Sanctuary; it's only a short walk from Cheydinhal. Head on up and inside.

The interior of Farragut is inhabited by the Dark Guardians, hardier versions of the skeletons you've been facing off against thus far. Dispatch anything that stands in your way and get to Lachance as soon as possible.

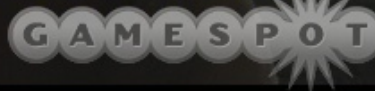
The Purification

When you reach Lachance, he'll tell you the truth behind the rumors you've been hearing: someone has indeed managed to infiltrate the Dark Brotherhood, and the spy is, in fact, one of the members of the Cheydinhal cell. Your task? Kill 'em all, and let God sort them out. Lachance wants you to return to the Sanctuary and finish off all of the Brotherhood members there. This is going to be a tall task!



Ocheeva, Vicente Valtieri, Antoinetta Marie,
Gogron gro-Bolmog, Telaendril, M'raaj-Dar and
Teinaava. All of these family members must
die!

Lucien Lachance



That's way harsh.

Before you head out, though, Lachance will offer you a pair of gifts. One is a Poisoned Apple, which you can use to poison almost anyone. The second is a scroll that will summon Rufio's Ghost to aid you in battle. Note that if you're capable of picking Very Hard locks, there's a barrel in Lachance's little lair that will let you pick up ten more Poisoned Apples. Even if you don't want to use them to finish off your compatriots, you should get nab these if you can, as they're worth a fortune when sold; 300 gold apiece.

A Game of Death Now, the ground rules for this little macabre exercise are fairly similar to those you followed in Whodunit? You need to kill all the inhabitants of the cell, but obviously enough, attacking them directly in the view of each other will make for one heck of a tough battle. It's much easier to divide and conquer and attempt to take them all down that way.

First off, though, you can attempt to ice a few of your targets with Poisoned Apples. In order to do so, head into the living quarters and remove all of the food from the tables and chests. With that done, all you have to do is ensure that your targets find and eat one of your special apples. Note that not all of the characters will eat your apple right away; you may have to wait a while for some of them to actually consume the poisoned pill. If you have time to wait, and prefer to avoid combat, then steal all of the food and sneak around to each character and pickpocket them. Instead of taking anything from them, though, drop a Poisoned Apple into their inventory. The next time they go to eat something, they'll take a bite of it and keel over dead shortly thereafter. Just keep in mind that not everyone eats everyday, and Vicente doesn't actually eat at all, so he won't succumb to your poison pill.

Where's Snow White? Anyway, if you have time, just plant as many apples as you can on to each of your target's bodies, then place a few on the tables in the living quarters for good

measure. (You can buy more apples from M'raaj-Dar if you need them, and if you can afford them.) Then...go about your business. We're not sure if you need to be in the building and watch your foes eat the food. We happened to sleep for a few hours and most of the inhabitants still keeled over dead, so we suspect that you can go out and do other quests or explore if you want to give your apples some time to work. No one in the Sanctuary actually reacts at all to any of the dead bodies that they have to step over, so don't worry about that.



Some poisoned apples will thin the ranks in the Sanctuary quite well.

When you've waited as long as you feel comfortable with, return to the Sanctuary and start finishing off any remaining foes. If you wait until your targets are by themselves, in their own little room, you can kill them out of line of sight of the rest of the bunch and avoid making them all hostile, just as you did in Whodunit? Most of the characters have to catch a catnap every now and again, with Vicente in particular choosing to sleep down in his quarters. Ocheeva likewise has her own place to sleep, making both of those characters easy to kill: just wait until they go to sleep, then sneak attack them with your most powerful poison.

The rest of the characters can be assaulted any time you like. If you can catch one of them sitting or sleeping, just sneak attack them and finish them off. You can summon Rufio's Ghost if you get into a pickle, but it probably won't even be necessary to do so.

When you're done with all of the killing here, return to Lachance, who'll tell you that from now on, you'll be working for him directly. You won't meet up very often - he's set up dead drops for you to find your missions at - but he does have a reward for you: the awesome Shadowmere horse. It's fast, it's hardy, and what's more, it'll actually fight your enemies when they get close with its front hooves. Rockin'. Note that if it ever disappears, it'll return to Fort Farragut for you to pick up again.

Dead Drop Quests

Affairs of A Wizard

When you first visit the Dead Drop at Hero's Hill, you'll be told to head to Leafrot Cave and kill Celedaen, a necromancer who's initiated his transformation into a Lich. You're warned of Celedaen's power, and told to search out his writings in an attempt to find a weakness before engaging him. Leafrot Cave is well, well off the beaten track. It's going to take a while to get there, unless you've already been in the area, so warp as close as you can with Shadowmere and get going.

When you do hit Leafrot, start poking about. Obviously enough, there's going to be plenty of undead roaming the halls, so be ready for them. You can find an Art of War Magic book in the first little set of shelves after you enter the cave; it'll add one point to your destruction magic. Also in this first area, you can find The Path of Transcendence, which will reveal Celedaen's one true weakness: he keeps a magical hourglass on his person at all times. While he has the hourglass, he's likely immortal, but if you can take it from him, such as by pickpocketing it, he'll die instantly.



For such a powerful necromancer, Celedaen sure is a pushover.

Pickpocketing Celedaen is a difficult matter, since he never really stands still, preferring to pace around his lair like a hyperactive kid looking for sugar. It's certainly possible to get behind him and pick his pocket, but you'll need a fairly high Sneak skill to do so. Even if you can't pickpocket him, though, he's not all that tough to beat in normal combat. He wields fairly standard mage spells, will turn invisible as soon as he's spotted you, and will somehow manage to summon his own

ghost to attack you. If you let him know you're there, wait for him to turn invisible, then stand so that the central pillar is between you and he, he'll eventually come back into sight. At this point, you can either poison him with a Silence poison and go to town, or just use a Damage Health poison to finish him off. Or just get up close and personal with a magical weapon and take him down! He doesn't have much health, so any of these options will work.

When you're done with Celedaen, loot anything you like from the cave, then head to Chorrol, where your next dead drop is located.

Next of Kin



Try to finish off Matthias in one shot, but don't be surprised if it doesn't kill him.

When you find the Old Sack in Chorrol, you'll get a new mission: kill every single member of the Draconis family. Unfortunately, you only know the location of Perennia Draconis, who resides on a farm called Applewatch. You have to head to her location, pump her for information about her family, then find and slaughter the lot.

Applewatch is near the Cloud Ruler Temple, so feel free to fast travel there and head out to the farm. Talk to Perennia and tell her you're looking for her children, and she'll give you a list of all of the children, along with some gold. Apparently she thinks that you're going to help her buy them gifts...poor girl. Kill her as best you can before moving on to her children.

Matthias Draconis - Talos Plaza District, Imperial City Matthias is arguably the easiest of all these hits. Simply find his house in the Talos Plaza District, wait outside until it's midnight or later, then pick the lock and head on in in Sneak mode. There's another resident of the house, one

Collatinus Vadius, whom you'll have to sneak past and head up the steps to Matthias' room.

Now, if you wish to avoid getting pinched, you'll have to kill Matthias with one powerful blow, which can be difficult, since he has a lot of health. Obviously enough, the sleeping sneak attack is the way to go, preferably after you've poisoned your weapon with a Poison of Illness or something similar. If you can't get this guy in one shot, consider coming back after dropping off any stolen goods in your safehouse, then just paying the fine when the guards nab you.

Andreas Draconis - Drunken Dragon Inn, Northeast of Leyawiin The Drunken Dragon is off the road that leads northeast of Leyawiin. You can head there any time to speak to Andreas, but killing him is another matter, since there'll often be an Imperial Guard standing around inside. Your best bet here is to just hunker down with all of your Sneak gear on, then start waiting for one hour at a time until the Guardsman is far enough away for you to take down Andreas. This is easiest if you can hit him while he's sleeping, which usually occurs between one and six or so in the morning, but be sure to save your game before you whack him, as the Guard has a good shot at detecting you if he's anywhere nearby. Again, though, if you don't have any stolen items, you can just pay the fine right then and there and move on.



Killing off Caelia in one shot is going to be almost impossible unless you're a Master of Sneak.

Sibylla - Muck Valley Cavern The Muck Valley Cavern is east of the Imperial City, near the Shrine of Vaermina, on Lake Poggad. Perennia's letter warns you of the animals in the area, and indeed, the cave will be populated with beasts of a level-appropriate nature. It's all one big cave, though, with no sub-areas, so you should eventually find Sibylla. She has no armor on, so she shouldn't be a very difficult target.

Caelia - Castle Leyawiin Barracks Caelia is a soldier in the Leyawiin Guard, who roams around town during most of the day, and presumably sleeps in the Barracks at night. During the morning, though, from around 7:00 AM to noon, she'll be in the Three Sisters Inn, in a private room on the second floor. If you can break into it, then hide in the room behind her and sneak up on her, you should be able to make a heck of a sneak attack. She's outfitted with a ton of armor, though, so it'll be difficult to kill her outright. You may need to finish her off with poison, then sneak out to your nearest Thieves Guild contact to pay off half of your fine for murder.

Your next quest is given in the Castle Skingrad Courtyard well.

Broken Vows

Your task? Travel to Bruma and kill J'Ghasta, who owns a home there. He's a master of unarmed fighting. If you can't find him in his home, he may be in the Secret Training Room that's hidden under a pile of cloth downstairs. This is the best place to fight him, since he won't be able to run out of doors, and you'll be assured that your fight will take place away from prying eyes.

As mentioned, J'Ghasta will use his fists against you, so be prepared for a physical beatdown. Characters with low Agility will find themselves getting knocked around, so you will definitely want to poison this guy if possible. If you're a melee fighter, then using a fatigue-draining poison on him can lead to a fun fight, since you'll be able to trade punches with him until he gets knocked out. Anyway, find a way to kill him before moving on to your next assignment.

Your next dead drop is at The Old Bridge, south of the Imperial City, just east of Vindasel. Find the Rotten Box underneath the bridge for your orders.

Final Justice

Oh god, it's a movie starring Joe Don Baker! We didn't sign up for this!

Well, not to worry: no sleazy Maltese gangsters here. Instead, you'll have to kill an Argonian named Shaleez, who's apparently a psychopath! Those are always the most fun people to kill. She's holed up in the Flooded Mine, just north of Bravil, so warp there and find her.

The Flooded Mine lives up to its name, so you may want to bring along spells or potions that allow you to breathe water. Otherwise, don't worry too much about it at this point; you can probably swim quickly enough to get to air before drowning. Probably. Anyway, Shaleez will wander the caves most of the day, but if you find her around midnight, she should be asleep on her cot, allowing you to sneak up and hit her with a sneak attack. She has Argonian resistance to poison, so this will be the best chance you have of getting a good first blow in.

Your next dead drop is an empty coffin outside Fort Redman, northeast of Leyawiin.

A Matter of Honor



Wait for Alval to leave town, then take him out while he's not suspecting it and when he has no one to help defend him.

Your next target is Alval Uvani, a traveling merchant. He's a powerful Destruction magician, but does have one weakness: mead. If you can somehow get him to drink a flagon of mead, he'll be much weaker than he would be normally.

Now, you have a few options with Alval. Getting him weakened up with mead is arguably the most complicated, and is probably only worth trying if you're at an extremely low level. To do so, you'll have to find him at one of the Inns that he stops in (or at his home in Leyawiin, but he's there only one day a week), take away all of the nearby drinks, and ensure that mead is the only type of drink available to him. You can find mead in plenty of places, including the house you visited during the Whodunit? quest.

Unfortunately, this means that you'll have to be running around thieving in the middle of a bunch of people, and picking up all their drinks will result in a bounty or two, which is inconvenient, to say the least. It's also just time-consuming.

Your better bet is to kill Alval while he walks from town to town. If you can track him down to a location that he's at, you should be able to wait in the Inn an hour at a time until he gets up and leaves, which usually occurs around 11:00 PM or so. If you follow him out of the inn, out of the town, and wait until you're both a bit out into the wilderness, you'll be able to attack him and take him down. He is a tough spellcaster, as mentioned, but you can deal with that in any number of ways, with our preference being to hit him with a Silence poison with your first strike. You won't be able to sneak attack him, but with a few solid blows he should go down.

The dead drop after this quest is in the Imperial Market District, in a small alley near Rindir's Staffs. Check the hollowed-out tree stump to nab it.

The Coldest Sleep



Go to the campsite on Gnoll Mountain and kill Havilstein Hoar-Blood. Sounds pretty simple!

Gnoll Mountain is to the east of Bruma, if you're wondering, but it's going to be difficult to get to Havilstein from the east. Instead, you'll need to approach from the west, along the mountain trail that runs up from that direction. Check your in-game map. If you head to the spot where the "Y" in "County Bruma" comes close to the "N" in "Jorall Mountains", then you should get an Oblivion Gate on your radar. Head there, then follow the trail from there to the west. It'll lead you right to Havilstein's camp.

Note that Havilstein will be enraged when he spots you. You may want to approach in Sneak mode, or invisible, or try to wait until early in the morning to see if he ever sleeps. Note that you'll have to kill his dog Redmaw, as well, so be ready for a couple of tough opponents.

Your next dead drop is in Nornal, an Ayleid ruin just south of the Muck Valley cavern you visited during the Next of Kin quest. You'll actually have to head inside to receive your orders, which are in a chest behind a locked door in an underwater passage.

A Kiss Before Dying

Your goal here is to kill Ungolim, a Wood Elf who visits the Lucky Old Lady statue in Bravil every

day between 6:00 PM and 1:00 AM. Head to Bravil and take him out! Ungolim is an archer who's going to be automatically hostile to you when he spots you, so be ready for a fight. He's a master archer, complete with knockdowns on some successful hits, so if you're worried about taking too much damage, a good strategy, as always, is to hit him with a powerful Damage Health poison and avoiding him while it does its job.



You can charge Ungolim if you wish, but it's a bit more fun to get into an archery duel with him.

After Ungolim is dead, Lachance appears, and claims that you've actually been killing members of the Black Hand! He says that you stopped visiting the real dead drops, and have instead been diverted by forces unknown to take down the high order members of the Dark Brotherhood. But who could've known so much about the business of the assassins guild?

Following A Lead

Lachance asks you to head to your next dead drop location, in Anvil, and...wait. Wait to find out whom has been diverting your efforts towards wiping out the Black Hand.

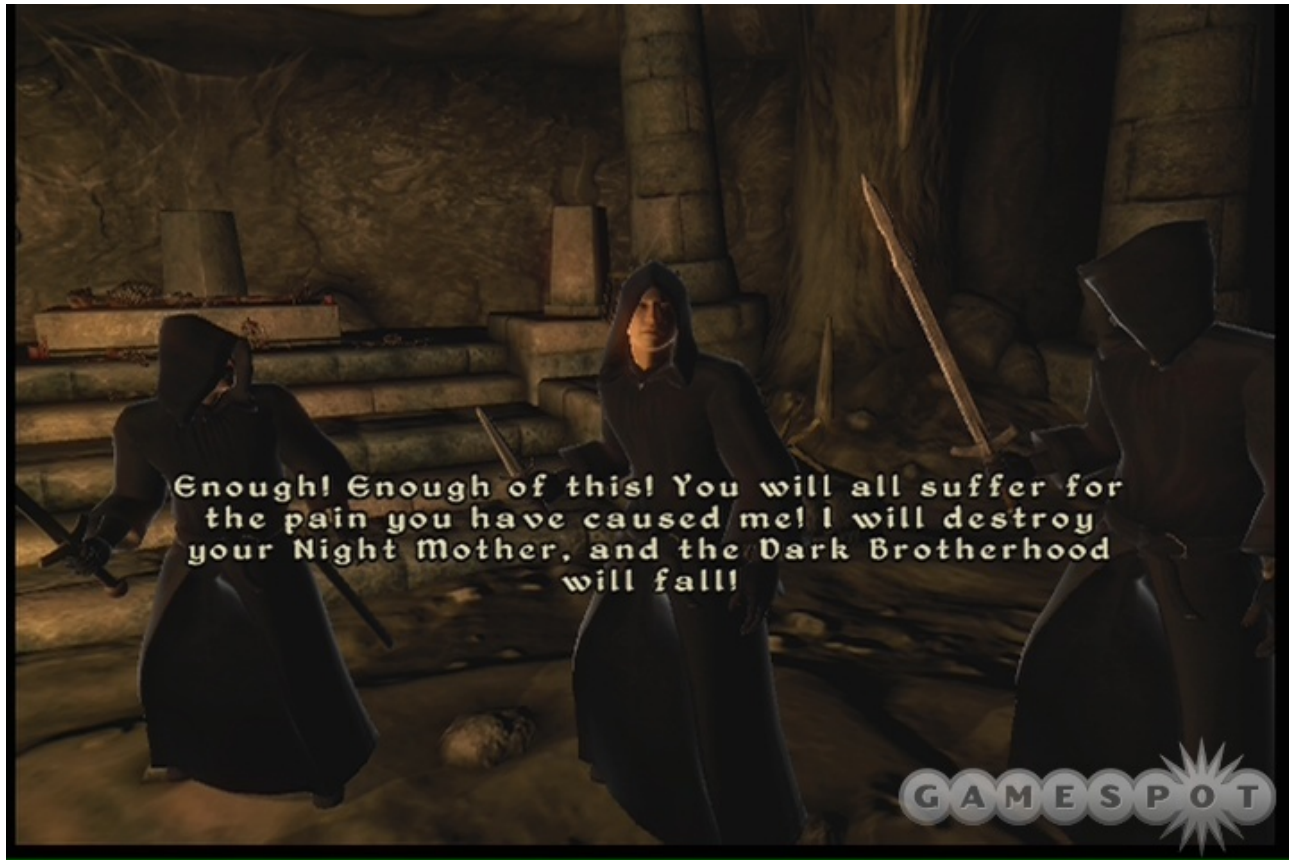
Travel to Anvil and find the wooden barrel that's highlighted on your compass. If you sneak back there, then wait for one hour, you should find Enilroth, a little Elf who says he was paid to put the instructions in the barrel. Sensing imminent doom, Enilroth wisely decides to tell you all about the bad man who paid him. If you further threaten him with death, he'll tell you that the man was living in the cellar of the lighthouse in the harbor, and that it was probably rented to him by the lighthouse keeper, Ulfgar Fog-Eye, who may be able to provide me with a key to the cellar.



Someone's got some anger issues.

Head to the Anvil Docks and track down Fog-Eye's house under the lighthouse and track him down wherever he may be. With a little coaxing, he should yield up the cellar key to you, so head back outside and find the entrance.

With a little poking around in the Corpses R' Us, you'll find the Traitor's Diary, which details the plot. Apparently the person who's been fooling with the dead drops is a member of the Black Hand itself, and has risen in the ranks of the Dark Brotherhood simply to take revenge on it for the murder of his or her mother many years ago. It's up to you to find this infiltrator and shut him or her down for good!



Two on one? Easy-peasey.


Return to Lachance. You'll discover that you're a bit too late to save him from the plotter. Since you're not sure which of the remaining members of the Black Hand is the traitor, all you can do for the moment is to play along.... Note that you'll net a Black Hand Hood and a Black Hand Robe, which are essentially the same items as you obtained earlier, but which add an additional five points to each of the skills that your Shrouded Armor did. They're not considered armor, though, so you may still want to keep the Shrouded Armor around if you're a light armor user.

Honor Thy Mother

In order to move the Dark Brotherhood quests, you need to speak to Arquen here between the hours of midnight and three in the morning. Agree to follow her to the Night Mother's location... which lies beneath the Lucky Old Lady statue in Bravil. Take the trap door down to the crypt and wait for events to unfold for themselves.

When Mathieu Bellamont reveals himself to be the traitor to the cause, quickly poison him and take him down with the help of Arquen. At this point, the bulk of your task is complete, so feel free to loot the bodies and, at the invitation of the Night Mother, loot the crypts as well, then speak to the Mother again. She'll upgrade your Blade of Woe and teleport you back to the Cheydinhal Sanctuary.

Whispers of Death



S... Sithis? Well... I am just a lowly Murderer, but... But I know Sithis is our Dread Father. When we kill, we send him souls! Is that right?

Dark Brotherhood Murderer

GAMESPOT

'Pay attention, Murderer! There'll be a test on all this later on.'

At this point, you've essentially completed the Dark Brotherhood series of quests; your only job now is as a quasi-administrator, overlooking the operations of the Cheydinhal Sanctuary. With Arquen around, though, even that's a pretty low-stress job: all you're required to do is to visit the Lucky Old Lady statue once a week, grab the list of names of people who've prayed to Sithis, and return it to Arquen. In return, you'll get a share of the profits that the cell generates. Nice.

As Listener of the Black Hand, you have some unique benefits to take advantage of. While the ability to speak to the Old Mother and relay her commands to Arquen will net you some cash, another cool aspect of running the Dark Brotherhood is the fact that it lets you obtain the services of Dark Brotherhood Murderers. If you speak to one of them, they'll follow you and act as teammates during your travels. Pretty handy!

Mages Guild

You can "join" the Mages Guild at any of the local guild halls in the seven minor towns around Cyrodiil. Ask around in each guild to learn who you need to speak to become an associate of the Guild. Before you become a full-fledged member and are permitted entrance to the Arcane University in the Imperial City, though, you'll have to complete the recommendation quests for all of the local branches. You can do them in any order, though.

If you played Morrowind, then you may be quailing at the thought of having to get your skills and attributes up to a certain level to advance in the Mages Guild, but fret not: there actually aren't any skill/attribute requirements for the guilds in Oblivion, so even a hearty warrior will be able to become Arch-Mage of the Mages Guild, provided he can cast a few simple spells. (Or can afford to

buy scrolls that let him pretend to cast spells.)

Recommendations

Anvil Recommendation



Things can get pretty complicated when dealing with Caminalda.

Speak to Carahil in Anvil to earn this quest. Your task is to find a rogue mage, who's been killing merchants as they travel along the road outside of town.

Travel to Brina Cross Inn and speak to Arielle Jurard, a battlemage that's been sent by the Mages Guild. She'll get all cloak and dagger and ask you to rent a room for the night, so do so. Booty call! Be sure to tell the innkeeper that you're a merchant.

Head up to the room and rest for an hour to get Arielle to come on up. She'll lay out the plan for you: you're to leave the Inn and start travelling along the road while Arielle and another battlemage shadow me. When the rogue mage attacks, they'll step in and finish the guy off. Sleep for one hour, then follow the plan.

And...well, for once, the plan is actually followed to the letter. If you travel along the road for a bit, you'll be confronted by another resident of the inn, Caminalda, who likely spoke to you after you told everyone that you were a merchant. She'll get right up next to you, so feel free to attack her as soon as she confronts you. If you suspect that she'll take you out, just wait for Arielle to come along and lend a hand. Caminalda will die soon enough, allowing you to return to Anvil to

complete the quest. (You can also take the key on her body back to the Brina Cross Inn to unlock her door and the chest within.)

Skingrad Recommendation



Rescuing Erthor will net you your Skingrad recommendation.

Speak to Adrienne Berene in the Skingrad guild for this quest. She wants you to track down Erthor, a fellow mage in Skingrad who borrowed some notes of hers. Unfortunately, he seems to have gone missing, so it'll be up to you to find out where the heck he's been.

Speak to Sulinus Vassinus downstairs to learn that Erthor has been hanging around in Bleak Flats Cave where he's been practicing his magic. Unfortunately he doesn't remember where it is...no problem, though, because Druja, the Argonian mage in the Guild, does. Speak to her to gain the map marker for Bleak Flats, then speak to Adrienne again for a free Weak Fireball spell.

Bleak Flats Cave is north-northwest of Skingrad, so follow the compass pointers until you reach it. After heading inside, you'll discover that it's full of something called "deranged zombies", presumably the result of a failed experiment of Erthor. Zombies are weak to fire magic, so feel free to blast them with the Fireball Adrienne gave you. When you reach Erthor, he might explain what's going on if you speak to him before killing all of the zombies, but in our case, we happened to clear the cave out before speaking to him, and he acted as if the quest was already done.

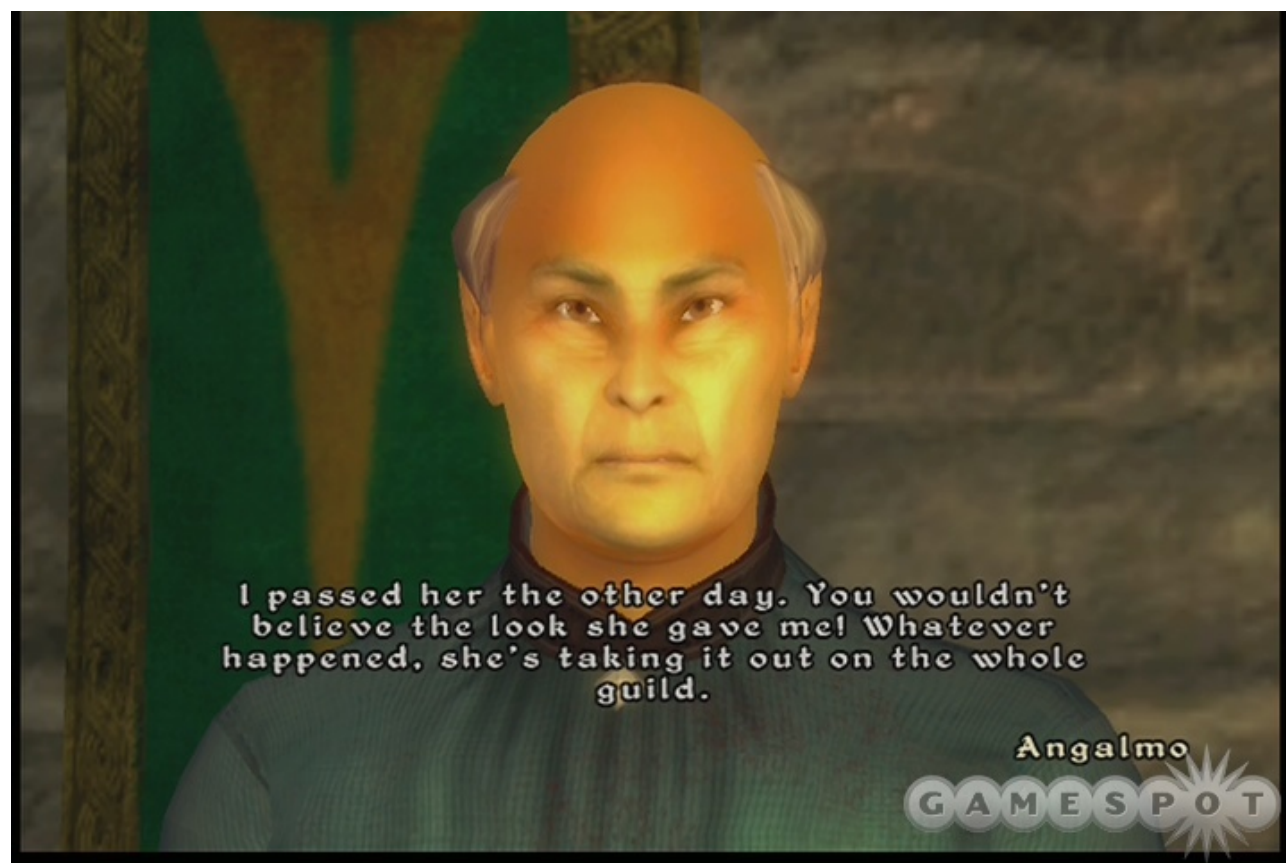
In any case, when all of the zombies in the cave are dead, you can apparently escort Erthor back to the entrance and return to Skingrad.

Chorrol Recommendation

Speak to Teekeeus in the Mages Guild here to get his quest. He wishes you to speak to one Earana, a rival mage of his, who's suddenly appeared in town. They once had a spat at the Arcane University, and apparently managed to get each other kicked out somehow. Teekeeus is apparently a stickler for the rules and regulations of the guild, while Earana is more of a free spirit; you can see why they'd get on each other's nerves.

Teekeeus wants to find out why Earana is in town. Before you go out to interrogate her, speak to the rest of the Chorrol mages to learn more about the pair and their history. When you're ready to track her down, head over to the Gray Mare Inn to speak to her. It turns out that she's not here for Teekeeus at all: instead, she wants you to find a book for her. That doesn't really explain why she's in town, but hey, you are extraordinarily good at finding things and bringing them back, aren't you?

Ignore Earana's warnings about speaking to Teekeeus and tell him of the conversation. He'll give you a map marker for the location of the book, and tell you to get it, just like Earana. Teek here, though, wants the book to be in the Guild's safekeeping.



Earana seems to have an abrasive personality.

Warp as close as you can to Cloud Top and walk the rest of the way there. It'll be difficult to make it up the mountain from the south, so you may want to either approach from the east, or bring a horse along to help you make the ascent. When you find the compass marker, you'll notice a burned corpse on the ground; search it to find the book.

Earana or Teekeeus? Now that you have the book in your possession, you have a number of options. You can give the book straight to Teekeeus if you just want to obtain your Guild recommendation, but that's kind of anticlimactic. You can give the book to Earana if you wish to obtain a special spell, but that will prevent you from gaining the recommendation, won't it? Dilemma.

Well, luckily for you, there's a way for you to obtain the unique spell from Earana, and get the guild recommendation from Teekeeus. To do so, begin by giving the book to Earana; she'll ask for a day to translate it. Wait around, or go questing elsewhere, or whatever. When a day's passed, return to Earana and talk to her. (If she tells you to go away, give it a few more hours, then try again.) She'll give you the Fingers of the Mountain, Part II quest which, when completed, will net you a unique Shock-damage spell. (To complete the quest, grab a Welkynd stone from an Ayleid ruin, then return to Cloud Top and cast any kind of Shock spell on the unique-looking pillar there. You'll have to survive the shocking damage that's returned to you, though, so you'll need some kind of shock resistance on your person.)

But hey - Earana doesn't give you the book back! Teekeeus is naturally upset by your choice of loyalty, but it's all good. If you break into Earana's room in the Gray Mare Inn (the one at the end of the hall), then pick the lock on her treasure chest, you'll be able to lift the Fingers of the Mountain book and return it to Teekeeus for your recommendation.

Bruma Recommendation

It appears that one of the Bruma mages, named J'Skar, has disappeared - literally. Jeanne Frasoric will ask you to reapparate him before she sends off a recommendation to the Arcane University. Volanaro will agree to help you find J'Skar, but only if you assist him in pulling off a "little prank". He gives you a spell capable of opening an Easy lock and asks you to head up to Jeanne's desk and retrieve her Manual of Spellcasting from it.

Needless to say, if you don't want to or can't cast the spell, you can feel free to just pick the lock on the chest and get the Manual that way. Bring it back to Volanaro, the witty prankster! Sounds more like thievery to us. Anyway, meet him at 10 PM in the Living Quarters of the guild hall, and he'll reveal to you that J'Skar's disappearance was itself a prank, albeit more along the "huh?" lines than of the "wow, what an awesome prank!" school. Regardless, tell Jeanne that J'Skars back, and the recommendation will be in the mail.

Cheydinhal Recommendation

Falcar, the master of the Chorrol guild, is a bit...intimidating. He seems dead set on denying you your recommendation, but offers you a task nonetheless: you're to retrieve a Ring of Burden that a previous Associate took and threw down the well behind the guild hall. The nerve! If you're familiar with the Burden effect, then you'll know that you're going to face the risk of being over-encumbered when you pick it up.

Not to worry, though, as Deetsan, the guild member that has the key to the well, has your best

interests in mind. You'll need to speak to her while Falcar is out of earshot, so wait around inside the guild hall until they're on separate floors, then speak to her again. She'll give you the key, as well as a Bouyancy spell that has short-lived Feather and Waterbreathing effects in it. Will you need them? Seems likely.... She'll also tell you about Vidkun, one of the previous Associates assigned to this task. He never returned from the well, so she wants you to find out his fate. Seems pretty obvious, doesn't it?

Welldiving Find the guild's well and head down into it. Now, you're not actually going to need the waterbreathing effect here; the well is very, very small. You will need some kind of Feather effect, though, to actually pick up the Ring of Burden, though, as it weighs 150 pounds. If you can't pick it up with your normal strength, you can either try casting some kind of Feather spell (which lets you pick up more weight than you normally would), drinking a Feather potion or a Fortify Strength potion (you can find one on Falcar's desk in the basement), or just dumping everything you're carrying into a chest or crate in the Mages Guild and heading down there naked.



Poor Vidkun. Oh well, at least you'll do better than he did.

After rooting around in the well for a bit, you'll find Viknud's body nearby, with the Ring of Burden on it. Take it back up to Deetsan, who'll relate a tale: she confronted Falcar about his cruel treatment of Associates, and he stormed off, and seemed to leave the guild altogether. She'll tell you to check Falcar's dresser to see if he wrote a recommendation. Do so, and you'll find...black soul gems?

If you're curious, black soul gems are used by Necromancers to capture the souls of humans. Needless to say, they're bad stuff, especially since the Mages Guild has recently banned necromancy from the land - the fact that Falcar is holding onto them would seem to imply that he doesn't quite hold with this edict. Show the black soul gems to Deetsan to acquire your

recommendation.

Bravil Recommendation

Speak to Kud-Ei in Bravil to get this quest. Note that she may have a text prompt for "Henantier" when you speak to her; this is an optional quest, unrelated to the Mages Guild. If you accept it, you may have to complete it before you can take on the Recommendation quest, because that prompt will disappear from her chat options.

Anyway, Kud-Ei will speak to you of a mage named Ardaline, who's in some kind of vague trouble with a man named Varon Vamori, who seems to have stolen her Mages Staff. Keep working through Kud-Ei's chat tree until you get the "Mages Staff" option. At this point, she'll give you a scroll of Charm, and tell you to use it to question Varon.

Head to Varon, who should be elsewhere in the guildhall. If you've got a decent Personality score, he may decide to up and talk without you even needing to use the scroll at all. Otherwise, cast the spell on him, and he should spill the beans, revealing that he sold the staff to his friend Soris Arenim. Quite the fool in love, this one. What's worse, he sold it to some dude in the Imperial City! Time for a little road trip.

Finding the Staff Head up to the Talos Plaza section of the Imperial City to speak to Soris Arenim, who owns a house there. Note that the Beguile spell is only a magnitude 30 charm, so even it might not be enough to get Soris to talk to you about the staff; you may want to Persuade him a bit before attempting to buy the staff back from him.



With a little charmingness, Soris will agree to sell the staff.

At this point, you have two options. You can charm Soris himself, and he'll offer to sell it back to you for 200 gold. Easy enough, if you have the cash. Alternately, you can charm his wife, who should be standing nearby, and she'll tell you that Soris has the staff locked up in the basement. To retrieve it, you'll need to head up to the bedroom, grab the key to the chest from the desk there, then enter the basement and unlock the chest to retrieve the staff. You may want to perform this latter task in the middle of the night, though, when Soris and his wife are asleep.

Either way, grab the staff and get it back to Kud-Ei. She'll send a recommendation off for you, and teach you a low-level Charm spell for free.

Leyawiin Recommendation

If you start talking to the Leyawiin Mages Guild members, you'll learn that Dagail is the only one that can issue a recommendation to you. Unfortunately, she seems to be a bit off her nut, talking about voices that only she can hear, and so on. She seems to want you to retrieve a special amulet for her, and asks you to speak to Agata, another member of the guild. Agata will tell you to interrogate the rest of the magicians in the guild about the Seer's Stone.



No one with this kind of brow could ever be a good person.

Kalthar is the one you want to speak to here, as he has another piece of the puzzle: Dagail's problems are apparently hereditary, and were passed down to her by her father. Taking this information to Agata, and then back to Dagail herself, will point you in the direction of a fort near Leyawiin, where Dagail's father was once stationed.

Fort Blueblood is located to the southeast of Leyawiin, and is currently populated by the rare Marauder enemies. Start cutting your way through them as best you can until you reach the Marauder Warlord, who'll possess the Fort Blueblood Key. Use it to unlock the crypt where Dagail's father is buried, but be sure to heal up before heading inside, as it's guarded by mythic creatures.

When you defeat the creatures and grab Manduin's Amulet out of his coffin, Kalthar himself will appear. At first, he'll ask you to hand over the amulet to him, but then he'll just flip out and start attacking you. Sigh...you can feel better about your needing to kill him since he summons a zombie to help him out. Necromancer! Can't have their kind polluting the Mages Guild.

Kill Kalthar, grab his key, and use it to unlock the path back to the surface. After returning the amulet to Dagail, she'll magically get better - magical amulets tend to do that - and send your recommendation off to the Arcane University, but not before muttering about your fated destiny and all that. Whatev's, cuz, I'm off to the big show!

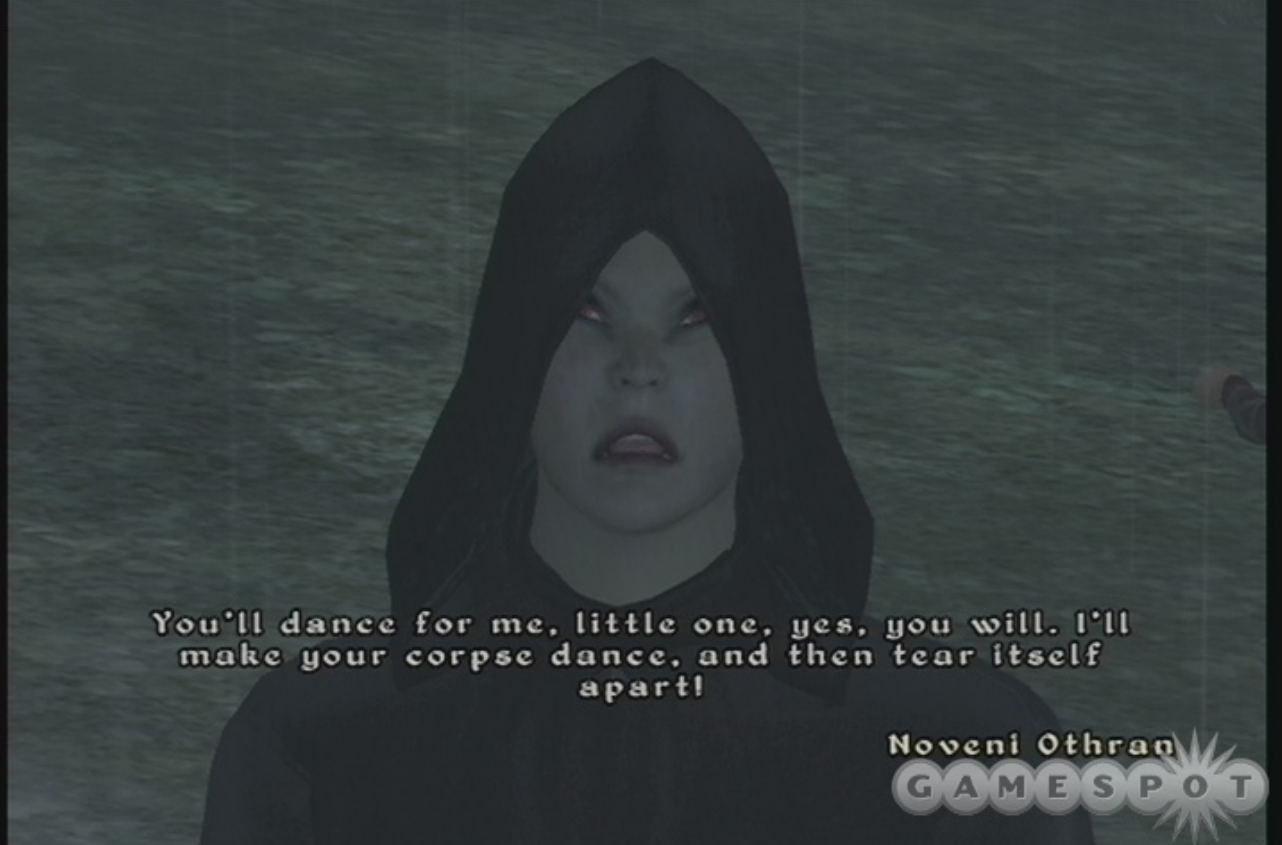
Join The Mages Guild

All that's left for you now is to join the Mages Guild for true. Head to the Arcane University and speak to Raminus Polus to get your Robes of the Apprentice, and your first task.

A Mage's Staff

Your first goal? The creation of your very own staff. Head to Wellspring Cave to obtain the wood for your first prized magical possession. Unfortunately, as soon as you enter, you'll find Zahrasha, one of the two attendants here, dead on the floor, with a necromancer glowering at you nearby. You know what we say: the only good necromancer is a zombified necromancer. Or something like that...

You'll find a cave key on Zahrasha's body. Pick it up before proceeding onwards; you will of course encounter more necromancers before you reach another door leading to the Waterfront. This will pop you out onto a small island in Lake Rumare, where you'll find the wood for your staff...but not without some trouble. As many as three Necromancers are here waiting for you, and with their zombies and skeletons, that could mean that you'll be facing as many as six opponents. You'll have to kill them, so you may want to try getting their attention individually before luring them back into the Wellspring Cave and attempting to fight them there, so that they'll have a harder time running for help when they get low on health.



You'll dance for me, little one, yes, you will. I'll
make your corpse dance, and then tear itself
apart!

Noveni Othran
GAMESPOT

'I'll get you, my pretty, and your little dog, too!'

Regardless, kill them all, check the body of Eletta, then grab the Unfinished Staff from the stone chest between the two torches. Return to Raminus to deliver the bad news. He'll take your information on advisement, and tell you to reach Delmar in the Chironasium to complete your staff. This is a fairly easy procedure; you'll be able to tell him what kind of effect you want the staff to have, and he'll make one just the way you like it. He'll need a day to prepare the staff, though, so you'll have a little time to wander around, if you like. Be sure to read the "Before the Ages of Man" book in the Chironasium for a boost to your Mysticism skill. If you can break into the upstairs portion of the building, you can also find a book called Cleansing of the Fane, which will leave a map marker for an Ayleid ruin called Malada far to the east. Not quest-critical, but an interesting place to explore if you're looking for something to do.

Note also that the Enchanting Altar is in the Chironasium, should you wish to enchant something. If you have any decent souls trapped in soul gems, now would be a good time to make a new ring or amulet or something similar.



Mercator, prepare to meet your maker.

At any rate, return to Delmar in 24 hours to obtain your staff, which is apparently levelled in effect so that it's appropriate no matter when you obtain it. At level 18, our Paralysis staff stunned enemies for eight full seconds!

Ulterior Motives

Return to Raminus to turn in your quest, and obtain your next advancement. He needs you to head to Janus Hassildor, the count of Skingrad, and retrieve a book from him. If you've dealt with Hassildor before, you'll know that there's something off about him....

Head to the Castle Skingrad County Hall during normal work hours and speak to Mercator Hosidus, who gives you a pretty smarmy reply to your inquiry. Nonetheless, he says that he'll try to get you an audience with Hassildor, and to return in 24 hours for your reply.

The response? Affirmative. The Count will see you...but only at an abandoned mine outside of town. Rich folk and their eccentricities! All you can do now is head to the point indicated on your map and wait until 2:00 AM, which is the time when Mercator indicated that Hassildor would show up.

And indeed Hassildor does show up there at that time. But before he does, Mercator and two of his necromancer friends will intercept you - it's an ambush! They intend to kill you, and would probably succeed had the Count himself not followed them. All you really need to do here is run out to the road and attempt to defend yourself as best you can. Hassildor will follow you and kill your attackers, right as rain. After your rather intense conversation with him, return to the Arcane

University in high dudgeon.

Vahtacen's Secret

Raminus will reward you with a useful amulet for your role in Mercator's undoing, and give you a new task: you're to speak with one Irlav Jarol, who's conducting research in an Ayleid Ruin. For the moment, though, he's holed up in the Arch-Mage's tower. Track him down, and he'll tell you that there's some problem with the site - a block passage, or somesuch. He wants you to head on over and see what you can do to help.

Travel to Vahtacen as best you can, then speak to Skaleel when you enter. She'll be somewhat skeptical of your ability to help out, but in the end, she'll let you know of a mysterious pillar that's been located deep within the ruins. Apparently it's sensitive to magical energies, but can also reflect energies back onto spellcasters. Caution signs are yet to be hung, but for now, be careful.

Speak to Denel further along the path to learn about a reference book that Skaleel has been holding onto. Asking her about it will persuade her to hand it over, so feel free to check it out before getting up close and personal with the pillar itself.

This Means Something...

If you want to examine the markings in the room and compare them to what's in the book, feel free. Only one of the markings has a direct reference in the tome, however, so in order to get more acquainted with the translations, speak to Denel. If you've examined all of the markings, he'll tell you what they mean. One refers to a fire spell, one to frost, one to a fortify magicka spell, and one to a damage magicka spell. Unfortunately, you won't be able to tell the correct sequence of events until you experiment a bit, but here's a hint: it's fire, frost, fortify, then damage.



Unlocking the pillar here will let you pass through to the dungeon beneath the dungeon.

If you don't have these spells on hand (although everyone should have fire and frost spells by now, surely), then you're probably not alone. We're not even sure that there is a spell that casts fortify magicka on a target; you may have to make one at the Arcane University. Otherwise, if you're of the lazy sort, just search the chest near Denel, which has scrolls for each of the effects that you need. Again, cast them in order of Fire, Frost, Damage Magicka, and Fortify Magicka, and keep in mind that some of the scrolls require you to be within touching distance of the pillar. Casting all of them, in that particular order, will unlock the pillar and reveal a passage to Vahtacen Lorsel.

Make your way through the dungeon, avoiding traps and undead, until you reach the green marker on your map. The large pedestal in the center of this room is currently inaccessible, so take the steps on the southeastern side of the room and look for the push block inside one of the pillars there. Pushing it will raise the steps to the central pedestal, where you'll find another switch that reveals an Ancient Elven Helmet. Grab it, then either fight the undead that have appeared, or just run away. You'll probably want to exit via the southeastern route, as there are a couple of small chests that appear to have boss-level loot. There are more in the other small exit in the northern side of the helmet's room.

With the helmet in hand, return to Jarol in the Arcane University to hand it over. After doing so, you can return to Raminus for a nice reward: the Robe of the Conjuror.

Necromancer's Moon

Time to learn more about those mysterious Black Soul Gems that you discovered in your recommendation quests. Raminus wants you to speak to Tar-Meena, whom you may have encountered in the game's main quest if you've been playing through that. She may know something about the function of the Black Soul Gems; apparently no one's ever bothered to ask her.

After finding the Mystic Archives, talk to Tar-Meena, who'll tell you to track down a book called Necromancer's Moon. She doesn't know precisely where it is, but your compass point will, as usual, save the day; look for the book on a small table near one of the desks here. Read it, then add it to your inventory. After speaking on its mysteries with Tar-Meena, return to Raminus, who'll point you towards Bothiel, the caretaker of the Imperial Orrery, which is as of yet still locked to you. You should be able to find her walking around the Arcane University, however.

Speak to Bothiel to obtain the Hastily Scrawled Note, which points out a list of four necromantic sites, complete with altars capable of transforming Grand Soul Gems into Black Soul Gems. Hmm. Raminus desires you to explore one of these ruins; the ominously named "Dark Fissure". It's right near Vahtacen, so at least you won't have a lengthy journey to get there.

The Dark Fissure

Note the appearance of the altar outside the cave here. If you head inside and kill the first necromancer inside the door, you should be treated to an explanation of what it's for if you read the Handwritten Note on his body. Apparently, if you place a Grand Soul Gem in an altar, wait until the spectral light shines on it from the skies (which happens one day a week), then cast a Soul Trap spell on the altar, you'll obtain a Black Soul Gem. Curious.



The only good necromancer is a dead necromancer.

With the Note in tow, you can leave the cave and return to the Arcane University if you wish, but you can also, of course, search through the Dark Fissure. There are a set of Tunnels beneath the first level. You can find the key for the door in a chest in the necromancer's sleeping area. Beneath the Tunnels is the Inner Sanctum, where you'll find more necromancers and at least one boss-level chest. Well, it's really a coffin, but it's still got good loot.

When you return to Raminus, he'll offer up another advancement, and tell you to seek out Arch-Mage Traven himself, who has a special assignment for you.

Liberation or Apprehension?



Mucianus has seen better days. There's nothing you can do for him at this point.

Traven has a delicate matter at hand: one of his spies in the necromancer cult, one Mucianus Alias, is suspected of being a double agent by the Council, which has sent a group of Battlemages to his last known location with the intent to bring him back into the Guild's safekeeping. Traven asks you to do pretty much the same thing, but to cut off the Battlemages before they arrive, and thus ensure that Mucianus isn't mistreated.

Proceed to Nenyond Twyll with all due speed. You'll encounter a battlemage named Fithragaer just inside the entrance whom, before he meets his hilarious fate, will tell you that the necromancers wiped out the rest of the battlemages and retreated further into the ruins. If you chase them through the first portion of the level, you'll encounter one Mariette Rielle just after you reach the Riellesel area. It would appear that Mucianus is now zombified himself, and thus won't

be returning with you to the Arcane University. She does make some kind of reference to "The Master", which bodes well for some kind of Manos-esque arch necromancer at the end of this questline.

At the far end of the Riellesal zone, you'll come across a Necromancer Adept, who'll guard access to a pushblock on the wall. Hitting it will reveal Mucianus Alias, who has indeed been transformed into the walking dead. Remove the head or destroy the brain, if you wish, but if you don't want to kill him, you can just leave him be; he won't attack you. Report his fate to Traven to complete the quest.

Information At A Price

Traven has a seemingly simple task for you now: travel to Skingrad and speak to Hassildor. That's it! Well, for now, at any rate. Speak to Hal-Liurz in the Skingrad County Hall to get the ball rolling on your appointment with the Count.

Hassildor is good for an interesting conversation, as usual. He knows something, but is reluctant to spill the beans until you help him with a little problem he's been having. It would appear that there's a nest of vampires in a cave outside of town - he wants them destroyed. There's also a gang of vampire hunters in Skingrad itself - they're to be taken out, as well. Angel and Buffy are getting staked tonight. Be sure to interrogate him thoroughly before moving out to deal with the disparate situations.

The vampires are fairly simple to deal with: just head to the cave and take them down. If you haven't fought vampires before this, then you'll have to deal with their invisibility power, which they'll normally activate just after they become aware of your presence. Most of them have spellcasting abilities, as well, and of course you'll probably get infected with Porphyric Hemophilia before too long. If you attempt to sleep while infected with this disease, you'll likely turn into a vampire yourself, so clear out the cave first and then, when you get the quest marker indicating that all of the vampires are dead, suck down a Cure Disease potion to ensure that the blood thirst doesn't consume you, as well.



Telling the vampire hunters to head to the vampire's cave results in quite a battle.

Now to deal with the vampire hunters themselves. You need to find Eridor, the leader of the vampire hunters; he'll usually be patrolling the southern portion of Skingrad. Of course, if you wish to just kill the hunters without concern for warrants or fines, you can just attack them all piece by piece, but if you want to deal with the problem a bit more diplomatically, you can tell Eridor that you've eliminated the vampires and prove it by giving him a bit of vampire dust, at which point he'll agree to leave town. If you really want to kill them, though, you can tell him that the vampires are hiding out at Bloodcrust Cave, at which point he and his men will go to check it out, allowing you to follow them and slaughter the lot.

Tip: If you want a few more bodies to loot, but less combat, then you can approach Eridor before heading to the Bloodcrust Cavern and tell him that that's where the vampires are hidden away. After waiting a few hours, you'll notice their map markers migrate to the Cavern, at which point you'll know that they're inside. They'll attack all of the vampires, and kill a few before likely getting killed themselves, allowing you to perform mop-up on the vampires to finish the objectives.

Whichever way you go, return to Hassildor and get the information he has available: Mannimarco has returned. Who? Well, apparently it's some ancient necromancer, intent on destroying the Mages Guild. Return to the Arcane University immediately to relay the information to Traven. He'll tell you that he needs to consult with the Council and dismiss you. No more quests for the next day or so, so feel free to take a little time off.

A Plot Revealed

After a day or two has passed, return to Traven to obtain your next task. He wants you to go to

Bruma and speak with Jeanne Frasoric, who's been out of contact for a few days. Sounds simple enough.

They all do, at first, but as so many simple quests go, this one winds up being complicated. When you reach the Bruma guildhall, you'll discover that it's been ransacked, apparently by necromancers. Undead roam the halls, filling the air with the wails of the damned. The furniture is overturned and on fire. And someone spilled the mead. Heathens.



Be prepared to deal with the Undead in Bruma.

Anyway, in your search for survivors, you'll have to traverse the living quarters below the main area of the guildhall, then head up to Jeanne's rooms. She's dead, of course, and you'll be attacked by one of the remaining necromancers when you pass through the doorway. Kill her to reveal J'Skar, who managed to survive the slaughter by remaining invisible throughout. He'll head back to the Arcane University, and you should as well. Report in to Traven to complete the quest, and learn again that it'll be a few days before he has anything else for you.

When you do get advanced all the way up to Wizard rank, you can speak to Traven again to pick up two more quests: The Necromancer's Amulet, and The Bloodworm Helm. You'll need to complete both of these quests, but you can do them in any order you like.

The Bloodworm Helm

The Bloodworm Helm was one of two necromantic artifacts removed from the Imperial City by mages eager to study them in an effort to find a way to defeat Mannimarco. Traven wants you to track them down and return them before the necromantic king gets his hands on them. The

Bloodworm Helm is in Fort Teleman, well to the southeast of the Imperial City.

In an absolutely shocking twist, Fort Teleman is full of necromancers!!!!!! We couldn't see that one coming, no sir. You'll find Irlov Jarol's body in the second section of the fort, so nab the Bloodworm Helm from his corpse and take it back to Traven to complete the quest.



Caranya has nothing to rely on but her fists if you Silence her before attacking.

The Necromancer's Amulet

Note that the Mages in Fort Ontus are not hostile to you, so don't do anything stupid like running or sneak attacking them before realizing that they're on your side. Um, not that we'd ever do anything like that... Head down to the Fort Ontus Understreets area to speak to Caranya. You're going to have to fight her, so try to have a weapon prepared with either a paralyzation or Silence poison before talking to her.

After killing Caranya and nabbing the Amulet from her body, the rest of the Mages in the Fort will show their true colors and spontaneously become Necromancers, complete with undead-summoning skills. Kill them - kill them all, and leave the ruins to bring the Amulet back to Traven. You'll need to speak to Raminus to obtain another advancement before you can obtain more quests from Traven.

Ambush



What's going on? Don't you know an ambush when you see one?

Things are getting progressively worse for the Mages Guild. The necromancers have apparently succeeded in completing the construction of a large Black Soul Gem. Its use is unclear, but Traven fears the worst should it find its way into the hands of Mannimarco. You're to rendezvous with a group of Battlemages outside the ruins of Silorn and obtain the soul gem, at any cost.

Travel to Silorn, southeast of Skingrad, to rendezvous with your Battlemages. When you speak to Thalfin, you'll get a rundown on the basics of the situation. The entrance to Silorn is magically sealed, so you can't storm the ruins like you originally planned on doing. Instead, you'll have to set up an ambush with Thalfin, Merete, and Iver to ambush the necromancers as they exit the ruin with the Black Soul Gem. Killing their leader, Falcar, will allow you to nab the Soul Gem and return to Traven.

Of course, things aren't nearly as simple as they seem - you're going to have to set your trap by placing your teammates in positions near where the necromancers exit. It doesn't really matter where you put them, for reasons that become obvious, but if you want to play along, put Iver and Thalfin up close to the exit, while Merete hangs back a bit. When they've all been assigned a position, wait a few minutes, and a gang of four necros, including Falcar, will exit the ruins and walk your way. When they've come far enough, your Battlemages will automatically attack them.

Tip: If you don't want to bother with the tactical considerations, just ignore Thalfin and run towards the entrance to Silorn. You'll be discovered by the necros there, but the doorway apparently will become unlocked, allowing you to head in and take on Falcar.

Now, at this point, if you want to obtain the Black Soul Gem with a minimum of fuss, you'll probably need to have some way of paralyzing Falcar, who's dressed in the nicest outfit;

otherwise, he'll make a beeline towards the entrance to the ruins when the battle is joined, and will likely escape there unless you have some way to stop them. The other necromancers are just garden-variety foes, and easily dispatched by your troops, but Falcar is the one that you need to kill. If he does make it back to the ruins, you'll have to follow him inside and track him down, while ignoring the slaughter behind you, where your teammates have likely turned on one another.

Silorn

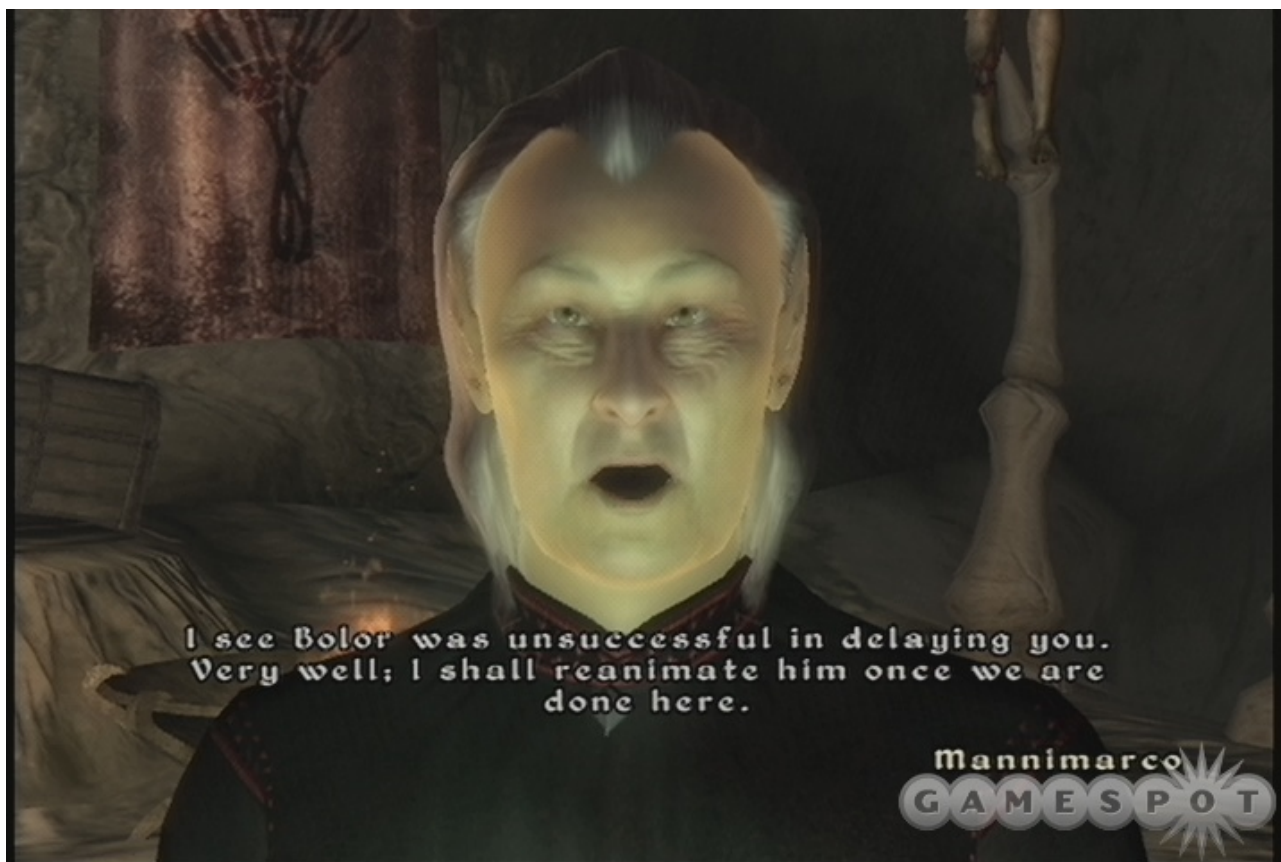
Don't be too confused by the red arrows on your map. The first area here is just called Silorn, but your compass marker will be pointing you towards a door leading to Silorn Buroseli. The catch? In order to unlock the gates leading there, you're going to have to pass through Silorn Sedorseli, which leads you back to Silorn and the high ledge where the button for the gates is located. (You can jump around the gates if you have an obscenely high Acrobatics score, or the Boots of Springheel Jak, however.)

In the Buroseli, find Falcar, kill him, and grab the Colossal Black Soul Gem off of his body. Return it to Traven in the Arcane University to complete the quest.

Confront The King

The time to take on Mannimarco has arrived, and Traven knows precisely how to protect you against his enthralling mental mastery: the Colossal Black Soul Gem must be filled with a soul, and you must carry it into battle with you. Whose soul to put into the gem, though? Traven, again, knows the answer, and immolates himself to fill the gem himself. Ah, self-sacrifice. Very noble, but it'll also let you become the Arch-Mage of the guild when you finish off Mannimarco! Sweet.

Mannimarco's headquarters is in the Echo Cave, on the northern edge of Cyrodiil. You'll need to kill Bolor Savel outside in order to get the key that opens the door, but hey - he's a necromancer, so don't feel too bad about chopping him down. More of his ilk reside inside the cave, of course, along with their undead friends, so be ready for a lengthy journey into the abyss. Head through the Echo Passages to the Echo Necromancer's Chamber, where Mannimarco awaits.



Oh Mannimarco...you had me from hello.

Now, when you get close enough to Mannimarco, he'll attempt to paralyze you and chat you up, but you're under no obligation to help him do so; if you can sneak up on him and hit him with a poisoned arrow shot, you'll be able to sap him of life and force him into a battle while on the defensive. He does possess the usual necromantic spell suite, including a summoning ability, so if you can tap him with a silence effect, so much the better. Still, he's not overwhelmingly powerful, so if you can close in on him and keep him poisoned or silenced, you should be able to knock him around enough to kill him, at which point - hey, you just saved the Mages Guild!

You can grab the Staff of Worms off of Mannimarco's body, should you like; it seems to have a reanimation effect that you can use on creatures to bring them back to life and fight for you. There are also a few boss-level treasure chests in this room, so search around (including underwater) to grab everything you can before returning back to the Arcane University to report your success.

Denouement

With the Mages Guild under your control, you have a few new things to take advantage of. One, you'll be able to talk to the Mage Apprentices scattered around the University grounds and tell them to accompany you on your trips into the wilderness. They aren't particularly great soldiers, but they'll do your bidding, and will never run out, no matter how many of them wind up getting killed.

Secondly, if you speak to Julienne Fanis in the Lustratorium, she'll tell you about a magical chest in the Arch-Mage's chambers. If you place a single alchemical ingredient into it, then come back

24 hours later, you'll gain ten more of the ingredient. Best used for rare stuff, obviously, like Vampire Dust. You can only perform this once a week, however, limiting its usefulness somewhat.

Daedric Quests

The Daedric quests are given to you when you approach certain Daedric shrines which are scattered around the game world. You can find the location of one of these by reading the Modern Heretics book in the Cloud Ruler Temple library; reading this book will also let you talk to certain other NPCs in the game world for specific directions to the shrines. Some are simply difficult to find, so we've done our best to describe their locations below. Each shrine will also require some kind of offering before you're able to speak to the Daedric gods.

Shrine	Location Giver	Requirements for Worship	Reward
Azura	Modern Heretics Book.	Glow Dust; Level 2	Star of Azura (reusable Grand Soul Gem)
Boethia	Bora in Bora's Goods shop in western Cheydinhal.	Draeda Heart, level 20	Goldbrand (fire-enchanted sword)
Clavicus Vile	None - shrine is southwest of Imperial City, in one of the loops formed by the Red Ring Road.	500 Gold, level 20	Masque of Clavicus Vile (+20 Personality Mask)
Hircine	Ontus Vanin, southwestern Talos Plaza.	Wolf or Bear Pelt, level 17	Savior's Hide (magical Light Armor)
Malacath	Thaurron in Mage's Guild of Anvil.	Troll Fat, level 10	Volendrung (Paralyze, Drain Health hammer)
Mephala	Ontus Vanin, or Luther Broad at his boarding house in Elven Gardens District.	Nightshade, level 15. Nightshade is difficult to find, but if you visit Camoran's Paradise in the main quest you should find some.	Ebony Blade (sword with Silence and Absorb Health)
Meridia	None, found west of Skingrad.	Bonemeal or ectoplasm, level 10	Ring of Khajiiti (Chameleon, Fortify Speed)
Molag Bal		Lion Pelt, level 17	Mace of Molag Bal (Drain Strength and Magicka)
Namira	None, found east-southeast of Bruma.	Personality under 20. (Find or buy a lot of Cheap Wine to reduce your score here. There's plenty in the Chapel Hall in Bruma.)	Ring of Namira (Reflect Damage and Reflect Spell)

Nocturnal	Alves Uvenim, Leyawiin Mages Guild	Level 10	Skeleton Key (unbreakable lockpick, adds 40 to Security score)
Peryite	None, and difficult to find. Lies along the southern bank of the Silverfish River, to the east of Bravil.	Level 10	Spell Breaker (shield with Reflect Spell)
Sanguine	Fadus Calidius, Skingrad Fighter's Guild.	Cyrodiilic Brandy (can be bought at the Main Ingredient in the Imperial Market District)	Sanguine Rose (staff that can summon Daedra)
Sheogorath	Around halfway between Brasil and Leyawiin. Follow road south from Brasil, cross the river, then head off-road, southwest of Camp Nowhere.	Lettuce, Lesser Soul Gem, and Yarn; Level 2	Wabbajack (Staff that can transmute creature into any other creature for 20 seconds)
Vaermina	Ontus Vanin in southwestern Talos Plaza yet again.	Grand Black Soul Gem (very difficult to come by unless you take part in the Mage's Guild Quests)	Skull of Corruption (staff that creates a clone of a target that is hostile to your target)

Azura

Azura's quest is alluded to in the main storyline, during the Blood of the Daedra quest given to you by Martin. If you wish to perform it then, then feel free to do so; otherwise, you can get another Daedric item and use that for the ritual instead.

Azura, when summoned with Glow Dust between the hours of five and seven (either in the morning or at night), will tell you a tale of five of her followers who slew a vampire, but were infected with vampirism themselves. Reluctant to share their gift with the rest of the world, they shut themselves into the vampire's mountain cave, where they've presumably lived ever since. Azura wants you to track down her followers and release them into the afterlife.

The Gutted Mine is further up the mountain to the northwest, so find it and head inside, but be ready for some tough, tough fights: bring healing potions, and preferably have some magical weapons charged up and ready to go. Three of the vampires are going to be wielding heavy melee weapons and will be doing heavy damage to you, so if you find yourself overwhelmed, try coming back later on. That's not even mentioning the fact that these guys are frickin' vampires, and can infect you if they hit you enough. Vampirism in its early stages is considered a disease, so be sure to bring along some Cure Disease potions if you head inside.

When all five of the vampires have been destroyed, loot their bodies and return to Azura's Shrine

to nab Azura's Star, an infinitely reusable Grand Soul Gem.

Boethia

Boethia's shrine is waaay up in the Valus Mountains, on the eastern edge of Cyrodiil, near the border with Morrowind. If you examine your map and find the text "The Valus Mountains", you can find the shrine a bit to the west of the "m" in "Mountains". It's difficult to reach, however; you'll probably have to scout around for Fort Facian, which is located to the southwest of the shrine, and follow the rough path there up to the shrine. You'll need to be level 20 before you begin this quest, so don't make the trip unless you're going to be able to attempt it.

Boethia's offering is a Daedra heart, easy enough to find in any Oblivion plane. When offered, he'll tell you of your task: enter a special plane of Oblivion and take part in the Tournament of Ten Bloods. When you pass through the portal, you can't come back until you win, so be sure to bring along anything you need. Special equipment, potions and poisons, filled soul gems, repair hammers, etc.

The Tournament When you enter the portal, you're given a moment to collect yourself, then are told that the Tournament of Ten Bloods will begin when you enter the gate on your right. And indeed it does! The goal here is to kill nine enemies, one of each different race, each of which has boss-level stats and armor. (Whichever race you chose as your own will not be represented, so you won't have to practice any fratricide, thankfully.)



You'll have to have a bit of longevity if you want to survive Boethia's challenges.

The Orc and the Redguard here are likely going to be two of the more difficult enemies you'll face,

and unfortunately they're both at the very start of the tournament. Both have magical weapons that will add quite a bit of damage to their attacks, and both have a large amount of health to draw on. These two will be perfect targets for any high-level poisons that you have, although the Redguard will likely have a small amount of resistance to poison. Stay away as best you can to prevent them from whacking you while your poison works its magic, then finish them off with whatever you have at your disposal, perhaps using scrolls if you happen to be a melee warrior. (The Nord character is likely another strong fighter, but as our character was a Nord, we can't speak from experience on this.)

Personal playstyles aside, the rest of the enemies shouldn't be quite as powerful as the melee warriors. The archers are especially useful to kill, since you'll be able to look some incredibly powerful arrows off of their bodies; get up close as soon as possible to prevent them from using them on you! Most of the characters will have plenty of great loot to carry, so be sure to bring some potions of Feather to help you carry it all out of the plane. Don't forget that you can rest for an hour between fights to restore your health, and don't forget to use the weapons that you like against subsequent opponents to prevent you from having to constantly recharge your own. One of them seems to always drop a Greater Staff of Lightning, which will make for some quick fights against the rest of the enemies.

Be sure to grab anything from the corpses that catches your eye, as you won't be able to return to this plane after you leave. When you do return and speak to Boethia's shrine again, he'll reward you with Goldbrand, a decent enough sword with a 22 point fire damage bonus. You've probably been able to make better ones with Sigil Stones, but whatever; we're not going to tell him what to give us. To be fair, it is an exceedingly quick sword for the damage it does.

Clavicus Vile

Clavicus Vile has one of the shorter quests in the game, albeit one of the more interesting. You can find his shrine just to the southwest of the Imperial City. If you leave via the west exit and take the roads south from the Wawnet Inn, you'll eventually run across Fort Virtue. Head into the woods to the southwest of the fort and you'll shortly stumble across Clavicus Vile's shrine. You'll need 500 gold to activate the shrine, and will have to be level 20 to start the quest here.

When you do so, Clavicus will tell you of a sword imbued with the soul of a warrior named Umbra. The sword (also called Umbra) is desired by Clavicus, and he wishes you to track it down and return it to him. He'll tell you to begin your quest in Pell's Gate, a village near the shrine. You'll have to speak to a character named Irroke the Wilde who, when he feels comfortable with you (at a high Disposition, in other words) will tell you of an apprentice of his who found the sword and was possessed by the soul inside. She's to be found in Vindasel, an Ayleid Ruin just to the east of the Shrine of Clavicus Vile, near one of the bridges over the water.



Killing Umbra is a difficult matter, but by level 20 you should have the tools to take her down.

Killing Umbra Now, unlike many quests of this sort, there's no way to get the sword from Umbra (as she's calling herself) without killing her. And she's hard. Quite hard. Luckily for you, if you're attempting this quest at level 20, you should have the tools required to take her on: a weapon with a 25-point magical damage enchantment, a hearty shield, plenty of health, and potions with which to heal yourself during the fight. Stealth characters will want to rely on the most powerful damage poisons you can create and attempt to evade her powerful attacks. Mages should rely on any kind of powerful staves that you might've found, or high-damage spell attacks. Any way you go, you might want to try completing Boethia's shrine quest and loot the equipment from the characters found within to give you an edge over Umbra.

Luckily, there is a little trick to taking her down without getting into range of her attacks. If you look around in her little room, you'll notice that there's a pillar that's been broken off. If you jump from the table to the pillar's midsection, you should be able to get yourself well off the ground and out of range of her attacks. This will require either a large skill number in Acrobatics, the Boots of Springheel Jak, or, if you're willing to get up there the ghetto way, you can upend the little wicker basket by the table, place it upright on top of the table, and use it as a springboard to get onto the pillar. From there, she won't be able to hit you, allowing you to fill her with arrows or spells as you like.

Alternately, you can try buying an item that'll help you take her down, like the Apotheosis staff from Rindir's Staves in the Market District. Regardless, kill her and get the sword, which sports a permanent Soul Trap enchantment when you hit an enemy. Definitely worth using for a while, but if you're level 20, then you can likely find a Sigil Stone with the same effect, albeit without quite as lengthy a duration (120 seconds for the Umbra).

Handing It In Now, at this point, you can either return the sword to Clavicus, or just use it yourself for a while. It's worth having if you like powerful swords, if only because the Soul Trap enchantment eliminates the need for you to cast that yourself each time you want to capture a soul. The reward you get for giving up the Umbra to Clavicus Vile is a heavy armor headpiece that adds 20 points to your Personality, which isn't really worth trading in the sword for. You will need to complete this quest to attempt the quest for Hermaeus Mora, but you may be able to "complete" it by returning to the shrine and refusing to hand over the sword, which will let you retain it while still moving on to the Hermaeus Mora quest. Worth a shot, but save your game first, because the Hermaeus Mora quest will net you quite a nice reward; it'd be a shame to miss out on it.

Hircine

Hircine's shrine is south of the Imperial City, near the "The" word in "The Nibenay Valley" on your map. It should be on the same sliver of map as the Arcane University when that landmark is at the top of your map, so it's not a huge journey from there to the shrine.

Hircine is the Daedric god of hunting, apparently, and asks for an appropriate tribute: the pelt of a bear or a wolf. You can find these yourself if you've advanced in level high enough to make these creatures appear, or you can buy one from most of the game's general vendors in the miscellaneous category.



This unicorn is located near Hircine's Shrine, so at least you won't have a long way to walk.

When you make the appropriate offer to Hircine, he'll offer you a task: find him a unicorn's horn. To do so, you'll have to find and kill a unicorn. Awwwww! Well, you don't have to do so if you don't want to. But if you do, the task shouldn't be too hard: the unicorn is located a short distance from the shrine, in Harcane Grove. Approach slowly, on foot, and try to take out any of the Minotaurs on the perimeter of the grove before luring the unicorn to you. Obviously enough, a fight against multiple enemies will be difficult to win, so you'll want to try and get the unicorn to come to you without alerting all of its defenders. If you do happen to have multiple foes to deal with, try luring them back to Hircine's Shrine, where the hunters can help you out by pelting them with arrows.

When you have the unicorn's horn in your possession, return to the shrine and offer it up. Hircine rewards you with the Saviour's Hide, a light armor chestplate with a large Resist Magic enchantment on it.

Malacath

To reach Malacath's shrine, follow the coast to the northwest of Anvil. When you reach the "The" part of "The Gold Coast" on your map, you should see it pop up on your radar; it's just north of that point.

If you speak to Shobob gro-Rugdush at Malacath's shrine, he'll initially be dismissive of you: he, and Malacath, prefers not to deal with non-Orcs. (If you're an Orc, then presumably you'll have no problems getting him to open up.) You'll have to Persuade him to tell you what Malacath wants. When you do, you'll learn that what you need is some Troll Fat. Mmm-mmm. If you haven't seen any trolls lately, check out the Tidewater Cave that you probably cleared out for Nocturnal's quest. It's on the southernmost coastline of the map, to the southeast of Leyawiin. Plenty of trolls to be found there.



How did these guys manage to imprison these ogres, anyway?

Hand the Troll Fat in to Malacath's shrine, he'll tell you of a problem he's having. A nearby nobleman, one Lord Drad, has apparently enslaved some ogres that Malacath is fond of. He wants you to free them from their bonds of oppression. A noble goal.

Proceed to Drad's Estate, which is a short walk from the shrine. If you speak to him, he'll tell you that the ogres are holed up in the Bleak Mine, a bit to the east. The lock should be easy to open, but if you wish, you can find a key on one of the small tables on the ground floor of the building.

Freeing The Ogres

If you head into the Bleak Mine, you'll find plenty of well-equipped Guards, as well as a Guard Captain. Start killing everyone you see, or just pickpocket a Shiny Ogre Cage Key and a Tarnished Ogre Cage Key and sneak past everyone in the area. There are two cages here to open (thus the pair of keys), so get to both of them and free the ogres. If you're overwhelmed by enemies, freeing the ogres will let them come out and play, which entails giving massive beatdowns to all of the guards in the mine.

After the ogres are free, they'll run out to the fields and, since turnabout is fair play, will enslave Lord Drad and make him work the fields outside his estate. Ah, delicious irony! Return to Malacath for your reward: a two-handed hammer with Paralyze and Drain Health enchantments.

Mephala

Mephala's shrine lies in the hills to the northeast of the Imperial City, just to the south of the "ea"

in "The Heartlands" on your map. When you approach, one of the disciples there will tell you to bring an offering of nightshade to the shrine between midnight and dawn. Nightshade isn't a particularly common plant, but can be found in some of the cities, including in the Arcane University's garden and behind the Mages Guild of Skingrad.

When you've got the nightshade, bring it to Mephala's shrine after midnight to speak to her. She'll tell you a tale of two happy families in the settlement of Bleaker's Way. She wants the families to go to war, so she tasks you with heading to the settlement, killing the leaders of both families, and planting evidence to implicate each family in the death of the other family's leader. Oh, what a twisted web we weave...



Congratulations, you've started up a new Hatfield-McCoy war.

Head over to Bleaker's Way and start checking out the scene. The two families you want to deal with are the Ulfgars and the Dalvilus, with their leaders being Hrol Ulfgar and Nivan Dalvilu. Speaking to anyone in the town will reveal this information, as well as the fact that Hrol is handy with an axe, while Nivan is a spellcaster of some renown. After learning this, both of them will appear as compass markers on your map, so track them down and check them out.

In order to pull these murders off, you're going to need to have evidence to plant on the corpses. It actually doesn't matter how you wind up killing the two leaders, so long as you can implicate the other clan in the murder. If you poke around Hrol's house, you'll find an Ulfgar Family Ring on the second floor near some tools, while Nivan's home features a Dalvilu Ceremonial Dagger on a table near his bed. You'd be wise to start your murdering and thieving after midnight, when both of the leaders should be alone and asleep in their respective homes.

You should get the jist of this by now; you have to kill both of the leaders, then plant the evidence

on their body by placing it there from your inventory. Nivan is the easier kill when he's sleeping; just get a sneak attack on him, then drop the Ulfgar Family Ring onto his body. Hrol likely won't die to a single attack, so you'll probably rack up a bounty while killing him. Regardless, take him out and plant the Ceremonial Dagger on his corpse.

With your work done, tell anyone in the town about the murders, and they'll be triggered into a violent melee right in front of the inn. You can watch if you like, or just head back to Mephala for your reward: the Ebony Blade, which deals an excellent amount of damage, plus has Silence and Absorb Health enchantments on it.

Meridia

This is a pretty easy mission, although you can't obtain it until you're level 10, and you'll have to find the shrine on your own, as no one is available to tell you about it. It's located almost directly west of Skingrad's Western Gate. If you head west from the Grateful Pass Stables, you should come across the Cursed Mine, then a Gate to Oblivion; slightly to the northwest of the Gate will be Meridia's Shrine.

Meridia will accept either Bonemeal or Ectoplasm as an offering; bonemeal should be easy enough to find. When you inquire with her, Meridia will task you with travelling to the Howling Mine to the east and killing the Necromancers there. You'll get the marker on your map, so fast travel to the closest point to that location and walk the rest of the way.

Although the Howling Mine appears to be just a normal mine, you'll eventually find undead creations, as well as the aforementioned Necromancers. There are five of them in all, tucked back in a hidden part of the dungeon, behind a rock that'll move out of your way as you approach it. They're all levelled above you, so they're tough individually; they'll often attack you in pairs, though. Use the door here as a barrier. Rush in from the door to kill one of them with a weapon or powerful magic, then retreat behind the door and heal up. The necromancers don't seem to wish to follow, and their summoned undead don't seem to be capable of doing so, either.

When all of the necromancers are done for, head back to Meridia to obtain the Ring of Khajiiti, a really handy little ring that'll add a permanent Chameleon effect to your character. Any stealth or thieving character will want to obtain this ring as soon as they hit level 10, and it's not all that difficult to do so.

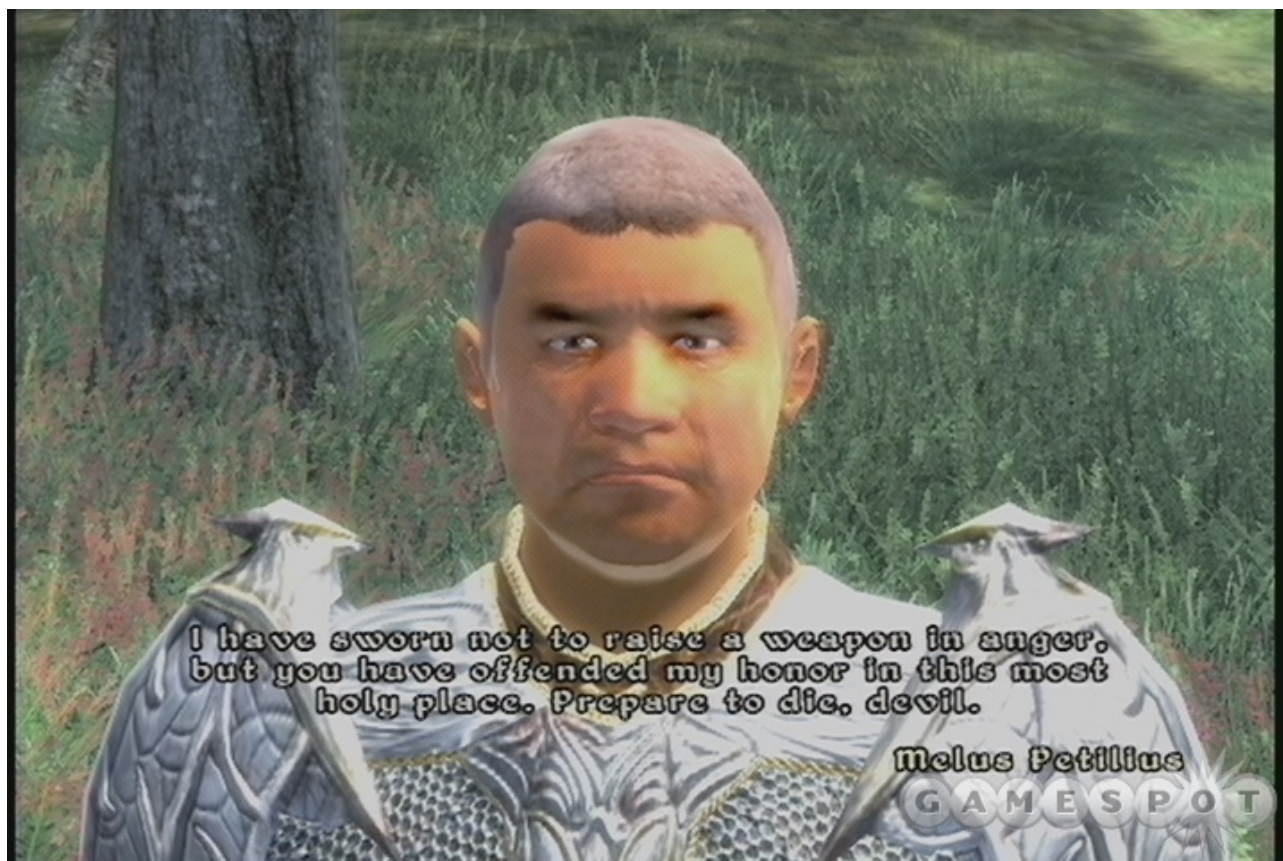
Molag Bal

Molag Bal's shrine is going to be tough to find, since it's well off the beaten track. It's located in The Great Forest, to the west of the Imperial City. If you check your map, you should find the large "The Great Forest" words stretching from the west of the Imperial City; the Shrine of Molag Bal is just to the southwest of the word "The" there, directly south of the Ayleid ruins of Narfinsel.

You're going to need a Lion Pelt in order to obtain the services of Molag Bal. These can be difficult to find, since they only drop off of Mountain Lions, but by the time you're able to attempt Molag

Bal's quest, you'll likely have seen plenty of them. They're likely to spawn in the plains of the Imperial Reserve, to the west of the Shrine, so warp out there and start running around until you come across one.

When you have a pelt in hand, return to the shrine to receive your marching orders. Molag wants you to corrupt a nearby man named Melus Petilius. Why? Well, if you travel to the village of Brindle Home and persuade someone there to talk about him, they'll tell you that Melus hasn't raised a fist in anger since his wife Vena died, and that he visits her grave once a day. Hmm.



With a little work, Melus will start a scrap. Well, technically, you start it, but hey.

Well, if you want to get Melus to attack you, then you have to take him on when he's (emotionally) vulnerable. During the noon hours, you'll be able to find him at Vena's grave near his home, where he'll be quietly mourning her. In order to get him to kill you, drop the Cursed Mace on the ground, and start attacking him! After he tells you about how badly he's going to beat you down, he'll grab the Mace and start wailing on you. To complete the mission as intended, you'll have to let him kill you, so unequip your armor and just wait for him to finish you off.

For corrupting Melus, Molag awards you the Mace of Molag Bal, a decent little weapon with Absorb Strength and Absorb Magicka enchantments.

Namira

Namira's shrine is just to the east of Bruma, to the south of the Plundered Mine, just on the other side of the Silver Road, near the "B" in "County Bruma" on your map. Your "offering" here isn't anything that you can give to Namira; instead, you're told that you're simply too pleasing to look

upon to be taken seriously by Namira. How to counteract your stellar beauty? By making yourself ugly, of course. You need to have a low Personality score for Namira to speak with you.

How do you lower your Personality? Well, how do crazy homeless people do it? By drinking Cheap Wine, of course. Each shot of Cheap Wine will lower your personality by 10 points, meaning that you'll probably need four or five bottles to lower your personality. Luckily, the stuff is all over the place. There's plenty in the Chapel Hall in the Chapel of Talos in Bruma, and most homes will have a couple bottles, as well, such as Arnora's. You can also buy bottles from many innkeepers.



Casting your spell on the priests here will let the worshippers attack them.

When you have enough bottles to get your Personality ranking down to 10 or 15 or so, head back to Namira and drink as many as you can. With that done, she should deign to speak to you and give you her task: you need to travel to Anga, an Ayleid ruin, where a group of her worshippers sulk in the dark. Priests of Arkay are attempting to rid the land of Daedra worship, and have appeared with torches, causing Namira's disciples to scurry about and be disturbed. Your goal is to enter the tomb and cast Namira's Shroud spell on the priests, which will allow the worshippers to get close enough to kill them.

And...that's pretty much all there is to it. Get to Anga, find the priests, cast the spell on them, and watch the fun. After all four are dead, you can return to Namira for your reward. Note that killing any of the priests yourself may screw the quest up, so try to avoid attacking them. Nothing is hostile to you here, save for a couple of undead that'll be behind a secret door, so you shouldn't have a problem with anything here. For your efforts, you'll get the Ring of Namira, which is enchanted with both Reflect Spell and Reflect Damage.

Nocturnal

Nocturnal's Shrine is located to the northeast of Leyawiin. If you follow the road across the river and head north, you should find it just by the "c" in "County Leyawiin" on your map, near an Oblivion Gate.

Nocturnal requires no sacrifice to summon, but will require you to be level 10 before you can attempt her quest. Apparently, a pair of thieves in Leyawiin has stolen her statue's eye, and although they believe that they're safe, Nocturnal knows precisely where they are. She can't retrieve her eye herself, though, so she tasks you with doing it.

Head back to Leyawiin and speak to any of the guardsmen there. If you interrogate them enough, you'll learn about Weebam-Na and Bejeen, two Argonians that have apparently made a big score recently - some kind of jewel. Sounds suspiciously coincidental, don't you think?

Head to Weebam-Na's house near the water in the northern end of town - it should be marked on your compass after talking to the guards. If you speak to Weebam and Bejeen, they'll claim ignorance as to what you're asking about, but your journal tells you to try and listen in on their conversations when they can't detect you. To do so, leave the house, go into Stealth mode, then re-enter. The pair will start talking about the Eye and where they've hidden it. You'll get a journal prompt telling you to hit up Tidewater Cave.

Tidewater Cave is located to the southeast of Leyawiin, along the coast and on the bay outlet of the river. It's going to be populated by trolls and assorted wildlife, so bring along some fire! If Nocturnal is still your active quest, you should have a green marker pointing you toward the Eye, at the end of a submerged corridor. Grab it and return it to the Shrine (no vengeance on the thieves necessary or recommended), and Nocturnal will reward you with the Skeleton Key, an incredibly useful lockpick. It's unbreakable and adds 40 to your Security score, making it one of the best of the Daedric items you can find.

Peryite

The shrine to Peryite is a difficult one to get to. It lies along the banks of the Silverfish River in southeastern Cyrodiil, to the west of Lake Canulus, well away from any towns or settlements. If you can make it to the part of the map near the word "river" in "Silverfish River", it should pop up on your radar.

When you reach it, you'll make an odd discovery: the shrine is populated by worshipers that are frozen in place. None of them move or speak when spoken to. So what are you to do? Well, you could begin by activating the shrine. Peryite will tell you that his worshipers attempted to transport their souls to Oblivion to be closer to their god, but somehow managed to become trapped between worlds. Your mission, should you choose to accept, is to enter a portal to Oblivion, find the five souls, and return them to the bodies of the worshipers.



Capturing souls for fun and profit...

When you're ready to head out to Oblivion, activate the shrine again and warp out. There's nothing that you haven't faced before in this plane of Oblivion: clannfears and atronachs roam the landscape, looking for something to kill. It's a fairly large plane, though, so you'll have to do some running around to find all of the souls. They're all marked on your compass, but they won't actually appear in your line of sight until you're close to them, so move slowly when approaching one. Some of them appear to be trapped behind towers or caves, but you can find all of them without ever going inside if you look around. Most of the cave systems can be jumped over or otherwise bypassed.

Anyway, when you find all five souls, return to the point where you entered Oblivion (it'll be marked on your map) and speak to Peryite again to obtain your reward: the Spellbreaker, a shield with a huge Reflect Spell enchantment on it. Hooray!

Sanguine

To pray to Sanguine, head north of Skingrad, and a bit west. The shrine itself is just below the "The Imperial Reserve" on your map, underneath the letters "ve" in "Reserve". You'll need to bring a flask of Cyrodiilic Brandy to the shrine in order to get the god to talk. You can buy some at the Main Ingredient in the Market District of the Imperial City, or find some in one of the two large bedrooms in Cloud Ruler Temple. It's also found loose in many different places, such as at the Gilded Carafe in the Market District.

When you have the Brandy, return it to Sanguine to obtain your task: he wishes you to crash a party thrown by the Countess of Leyawiin and cast a Stark Reality spell on the Countess and her

guests. Just to spice things up a little; you know how it is.

Although Sanguine mentions the time of the party as being "6 PM Tomorrow", you don't have to worry about missing it; it'll repeat until you're done with the quest. Warp directly to Leyawiin Castle and head inside. If you follow the pointer on your compass, you'll find a locked door that'll probably be watched over by a guard. His disposition towards you depends on the time of day; before 6 PM he won't have much to say to you. After six, though, he'll let you into the party if you're dressed up enough (you can steal some fancy clothes from one of the dressers in the living quarters, or just wear some nice armor to get inside), or if you bribe him so that his Disposition is over 70.



Leyawiin girls go wild! Order now!

By hook or by crook, get into the party and cast the Stark Reality spell, which...removes the clothes of everyone in the room. Oh, that wacky Sanguine, what a kidder he is! Although the practical joke comes off successfully, the guards don't find it all that amusing. Casting spells at the Countess of Leyawiin is apparently a crime, so you'll immediately have a bounty on your head. If you intend to pay it off, you'll discover that the spell has worked on you as well, meaning that your entire inventory has been stripped clean, including your gold!

Your choices thus become: serve your time in jail, or run! Jail is probably the better option here, as running away entails backtracking through the castle and getting out of town, while avoiding the guards, and then getting far enough away from town and any guards that are chasing you before you can fast-travel back to the shrine. When you hit up Sanguine again, though, he'll reveal that all of your equipment has been stowed in the chest near the shrine, along with Sanguine's Rose, a staff that will summon Daedra when cast on a target. Yay!

Sheogorath

Sheogorath's shrine is fairly tough to find, especially since there aren't any characters in the game who'll actually tell you where it is. It's south of Bravil, halfway between Bravil and Leyawiin. If you follow the road south of Bravil, the road will eventually make a small C shape on the map after crossing a river. Immediately to the south of this twist is Fort Nomore, to the southwest of Nomore is the Shrine of Sheogorath, near the border between Cyrodiil and Elsweyr.

If you speak to the characters around Sheogorath's shrine, you'll discover that most of them are... well, pretty damn crazy. One of them, at least (in the white robe) will be lucid enough to tell you what to offer Sheogorath's shrine to make the god speak to you: a bolt of yarn, a head of lettuce, and a Lesser Soul Gem. None of these should be particularly difficult to find. If you head to the Imperial Market District, you should be able to buy lettuce from the Feed Bag, the soul gem from the Mystic Emporium, and the yarn should be findable in plenty of basements or warehouses. You might want to check in the basement of

When you do manage to summon Sheogorath, his quest will involve travelling to the hamlet of Border Watch, a bit to the south of the shrine. When you arrive, speak to Ri'bassa, the town's shaman. He'll tell you of three prophecies: one involving a plague of rats, one involving the death of the town's livestock, and one which he doesn't consider fit for outsider's ears. Note that you need to have a fairly high disposition with Ri'bassa to hear the specifics of the prophecies; you can help this out by telling him that you're a travelling scholar, then either speechcraft him or bribe him up over 60 or so to get the specifics on the plagues. Also ask him about the town for hints as to what you need to do.



Poison the sheep and cause a rat stampede to wipe the town off the map!

To start the plague of rats, you'll need to steal an exceptionally stinky wheel of cheese from the Border Watch Inn. It's in one of the locked display cases here; it's the larger orange wheel of cheese that's in its own display case. To get it out, you'll either have to pick the Very Hard lock, or pickpocket the key from the innkeeper, preferably while she's sleeping. Either way, you're going to have a hard time of this objective if you haven't been increasing your thieving skills.

When you do have the Olroy Cheese, though, head outside and place it in the melting pot near the top of the stairs in the middle of town. Wait for a few moments, and there'll be a rat parade! Hooray! You can help kill the rats, if you wish, or just watch them scamper about for a bit.

If you wait for a few hours, a pile of rat poison should appear in the middle of the town's central staircase. Grab it and head to the southern part of town where the sheep are corralled. Put the poison in the feeding trough to kill them all off, and Sheogorath will tell you to visit the center of town. When you do, he'll initiate the Plague of Fear by himself...and let loose a hail of dogs onto the town. Dogs on fire. Dead dogs on fire. This game is pretty weird at times.

Anyway, after successfully freaking out the entire populace of Border Watch, return to Sheogorath's shrine to obtain the Wabbajack, a staff that can turn any creature into any other (random) creature. You can't choose its effects, but it can occasionally make difficult fights much easier, such as by turning an incredibly difficult enemy into a Rat or something similar.

Vaermina

Vaermina has one of the more difficult tribute requests to fulfill, despite the fact that you can do this quest as early as level five: she needs you to bring her a Black Soul Gem. Finding one of these is going to be a quest in and of itself for most characters.

Obtaining a Black Soul Gem Black Soul Gems are necromantic tools, used when a necromancer wishes to capture the soul of a humanoid character. Normal soul gems can only capture the souls of creatures, but a black soul gem will let the user capture the soul of a human - definitely not something you're going to need very often, unless you're something of a badass. Anyway, in order to find one, you'll have to deal with necromancers, which can be found in their own special lairs, as well as in some of the other quests you may have to deal with.

If you want to obtain one of these gems early on in the game, then you should attempt to do some of the Mages Guild quests - one of the recurring themes of those quests revolves around the Guild's attempts to root out and destroy necromancy. If you can't find one that way, though, you can occasionally find Black Soul Gems on the bodies of necromancers, but this is unlikely to occur before you're level 15 or so.



Find one of these altars to make your own Black Soul Gem.

Another way to acquire a Black Soul Gem is to make one yourself via the shrines outside of necromancer strongholds. To do so, you'll have to have a Grand Soul Gem (which you can buy from merchants in most Mages Guild halls, or steal from the Chorrol Mages Guild. When you have one, as well as any level of Soul Trap spell, head out to a necromancer stronghold with an altar outside of it, such as Fort Linchal, which is northeast of Kvatch, just north of the "H" in "Kvatch" on your map.

When you find an altar, start waiting in 24-hour increments. Each altar will have one day of the week when it's powered-up, which is indicated by a beam of light that shines down from the heavens. When you see this beam of light, place the Grand Soul Gem in the altar (making sure it's empty), then cast Soul Trap on the altar to obtain your new Black Soul Gem.

The Quest Itself When you've delivered the Black Soul Gem to Vaermina's Shrine, she'll tell you what she wishes you to do. She'll tell you a tale of the Orb of Vaermina, which was stolen from her by the wizard Arkved. Find him, retrieve the orb, and return it to her for the reward.

Arkved's Tower is a short walk from the Shrine of Vaermina. Although it appears to be just another Fort, you'll find that the interior has a more....deliberate layout. Arkved is apparently either insane or very eccentric, because you'll find rooms that are completely upside down, rooms that are populated by Daedra, and so on. Make your way into Arkved's Lair for the ultimate mind-trip: it's a room that apparently obeys none of the laws of spatial interiors.



Arkved's dreamscape is a pretty disturbing place to dwell in.

Pass through into Arkved's Lost Halls and find the exit to the Hall of Changes. (Arkved's Oasis is apparently a dead-end.) Follow the red compass pointer until you reach the trap door to Arkved's Rending Halls. (The Retreat is also a dead-end.) Fight your way through the Halls to the Death Quarters, where Arkved lies sleeping.

The Orb of Vaermina stands on a desk nearby, near the Palla, Volume I book, which will increase your Illusion skill by one point. Grab it, then sneak out the door nearby to return to the "real world." You can kill Arkved if you like, but he doesn't offer any decent loot. With the Orb in hand, return to Vaermina's Shrine and offer it to her. She'll give you the Skull of Corruption, a very fun little toy that will make a clone of anything you aim it at. This includes people, but note that using it against regular civilians is considered a crime, due to the fact that the clone will always attack the original.

Hermaeus Mora

The Mora quest is the last Daedric shrine quest, and can only be completed if you've completed all the rest. You'll also need to be level 21 or higher, and have reached the section of the main quest that requires a Daedric Artifact. If you've fulfilled these requirements, then go to sleep at a bedroll or a bed, and when you wake, Casta Flavius will be standing nearby, telling you that you've been summoned to the Shrine of Hermaeus Mora, high in the mountains in northwestern Cyrodiil.

Now, getting to the shrine is going to be a task in and of itself, due to its elevation. Before you head out, be sure to buy or steal a horse, as it'll cut down your travel time immensely. With one in hand, travel to Sancre Tor, just above the "y" in "County Chorrol" on your map. From there, head

west or northwest until you start seeing sets of stone stairs cut into the mountain. Although you initially start out heading away from the shrine, you'll eventually wrap around to the northeast and cut back towards the shrine. With a horse, you'll be able to just outrun all of the enemies that stand in your way.

Mora's Task After getting to the shrine, speak to Mora to learn what he needs you to do. His task? You're to capture ten souls and place them into a special soul gem of his providing, using a special Soul Trap spell. You'll need to gain one soul of each of the sentient races of Oblivion, meaning one Nord, one Altmer, one Khajit, and so on and so forth.



Mora needs souls, and he's not particular about where they come from.

Obviously enough, this can be as hard or as easy as you want to make it. The hard way would be to track down bandit, marauder, necromancer, and conjurer caves and attempt to find all the souls that you need in that fashion. This'll work, but it'll take a while, since some races are poorly represented in these environments, such as Argonians.

Alternately, if you're not opposed to a bit of murder now and again, you can simply travel back to the various Daedric shrines that you've passed through earlier and kill the worshipers there. None of them have any further relevance to quests in the game, and they're far enough away from guards that you're unlikely to earn a bounty for their slaughter. Of course, if you're just looking to get some souls, no matter the cost, you should be able to find one of each type of race in most of the major cities....

Mora's Reward Mora doesn't particularly care where the souls he required come from, even if they happen to be Daedra worshipers. When you capture all ten, you'll get a note telling you to return to Hermaeus Mora, who hands over the Oghma Infinium, a special book covered in Daedric

text. You can read it in one of three manners: Steel, Shadow, or Spirit. Each has its own suite of bonuses to your attributes and skills.

Path of Spirit: +10 to Destruction, Conjuraton, Restoration, Intelligence.

Path of Steel: +10 to Blade, Heavy Armor, Blunt, Strength.

Path of Shadow: +10 to Sneak, Security, Light Armor, Agility.

Note that these bonuses can get you up over 100 points for both your skills and attributes. In the case of skills, this doesn't seem to have much of an effect (your Heavy Armor won't protect you any better at 110 than it does at 100, for instance), but it's a great way to permanently add another 10 points to a critical primary attribute if you've already maxed it out. We're not sure what happens if you add 10 points to an attribute that hasn't been maxed, but we're betting that you'll wind up hitting the same of 100 points when you eventually reach that number, instead of benefiting from the increased cap of 110. Note also that the bonuses to your major skills will cause you to level up instantly, possibly as many as three times.

And...that's it for the Daedric quests. There's nothing more to see here, but the rewards were hopefully worth it to you. Azura's Star and the Skeleton Key are certainly worth using throughout the game, with other items, like the Ring of Khajiiti, being tremendously useful in other situations.