



**Presents an Unofficial Guide to:
Diablo 2**

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Section 1 – Characters, Stats, and Skills	3
General Information	3
Amazon	12
Barbarian	32
Necromancer	49
Paladin	68
Sorceress	85
Section 2 – General Information, Hints, and Tips	103
Section 3 – Bestiary	114
Section 4 – Walkthrough	149
Act 1 – The Rogue Encampment	149
Act 2 – Lut Gholein	165
Act 3 – Kurast	184
Act 4 – Hell	197



Introduction



Be prepared to spend some time playing Diablo II...it's addictive!

Diablo II, as if you didn't already know, is the massively successful new game from Blizzard Entertainment, and the sequel to their smash hit Diablo from 1996. With updated graphics across four huge Acts, five new character classes with 150 different skills between them, a huge variety of new enemies, and free multiplayer action on Battle.net, this game has enough to keep anyone busy for a long, long time.

This guide is intended to act as your all-in-one helping hand to the world of Diablo II. With a full walkthrough, a complete bestiary, thorough examination of all character classes and skills, and a number of hints and tips, you should find help with whatever is troubling you somewhere in these pages.



Characters, Skills, and Stats

General Information

Before you begin your adventure in the world of Diablo II, you'll need to select a character class. The five choices offer a range of gameplay options, from the magic-oriented Sorceress to the brutish and battle-hardened Barbarian.

Though the characters differ greatly in the way they're played, all of them share the same basic attributes and statistics. The four main statistics, Strength, Dexterity, Life, and Energy, will determine how capable your character is at moving through the game world, attacking enemies, casting spells, taking damage, etc. Some stats will be more important to one class than they will be to others. The Barbarian, for instance, will want to put most of his points into Strength, and fairly few into Energy, while the Sorceress will want to pour her Stat Points into Energy, and relatively few into Dexterity. All players will need a thorough understanding of what these stats do, however, to intelligently choose how to allocate their Stat Points.



This window displays the vital statistics for your character.

When you open the character screen in Diablo II (by default, either the A or C buttons), a window will pop up, showing your character's name, class, experience, level, and vital statistics. The number of points you put into each statistic will be reflected in your character's ability to do certain related things, e.g. a character with high Strength will deal more damage with melee weapons than a character with low Strength. Your main source of Stat Points will be by advancing in levels. Each time your character gains a level (also called a "level up"), you'll gain five Stat Points to allocate. Where you choose to put these points



will depend on your style of play and the character class that you're using. The stats and their effects are explained below.

Strength and Damage

Strength is the most important statistic for the Barbarian and Paladin classes. The most obvious result of a high Strength is that a character will deal a significantly increased amount of damage using melee weapons than less powerful characters would. However, even characters that don't use melee weapons will want to add to their Strength, as this will allow them to wear more advanced equipment. As armor increases in defensive power, the Strength requirements to wear it increase well past 100. If you find yourself mostly playing multiplayer games where you support other characters with ranged attacks, you might not need to add many points to Strength, but getting up to 40 or 50 is generally a wise idea for any character. Luckily, as you proceed further into the game, you'll find items, mostly belts, rings, and amulets, that can add up to 20 to your Strength. Utilizing items such as these will help you reach the minimum requirements for high-grade armor, so weaker classes like the Sorceress should definitely keep their eyes open for them.

The boxes next to your Strength rating show the damage your character deals with both your primary and secondary attack (if applicable). For the majority of attacks, your damage will encompass a range, consisting of a minimum and maximum number. It's important to increase both of these numbers as your character advances through the game. Also keep in mind that, even if your maximum damage is an incredibly high number, you'll want to place an equal emphasis on the minimum damage as well. A weapon that deals 40 – 60 damage will generally be preferable over one that deals 1 – 100, simply because of the consistency of the lower damage.

It's also worth pointing out the effects of your character's percentage bonuses to damage. Most characters, notably the Barbarian, have skills that will



enhance the damage they deal with weapons, most often by applying a percentage increase to the random amount of damage that is generated by a successful swing. This percentage will allow you to deal an enhanced amount of damage, but it's important to note that only natural, non-magical damage can be increased by most of these skills. So, if your Barbarian with a few points in Sword Mastery is using a Sword of Thunder that deals 3 – 8 damage, with an additional 1 – 32 points of Lightning damage, the damage bonus from the Sword Mastery skill would only apply to the 3 – 8 natural damage. The sword might still be worth using, but keep in mind this basic limitation.

Dexterity, Attack Rating, and Defense

Dexterity measures your character's agility and quickness, as well as his or her ability to accurately land blows with melee weapons and aim ranged weapons. Adjacent to your character's Dexterity number, you'll see boxes containing your Attack Ratings for both your primary and secondary attacks (again, if applicable). Higher numbers here are better, but be warned that there is a point of diminishing returns for your Attack Rating. When you hover your mouse over your Attack Rating, you'll notice that a percentage pops up, showing how often you'll successfully hit a monster that has the same level as you. As you play through the game, you'll see that it's very rare for this percentage to reach higher than 86 or 87%. Even Combat Shrines that boost your Attack Rating to many times its normal level won't raise your accuracy above 95%. This percentage, however, is only for attacks against monsters that are the same level as you. You'll have a much easier time hitting low-level enemies, and a much more difficult time connecting with higher-level monsters. For this reason, you should generally attempt to level up as you move along in the game, instead of rushing through each area while avoiding the monsters there. If you proceed too far too quickly, you'll find it nearly impossible to hit the foes you face.



Note, however, that your accuracy rating doesn't apply to magical attacks, which will always hit if they're aimed properly. "Magical" attacks would include things like the Amazon's Ice Arrow, but not her Multiple Shot skill, which merely enhances her normal attacking skill.

Dexterity can also have a small effect on your character's Defense, supposedly representing your ability to dodge enemy blows that slower characters could not, which is why the Defense is listed beneath the Attack Rating. Your Defense number is an aggregate of your natural defensive capabilities, which are supplied by Dexterity, and the Defense provided by your armor and equipment. The contribution of your Dexterity to your Defense is very small, however, and you'll notice that it takes an addition of a few points to Dexterity to yield even a one-point increase to Defense. Higher Defense allows your character to dodge incoming blows and missiles more effectively (it does not have an effect on magic, however). Much like Attack Rating, Defense has a point of diminishing returns, because you'll rarely be able to get below a 10% chance for your enemies to hit you.

Lastly, Dexterity increases the damage dealt by ranged and thrown weapons. This makes Dexterity the most important stat to increase for most Amazons, saving those specializing in Spears (who will probably want to concentrate on Strength). As with Strength, you'll often find equipment that increases your Dexterity rating.

Vitality, Stamina, and Life

Your Vitality controls how physically fit your character is. It will have an effect on how far your character can run without rest and how much damage you can take before dying.

The first box next to your Vitality statistic is Stamina. This box gives a numerical equivalent of the large white Stamina bar at the bottom of your screen. As you put more points into Vitality, your Stamina reserves will increase, and



your character will regenerate Stamina at an increased rate. As you'll notice in the beginning of the game, your character won't be able to run for an extended period of time without needing to recharge his or her Stamina reserves. For this reason, it's important to add points to Vitality, as you're going to be doing a **lot** of running throughout Diablo II. As with anything else, Stamina is going to be more important to some classes than others. Amazons and Sorceresses will likely want to add points to Vitality because they will often be running away from melee enemies.

Vitality will also affect the amount of Life your character has, represented in the large red globe on the bottom right of your screen. This is probably the most important number in the game, because if your Life runs out, the obvious effect is death. Life makes Vitality extremely important to any character, but most notably to the Barbarian and Paladin, as they are generally the characters that attack enemies at close range, absorbing tons of damage while the Amazons and Sorceresses in your party attack from a distance. Fittingly, they will gain more Vitality with each Stat point allocated to Life than other classes will.

Unlike Strength and Dexterity, there are no items that add directly to Vitality. Instead, you'll find quite a few items that add directly to your Life total, as well as some that will allow you to slowly regenerate Life, or steal Life when you deal damage to your enemies. There are a few items that will add to your maximum stamina, and even fewer that will enable you to regenerate stamina more quickly.

Energy and Mana

Rounding out the vital statistics, Energy encompasses the magical potential of your character. Unlike the Magic stat from the original Diablo, this doesn't affect the damage dealt by your character's magical skills. Instead, higher numbers in your Energy score simply translate into more Mana that you



can spend on your Skills. Sorceresses will gain more Mana with each point put into Energy than will other character classes.

Because of this disparity in the ratio between Energy and Mana, you won't find any items that add to your Energy score, but you will find plenty that add directly to your Mana.

Resistances

Beneath your vital statistics, your four Resistances are displayed. You can have up to 100 points of resistance to Cold damage, Lightning damage, Fire damage, and Poison damage. The higher your resistance to a certain type of magic, the less damage you'll take from an attack of that kind. The only way to get resistances is to equip yourself with magical armor, as you can't add any of your Stat Points to these resistances, and they don't grow naturally.

Characters and Skills

This section is intended to give you a good introduction to each of the five character classes and their skills. Given the wide range of abilities and skills of each class, it's almost impossible to tell which class will be most enjoyable until you actually play with each of them for a bit. Some players prefer the reliability and strength of a Barbarian, some prefer teamwork and tactics, and choose the Barbarian, and some have always wanted to raise the dead, and choose the Necromancer.

The only thing that can be said about choosing a character is that everyone should remember that they can start a new character whenever they choose. So, before you charge through and make a 30-level character, you should probably playtest a bit and see which style of play suits you and your unique tastes and situation best (for instance, if you're playing on a high-latency connection, you'll probably want a character with a ranged attack, as melee



combat is fairly unstable with high amounts of lag). If you get tired of a character, just delete it.

Instead of the spells of Diablo that were the same for all character classes, Diablo II contains a wide variety of “skills,” with each class having 30 unique skills that are only available to them. There are two main types of skills: “passive” skills that are always active, that “run in the background” while your character moves through the game world, and “active” skills that require some kind of activation, and generally some amount of Mana as well. Most of the skills will be unavailable to you when you begin the game, because of their minimum level restrictions. Each of your character’s three skill trees will have skills that require your character to be at a certain level to attain them. These restrictions are multiples of six. So, your character might unlock a few skills at levels 6 and 12 before facing Andariel at the end of Act I, but acquiring the highest-level skills at level 30 might not occur until after you’ve beaten Diablo and moved on to Nightmare mode.

Skills can only be acquired by allocating Skill Points. You’ll gain one Skill Point each time you gain a level, as well as for accomplishing a few missions during the game itself. Since most characters won’t get beyond level 60 or so (even though the maximum level is 99), you’ll have to plan ahead, adding points only to those skills you plan to use a large amount of the time.

Also of note are skill prerequisites. Some skills require you to have one or more point allocated to an earlier skill before it becomes available. Most of these are bound together by a common attribute, e.g. a Sorceress must have one point in Fire Bolt before she can move on to Fire Ball at level 12. Some skills have more than one prerequisite; the Amazon’s Valkyrie skill, for instance, requires you to have at least one point in six separate lower-level skills before you can unlock and use it.

There is a limit on how many points you can allocate to a skill. The maximum number of points that can be put into one skill is 20, but you can



actually increase the skill level past 20 using items that raise all of your skill levels by a certain number of points (obviously, these magical items are very, very rare and quite highly prized by players on Battle.net). Also note that while you can add up to 20 points to a skill, you'll need to wait one level between each skill allocation if you start adding as soon as that skill becomes available. For instance, if you want to add 20 points to Warmth, a first-level Sorceress skill, you wouldn't be able to add the 20th point until your Sorceress reaches level 21. You could add one point each time your character gained a level, or you could save them up until you reached level 21 and add them all at once.

All of these factors combine into an elegant and effective way to customize your character, though it is a little daunting at first. You'll probably find yourself adding points to skills that aren't as useful later on in the game the first time you play through. Practice makes perfect, so don't be afraid to make another character and try again.



Amazon



The Amazon is possibly the most versatile of the five character Classes.

Though pre-release polls showed that the least popular class in Diablo II was going to be the Amazon, this spiritual descendent of the Rogue from Diablo has the potential to be the most versatile, powerful character class in the game, so hopefully we'll see an increase in the number of players on Battle.net that choose to play as Amazons. While they are able to wield spears with grace, Amazons are most gifted at ranged combat with bows and Javelins, dispensing pain from a distance while Paladins or Barbarians deal with the enemies from up close (or better yet, while a Valkyrie does the dirty work). While they rarely deal as much damage as characters with melee weapons, Amazons make up for this



with a variety of skills that allow them to attack much more quickly than other character classes.

The skills of the Amazon are divided so that most players will choose to specialize in either Spears, Javelins, or Bows and Crossbows (helpfully, you can refer to these variations as Spearazons, Javazons, or Bowazons). While you're never prohibited from switching to another type of weapon, most players that put most of their Skill Points into the Bows and Crossbows skill tree will not want to pick up a Spear later on, no matter how powerful it is. This variation between Amazons makes it difficult to recommend specific stats for them, but most Amazons will wish to concentrate their Stat Points into Dexterity, which increases the damage of both Javelins and Bows. Spearazons might want to throw a few more points into Strength than normal, but Dexterity cannot be forgotten, since Spearazons will have no passive skill to increase their Attack Rating. Vitality, of course, will generally be a good third choice, with Energy being the fourth stat in the lineup. Most of the spells that Amazons use are more expensive than those of the Barbarian, however, so you'll definitely want to supplement any Energy points with at least one column of Mana potions in your belt, and perhaps some items that add to Mana. By the time you reach level 30, you'll probably want around 150 Mana, as you'll find that when you move into Nightmare and Hell modes, most of your attacks will be skills instead of normal firing of your bow or Javelins.

The weaponry and armor that you choose will be completely dependent on how far you choose to advance your Strength. It's not impossible to have a variety of magical items that can boost your Strength by 40 or more points, so don't worry too much about having to pass up armor until you advance to Nightmare difficulty. When you get to Nightmare, you're going to want to start to add points to Strength until it's at least at 80 or 90, including any magical modifiers. This will allow you to wear most suits of armor, so you'll be able to choose one that provides a large amount of protection for your character. You



might even stretch your Strength out to 100, allowing you to wear any suits of Ancient Armor that come your way. Of course, you might get lucky and find a Holy Ornate Armor of Simplicity (which would have a theoretical 900 Defense, and requiring 85 Strength to wear), but you shouldn't count on it. Of course, when choosing weapons, you shouldn't have to worry about Dexterity requirements, so pick the most powerful Bow you come across and use that.

Skills

Javelin and Spear Skills

This skill tree, of course, is of the most concern to players that choose to specialize in Javelins or Spears. Javelins will be the weapons of choice for most players, as they are able to utilize both the ranged attack skills and the short-range melee skills of this tree. Once you get to Nightmare and Hell mode, though, it will be difficult to find exceptional Javelins (the Nightmare versions are called Harpoons, and Superior Harpoons can sell for 25,000 gold). This, and the fact that Spears can be enchanted with magical attributes, might convince some few players to try Spearazoning out.

Jab (available at character level 1)

Jab will be a skill that most Amazons will want to pump a large amount of Skill Points into. It allows Amazons to attack three times with their spear or Javelins at short range, but the attacks come much more quickly than they would if done normally. The damage inflicted by Jab is actually lower in the first few skill levels than it would be for a normal attack, but this changes after a few points are added. The Mana cost is also very low, starting at 2 and adding 0.2 or 0.3 for each level, until it reaches a maximum of 6.7 at level 20.

The damage inflicted by Jab begins at -15% compared to the normal attack damage, and adds 3% each level. The Attack Rating Bonus is +10% at level one, and adds five percent each skill level.



Power Strike (available at character level 6; prerequisites: Jab)

Power Strike adds a small amount of Lightning damage to an otherwise normal melee attack when activated. Essentially, this is the same as picking up a weapon that adds Lightning damage when it hits the enemy. Useful to add a little zest early in the game, but the bonus will be insignificant when you encounter tougher enemies in Act II.

The Mana cost for Power Strike is the same as for Jab, starting at 2 and increasing from there. The modification to your Attack Rating is also exactly the same as for Jab. The damage begins at an additional 1-8 points, and will be increased by 3 points to both the minimum and maximum with each additional Skill Point.

Poison Javelin (available at character level 6)

Poison Javelin imbues a thrown Javelin with poison damage, increasing the amount of damage that the Javelin would normally do. In addition to poisoning the target, any enemies close to the point of impact will be poisoned, and the Javelin will also leave a trail of poison clouds in its wake, so that any enemies that chase after you will also be poisoned. The damage that is added on can be substantial with a few points added on, but keep in mind that poison takes time to activate, making it, on the whole, a less efficient attack than the more traditional elemental magics. Also, most of the Undead are poison resistant, making this skill less useful in the first two Acts than other types of attack.

The poison damage begins at 9 – 14, and the minimum and maximum will increase by 4 or 5 points with each additional Skill Point, until it reaches a maximum of 98 – 103 at level 20. The Mana cost begins at 4 and increases by 0.2 or 0.3 points each, until it hits 8.7 at level 20.

Impale (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Jab)



Impale will automatically quadruple the amount of damage you deal with a successful melee attack, making this one of the most useful skills for a high-level Amazon. Unfortunately, that kind of damage comes with a price, and in this case, the durability of the weapon you wield will sharply drop off, beginning with a 50% hit with each attack, and adding 1% to the durability penalty with each additional skill level. The Mana cost is a svelte three, though, so no Amazon should have a problem paying for this skill. The Attack Rating bonus begins at +25% and increases by seven percent with each skill level.

Lightning Bolt (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Poison Javelin)

Lightning Bolt turns a thrown Javelin into a blazing bolt of Lightning. Unlike the Sorceress' Lightning skill, this will not travel through an enemy, making it less than useful against crowds. The damage dealt seems substantial, starting at 1 – 40 with the maximum damage increasing by eight points with each skill level. Unfortunately, like Lightning, the minimum damage stays at one, meaning that you'll be just as likely to deal next to no damage as you'll be to deal the maximum. It's fairly unreliable, but might be useful during Act II for a bit. The Mana cost starts at 6 and increases by 0.2 or 0.3 with each skill level.

Charged Strike (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Jab, Power Strike, Poison Javelin, Lightning Bolt)

Charged Strike enhances your melee attack with Lightning damage, and also releases three Charged Bolts that radiate from your position, striking any nearby enemies that happen to get in the way. The damage isn't huge for an 18th level skill, at least, not until you pump a few points into it. You're probably better off putting one point into this skill and then waiting for Lightning Strike to become available at Level 30 than really committing yourself to Charged Strike.



The damage done by Charged Strike begins at 1 – 15, with both the minimum and maximum increasing by five points with each skill level. The Mana cost begins at four, increasing by 0.2 or 0.3 with each level.

Plague Javelin (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Poison Javelin)

The big brother of Poison Javelin, Plague Javelin not only leaves poison clouds in its wake, but also creates a large poison cloud wherever it impacts. Unfortunately, like Charged Strike, the damage begins at a fairly low level, a mere 9 – 14, with the minimum and maximum damage increasing by 4 or 5 points with each skill level. It shares the prime weakness of Poison Javelin, namely that it is less than fully effective against the large number of undead foes that you'll be facing. The damage will also be negligible against monsters on Nightmare and Hell difficulties, so you'll probably want to wait for Lightning Fury at level 30. The cost begins at seven Mana, and increases by 1 point per skill level.

Fend (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Jab, Impale)

Fend is going to be the skill Spearazons will want to throw 20 points into. Finally, melee Amazons will be able to deal substantial amounts of damage to all the enemies around them, without needing to attack them all separately. Fend will allow your Amazon to attack all adjacent enemies, dealing more damage and hitting more often than she normally would. Obviously, this is useful when you're surrounded, but it is also a good skill to use against tough single enemies, as the damage and attack modifiers increase as you add points.

The cost for Fend stays steady at five Mana. The Attack Rating bonus is 10% and increases by five percent with each additional point. The damage bonus begins at a substantial 25% and increases by three percent per point, until ending up at a very nice +82% at level 20.



Lightning Strike (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Jab, Power Strike, Poison Javelin, Lightning Bolt, Charged Strike)

Lightning Strike enhances your melee attack with a large amount of Lightning damage. Your melee weapon will shock the foe with a Lightning bolt, and more Lightning bolts will jump off of the point of impact, damaging any nearby foes. This is for melee only, and is substantially weaker than Lightning Fury, which enhances ranged attacks. You'll probably want to put a few points here to provide a little emergency firepower, but Fend will still be the prime skill for melee Amazons.

The initial Lightning damage done to the first target is 1 – 14, with the maximum damage increasing by two points per skill level. At the first level, two points will jump off of the target, with one additional bolt per skill level. Each of those bolts will deal 5 – 25 damage at the first level, with both minimum and maximum damage increasing by 10 points per skill level. Finally, the cost begins at nine points, with an additional 0.5 points added on with each skill level.

Lightning Fury (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Poison Javelin, Lightning Bolt, Plague Javelin)

Lightning Fury is the more powerful version of Lightning Strike, adding a huge amount of Lightning damage to a ranged attack with a Javelin. It acts in a similar fashion, turning into a Lightning bolt as soon as it's launched, then branching out into multiple Lightning bolts upon impact. It will be the best way for high-level Javazons to deal damage to multiple targets from a distance.

The original Lightning damage will be 1 – 40 at level one, with an additional four points to maximum damage with each Skill Point. Two bolts will leap off originally, with an additional bolt at each skill level. The branched Lightning damage begins at 1 – 40 as well, but both the minimum and maximum damage will increase by 10 points per level (to a whopping 191 – 230 at level



20). Finally, the Mana cost is 10 points at level one, with an additional 0.5 points with each level.

Bow and Crossbow Skills

This is the tree that enhances your skill with Bows and Crossbows. Most of the players that used the Rogue in Diablo will want to utilize this skill tree, as many of the skills will become vital as you proceed through the game.

Magic Arrow (available at character level 1)

Magic Arrow creates an arrow for you entirely from Mana, so it can be used when your arrow supply is completely diminished. It's cheap, and adds a bit of damage to your attack when you proceed to higher skill levels. However, you won't want to add more than a single point here, as there are **much** better skills coming along down the road. The fact that it doesn't draw on your arrow supply should be a non-factor, as arrows are quite plentiful on dead monsters, and very cheap in town.

The cost for this spell starts at 1.5 Mana, and drops by 0.1 Mana for each Skill Point added. The damage modifier begins at +0 damage, and increases by 1 extra damage for each Skill Point added.

Fire Arrow (available at character level 1)

Fire Arrow is a simple skill that turns one of your physical arrows into a Fire Bolt, adding a bit of Fire damage on top of the normal damage you'd deal. Like Magic Arrow, it's cheap and all, but you won't be using this one once you get better skills, so don't bother putting more than one point into it.

The cost for this spell starts at 3 Mana, and increases by 0.2 or 0.3 Mana for each Skill Point added. The damage modifier begins at 1 – 4 extra damage, and increases by 2 additional minimum and maximum damage for each Skill Point added, until it reaches 39-42 at level 20.



Cold Arrow (available at character level 6)

Cold Arrow is the beginning of the cold branch of this skill tree. In addition to adding a small amount of Cold damage to your attack, Cold Arrow also has the added effect of slowing down your opponent for a short amount of time, similar to an attack with a bow gemmed with sapphires. The slowing effect lasts longer with additional Skill Points, but you're much better off just waiting for Ice Arrow at level 18 (which doesn't sound like as large of a gap as it is, since you should reach level 18 by the midway point of Act II).

The cost for this spell starts at 3 Mana, and increases by 0.2 or 0.3 Mana for each Skill Point added. The damage modifier begins at 3 extra damage, and increases by 2 additional damage for each Skill Point added, until it reaches 41 extra damage at level 20. The slowing effect lasts for 4 seconds at the first level, and increases by 1.2 seconds per Skill Point.

Multiple Shot (available at character level 6; prerequisite: Magic Arrow)

Finally, a skill you will want to sink a few points into. Multiple Shot helps you save arrows by taking one arrow and splitting it into many. Most Bowazons will want to put at least 5 or 6 points into this skill, considering that the next really useful skill, Strafe, doesn't come along until level 24. The more points added, the more arrows are produced when you fire, and the wider the range of fire. You can control the spread of the arrows as you increase the number of arrows fired. Click on the edge of the screen for a tight formation of arrows, and click closer to your character for a wide array of arrows. This skill is especially useful for characters that really like to use Crossbows, as it will help them take out more enemies in a smaller amount of time, compensating for the Crossbow's slow rate of fire. In any case, you can generally kill a huge amount of enemies by running into an area, exciting the monsters, and then running away so that they follow you. When they're in a bunch, fire a few Multiple Shots their way, and they'll fall



like dominoes. This skill is also terrific to use with items that steal Mana, as it's fairly cheap, and when you're hitting with 5 or 6 arrows, each of them will feed you back Mana, often resulting in you actually gaining Mana from the skill rather than losing it.

The cost for this spell starts at 4 Mana, and increases by 1 Mana for each Skill Point added. The number of arrows fired begins at 2, and increases by 1 for each Skill Point added.

Exploding Arrow (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Magic Arrow, Fire Arrow, Multiple Shot)

Exploding Arrow is a souped-up version of Fire Arrow, not only dealing more damage where it hits, but also exploding, damaging any enemies around it (in a fashion similar to an Exploding Potion). It might sound like a great deal, but you should probably hold off on adding a huge amount of points to this skill, since the superior Ice Arrow is coming up at level 18, and Immolation Arrow follows soon after at level 24.

The cost for this spell starts at 5 Mana, and increases by 0.5 Mana for each Skill Point added. The damage modifier begins at 2 – 4 extra damage, and increases by 5 additional damage to both the minimum and maximum for each Skill Point added, until it reaches 97 – 99 extra damage at level 20. The slowing effect lasts for 4 seconds at the first level, and increases by 1.2 seconds per Skill Point.

Ice Arrow (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Cold Arrow)

Ice Arrow will probably wind up being the most-used elemental damage skill of high-level Amazons. Combining low cost and a terrific effect, this is one that you should definitely pump up a few points. The main advantage of Ice Arrow over Cold Arrow is that Ice Arrow actually freezes your enemies instead of slowing them, making it easier to bash them into ice pieces, which will make it



impossible for Shamen or Greater Mummies to resurrect them. It only affects one enemy at a time, though, unless you've invested in Pierce.

The cost for this spell starts at 4 Mana, and increases by 0.2 or 0.3 Mana for each Skill Point added. The damage modifier begins at 6 – 10 extra damage, and increases by 4 additional damage to both maximum and minimum with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 82 – 86 damage at level 20. The freezing effect lasts for 2 seconds at the first level, and increases by 0.2 seconds per Skill Point.

Guided Arrow (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Magic Arrow, Multiple Shot, Cold Arrow)

Guided Arrow is likely to wind up as one of those “love it or hate it” skills, with some Amazons putting one point into it as a prerequisite for Strafe, and others pumping it up to level 20 and using it in place of their regular attack. There is something of a choice to be made here between Guided Arrow and Strafe, as both are excellent skills, but you won't have enough Skill Points to become an expert at both.

Guided Arrow essentially shoots out a homing arrow, changing one of your normal arrows into a guided missile that will bend and turn around corners to find a target. It won't hit anything if there's nothing to hit, but in open areas, you can use this skill to fire across a few screens worth of distance and be sure that if there's anything out there, it's getting damaged. The thing that makes Guided Arrow so great at higher levels is that the cost actually drops off, making it more cost effective as you become more skilled in it. Add to this the fact that it adds a percentage increase to your total damage, and you wind up with an arrow that, at level 20, nearly doubles your damage, costs a mere 3.2 Mana, and will never miss its target. If you combine this skill with an item that steals Mana, you will probably wind up being able to break even with this spell, since it will always hit something.



The cost for this spell starts at 8 Mana, and decreases by 0.2 or 0.3 Mana for each Skill Point added. The damage modifier begins at +0%, and increases by 5% for each Skill Point added, until it reaches +95% at level 20.

Strafe (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Magic Arrow, Multiple Shot, Cold Arrow, Guided Arrow)

Strafe is, bar none, the most useful offensive skill for a Bowazon to have in her arsenal. You'll want to move start adding points to this skill as soon as you get it, because you're going to be using it for a long, long time.

Strafe acts as something of a machine gun for a bow, allowing the Amazon to pivot quickly and fire a number of arrows at the nearest targets to her. The number of targets fired at increases with Skill Points, as well as the damage modifier (a percentage of the base damage). The speed of the shooting does depend on the speed of the weapon, but it will be much faster than normal. A bow, for instance, will send out 10 missiles in the space of about a second and a half, while most crossbows will take a bit longer, around 3 seconds (though the slower rate of fire makes for a somewhat more impressive effect, much like the aforementioned machine gun). Each separate firing of Strafe only costs one arrow, making it like an advanced version of Multiple Shot (your points in that skill won't be wasted however, as it will still be the more efficient skill in many situations). The best thing is that, as you add more Skill Points, even though you attack more enemies, the cost of the skill stays at 11 Mana. As you do more damage, this skill will combine nicely with items that steal life or Mana, since you'll be hitting so many targets. You'll have to decide how many Skill Points you wish to allocate to Strafe. Boosting it up to the fifth level will make it fire at 13 different enemies, more than will generally be appearing on the screen at one time, but adding more points will increase the damage modifier, which will be more useful as you increase your Dexterity and find more powerful bows.



The cost for this spell stays at 11 Mana. The damage modifier begins at +5% damage, and increases by 5% with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +100% damage at level 20. The number of possible targets begins at 5, and increases by 2 with each Skill Point.

Immolation Arrow (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Fire Arrow, Exploding Arrow, Magic Arrow, Multiple Shot)

Immolation Arrow is the culmination of the fire branch of this skill tree. In addition to a minor explosion around the point of impact, it burns the ground nearby, creating a few seconds of Fire Wall-like burning that damages any enemies in the area or those that walk through it. The fire lasts longer with more Skill Points, but in general, the most effective usage for this skill is to cast a whole bunch of Immolation Arrows on top of an immobile enemy (Duriel when he's attacking you at the end of Act II, for instance, or a group of monsters that are surrounding a friendly teammate). The fire effects are stackable, and each one will add to the damage caused by the one before it, combining to make a small part of the screen completely deadly to any enemy. This is a great skill to combine with a Valkryie, which will usually head out in front of you and attract the monsters. Throw down a few Immolation Arrows and the bunch will be dead in seconds. Luckily, the enemies are too stupid to realize that they're being roasted alive, so they will never move out of the way of the burning effect.

The main weakness of Immolation Arrow is that the damage the fire deals doesn't increase as your Dexterity or normal damage does, meaning you have to continue to pump Skill Points into it in order to have this skill be useful on Nightmare or Hell difficulties. While this doesn't mean you should abandon this spell, you probably won't want to sink 20 points into it, and have the damage dealt not really hurt the Hell difficulty monsters. A few points here will be useful, but don't overdo it.



The cost for this spell starts at 6 Mana, and increases by 1 Mana for each Skill Point added. The explosion damage begins at 4 – 10, and increases by 6 additional damage to both maximum and minimum with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 118 – 124 damage at level 20. The fire effect lasts for 4.6 seconds at the first level, and increases by 1 seconds per Skill Point. The damage from the fire starts at 8 – 10, with the minimum and maximum damage gaining either 5 or 6 points with each additional Skill Point, until the maximum of 119 – 121 is reached at level 20.

Freezing Arrow (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Cold Arrow, Ice Arrow)

Freezing Arrow is the most powerful cold-based skill in the Bow and Crossbow tree. It acts much like the earlier Ice Arrow, except that the freezing effect will affect multiple enemies around the point of impact. The radius of effect is quite large, so you can expect to freeze a large number of enemies when they're closely packed together. The main drawback is that the damage begins at a fairly low number for a level 30 skill, a mere 6-10 at level 1, and the cost can quickly become prohibitive. While the ability to freeze multiple enemies is often quite nice, the freezing effect doesn't increase with more Skill Points, staying steady at 2 seconds. Also, even though the freezing damage is added on to your base damage, this often won't be enough to quickly kill Nightmare level enemies. Even when the skill is at the fourth or fifth level, it can still take six or seven shots to destroy a pack of Burning Dead in the Tombs of Tal Rasha on Nightmare mode, for instance, which can quickly drain your Mana reserves.

Perhaps the best use for Freezing Arrow is as support for melee party members like the Barbarian. If your friends are attacking the enemy from up close, you can throw a Freezing Arrow in there to freeze all of them, letting your friends have a couple of seconds of uninterrupted offense before you launch another Freezing Arrow into the pack.



The cost for this spell starts at 9 Mana, and increases by 1 Mana for each Skill Point added. The damage added begins at 6 – 10 at skill level one, and both minimum and maximum gain 6 damage with each additional Skill Point.

Passive and Magic Skills

The Passive and Magic skills will be quite important for all Amazons, whether they use Javelins or Bows. These skills have a wide variety of effects, from decreasing the enemy defense, to creating an avatar out of pure Mana to fight for you.

Inner Sight (available at character level 1)

Inner Sight allows the Amazon to affect all nearby monsters (within a radius of 13.3 yards) by lighting them up, adding small sparkling lights above their bodies, making it easy to see them even in the darkest dungeon. The real benefit to Inner Sight, though, is that it decreases the enemy defense, making them easier to hit. This can be a hugely useful skill, and most Amazons will want to have at least a couple of points in it and bind it to a hotkey for easy access.

The cost for this spell stays steady at 5 Mana. The defensive modifier for affected enemies begins at -46%, and decreases by a smaller and smaller amount with each Skill Point added, until it reaches a nadir at -73% to defense at level 19. The duration of the effect begins at 8 seconds, and increases by 4 seconds with each level. The sweet spot of this skill is around level 3, with a 16 second duration and a -54% to defense.

Critical Strike (available at character level 1)

Critical Strike = Critical Skill. Every Amazon will want this skill, and will want around five points added into it. Critical Skill gives you a chance to deal double damage with each attack. As you can imagine, dealing double damage is a **huge** benefit to the normally fairly weak Amazon. This is a passive skill, so it's



always active once you put at least one point into it. It begins with a 16% chance to double your damage, with a rapidly diminishing rise in percentage as you add more points. In fact, the difference between level 1 and level 5 is 26%, while it takes all the way from level 5 to level 20 to rise another 26% (to a maximum of 68%). Around five or six points in this skill will be optimal, as that will result in an excellent 42 or 46% percent chance to deal double damage.

Dodge (available at character level 6)

Dodge, a passive skill, gives your character a chance to avoid melee attack from an enemy when you're standing still. It sounds like a groovy skill, and it is, but the drawback is that the Dodge animation takes over when you dodge an attack, and it takes about a half-second to conclude, during which you can't act.

The chance to dodge an attack begins at 18%, and rises from there. It does slow down as you add more points to it. The chance to dodge hits 37% at level 5, and takes all the way to level 20 to hit 56%.

Slow Missiles (available at character level 12; prerequisite: Inner Sight)

Slow Missiles slows all enemy ranged fire down to one-third of its normal speed for the duration of the spell (12 seconds at level one, with an addition six seconds per skill level). The radius is only around 13 yards, so it's going to be difficult to protect party members with this skill. This skill is okay, but most of the time, you're going to want to just keep your hotkey on Strafe or Multiple Shot and kill the enemies that are attacking you, rather than passively trying to dodge their incoming blows. The cost for the skill is fairly low, though, at five Mana.

Avoid (available at character level 12; prerequisite: Dodge)

Avoid acts much like Dodge, except that it gives you a small chance to dodge an enemy ranged attack when you're standing still. In general, the



Amazon will be more worried about hand enemies, so Avoid isn't a huge priority. Even worse, Avoid can sometimes kick in when enemies are approaching you and ranged enemies are firing, making the animation start, which gives the melee enemies even more time to surround you. You should put a point here, but probably just for the prerequisite.

The chance to dodge an attack begins at 24%, and rises from there. It does slow down as you add more points to it. The chance to dodge hits 45% at level 5, and takes all the way to level 20 to hit 65%.

Penetrate (available at character level 18; prerequisite: Critical Strike)

Penetrate is definitely going to be a required skill for Amazons. Any ranged attack you possess with this skill will have its Attack Rating increased by a certain percentage, with a higher percentage increase as you add more skills. Most people won't need to really pump this up too high, but even with three points, you'll have above a +50% chance to hit the enemy. The percentage begins at +35% and increases by 10% with each additional Skill Point.

Decoy (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Inner Sight, Slow Missiles)

Decoy creates a duplicate of the caster, immobile and unable to attack. Monsters, stupid as they are, will attack the duplicate instead of the player, as long as the Decoy is closer to the monster than the player is. So, if some huge meanie is attacking you, don't cast a Decoy somewhere on the other side of the screen and expect the enemies to run over there. Decoy lasts for a certain amount of time, with a longer duration at higher levels, but also seems to disappear if it takes a certain amount of damage. Regardless, any Amazon will want at least one point here, to provide access to Valkyrie, but also to cast for tough melee enemies later on, like Hephasto the Armorer in Act IV. Needless to



say, this won't be hugely useful during multiplayer games, so don't bother spending too many points on it.

The cost for this spell starts at 19 Mana, and decreases by one with each skill level. The duration of the decoy begins at 10 seconds, and increases by five seconds with each additional Skill Point.

Evade (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Dodge, Avoid)

Evade is the last of the "avoidance" skills of the Amazon, and perhaps the least useful, though it is the one with the highest level requirement. Unlike Dodge and Avoid, Evade works while your character is running or walking, giving her a chance to dodge any attack (whether melee or ranged). Normally, any attack that's performed on your character while you're moving has a 100% chance of connecting, but it's generally fairly easy to avoid any close-range enemies while you're running, so you won't have many chances to use Evade. It will probably come in handy if you get backed into a corner with only a narrow exit, but on Nightmare or Hell, you'll probably as good as dead when you're trapped in a corner anyway. Evade takes too many points to become truly effective, and is of dubious worth anyway, so most players will want to put a point here as a prerequisite to Valkyrie and be done with it.

The chance to dodge an attack begins at 18%, and rises from there. It does slow down as you add more points to it. The chance to dodge hits 37% at level 5, and takes all the way to level 20 to hit 56%.

Valkyrie (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Inner Sight, Slow Missiles, Dodge, Avoid, Decoy, Evade)

Valkyrie is perhaps the most critical skill for single-player Amazons to learn, and boost with additional Skill Points. It creates a full plate wearing, spear wielding Amazon warrior to act as your minion, in much the same fashion as a Necromancer's Golem. She'll move in front of you to attack oncoming enemies,



giving you a valuable diversion and allowing you to attack from a distance while they're busy with her. She's fairly weak at lower skill levels, so players that are playing single player will want to spend a large amount of points on her, probably up to the limit of 20, so that she's nice and tough and can actually last a few minutes against the enemies on Nightmare and Hell difficulties. Increasing the number of points allocated to Valkyrie increases her health, damage, defense, and Attack Rating, so the more the better (the Mana cost can get pretty extreme, however). All experience that the Valkyrie would receive is automatically funneled to the casting Amazon. When she's particularly hardy, you can cast her across rivers or other barriers to let her deal with enemies in areas that you can't quite reach right away. If you get too far away from the Valkyrie, she will reappear at your side automatically. Like other minions, she will be healed when you stop by the healing character in the local town. In addition to all those great benefits, Amazons will come, at random, with a Cold, Fire, Lightning, Poison, or Howling-imbued weapon (Howling weapons makes enemies flee after a successful hit). For multiplayer Amazons, the Valkyrie won't be as critical a skill, especially if you like playing with huge parties.

The Valkyrie's health begins at 362, and increases by 60 or 61 points per skill level, with a maximum of 1510 at level 20. The damage modifier begins at +0% and increases by 20% per level. Her Defense and Attack Rating modifiers begin at +0% and increase by 5% per level. Her Mana cost begins at 29 and increases by four for each Skill Point.

Pierce (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Critical Strike, Penetrate)

Pierce is one of those funny skills that some people will hate, and others will swear by. It basically allows your arrows and Javelins to pass through the first target they hit, continuing on through the body to hit other enemies behind the first. The obvious effect of this is that you will be able to damage many



enemies with a single arrow, saving you on ammo and also increasing the benefit from Mana and life-stealing items. Pierce also affects your skills, however, so things like Immolation Arrow and Plague Javelin will suddenly be passing through their intended targets, resulting in a lessened effect. If you rely on things like Freezing Arrow, you probably shouldn't throw too many points into Pierce, if any, but it can really be a huge performance booster in the case of skills like Multiple Shot and Strafe. In the specific case of Freezing Arrow, the arrow will not freeze any enemies until it actually explodes, but Ice Arrow will freeze any enemies it hits, whether it passes through them or not. Note that there are some bows that have Pierce built-in, such as the unique Stormstrike. If you find one of these, you can try the Piercing effect before allocating points to the skill later on. The important thing to remember is that Pierce is a permanent, passive effect and cannot be turned off once you put a point into it, so think carefully before you decide to go with it or not.

Like most of the Amazon's other passive skills, the percentage chance that Pierce activates increases rapidly with the first few Skill Points, then slowly increases. It begins at 23% and increases to 55% at level 5, and hits a maximum of 85% at level 20.



Barbarian



Known for his strength, the Barbarian is talented at hand-to-hand combat.

The Barbarian class is probably the closest replacement you'll find for the Warrior class of the first Diablo. Meant for combat, he's the most powerful character and will be the most adept at wielding the many melee weapons found in Diablo 2. The Barbarian will generally be the brawn of any given group of players, wading into the enemy forces while the other characters attack from a distance or melee with any stragglers the Barbarian doesn't dispatch.

Since the Barbarian will normally be hacking and slashing in the midst of the enemy, your Stat Points should be allocated mainly to Strength and Vitality, both to increase the damage you deal and increase the damage you can take.



Dexterity is of secondary importance, but don't neglect it, or you'll find it difficult to hit your opponents. You'll probably find that you will be able to gain most of your Attack Rating by adding points to your chosen Mastery, rather than dumping egregiously large amounts of points into Dexterity. However, once you advance to Nightmare and Hell difficulty levels, you'll find that some weapons require extreme amounts of Dexterity, often above 80, so keep that in mind. Energy is the least important Stat for the Barbarian class. The most important skills for the Barbarian will (arguably) be the passive Masteries that are constantly active without requiring Mana. Most of the Barbarian's Combat Skills cost a mere two Mana, and most of the Warcries are fairly cheap as well. Depending on how you intend to build your Barbarian, it's entirely possible to have a successful character without ever adding a point to Energy (keeping in mind that your character gains a point of Mana with each level up). If you intend to make heavy use of Mana-intensive skills like Whirlwind and Warcry, though, you'll probably want to add a few points to Energy.

The main gameplay distinction between the Barbarian and the other classes is his ability to wield two weapons simultaneously, one in each hand. Needless to say, dual-wielding weapons will prevent you from carrying a shield in your off hand, but the added offensive capabilities will generally be well worth the loss of defense. When you have two weapons equipped, you'll alternate between them automatically when you attack. Of course, some weapons either require two hands to function (bows, for instance) or require both hands to achieve the leverage necessary to be useful (spears, polearms, etc). These cannot be dual-wielded and will be removed from the weapon slot if you attempt to equip an item in the other hand. Two-handed swords, as well as their more advanced ilk, are unique in their ability to be used either as one-handed or two-handed weapons, though they deal less damage when used in combination with another weapon or shield.



As far as weaponry and armor goes, for the Barbarian, the sky's the limit. With the high strength that you'll have as your character gets up to level 30 and beyond, you'll be able to wield any armor or weapon that comes your way, making the Barbarian uniquely flexible in this regard. Of course, you'll want to choose a weapon that complements your chosen Mastery. With armor, you will certainly be able to find some sterling examples of high-Defense armor that will protect you from a majority of attacks. For Barbarians especially, you'll want to use your body armor and helmet (and optionally, your shield) to provide the majority of your Defense, while your gloves, boots, and belt will mostly be chosen for their magical attributes.

Skills

Combat Masteries

Combat Masteries are what makes the Barbarian a powerhouse character for players that enjoy melee combat. The first six skills in this tree give the Barbarian bonuses to his Attack Rating and Damage when he wields his favorite type of weapon, while the last four enhance his natural combat abilities, enabling him to run faster and defend himself better.

As far as the weapon Masteries go, most serious Barbarians are going to want to put the maximum 20 points into these skills, as there is no point of diminishing returns, like so many other skills have. Each point will add 5% more damage and an 8% bonus to your Attack Rating, until, using Sword Mastery for example, 20 points gives you +123% to Damage and +180% to your Attack Rating. Since these bonuses apply to both normal attacks and the attacks done with your Combat Skills, more points in Masteries is always a good thing.

Sword Mastery (available at character level 1)

Swords are going to be the favorite weapons for many a Barbarian on Battle.net. Combining high damage with their relative abundance, Swords are



easy to come by and quite reliable, and also give a good deal of flexibility, with any number of configurations begin available, such as a sword and a shield, two swords, a two-handed sword, and you'll always be able to wield any good Maces or Axes that come along. The drawback of Swords is that they generally have fairly low Durability, and need to be repaired quite often. Their minimum damage scores are generally going to be lower than Maces or Axes, as well.

The bonuses for Sword Mastery start at +28% to Damage and +28% to Attack Rating at one Skill level, and increase as described above with each additional point.

Axe Mastery (available at character level 1)

Axes are generally more damage-oriented than Swords or Maces. While being a bit bulky, and therefore often slow, by the time you reach the Giant Axe class, Axe Barbarians are going to find themselves unparalleled in raw damage potential.

The bonuses for Axe Mastery start at +28% to Damage and +28% to Attack Rating at one Skill level, and increase as described above with each additional point.

Mace Mastery (available at character level 1)

Maces include such weapons as Clubs, Flails, Mauls, and Scepters. The main benefit of Maces is that you'll always gain a bonus to damage against the Undead that appear in large numbers throughout the game. Other than that, Maces often come with extremely high durabilities, making the chances of mid-game breakage fairly low.

The bonuses for Axe Mastery start at +28% to Damage and +28% to Attack Rating at one Skill level, and increase as described above with each additional point.



Polearm Mastery (available at character level 6)

Polearm Mastery will enhance your usage of all of these odd weapons. Generally looking like a Spear, except with an axe or other bladed weapon at the tip, Polearms have much greater range than Axes or Maces, as well as the majority of Swords. The drawback to using a Polearm is that they require both hands to use properly, eliminating the possibility of dual-wielding weapons, or carrying a shield.

Due to the specialized nature of this Mastery, the bonuses begin at +30% to both Damage and Attack Rating, and increase by +5% to Damage and +8% to Attack Rating with each additional point.

Throwing Mastery (available at character level 6)

Throwing Mastery enhances your Barbarian's ability to wield any type of throwing weapons, including Throwing Knives, Balanced Axes, and so on. The huge drawback to these weapons is the fact that throwing weapons cannot have magical attributes, preventing any kind of magical bonus coming from your weapon. Inconsistency in finding these weapons is also frustrating, especially on higher difficulty levels, where things like Harpoons replace Javelins. Finding high-quality versions of these exceptional throwing weapons is a rare occurrence, and they can't be bought. On the other hand, this is the closest a Barbarian will get to having a true ranged attack, so perhaps some players will find this Mastery a good choice.

Due to the specialized nature of this Mastery, the bonuses begin at +30% to both Damage and Attack Rating, and increase by +5% to Damage and +8% to Attack Rating with each additional point.

Spear Mastery (available at character level 6)

Like the Polearm, Spears are long-range melee weapons, except Spears are designed to puncture instead of slash like a Polearm. Also like the Polearm,



Spears can only be wielded with two hands, preventing dual-wielded weapons and the wearing of shields.

Due to the specialized nature of this Mastery, the bonuses begin at +30% to both Damage and Attack Rating, and increase by +5% to Damage and +8% to Attack Rating with each additional point.

Increased Stamina (available at character level 12)

Increased Stamina, quite obviously, will increase the amount of Stamina you can possess, enabling you to run farther before tiring. Most Barbarians are going to have plenty of Stamina reserves as a side effect of adding so many points to Vitality, but it's worth pointing out that as you start to wear more advanced armor, such as Plate Mail and Ancient Armor, your stamina will be drained more quickly than it would if you were wearing lighter armor, or nothing at all. If you find yourself running out of stamina later on in the game, you might want to invest a point or two here.

Stamina reserves are increased by 30% for the first point, and increase by 15% for each point thereafter.

Iron Skin (available at character level 18)

Since the Barbarian is primarily going to be attacking enemies from short range, this skill will probably be a good one to invest a couple of points in. Iron Skin adds a percentage to your Defense, enabling you to dodge blows more effectively. The bonus begins at 30% and increases by 10% with each additional point. Even though additional points add the same bonus, there actually is a point of diminishing returns with points added to this skill, due to the inherent inability of Defense to prevent all enemy attacks. Even if you add 100% to your Defense of 700, the percentage chance that an enemy will hit you would not drop off very much. For this reason, you'll probably want to add a few points to this skill, but hold off on allocating a substantial number of your scarce Skill Points to Iron Skin



until you reach a level where you're more or less set in the Armor that you're going to wear for the life of your character.

Increased Speed (available at character level 24; prerequisite: Increased Stamina)

Increased Speed will add a small percentage to your character's foot speed, enabling him to run and walk faster than he normally would. Fairly straightforward effect, really, and keep in mind that if your boots give you a faster foot speed, this skill will be even more valuable.

The benefit here begins at +13% to speed, but the effects drop off quickly as you add more points. Once six points are put into Increased Speed, you'll gain an additional 30% to your speed, but each additional point will only increase the benefit by one or two percent.

Natural Resistance (available at character level 30; prerequisite: Iron Skin)

Natural Resistance will be another useful skill for Barbarians to have. It adds a percentage to all of your Resistances, to Cold, Fire, Lightning and Poison, making these types of damage hurt you less than they would a character with less resistance. These benefits will be even more important on Nightmare and Hell difficulties. On Nightmare, all of your resistances are reduced by 20%, and on Hell, all are reduced by 50%. Adding a few points to this skill will enable you to cancel out these penalties, and perhaps even take your character back in the black.

The benefit here begins at 12%. The second point adds 9 percent, bringing you to +21%, but it drops off fairly sharply thereafter, until you hit a "sweet spot" of +49% with eight points allocated. After that point, you'll only gain one or two percent bonus with each point, until you hit +67% at 20 points.

Combat Skills



Combat Skills enable your Barbarian to be a more effective warrior on the battlefield. All of these skills are Active, and require Mana to be utilized, but only four (Leap Attack, Whirlwind, Frenzy and Berserk) cost more than two Mana, making most of these quite manageable for the normally Mana-starved Barbarian. With such low Mana costs, many Barbarians are going to be finding great benefit with Triumphant items that add one Mana to your reserves each time you kill an enemy. When you gain one Mana with each kill, you can utilize the skills much more often that you would be able to if you had to wait for your Mana to recharge on its own (a tormentingly slow process for the Barbarian).

Bash (available at character level 1)

Bash, the classic Barbarian skill from the Stress Test, will enable you to deal more damage and will give you a better chance of attacking, as well as stunning the opponent and knocking it back a couple of feet, all at a low Mana cost of two. This will be an important skill in the early portions of the game for the Barbarian, and you'll likely be using it against most of the bosses and unique monsters you encounter until you reach the higher-level Combat Skills.

Bash adds one point of damage to your total at skill level one, and an additional point for each Skill Point you add. The damage modifier begins at +50%, and the Attack Rating bonus begins at +20%, with each increasing by five percent with each additional Skill Point.

Leap (available at character level 6)

This simple, but unique, skill gives the Barbarian the ability to leap over large expanses of area and all the enemies in between (hence the name). This ability deals no damage, but does have a small stunning effect on the enemies near the landing point. This is a great, and cheap, way to avoid large packs of enemies, by jumping on the other side of an obstacle, or to a higher level of the playing field (in areas such as Travincal and the Arcane Sanctuary).



The Mana cost for this spell stays the same at two no matter how many Skill Points are allocated to it. More Skill Points allow your character to jump further. The distance starts at 4.6 yards at level one, increasing to 10 yards with just four points allocated, but dropping off after that, until it reaches a maximum distance of 16.6 yards at level 18.

Double Swing (available at character level 6; prerequisite: Bash)

Double Swing will be the favorite attack of many Barbarian players, as it effectively doubles your attack speed. When you activate Double Swing, which requires having weapons in both hands, your character will swing once with each weapon, one rapidly following the other. If you are only attacking one enemy, both of the swings will target that enemy, but if you're surrounded by foes, you will hit your target once, then attack another enemy close by. This can allow you to chew through packs of enemies much more quickly than you would be able to with your regular attacks, and also lets you deal more damage in a smaller amount of time to a single foe (like a boss) than normal. It's also great to speed up your attack if you've been slowed by a Cold-based attack.

Unlike Bash, this skill doesn't add to the damage dealt. It adds a small percentage to your Attack Rating, starting at 15% at level one and adding five percent with each additional point.

Stun (available at character level 12; prerequisite: Bash)

Stun enables your Barbarian to attack in a fashion similar to that of the Blunderbore, stunning the enemy so that they're helpless to react. When you connect with this skill, the enemy will appear with rotating stars over his head, just like a cartoon, and will be momentarily unable to perform any actions. While this might sound useful, the small duration of the stunning, and the fact that it only affects one enemy, makes this skill less than ideal for most combat situations, where you face off against hordes of enemies rather than just one.



Stun might be good for dealing with Unique monsters or Champions, but most players will probably want to put the minimum of one point into this skill, just to act as a prerequisite for more handy skills.

Stun costs two Mana. The Attack Rating bonus starts at +15%, and increases by five percentage points for each Skill Point. The stun duration begins at one second, and increases by 0.2 seconds for each Skill Point, until it reaches a maximum of five seconds at level 20.

Double Throw (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Bash, Double Swing)

As the name implies, this skill will let your character use throwing weapons in both hands simultaneously. This skill generally winds up being a little less useful than Double Swing, since most throwing specialists manage to stay away from the enemies, and therefore don't need to use this skill to inflict damage as quickly as possible. Of course, there's also the situation where you use two throwing weapons to kill an enemy that would've died in one shot, and the second weapon is wasted. Most players are going to be better off using these points for Throwing Mastery, and perhaps matching their weapon up with a really good shield.

Double Throw's Mana cost stays steady at two, and the Attack Rating bonus, which begins at 20%, increases by 10% for each point added thereafter.

Leap Attack (available at character level 18; prerequisite: Leap)

Leap Attack allows the Barbarian one of his few methods of attacking over a distance. When this skill is activated, the Barbarian will fly through the air towards the target, landing a powerful blow on the closest enemy within range. The damage inflicted, the Attack Rating of the blow, and the length you can jump are increased by a huge amount when just a few points are added to this skill. The main drawback is the relatively large casting cost of nine Mana, much more



than most of the other skills in this tree. Since Barbarians gain the least amount of Mana from each point added to Energy, nine Mana for each casting of this skill can drain your Mana reserves very quickly. No one can debate the large bonuses that the skill gives, but you should definitely keep this one in reserve for powerful bosses, like Uniques, so that you don't wind up jumping into a situation you can't get out of.

The distance of the jump is the same as a regular Leap, beginning at 4.6 yards and increasing from there. The damage done starts at +100% and increases by 30% per point, while the Attack Rating begins at +50% and increases by 15% for each point after the first.

Concentrate (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Bash, Stun)

Concentrate will become a crucial skill as you advance through the game, especially if you're playing in single player games without other party members to help you out. Concentrate allows you to complete a swing that cannot be stopped, even if an enemy damages you in midswing (normally, this would stun you enough to prevent the blow from being landed, and you'd have to attack again). Obviously, when you're surrounded by high-level enemies, the chances of one of them hitting you while you swing is pretty good, and you'll find your attack hampered by the numerous misfires caused by their blows. Since Concentrate only costs two Mana, you can use it to thin the crowd a bit until there are fewer enemies to worry about, and then revert to your normal attack to clear out the rest. This skill will be more useful for characters that wield slower weapons like Axes and Polearms, since there's more of a window for enemies to attack you when you swing. If your attack speed is Fast or Very Fast, you probably won't need to use it too much.

Concentrate provides a temporary Defense boost of 20% and increases your Attack Rating by +25% at the first skill level. The Defense boost increases by 10% and the Attack Rating increases by 5% with each point after that.



Frenzy (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Bash, Double Swing, Double Throw)

Frenzy is somewhat different than the skills that precede it in the branch. It allows you to rapidly strike at a single enemy, with your attack speed increasing after each successful hit. If you miss, then the streak will be broken and you're back at square one. Obviously, you'll want to be wielding a weapon that you have a large amount of Mastery with, so that your Mana isn't wasted. More points in this skill will increase your attack rating, as well as the duration of the effect, making it more easy to build a long streak and eliminate the opponent quickly.

The Mana cost for Frenzy stays steady at three points. The duration of the skill's effects begins at two seconds, and increases by one second per point, while the Attack Rating bonus begins at 10%, and increases by 10% per point.

Whirlwind (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Bash, Leap, Stun, Leap Attack, Concentrate)

Whirlwind is the Barbarian's best friend, finally enabling him to deal massive amounts of damage to a crowd of enemies without needing to attack them all individually. When this skill is used, the character spins around like a top, rapidly dealing damage to all enemies in his path, until he reaches his destination. The damage is actually reduced when you first acquire this skill, but after adding a few points, you'll be able to deal more damage than you normally would. The biggest drawback, however, is the huge Mana cost, starting at 25 and increasing by two points per skill level (until it hits 63 at level 20). The minimum Mana a Barbarian can have at level thirty will be 40 points, so unless you've been adding a lot of points to Energy, you better hope you've found some items that give substantial bonuses to Mana, or you won't be able to use this skill very often.



The Damage for this skill begins at -50%, but gains +15% with each point, until it becomes a positive bonus at level five (and reaches a huge +235% at level 20). The Attack Rating begins at +25% and increases by five percent for each point thereafter.

Berserk (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Bash, Stun, Concentrate)

Berserk gives your character the ability to greatly increase the damage dealt and the chance to hit the opponent for a short amount of time. Due to the short duration, Berserk is best used when dealing with bosses or other powerful foes, rather than packs of normal enemies. It only costs five Mana, though, so you will be able to repeatedly cast it without causing a huge drain on your Mana reserves.

Berserk adds 56% to your Attack Rating at level one, with an additional 16% for each point after that. It also adds a 56% bonus to your Damage in the form of magical damage that will overcome enemy defenses like Stone Skin. This bonus increases by 10% per point.

Warcries

A Barbarian's Warcries allows him to affect a larger portion of the battlefield than his normal attacks do. The effects, for the most part, aren't directly related to combat, but will help the Barbarian defend himself and attack the opponent.

Howl (available at character level 1)

Howl allows the Barbarian to send out a frightening scream, causing all enemies in the radius of effect to run scrambling from him. The radius of the scream will increase with your level, causing more enemies to run for a longer time. This doesn't damage the enemy, but if you can send them far enough, it's a



good bet they won't return to attack you. You can tell when an enemy is affected by Howl by the mass of greenish squibbles that appear over their heads (and the fact that they're running away, of course). The Barbarians that will get the most use from this skill are the few that specialize in Throwing Mastery, as Howl will enable them to clear out dangerous melee enemies and concentrate on the foes that are sending ranged attacks their way.

The Mana cost of Howl remains steady at four points, while the distance the enemy runs begins at 16 yards, increasing by around 3.3 yards for each point added after that. The seconds that an enemy will run for begins at three, and increases by one for each point.

Find Potion (available at character level 1)

Find Potion allows a Barbarian to root through his enemy's body, searching for potions that he, she or it might have been carrying. This skill is of debatable utility, considering that Healing Potions are available for purchase in the towns, and Mana potions are fairly common among the dead enemies. The percentage chance to find a potion is fairly low at the beginning, but increases to 50% with just five points added. You probably shouldn't add more than that many points to this skill, as the Mana rate never goes down, and even though the percentage chance of finding potions increases up beyond 80%, you'll generally be finding enough Mana potions with five points in this skill to make up for all the times you **don't** find a potion. The Mana cost for this skill is always two points.

Taunt (available at character level 6; prerequisite: Howl)

Taunt acts as something of the antithesis to Howl, drawing enemies in towards you, goading them into coming within melee range, and reducing their combat effectiveness while you're at it. The main usefulness for this skill is in letting melee Barbarians draw in enemies that like to hang back and fire from a distance, such as Ghoul Lords and Corrupted Archers. This will cause them to



abandon their ranged fire until they get within your striking distance, making them easier to take out, without the messy chasing that often occurs.

The Mana cost for Howl stays at three. Your opponent's Attack Rating and Damage start at -5%, and decrease by two percent with each additional point.

Shout (available at character level 6; prerequisites: Howl)

Shout acts as a warning beacon for you and your party members, as well as adding to everyone's defense that is within the radius of effect, making it something of a pseudo-Aura. The Defense bonus begins at +100%, and increases by 10% for each point thereafter, while the duration begins at 16 seconds and increases by 2 seconds with each level. This skill is a no-brainer for most important battles, and will be much appreciated by your teammates in multiplayer games. Shout only costs six Mana per casting.

Find Item (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Find Potion)

One of the few skills for any character that seems genuinely worthless, Find Item costs seven Mana and gives you a low probability of finding an item on a corpse. The chance to find an item begins at a mere 14%, adding 7% with another point, but with a smaller and smaller bonus with each additional point. The items you find can be pretty much anything, as it seems to resemble the same collection of junk you normally find from dead enemies, anything from Arrows to a pile of gold. The high Mana cost, and the fact that you probably won't get anything better than what you would find when you first killed the foe, make this a skill that most players will want to avoid, unless they need a point to advance on to Grim Ward.

Battlecry (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Howl, Taunt)



Battlecry will be one of the skills most Barbarians will use constantly. Costing a mere five Mana, Battlecry dramatically reduces the effectiveness of enemies in battle, reducing their Defense and Damage by a large amount. It lasts a fairly long time even with one Skill Point, as well. Battlecry works well with normal attacks, but it's even better when combined with Combat Skills like Whirlwind and Frenzy.

Battlecry lasts for 12 seconds at skill level one, and adds 2.4 seconds with each level. The Defense of your enemies drops by 50% with one point, and decreases by an additional 2% with each point. Their Attack Rating will be reduced by 25% with one point, and will decrease by an additional one percent with each point after that.

Battle Orders (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Shout)

Battle Orders is another important skill for multiplayer games, adding a large amount to your party's Stamina, Health, and Mana. Each time you cast Battle Orders, your team members will become much more powerful for a short duration. You can, of course, use this skill to boost your own abilities in single player games as well.

At level one, Battle Orders lasts for 30 seconds, adding 6 seconds for each level after that. The bonus to Stamina, Health and Mana begins at 40%, and increases by a small amount for each level after that, with the most efficient level seeming to be around 7 or 8, with a 55% bonus.

Grim Ward (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Find Potion, Find Item)

Grim Ward allows your character to make a small symbol from the corpse of a fallen enemy that frightens them away from the area for 40 seconds. No enemy will be able to come within the radius of effect for the duration of the spell, enabling you to heal up for a bit, go get a drink from the fridge, answer the



phone, or anything else that you might want to do for 40 seconds. You might want to put these down in multiplayer, giving your Sorceresses and Amazons a safe place to attack from. For single player, though, you're probably better off just opening a portal back to town.

The radius of the Grim Ward effect is 2 yards with one Skill Point, and an additional 0.6 or 0.7 yards with each point after that. The Mana cost stays constant at 4.

Warcry (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Howl, Taunt, Shout, Battlecry, Battle Orders)

Warcry is one of the Barbarian's few skills that can damage more than one enemy at a time. When cast, the Warcry effect will stun and damage all enemies in the radius of effect, giving the Barbarian a small amount of time to regroup and perhaps run away. The amount of damage dealt is going to be negligible to the enemies you'll face by the time you reach level 30, so don't count on this skill for clearing out rooms of enemies in Nightmare mode, no matter how many points you soak into it.

The Mana cost for Warcry starts at 17, and increases by one point of Mana for each level. The damage dealt begins at 15 – 20, with both maximum and minimum damage increasing by five with each level. Finally, the stun duration begins at one second, with an additional 0.2 seconds for each level afterwards.

Battle Command (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Shout, Battle Orders)

Battle Command is the real payoff skill for Barbarians that fight on Battle.net. For a very short amount of time, Battle Command will increase the level of your skills, and those of all allies nearby, by one point. The benefits of this will be obvious, as any other characters will see a marked increase in their



skills. A Necromancer, for instance, will be able to raise another Skeleton and Skeleton Mage, as well as having them all turn tougher by the additional point in Skeleton Mastery. The only drawback is the relatively short duration. Battle Command is in effect for 12 seconds at level one, with an additional four seconds for each level after that. It costs 11 Mana, as well.



Necromancer



A Battle.net favorite, the Necromancer has the ability to control a small army of skeleton minions.

Those same pre-release polls alluded to in the Amazon introduction indicated that most players wanted to try their hand at the Necromancer before the other classes. For good reason, too, as the Necromancer is able to raise an army of undead Skeletons, Skeleton Mages, as well as one Golem at a time to do his bidding and strike down his enemies. The Necromancer also has a wide variety of Curses, similar to the Paladin's Auras, but effective at a distance, that will enable him and his minions to better attack the enemy, or even turn their attacks against themselves. The third specialty of the Necromancer is his Poison and Bone focus, giving him the ability to raise bone barriers, poison enemies with



powerful melee attacks, and even remote detonate their corpses with Corpse Explosion, one of the most powerful skills in the game.

The Necromancer will primarily be using his Minions to deal damage and kill enemies. However, since you'll never be perfectly safe from an enemy swarm, many Necromancer players will want to add a good portion of their Stat points to Strength, to enable them to wear the most advanced armor that they will come across. Dexterity will probably be the least important Stat for these characters, as very few Necromancers will be using weapons as their primary source of damage, and therefore being able to actually hit the enemy won't be important enough to encourage them to spend points on Dexterity that could be better spent elsewhere. Vitality, as with all characters, will be important for the Necromancer. Energy will be his prime Stat, though, especially with the large number of Corpse Explosions and Revives that you'll be casting throughout your journeys. Most Necromancers will want to have a large reserve of Mana, just in case Mana potions are not readily available.

As far as weaponry and armor is concerned, you'll probably be advancing enough in Strength to wield some hefty armor, so choose the best suit that you're able to equip and go for it, with perhaps a little more focus on the magical abilities of the armor than on its Defense. You'll still definitely want a lot of Defense, but if you get to choose between going from 300 to 400 Defense and gaining +1 to all your skill levels, you'll want to choose the skill levels most of the time. Most Necromancers won't be wading into battle with melee weapons very much, so you won't have to worry about finding a really great sword. You should probably build up a lot of gold (and having 200,000 gold in your stash as well as 100,000 on your person is not uncommon through the midway point of the game in Nightmare mode) and find a really, really good Wand that adds points to the skills you use most. Wands, of course, are some of the most expensive items in the game to purchase, and they cost more as they modify higher-level skills, so you can expect to pay over 200,000 gold for a really excellent Wand that suits a



high level character. Fortunately, once you get to Nightmare mode, most monsters will be dropping in excess of 100 gold when they die (even the lowly Fallen). Besides, even if you did try to attack with a melee weapon, without any Mastery-type skill that adds to your Attack Rating, you'd find it difficult to connect to higher-level monsters. In addition to a Wand, all of which luckily are one-handed, you should find an excellent shield that increases your Defense.

Skills

Curses

Curses allow the Necromancer to cast a negative effect on a large group of enemies. The results vary in usefulness and efficiency, so you'll want to experiment with the various options before picking a couple to concentrate in. Note that any given enemy can only have one curse on himself at a time, so don't go buck wild with these things.

Amplify Damage (available at character level 1)

Amplify Damage is the first skill that the Necromancer has available, and it will probably be the most used of his curses throughout the game. Basically, it doubles the amount of damage that afflicted enemies receive, from either you, your minions, or anyone else in your game. The benefits of that are obvious enough. The duration of the effect and the radius increases with additional Skill Points.

The cost for this spell stays at 4 Mana. The radius begins at 2 yards, and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 yards per skill level. The duration begins at 8 seconds, and increases by three seconds per skill level.

Dim Vision (available at character level 6)

Dim Vision, as the name implies, reduces the vision of a group of target monsters to one yard, making them essentially blind. Most of the time, this won't



be a huge boon to the Necromancer, as his minions will charge the enemies anyway, and they'll be able to see anything that attacks them at point blank range. It's handy for preventing ranged enemies from firing at you, though.

The cost for this spell stays at 9 Mana. The radius begins at 2.6 yards, and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 yards per skill level. The duration begins at 7 seconds, and increases by 2 seconds per skill level.

Weaken (available at character level 6)

Weaken reduces the effectiveness of all enemy attacks by one-third while it stays in effect. This skill ramps up nicely with the increased damage enemies deal in the later parts of the game, but it's a fairly passive skill in that it won't allow you to damage the enemy any more easily. You'll probably want to just stick with Iron Maiden or Amplify Damage instead of Weaken, but it can be useful if you're taking a beating.

The cost for this spell stays at 4 Mana. The radius begins at 2 yards, and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 yards per skill level. The duration begins at 8 seconds, and increases by three seconds per skill level.

Iron Maiden (available at character level 12; prerequisite: Amplify Damage)

Iron Maiden, like the medieval torture device, turns the damage that enemies deal back on themselves (it's also fairly similar to the Paladin skill Thorns in this regard). Not too much strategy with this one, but it's great to combine this with a Golem or horde of Skeletons. Simply cast Iron Maiden on the monsters and watch them kill themselves off as they pound on your minions, all without taking any damage yourself.

The cost for this spell stays at 5 Mana. The radius is set at 4.6 yards, and doesn't increase. The duration begins at 12 seconds, and increases by 2.4 seconds per skill level. The damage returned to the monster begins at 200% of



the original damage, and increases by 25% per skill level (until the enemies are taking back almost 700% of their damage at level 20).

Terror (available at character level 12; prerequisite: Weaken)

Similar to the Barbarian skill Howl, Terror allows the Necromancer to induce unnatural fright in a group of enemies, causing them to flee in the opposite direction for a short amount of time. While most of the time this skill will be relatively unused, you might want to keep it hotkeyed just in case you run out of corpses to raise minions with and get boxed in by enemies.

The cost for this spell stays at 7 Mana. The radius stays at 2.6 yards and does not increase. The duration begins at 8 seconds, and increases by one second per skill level, more than long enough to get put a couple screens worth of distance between you and the enemy.

Confuse (available at character level 18; prerequisite: Dim Vision)

Confuse causes the enemies to stop their attacks and focus on a new target, perhaps you, your minions, a party member, or even each other. Of course, the optimal outcome is to have the enemies attack each other, so the best way to use this skill is to target a group of enemies that are currently inaccessible to you and your party. For instance, in the Great Marsh section of Act III, you'll often come across groups of enemies that are across a river from you. Confuse them, and they'll have no choice but to attack each other, greatly weakening themselves by the time you get to them.

The cost for this spell stays at 13 Mana. The radius begins at 4 yards, and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 yards per skill level. The duration begins at 10 seconds, and increases by 2 seconds per skill level.

Life Tap (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Amplify Damage, Iron Maiden)



Life Tap causes the afflicted monsters to act as if any minion or player that hits them has a really good "of the Leech" item on. In effect, anyone that strikes a monster cursed by Life Tap will gain 50% of the damage they cause back into their life pool, giving your minions and teammates a chance to heal themselves. Necromancers themselves probably won't gain much from this skill, since very few Necromancers choose to use melee or ranged weapons, but it can help your minions out a great deal.

The cost for this spell stays at 9 Mana. The radius begins at 2.6 yards, and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 yards per skill level. The duration begins at 16 seconds, and increases by 2.4 seconds per skill level.

Attract (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Dim Vision, Confuse)

Attract is the rare curse that acts on a single foe, causing it to become the center of attention, meaning that all other nearby monsters will attack that foe instead of you and your party members. The main benefit to this skill is that no monsters will be attacking you for the duration, but it will generally end pretty quick, with the target going down in flames as every other monster starts wailing on him. Attract cannot be used on bosses or Super Unique enemies, though.

The cost for this spell stays at 17 Mana. The radius stays at 6 yards. The duration begins at 12 seconds, and increases by 3.6 seconds per skill level.

Decrepify (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Weaken, Terror)

Decrepify slows down your enemies, making them easier targets, or just easier to run away from. Again, this is something of a passive skill, not really making a huge difference in combat, and the duration is much slower than other curses, so most players will probably stay away from this one. It can be useful to help out a party member that needs to retreat, or escape a stunlock, however.



The cost for this spell stays at 11 Mana. The radius begins at 2.6 yards, and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 yards per skill level. The duration begins at 2 seconds, and increases by 0.2 seconds per skill level.

Lower Resist (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Amplify Damage, Weaken, Iron Maiden, Life Tap, Terror, Decrepify)

Probably of most use in a multiplayer game with Sorceresses, Lower Resist (oddly enough) reduces the resistance of the affected enemies to elemental magic (and just plain magical attacks). Since the Necromancer rarely delves into elemental magic, other than poison, this skill isn't so hot in single-player games, but if you're fighting along a Sorceress or Amazon, it can increase the effectiveness of their various elemental-based skills. Alternatively, it can be used to reduce the resistance to your Fire Golem, or an Iron Golem created with a gemmed weapon.

The cost for this spell stays at 22 Mana. The radius begins at 4.6 yards, and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 yards per skill level. The duration begins at 20 seconds, and increases by 2 seconds per skill level. The resistance is reduced by 31% at level 1, decreases rapidly, but slows down as more points are added. The resistance at level 5 is -47%, while at level 20, it reaches only -62%.

Poison and Bone Skills

This skill tree will give the Necromancer what is possibly his most powerful spell in Corpse Explosion...as well as a bunch of not-so-useful stuff.

Teeth (available at character level 1)

Teeth is the basic ranged damage spell for Necromancers. The words that can be used to describe it range from "mediocre" to "awful". It's okay, especially in that it pierces enemies and inflicts damage on all enemies it hits, but the damage dealt is pretty low, even for a level 1 skill. As you pump points into it, the



number of teeth shot out increase, which can make it affect a wide range of enemies, but you won't be killing anything with this spell once you get, oh, to the midway point of Act 1. Put a point here as a prerequisite, and then forget about it.

The cost for this spell starts at 3 Mana, and increases by 0.5 Mana per Skill Point. The damage dealt begins at 2 – 4, and increases by 1 point to both minimum and maximum until it reaches 21 – 23 at level 20 (are you quaking with fear yet?). The number of teeth begins at 2, and increases by 1 with each Skill Point.

Bone Armor (available at character level 1)

Bone Armor creates a virtual shield of bone around you, absorbing all damage that would otherwise drain your precious life points. It will last until it has taken all of the damage it's rated for (visibly represented by a smaller number of bones that rotate around you), and then fall away. It's an effective way to protect yourself, especially at higher levels, but there's nothing that can replace the reliability of good old steel armor. This really isn't a halfway type of skill; either you go the whole 20 points and cast it whenever it fails, or you put one point in for the prerequisite and forget about it. Most players will just want to go for real armor and not worry about this skill.

The cost for this spell starts at 11 Mana, and increases by 1 Mana per Skill Point. The damage the armor can take before failing begins at 20 damage, increasing by 10 points with each Skill Point.

Poison Dagger (available at character level 6)

Poison Dagger is a skill that adds a certain amount of poison damage to your attacks, but only attacks with a Dagger are affected. Like all poison attacks, the damage dealt takes time to work, so even if you manage to deal enough poison damage to kill the opponent, he or she will still have enough time to strike back a couple of times. In fact, as you increase the level of this skill, the time the



poison takes to work actually increases, until the enemy will actually have over 20 seconds to act before they take the total poison damage! Daggers are also incredibly short-ranged weapons, so you won't find much use for this skill when you're dealing with the high-power ranged monsters in the later portions of the game. The damage done is also fairly small at the lower levels of the skill. On the good side, there is an Attack Rating increase with this spell, something that's fairly rare for the Necromancer.

The cost for this spell starts at 3 Mana, and increases by 0.2 or 0.3 Mana per Skill Point. The damage dealt begins at 7 – 15, increases by a small amount with each of the first few Skill Points allocated, and then rapidly begins to rise until it reaches 168 – 217 at level 20. The time the poison takes to deal all of its potential damage begins at a minimum of 4 seconds, and increases by one second with each Skill Point. The Attack Rating bonus begins at +15% and increases by 10% with each additional skill level.

Corpse Explosion (available at character level 6; prerequisites: Teeth)

Ah, Corpse Explosion. This is the skill that every Necromancer will be using again and again, over and over. Destined to become a classic spell in Diablo lore (and you know there are more games coming in the series), Corpse Explosion takes an enemy corpse and detonates it, damaging all enemies in the radius of effect for 60% to 100% of the dead monster's total health. The beauty of this spell is that it increases in effectiveness as you begin to encounter tougher monsters, even on higher difficulty levels. The typical scenario begins with a Golem or party member killing an enemy. The Necromancer casts Corpse Explosion, damaging all nearby enemies. As soon as another enemy dies, the Necromancer casts another Corpse Explosion, killing off most of the remaining foes. Corpse Explosion chain reactions will be a common sight around high-level Necromancers, as it is, pound for pound, the quickest and most effective way of killing enemies in Diablo II. It doesn't hurt your minions or your party members,



so you don't have to worry about staying away from the explosion. About the only drawback is that the Mana cost increases with additional points, and since it's generally cast twice or more at a time, it will be a drain on your Mana reserves. In addition, most bosses, such as Duriel and Diablo, aren't generally surrounded by hordes of monsters, so you'll have to utilize another means of attack for powerful, solitary enemies.

The cost for this spell starts at 15 Mana, and increases by 1 Mana per Skill Point. The radius of damage begins at 2.6 yards, and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 with each Skill Point.

Bone Wall (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Bone Armor)

Another underwhelming spell in this tree, Bone Wall raises a wall of bone from the ground where you cast it. It can be broken through quite easily, and in fact, even your own minions will attack a Bone Wall if you cast it (currently as of version 1.02; this may be changed in a future patch), so the usefulness here is pretty low. It can be used to gain a couple of seconds of time during a retreat, but even that is rarely needed in most situations; just open a Town Portal and go. It can be used as a distraction to cast near ranged enemies that are attacking you, but again, it won't last for more than a few seconds unless you really pump it up a huge amount. Avoid this skill, and save your points for something better. Corpse Explosion, anyone?

The cost for this spell starts at 17 Mana, and does not increase. The duration is 48 seconds, but it will generally die well before then. The health of the wall begins at 19, and increases by 4 or 5 points with each Skill Point, reaching 109 points at level 20.

Poison Explosion (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Poison Dagger, Teeth, Corpse Explosion)



The less impressive big brother of Corpse Explosion, Poison Explosion doesn't directly deal explosive damage to the enemies, nor does the damage increase with the power of the enemy. Instead, it deals a preset amount of Poison damage to everyone in a non-increasing radius over an ever-increasing amount of time. The only conceivable way this could be better than Corpse Explosion is in the fact that it costs less Mana, but even then, the sheer power of Corpse Explosion makes it a far better choice for most enemies than Poison Explosion.

The cost for this spell stays at 8 Mana. The damage dealt begins at 25 – 50, and increases by 5 points to the minimum and 10 points to the maximum until it reaches 120 – 240 at level 20. The time over which the poison acts begins at 4 seconds, and increases by 0.8 seconds with each skill level.

Bone Spear (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Teeth, Corpse Explosion)

Bone Spear is something of an upgraded version of Teeth, sending a single powerful missile out from the caster, which will pass through and damage all enemies it hits. The damage isn't going to make it a must-have skill for many players, especially as you move on to Nightmare and Hell difficulties. Best to let your minions work on killing the enemies, then start blowing their bodies up.

The cost for this spell starts at 7 Mana, and increases by 0.2 or 0.3 Mana per Skill Point. The damage dealt begins at 16 – 24, and increases by 8 points to both minimum and maximum until it reaches 168 – 176 at level 20.

Bone Prison (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Bone Armor, Bone Wall)

Bone Prison acts as something of a localized Bone Wall, constructing a bone prison to hold in a single enemy until they break out or the pre-set duration expires. Like Bone Wall, the health for the prison is very small, so that most



advanced monster will be able to break out in just a couple of hits. You can't attack through the prison, either, so you can't use it to shoot the proverbial fish in a barrel.

The cost for this spell starts at 27 Mana, and decreases by 2 Mana for each skill level. The health of the prison begins at 19, and increases by 4 or 5 points with each Skill Point, reaching 109 points at level 20.

Poison Nova (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Poison Dagger, Teeth, Corpse Explosion, Poison Explosion)

Poison Nova acts in much the same way as the various Nova spells of the Sorceress, sending out a ring of poison from the caster, damaging all enemies within range by inflicting poison on them. Like all poison spells, its weakness is in the time it takes for the poison to reach full deployment, and its reduced effectiveness against Undead. It also costs quite a bit, at a set 25 Mana per casting. You might want to put one point into this skill, just to act as a ranged attack against powerful enemies, but you won't be able to add enough Skill Points to make it effective against the high-power enemies you'll face in Nightmare mode (you'll probably beat Diablo before you even reach level 30).

The damage dealt begins at 50 – 75, and increases by 5 points to the minimum and 7 or 8 points to the maximum until it reaches 145 – 217 at level 20. The time over which the poison acts begins at 4 seconds, and increases by 0.8 seconds with each skill level.

Bone Spirit (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Teeth, Corpse Explosion, Bone Spear)

Bone Spirit is a high-power homing missile that will track down one enemy and deal a lot of damage to them. Its damage potential is pretty good, reaching upwards of 300 damage per hit at the highest levels, and its Mana cost is low. However, the damage takes a while to really hit the stratosphere, and when you



actually have enough levels to put 20 Skill Points into it, you'll be facing enemies that it will barely dent. Even a level 1 Corpse Explosion will be dealing more damage than a level 20 Bone Spirit, and to more enemies, once you hit the Hell difficulty. It's nice that it seeks enemies, but this can also cause it to run into barriers and such, and it has no splash damage, so you'll have to fire a lot of them to take out a crowd. Stick with Corpse Explosion.

The cost for this spell starts at 12 Mana, and increases by 1 point every other level. The damage dealt begins at 20 – 30, and increases by 16 points to the minimum and maximum until it reaches 324 – 334 at level 20.

Summoning and Control Skills

The Summoning and Control skills of the Necromancer allow him to raise minions to do his bidding, whether from the skeletal remains of dead foes, from the very earth, or by resurrecting dead enemies to fight against the monsters that were their allies seconds ago. Since the Necromancer isn't a powerful fighter, he'll need to have powerful minions around to help him out, especially in single player games. Unfortunately, the best summoning spell isn't accessible until level 30, so you'll have to make do with the various types of Golems until Revive becomes available. Golems are fairly powerful, but you can only have one type of Golem at a time, which generally makes earlier versions obsolete once you gain access to a new type. This can make for some frustrating choices. You should try and save your Skill Points as long as you can, holding out for Iron or Fire Golems at the higher levels, but you won't be able to survive without putting a few points into the earlier types, which seems like a waste. No way around it, though.

Skeleton Mastery (available at character level 1; prerequisite: Raise Skeleton)

Skeleton Mastery affects Raise Skeleton, Raise Skeletal Mage, and Revive by increasing the hit points and damage dealt, by a set number with



Skeletons and by a percentage with revived monsters. Most players won't be having too many Skeletons under their control after they gain access to Golems, but some high-level Necromancers put 20 points into Skeleton Mastery just to affect Revived monsters later on in the game. While the benefits from Skeleton Mastery won't be as large as simply adding points to Revive, it is available earlier in the game, so you will be able to start off Revive with much tougher monsters. In addition, starting at skill level 2, Skeletal Mages gain increased damage with their missile attacks. This is a passive skill, and is always active once you put one point into it.

The damage modifier for skeletons begins at +2 damage, and increases by 2 damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +40 damage at level 20. The life of your skeletons begins at +7, and increases by 7 health with each Skill Point, until it reaches +140 at level 20.

The damage modifier for revived monsters begins at +2% damage, and increases by 2% damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +40% damage at level 20. The life of your revived monsters begins at +7%, and increases by 7% health with each Skill Point, until it reaches +140% at level 20.

Raise Skeleton (available at character level 1)

This skill, available via a wand at the beginning of the game, allows you to raise Skeletons from the corpses of fallen enemies. Skeletons are fairly weak minions, and even if you allocate most of your Skill Points to Skeleton Mastery, will probably start dying rapidly as you encounter the tougher foes near the end of Act I. They are melee-only creatures, so they will generally act as a buffer between you and charging enemies, but, as mentioned, they usually die too quickly to be very effective. You need a corpse to revive a Skeleton from, so as they become less effective, they will kill fewer monsters before they die, making it difficult to find corpses to revive them from. It's best to avoid plunking too many



Skill Points here, and wait until you have access to Clay Golem to use as your main minion.

The cost for this spell starts at 6 Mana, and increases by 1 with each skill level. The number of skeletons that can be raised begins at 1, and increases by 1 with each skill level, until you can summon a total of 20 Skeletons at level 20.

Clay Golem (available at character level 6)

Clay Golem is the first of the Golem Skills. Like Raise Skeleton, it allows you to raise a minion that will attack your enemies for you. However, the Clay Golem will be much tougher than a normal skeleton, and will increase in health and damage with added points, without needing to add points to Golem Mastery. Another benefit is that a Golem can be cast anywhere, and doesn't require a corpse. However, only one Clay Golem can be summoned at a time. If another one is summoned while one is still alive, the first will crumble, and the new one will appear, with a full bar of health. This can be an easy way to keep yourself stocked with a fresh minion, but it also starts to cost a huge amount of Mana as you add points to this skill. Like Skeletons, Golems are melee-only, so you might want to have some method of taking out opponents from a distance while your Golem is busy with melee opponents.

The cost for this spell begins at 15 Mana, and increases by 3 with each Skill Point added. The damage dealt by the golem begins at 2 – 5 damage, and increases by small amounts to the minimum and a slightly larger amount to the maximum with each Skill Point added. It hits 4 – 12 at level 5 and reaches 15 – 39 at level 20. The life of the Golem begins at 100 health, and increases by 35 health with each additional Skill Point.

Golem Mastery (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Clay Golem)

Golem Mastery, like Skeleton Mastery, increases the efficiency and power of your Golems without increasing the cost of the spells themselves. It's



somewhat less effective than Skeleton Mastery, however, as it only affects your Golems' life and speed, not their damage potential. Their life and speed bonus, however, is increased by a percentage, so it will affect the advanced Golems just as much as it will the Clay Golem. Overall, you'll probably want to invest a few points here, but save most of your Skill Points for adding to the actual Golem skills. You can always add more later if you find your Golems dying too quickly. This is a passive skill, and is always active.

The life modifier begins at +20% damage, and increases by 20% with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +400% life at level 20. The speed of your golems begins at +6%, and increases by a slowly decreasing amount, hitting +20% at level 5 and +33% at level 20.

Raise Skeletal Mage (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Raise Skeleton)

This more advanced Skeleton skill will raise a Skeletal mage from the corpse of an enemy. Unlike normal Skeletons, these Mages can inflict damage from a distance, and come in Lightning, Cold, Fire, and Poison flavors. You can't choose what type you raise, as the selection is random, but you can re-cast the spell until you get one you like.

The cost for this spell starts at 8 Mana, and increases by 1 with each skill level. The number of Skeleton Mages that can be raised begins at 1, and increases by 1 with each skill level, until you can summon a total of 20 Skeleton Mages at level 20.

Blood Golem (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Clay Golem)

Blood Golem is the second level of Golem skills, giving you a more powerful minion to help you get through Act II. The Blood Golem, oddly, is tied to your health, meaning that he can transmit health to you when he deals damage, but you will also take damage when he's hurt. You should be ready to re-cast him



if he gets surrounded by the quick Act II foes that you'll come across, like a pack of Desert Panthers or hordes of undead in the Tombs of Tal Rasha, or just keep a number of healing potions at the ready.

The cost for this spell begins at 25 Mana, and increases by 4 with each Skill Point added. The damage dealt by the golem begins at 6 – 16 damage, and increases by small amounts to the minimum and a slightly larger amount to the maximum with each Skill Point added. It hits 14 – 38 at level 5 and reaches 45 – 122 at level 20. The life of the Golem stays steady at 201 hit points, not counting additional life from Golem Mastery. The amount of damage dealt that is converted into health for the Necromancer begins at 31%, and increases by 1% for the first few levels, then levels off at 38%.

Summon Resist (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Clay Golem, Golem Mastery)

Summon Resist is another passive skill that gives your summoned minions a percentage resistance to Lightning, Cold, Fire, and Poison damage. It might be worth it if you use a large amount of skeletons, but for Golems, your points are probably better spent just increasing their health by adding points to the Golem spell or Golem Mastery. Either way, one point here couldn't hurt.

The resistance bonus begins at 24%, increases rapidly to 47% at level 5, but then tapers off, hitting 66% at level 20.

Iron Golem (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Clay Golem, Blood Golem)

Iron Golem casts a Golem from a metallic item that is placed on the ground near the spot of casting. The item used is consumed in the casting, but better items do result in better Golems. In fact, the Golem will take on the attributes of the item used to create him, so if you use a Holy Full Plate Mail of the Colossus, which grants a +50 bonus to life and almost double the normal



Defense, you can expect a massive Iron Golem with enhanced defense and more life than normal. You can also perform this casting with weapons, even gemmed weapons, to grant your Golem an enhanced level of attack. The main drawback to the Iron Golem is that his Life and Damage are solely dependent on the item used to create him; they don't increase with additional Skill Points in the skill itself. In addition, the need to have an item on the ground when you cast the spell makes it difficult to compensate for a Golem that is suddenly swamped and dies, for instance, and also makes it more expensive than most other Golem types, beyond the Mana cost. Interestingly, though, at level 2, Iron Golems gain a Thorns aura for themselves, transmitting melee damage dealt to them back on their attacker. Theoretically, with a high-quality armor as the reagent for the Golem, the Thorns aura could finish off most enemies by itself.

The cost for this spell stays at 35 Mana, not including the cost of the item consumed. The damage dealt by the golem stays at 7 – 19 damage, plus any bonuses from sacrificed weapons. The life of the Golem stays steady at 306 hit points, not counting additional life from Golem Mastery or magical modifiers to the item. The amount of damage dealt by the Thorns aura begins at 150% at skill level 2, and increases by 15% per skill level after that.

Fire Golem (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Clay Golem, Blood Golem, Iron Golem)

The highest level of Golem, Fire Golem will probably be the most-used type once a Necromancer proceeds past level 30. The Fire Golem not only deals fire damage with his melee attack, he also absorbs fire damage dealt to him, converting it into additional health (especially handy once you reach Act IV). The main drawback to these guys is the fairly huge Mana cost, topping 200 Mana at higher skill levels.

The cost for this spell begins at 50 Mana, and increases by 10 with each Skill Point added. The damage dealt by the golem begins at 10 – 27 damage,



and increases by small amounts to the minimum and a slightly larger amount to the maximum with each Skill Point added. It hits 20 – 54 at level 5 and reaches 57 – 155 at level 20. The life of the Golem stays steady at 313 hit points, not counting additional life from Golem Mastery. The amount of fire damage received that is converted into health begins at 36%, increases rapidly to 62% at level 5, then slowly rises to 88% at level 20.

Revive (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Raise Skeleton, Raise Skeletal Mage)

Probably the most powerful summoning skill the Necromancer has at his disposal, Revive will resurrect a dead foe to fight again, on the Necromancer's side this time. The power of this skill is only limited by the ability of the Necromancer to kill enemies powerful enough to make good minions. Super Unique, Unique, and powerful normal monsters all make great minions, but the duration of the spell is set at 180 seconds, making time a critical factor in your choice of minion. Boss monsters, of course, cannot be revived, including Super Uniques that play a large role in quests, such as Radament. The monster is identical in appearance and behavior to the pre-death version, except slightly darker in hue. The Mana cost stays at 45, so it's an expensive spell to cast over and over again, but generally worth it.

The life of the revived monster begins at 200% of their pre-death health, and increases by 20% with each Skill Point added. The number of possible revived minions begins at 1, and increases by 1 with each Skill Point.



Paladin



The Paladin, being a warrior of Light, has 18 different Auras available to him.

The Paladin class is a sign of Blizzard's understanding that this version of Diablo is going to be primarily played online. A consummate team player, the Paladin comes with a large variety of Offensive and Defensive auras, all of which will be transmitted to allied characters and minions when they're within range. This makes a Paladin a wonderful character to play with during multiplayer games, so if you choose a Paladin in Battle.net, expect your stock to rise with other players as you advance in levels. In addition to their Auras, Paladins are equipped with Combat skills that give them an edge on their foes.



Paladins, of course, are the classic “warriors of light” fantasy archetype, and so have something of an advantage over the other classes in combat with the Undead, which will be helpful not only as you wander through the Skeletons and Zombies of Act 1, but even as you wander through the final Chaos Sanctuary in Act IV. Like the Barbarian, they excel at close-in combat. Though they don’t possess the raw strength of their brutish companions, they wield more subtle ways of dealing with enemies, including reducing their defensive capacity, directly damaging them with his Auras, and making it easier for his party members to strike.

Also like the Barbarian, the Paladin will want to make sure he has plenty of Strength, enabling him to wield any of the armor that he comes across during the game. This is his primary focus, so you should be allotting two points to Strength each level if possible (perhaps giving two points to Dexterity with every third level). The rest of the stats are all of roughly equal importance. Dexterity is going to be more important to a Paladin than a Barbarian, simply because Paladins have no form of Combat Masteries that will give them large bonuses to their Attack Rating, which will make it difficult to hit enemies later on in the game, unless you’ve been consistently adding points to Dexterity. Vitality, of course, will keep your Paladin alive. Energy will also be more important to a Paladin than a Barbarian, as his Combat skills cost more, on average, than the Barbarian’s. Don’t overdo it, though. You’ll probably find plenty of items that add to your Mana total, but to be on the safe side, set aside around 20 Stat Points if you can spare them.

The Paladin’s weapon specialty, supposedly, is in blunt weapons, which deal extra damage against the Undead, but he has no skills or special attributes that make him more deadly with a mace than, say, a sword. Scepters are the weapon of choice for many Paladins, as most of them will add points to the skills of the Paladin. Unlike the Necromancer and Sorceress, however, the Paladin will primarily be attacking the enemy with melee weapons, so you will probably want



to find a sturdy sword or other “real” weapon and use that instead of a Scepter. As far as armor is concerned, your Strength should be high enough to wear whatever comes along, so pick the sturdiest items and try to assemble the highest possible AC. Most Paladins will probably be wielding one-handed weapons, so be sure you find an excellent shield to help protect you from enemy blows.

Combat Skills

This tree enhances the Paladin’s abilities in combat. Since the Paladin doesn’t have any passive, permanent skills that increase his Attack Rating, he’ll want to invest in a few of these to enable him to more easily attack and deal more damage.

Sacrifice (available at character level 1)

Sacrifice allows the Paladin to increase his Attack Rating and damage by sacrificing a fair amount of his health. Interestingly, this skill costs no Mana, and it can deal quite a punch, so it’s somewhat useful when your Mana is low, but in most cases, you’ll probably want to keep the health and just stick with a normal attack, or more powerful Combat skills.

The damage modifier begins at +180% damage, and increases by 12% with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +408% damage at level 20. The Attack Rating bonus begins at +20%, and increases by 5% per skill level, until it reaches +115% at level 20.

Smite (available at character level 1)

This skill allows the Paladin to bash a single opponent with his shield, stunning them temporarily and dealing a bit of damage (you’ll note that all Shields display a Smite damage for a Paladin character). The damage generally isn’t overwhelming, and the stunning effect is very brief unless you pour Skill



Points into Smite, making this something of an underwhelming skill overall. It might be useful against single powerful enemies, but you'll more often be facing off against a crowd, and Charge makes it somewhat obsolete as well. As should be obvious, Smite requires you to have a shield equipped.

The cost for this spell stays at 2 Mana. The damage modifier begins at +15% damage, and increases by 15% with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +300% damage at level 20. The length of the stun begins at 0.6 seconds and increases by 0.2 seconds per skill level.

Holy Bolt (available at character level 6)

Holy Bolt allows the Paladin to directly damage Undead foes from a distance, as it did in the first game, but it also lets him heal hired companions, or other players in multiplayer games. The damage done is okay for a low-level spell, and it does let the Paladin strike from a ways away, so it might be handy to keep hotkeyed in case of Skeleton Mages, but it won't really be denting the tougher Undead later on, like the Hell Knights in Act IV. The healing effect is also quite paltry, nothing that will be making healing potions obsolete. In the case of hirelings, it can be useful to boost their health in case they're near death, but it won't be something you use very often.

The cost for this spell starts at 4 Mana, and increases by 0.2 or 0.3 Mana per Skill Point. The damage begins at 8 – 16 damage, and increases by 6 points to both minimum and maximum with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 122 – 130 damage at level 20. The amount of healing begins at 1 – 6, and increases by 2 points to both minimum and maximum with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 39-44 at level 20.

Zeal (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Sacrifice)

Zeal will probably be replacing your regular attack once you gain access to it. Since it only costs 2 Mana, and allows you to attack multiple times, it can be



used against crowds or single enemies with equal effectiveness. Essentially, you'll compress a large number of attacks into a short space of time, flipping from enemy to enemy if you're surrounded, or landing all of your blows against a single enemy if you're facing off against a powerful foe. You won't want to add more than 6 or 7 points here, though, as when you increase the number of blows, the time the skill takes increases, making you more vulnerable to ranged attacks. You can combine this with Mana-stealing items to effectively make it free.

The Attack Rating modifier begins at +10%, and increases by 5% with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +105% at level 20. The number of possible blows begins at 2, and increases by 1 with each Skill Point.

Charge (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Smite)

Charge is cast when you're a distance away from the enemy, with no obstacles in between. Your Paladin will run across the interceding ground and deliver a smashing blow to the enemy. The damage potential is fairly huge, but the high Mana cost will probably keep this as a special attack to use on tougher Unique enemies or quest monsters, with Zeal still being preferred for everyday use. Whether or not you will find Charge worthwhile will probably depend on how useful you find it. It can be nice to escape from a bad situation, since you can hold down the shift key and cast it without a target.

The cost for this spell stays at 9 Mana. The damage modifier begins at +100% damage, and increases by 25% with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +575% damage at level 20. The Attack Rating modifier begins at +50%, and increases by 15% with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +335% at level 20.

Vengeance (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Sacrifice, Zeal)

One of the more powerful Combat Skills for the Paladin, Vengeance adds a large amount of magic-enhanced damage to his normal attack, as a modifier to



the base damage (which makes this skill perfect for Nightmare and Hell difficulties). The blow, if it successfully lands, will add Lightning, Cold, and Fire damage, effectively bypassing any resistances the target might have to one of the three types. In addition, the target will be chilled for a moment, allowing successive strikes to land unimpeded. The only drawback is that you can only attack one foe at a time, but it'll be worth it when you face off against Uniques and Super Uniques.

The cost for this spell starts at 4 Mana, and increases by 0.5 Mana per Skill Point. The damage modifier begins at +35% damage, and increases by 5% with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +130% damage at level 20. The length of chilling begins at 1.2 seconds, and increases by 0.6 seconds per skill level.

Blessed Hammer (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Holy Bolt)

This odd spell will launch a rotating hammer that spins outward from the caster, damaging any foe it hits. Since it deals 1.5 times as much damage to undead foes, it's nice for large packs of skeletons, but it's not something that you'll want to be using very often, as it's a bit unwieldy and cannot be targeted.

The cost for this spell starts at 5 Mana, and increases by 0.2 or 0.3 Mana with each Skill Point. The damage dealt begins at 12 – 16 damage, and increases by 8 points to both minimum and maximum damage, until it reaches 164 – 168 damage at level 20.

Conversion (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Sacrifice, Zeal, Vengeance)

Conversion can be a useful tool for the Paladin, as it convinces enemies to fight on his side for a short duration. It works as the Paladin deals damage in melee combat. With each strike, there is a chance that the enemy will be converted, and begin fighting his former allies. The chance for conversion is



initially quite small, but grows with time. The duration is also fairly short, but the converted monster will usually die before time is up anyway. Like most of these types of spells, you cannot Convert bosses or quest monsters. In addition, since there is no Attack Rating bonus, this skill will become more difficult to successfully use against the higher-level enemies on the harder difficulty levels. Conversion seems to sometimes automatically kill an enemy if they are low on health when the conversion effect wears off.

The cost for this spell stays at 4 Mana (per attack, whether successful or not). The chance to convert begins at 11% damage, and increases rapidly with the first few points, reaching 37% at level 5, but then tapering off, reaching 63% at level 20. The duration of the conversion begins at 20 seconds, and increases by 10 seconds with each Skill Point.

Holy Shield (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Smite, Holy Bolt, Charge, Blessed Hammer)

Holy Shield will be a useful skill to keep around when you're facing off against a boss or other powerful monster, but its high cost, 35 Mana, will prevent it from being a highly used skill. Basically, Holy Shield increases the Defense of your shield by a percentage, as well as increasing the chance that you'll successfully block an attack. Since most of your Defense will probably be coming from your body armor, this won't have a huge effect in most situations, but if you're wielding a Holy Tower Shield, or something similar, it can substantially increase your Defense.

The cost for this spell stays at 35 Mana, and doesn't increase. The shield Defense modifier begins at +25% Defense, and increases by 15% with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +310% Defense at level 20. The chance to block begins at +8%, and increases slowly from there, reaching +15% at level 5, and hitting 21% at level 20.



Fist of the Heavens (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Sacrifice, Zeal, Vengeance, Conversion, Holy Bolt, Blessed Hammer)

Fist of the Heavens is a rather underpowered skill to cap off this tree. It summons a Lightning bolt to deal damage to a single target, and sends Holy Bolts off from the point of impact, damaging undead or healing friendly players. By the time you actually reach level 30, the amount of Lightning damage will make most enemies laugh, and the Holy Bolts are even less effective. By the time you reach level 50, the earliest you could possibly invest 20 Skill Points into this skill, the 153 – 192 damage from the Lightning will probably not even register on the monsters in Hell difficulty. Luckily, this skill isn't a prerequisite for anything, so you don't have to spend a Skill Point on it (unless you really want to try it out).

The cost for this spell starts at 25 Mana, and increases by 2 with each Skill Point. The damage from the Lightning begins at 1 – 40 damage, and increases by 8 points to both minimum and maximum with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 153 – 192 damage at level 20. The damage from the Holy Bolts begins at 1 – 16 damage, and increases by 6 points to both the maximum with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 1 – 130 damage at level 20.

Offensive Auras

Offensive Auras are free, passive skills that stay in effect only while selected in the small square at the bottom of the screen. In order to combine these with Combat Skills, you'll want to hotkey these up in the right square, and select your Combat Skills in the left square. The added benefit of Auras in multiplayer is that all of the friendly players in the game will also be enhanced by the aura, as long as they stay within the radius of effect. This makes a Paladin a very useful friend to have in larger games, where the enemies are tougher.

Might (available at character level 1)



A basic aura that will be useful in the battle against tougher enemies, Might increases the amount of damage that you deal automatically. The damage is increased by a percentage, making this aura scalable, and it works fairly well in coordination with Combat Skills like Zeal to deal even more damage than normal.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 7.3 yards, and increases by 1.3 or 1.4 yards per skill level. The damage modifier begins at +40% damage, and increases by 10% with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +230% damage at level 20.

Holy Fire (available at character level 6)

You'll probably want one Skill Point here, to act as a prerequisite to more advanced skills, but anything beyond one point is a waste. Holy Fire acts to automatically damage enemies with fire damage every few seconds as long as you stay close to them. It sounds great, but the damage done is so small, it won't be able to kill anything without a long wait once you get past the Underground Passage in Act I.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 4 yards, and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 yards per skill level. The damage begins at 1 - 3 damage, and increases by 0.5 or 1 to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches an epic 15 – 17 damage at level 20.

Thorns (available at character level 6)

Probably the best aura the Paladin has at his disposal, Thorns allows him to transmit damage received back onto the attack, many times over, in fact. Because it only depends on the damage dealt by the enemy, Thorns works perfectly throughout the game. The only drawback is that it only reflects melee damage back on the attacker; ranged attacks will not be affected by Thorns. Also, be aware that Thorns doesn't reduce the damage received, so in order to



really harm the enemy, you'll have to be able to take quite a bit of damage as well.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 7.3 yards, and increases by 1.3 or 1.4 yards per skill level. The damage reflected back begins at 250% of the original damage inflicted, and increases by 40% with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 1010% of the original damage (ten times, for the math impaired) at level 20.

Blessed Aim (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Might)

This is one of the more commonly useful auras, affecting the Paladin's Attack Rating. Since the Paladin has no Mastery-type skill to increase the Attack Rating, he'll have to rely on bonuses from items and his Dexterity number to be able to hit the enemy. Blessed Aim can be a huge boost if you encounter a series of high-level enemies that seem to be too tough to hit. You can combine it with a Combat Skill like Vengeance, as well.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 7.3 yards, and increases by 1.3 or 1.4 yards per skill level. The Attack Rating modifier begins at +75%, and increases by 15% with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +360% at level 20.

Concentration (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Might, Blessed Aim)

Concentration is a kind of upgraded Might, with a higher increase to damage, but also with a small chance to make your attack uninterrupted. The chance is fairly small, though, an unchanging 20%, so it's not very reliable when you really need it, but can be useful if you use this aura with Zeal. If you find yourself using Might quite a bit, you might be well off putting a few points here, but otherwise, you should probably just skip it.

The damage modifier begins at +60% damage, and increases by 15% with each Skill Point added, until it reaches +345% damage at level 20.



Holy Freeze (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Holy Fire)

Holy Freeze is much like Holy Fire, except that where the previous Aura damaged enemies, Holy Freeze chills them, slowing them down and making them easier targets for you and your party members. It's undeniably more useful than Holy Fire or Holy Shock, especially against hordes of fast opponents. One Skill Point wouldn't hurt here, but you'll probably find the effect too passive, and wind up switching to something that actually helps you kill the enemies.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 4 yards, and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 yards per skill level. The speed modifier for the enemies begins at -30% quickness, and increases by a small amount with each Skill Point added, reaching -42% at level 5 and -54% at level 20.

Holy Shock (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Holy Fire, Holy Freeze)

The last of the Holy Trinity, Holy Shock is a bit more powerful than Holy Fire, but that doesn't change the fact that it's useless. The damage that it does will be nothing to the enemies you face in Act II, let alone continuing on into the later stages of Normal Mode or higher difficulties. You're better off picking an aura that actually helps you kill the enemy rather than slowly pricking them to death over several minutes of game time. Luckily, it isn't required as a prerequisite to anything, so you don't have to spend any points on it, if you don't want to.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 3.3 yards, and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 yards per skill level. The damage dealt begins at 1 – 5 damage, and increases by 1 or 2 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 29 – 33 damage at level 20.

Holy Sanctuary (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Thorns)



Holy Sanctuary gives the Paladin a small radius around himself where undead enemies cannot enter. If they do, they simultaneously take damage and are repelled outward. This can be somewhat useful in areas with high concentrations of undead enemies, like the Tombs of Tal Rasha, but in most situations, it won't be anything you want to have active. Best to add a point and wait for Conviction, which affects all enemies, not just the undead.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 3.3 yards, and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 yards per skill level. The damage dealt begins at 8 – 16 damage, and increases by 4 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 84 – 92 damage at level 20.

Fanaticism (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Might, Blessed Aim, Concentration)

Fanaticism allows the Paladin and all nearby friendlies to attack more quickly than they normally would, as well as giving them a bonus to their Attack Rating. How useful this is depends on your teammates, really. The benefit to attack speed is something of a non-issue to a Paladin that is a master of Zeal, but if you're tagging along with a group of Barbarians with Polearms, it might be worth activating. On the other hand, if your group consists of Necromancers and Sorceresses, this won't help them out at all (except for the Necromancer's minions), so you'd do well to pick something else.

The radius of effect for this aura stays at 7.3 yards, and does not increase. The attack speed for affected characters begins at +14% and increases to +25% at level 5, but slows down rapidly after that, taking until level 20 to hit +35%. The Attack Rating bonus begins at +40%, and increases by 5% with each skill level.

Conviction (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Thorns, Holy Sanctuary)



Conviction acts on all monsters within the radius, lowering their Defense by a huge amount, as well as their resistance to elemental damage. This will be critical on Nightmare and Hell difficulties, as enemies will increase in Defense to the point where they are almost impossible to hit without help. Though the Paladin won't gain much from the lowered resistances, unless he's attacking with Vengeance, this will come in very handy when fighting alongside Sorceresses or Amazons, with their elemental damage skills. Sorceresses, especially ones with Fire Mastery or Cold Mastery, will find that this Aura makes their skills remarkably more effective. The defensive and resistance penalties do slow down as you increase the points allocated to this skill, so you probably won't want to go higher than 5 or 6 points into it.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 6 yards, and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 yards per skill level. The defensive modifier begins at -49%, and increases ever more slowly, hitting -70% at level 5 and -90% at level 20. The resistances drop by 26% at level one, with a 42% penalty at level 5 and a 57% penalty at level 20.

Defensive Auras

Defensive Auras, like their Offensive brothers, are free and passive, except for Prayer. Select one and you're good to go.

Prayer (available at character level 1)

Prayer is another one of those mostly ineffectual level 1 skills that people will put one point into and forget about it. It slowly (sloowly) regenerates your health, and the health of people within the radius of effect. Due to the proliferation of healing potions, both in town and on dead monsters, this skill is rarely needed, and is so slow at lower levels that it will rarely compensate for damage that you take. Worse, it actually drains Mana while it restores health, so you'll have to carry Mana potions (which can't be bought) if you want to keep it



active for long. Sure, if you really add a lot of points to it, it might be useful, but it's better just to stick with health potions.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 7.3 yards, and increases by 1.3 or 1.4 yards per skill level. The health regeneration begins at +2 (no one seems to be quite sure what this means, since there is no regeneration normally...suffice to say it's quite slow), and increases by 1 with each skill level. The Mana cost begins at 1 Mana, and increases by 0.1 or 0.2 points per skill level.

Resist Fire (available at character level 1)

Resist Fire increases the Paladin's natural resistance to fire-based damage by a large amount. Not much to say about it; this is pretty useful, especially in the later acts where fire-wielding foes are quite common.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 7.3 yards, and increases by 1.3 or 1.4 yards per skill level. The increased resistance begins at +54%, and increases less rapidly as you progress, hitting +65% at level 5 and reaching +75% at level 20.

Defiance (available at character level 6)

The flipside of Blessed Aim, Defiance increases your Defense by a large amount while it's active. You'll generally have more than enough Defense from your armor, not to mention health potions, so this won't be used too often, but if you need to protect a Sorceress or other weak character, you could do worse than Defiance.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 7.3 yards, and increases by 1.3 or 1.4 yards per skill level. The increased Defense begins at +70%, and increases by 10% with each skill level, reaching +260% at level 20.

Resist Cold (available at character level 6)



Much like Resist Fire, this skill will increase your resistance to Cold-based attacks. There aren't as many cold-wielding enemies as fire-based, but it can be useful in places like the Claw Viper Temple.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 7.3 yards, and increases by 1.3 or 1.4 yards per skill level. The increased resistance begins at +54%, and increases less rapidly as you progress, hitting +65% at level 5 and reaching +75% at level 20.

Cleansing (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Prayer)

Cleansing can help reduce the effects of poison and negative curses. It essentially reduces the amount of time poison and curses affect you, reducing the damage that poison does to you as a result. It can be activated after you've been poisoned, helping to save you a few health points. It doesn't act as a resistance, so it won't reduce the damage poison does to you while active. Really, there are very few times poison is a threat to your life (Coldworm the Burrower comes to mind), and you are rarely cursed by enemies except at the end of Act IV. Not hugely useful.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 7.3 yards, and increases by 1.3 or 1.4 yards per skill level. The duration of poison and curses begins at -39%, and decreases less rapidly as you progress, hitting -60% at level 5 and reaching -80% at level 20.

Resist Lightning (available at character level 12)

The third of the Resist auras, Resist Lightning is also not going to be tremendously useful for the majority of the game. Certainly, while facing off against Horrors or Horror Mages, you might want to flip it on, but otherwise, it won't be something you constantly use.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 7.3 yards, and increases by 1.3 or 1.4 yards per skill level. The increased resistance begins at +54%, and



increases less rapidly as you progress, hitting +65% at level 5 and reaching +75% at level 20.

Vigor (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Defiance, Prayer, Cleansing)

Vigor is a great aura to have while you're in between fights and running through the game, exploring and mapping out the area. It increases your footspeed, maximum stamina and the rate at which you regenerate stamina. During a fight, you'll want something that increases your combat abilities, but if you're running away, Vigor can help you out a bit. You probably won't want more than one point in it, though, as it drops off in effectiveness as you add more points.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 10 yards, and increases by 2 yards per skill level. The maximum stamina bonus begins at +50%, and increases by 25% with each skill level. The stamina recovery bonus begins at +50%, and increases by 25% with each skill level. The walk/run speed bonus begins at 13%, and increases less rapidly as you put more Skill Points into it, hitting +28% at level 5 and reaching +43% at level 20.

Meditation (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Prayer, Cleansing)

Meditation increases the Mana regeneration rate for the Paladin and all nearby friendlies. Most Paladins won't have a problem with Mana, mostly sticking to Zeal, and since Auras are free, Mana potions will be able to make up for what little Mana is lost. Meditation can be useful for groups of Sorceresses and Necromancers, though.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 7.3 yards, and increases by 1.3 or 1.4 yards per skill level. The Mana regeneration rate bonus begins at +65% and increases by 15% per skill level.



Redemption (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Defiance, Vigor)

An interesting recycling method, Redemption allows the Paladin to ...become a cannibal? Well, in a manner of speaking. Through some kind of holy osmosis, the Paladin will absorb the dead bodies of fallen enemies, and turn them into health and Mana for himself. It doesn't always work, but as you increase the amount of points allocated, the chances increase fairly rapidly, coming above 50% at the fifth level. It can be especially useful in single-player games. If you get in trouble health-wise, turn Redemption on and retreat across the bodies of any nearby enemies. When you're healthier, switch back to your normal Aura and deal with any foes that pursued you. Be careful in multiplayer games that you don't steal corpses that a Necromancer might use for Skeletons or Corpse Explosion.

The radius for this skill stays at 7.3 yards. The amount of health and Mana that is recovered begins at 25 points, and increases by 5 points per skill level. The chance that a body will be recovered begins at 23%, and increases less rapidly as you put more Skill Points into it, hitting +55% at level 5 and reaching +85% at level 20.

Salvation (available at character level 30)

The all-in-wonder Aura, Salvation increases your resistance to all three types of elemental damage at once. Obviously, you'll want to use this one instead of Resist Fire, Cold, or Lightning, especially on the harder difficulties, where your resistances are reduced anyway.

The radius of effect for this aura begins at 7.3 yards, and increases by 1.3 or 1.4 yards per skill level. The increased resistance begins at +54%, and increases less rapidly as you progress, hitting +65% at level 5 and reaching +75% at level 20.



Sorceress



The Sorceress forgoes early advantages in favor of more power during the later parts of the game.

The descendent of the Mage from Diablo, the Sorceress carries the torch of the magic-user into Diablo II. Mage users from the earlier game will probably find the Sorceress much weaker than her earlier counterpart, without the crutches of things like Elixirs and Mana Shield to protect her and boost her stats. While the Mage perhaps had the best potential for power in the original game, the Sorceress is perhaps a bit underpowered, especially on the harder difficulty levels.

As should be obvious, the Sorceress is primarily a magic-user. Her 30 spells are split into the Fire, Ice, and Lightning categories, and most players will



want to pick one tree and stick with it. Because they're so magic-oriented, Energy will be the obvious choice for most Sorceresses, to ensure a large Mana reserve for the expensive spells that come along as you play (see the skill Warmth below for another option). Beyond that, the most obviously useful Stat for Sorceresses will be Vitality, to increase the amount of damage you can receive, especially in single player games, where you won't have a Barbarian buffer between you and the monsters. Since there is no self-healing skill this time around, you'll have to rely on the slow-working Health Potions, which won't help much if you don't have enough health to survive more than three or four hits. No Sorceress will really want to put any points into Dexterity, unless you plan on using a Bow during the early portions of the game or something like that. Once you gain enough Mana, you'll be damaging the enemies exclusively with spells, so don't bother increasing an Attack Rating that you won't ever use. Strength can be very useful for single-player Sorceresses, which will need to be able to wear excellent armor to help prevent damage, but Battle.net players probably won't need to emphasize it too much, if you manage to find strong melee characters to help you out. That said, even multiplayer Sorceresses will want to increase Strength up to around 50 or 60, to at least use some of the low-grade plate mail that will come along.

As far as weapons go, most Sorceresses, like Necromancers, will want to find a good Staff and stick with it. Like wands and scepters, Staves give bonuses to Sorceress skills, but can also be quite expensive as they increase in quality and skill levels. The main drawback to Staves is that they will often boost skills from two or three different trees, making them less useful for Sorceresses, which generally choose one tree and stick with it. With armor and items, anything that gives you a bonus to Strength or Mana will be useful to a Sorceress. Extra strength will enable them to use better armor, and more Mana will allow them to cast more spells in between using a potion. Dexterity bonuses won't be highly prized, but large increases in Life can be helpful.



Fire Skills

The Fire tree of skills is generally going to be for players that enjoy raw power, scorching the enemies from a distance with a variety of high-damage spells. A few spells from the original Diablo return here, making this a familiar tree for any old-school players.

Fire Bolt (available at character level 1)

All Sorceresses will begin the game with this skill, getting an automatic Skill Point from a staff. It's a typical fantasy RPG spell, a simple fire ball that zaps one enemy with a small amount of damage. It will be useful against the enemies in the first few areas of Act I, but probably won't be used once you reach Inferno or Fire Ball.

The cost for this spell stays steady at 2.5 Mana. The damage dealt begins at 3 – 6 damage, and increases by 1 or 2 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 31 – 34 damage at level 20.

Warmth (available at character level 1)

Warmth is an intriguing spell that every Sorceress, regardless of their tree choice, will want to invest in. It increases the regeneration of your Mana supply, which recharges quite slowly on its own. The benefits of this spell, unlike most percentage-based skills, don't drop off as you add more points into it, so many Sorceresses will want to add a few points here. As you increase the points allocated to Warmth, it can actually act as a replacement for Stat Points in Energy: since the Mana will regenerate so much more quickly, you won't need to have as large a reserve. Between Warmth and Mana-boosting items, you will probably be able to put a few more Stat Points in Strength or Vitality. One Blizzard employee even managed to reach 20 points in Warmth with his fire-based Sorceress, so don't underestimate this skill. Of course, you'll want to put the emphasis on actual offensive skills in between boosting Warmth, and most



players won't reach level 20 in this skill until they pass character level 40 or 45 (if they choose to go that far in this skill).

This skill is passive, so no Mana cost is required. The Mana regeneration boost begins at +30% and increases by 12% with each Skill Point.

Inferno (available at character level 6)

Another favorite from Diablo, Inferno turns your Sorceress into a fire-breathing foe that no enemy will want to get too close to. The range of the fire breath isn't huge, but will increase as you add points. The beauty of this skill is that it deals damage by the second, meaning that it will quickly eliminate any foe dumb enough to wade into it, especially when higher skill levels are reached. The drawback is that it can really drain your Mana reserves quickly, so use it sparingly.

The casting cost for this spell stays steady at 6 Mana, but the cost to keep it in effect starts at 7 Mana per second and increases by 0 or 1 Mana with each additional level. The damage dealt begins at 12 – 25 damage per second, and increases by 9 or 10 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 190 – 203 damage at level 20.

Blaze (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Inferno)

Blaze is an interesting descendent of Fire Wall. When cast, it ignites the Sorceress's feet, causing her to leave a trail of flames wherever she runs or walks for a short amount of time. The most obvious use for this skill is to attract the attention of a group of enemies, cast Blaze, and then run. Since most enemies will make a beeline for you, they will be caught in the fire and die within a short amount of time. Against slower enemies, you can backtrack over your path to double up the effect of Blaze, making them take even more damage than they normally would. You won't be using this much when you get to Fire Wall, but it's still pretty cool.



The casting cost for this spell starts at 11 Mana and increases by 0.5 Mana with each additional level. The damage dealt begins at 18 – 37 damage per second, and increases by 9 or 10 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 196 – 215 damage at level 20. The duration of the flames begins at 4.6 seconds and increases by 1 second for each additional skill level.

Fire Ball (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Fire Bolt)

An upgraded version of Fire Bolt, Fire Ball adds a bit of splash damage (within a 2 yard radius of the point of impact) to the equation, and of course a bit more damage overall. The Mana cost is quite reasonable, and the damage is pretty good, especially if you can cast it rapidly with an item that increases casting rate.

The casting cost for this spell starts at 5 Mana and increases by 0.5 Mana with each additional level. The damage dealt begins at 6 – 14 damage per second, and increases by 7 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 139 – 147 damage at level 20.

Fire Wall (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Inferno, Blaze)

The fan favorite spell from Diablo, Fire Wall, returns triumphantly in Diablo II, and is even better this time around. It raises a huge barrier of flames wherever it is cast, inflicting huge damage on enemies that stand on top of the fire. The most obvious use for this spell remains as it was in the original Diablo. Find a group of enemies that can't reach you (a group of Flayers standing across a river, for example), cast Fire Wall beneath their feet, and watch them burn. The AI for the monsters won't even try to avoid the flames, so you will be able to take most of them out from a distance. It's also great against enemies with ranged attacks, which generally stay in one place. It's even better in multiplayer games, where you can cast it around your Barbarian and Paladin friends, destroying the



enemies that they're fighting against. You can even cast it just inside doors, where it will burn any enemy that's hugging the opposite wall. Overall, this is one of the most useful spells in the game, and any fire-wielding Sorceress will want to add a few points here.

The casting cost for this spell starts at 22 Mana and increases by 2 Mana with each additional level. The damage dealt begins at 32 – 42 damage per second, and increases by 18 or 19 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 389 – 398 damage at level 20. The duration of the flames begins at 4.6 seconds and increases by 1 second for each additional skill level. The length of the wall begins at 4 yards and increases by 1 yard with each additional Skill Point (it forms at a right angle to the Sorceress).

Enchant (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Warmth)

Enchant gives the weapon of the targeted character additional fire-based damage for the duration of the spell. Most Sorceresses won't want to bother with this spell, as they will rarely partake in melee combat, and their friends will be more than able to take care of themselves by level 18.

The casting cost for this spell starts at 25 Mana and increases by 5 Mana with each additional level. The additional damage dealt begins at 8 – 10 damage, and increases by 1 point to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 27 – 29 damage at level 20. The duration of the enchantment begins at 144 seconds, and increases by 24 seconds per Skill Point.

Meteor (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Fire Bolt, Fire Ball)

This impressive spell calls down a fiery ball on top of the Sorceresses' enemies, causing massive damage and leaving a burning area of flame on the ground for several seconds after the impact. There is a delay of a few seconds



between casting and result, so you'll need to guess where your targets will be before you click the button. Of course, if your targets are immobile, then you don't have to worry about it. Despite the fact that the Meteor has nowhere to come from, this spell is useable indoors.

The casting cost for this spell starts at 17 Mana and increases by 1 Mana with each additional level. The damage dealt by the meteor impact begins at 40 – 50 damage, and increases by 12 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 268 – 278 damage at level 20. The damage dealt by the flames begins at 16 – 21 damage per second, and increases by 7 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 150 – 154 damage at level 20.

Fire Mastery (available at character level 30)

Fire Mastery acts to boost the damage done by all the fire-based spells in your arsenal, making it an easy choice for lots and lots of points, especially if you use a wide variety of skills. The most benefit comes from the first few Skill Points, however, so you might not want to go farther than 7 or 8 deep.

The additional damage begins at +18%, increases to +60% at level 5, and slowly increases after that, reaching +81% at level 10 and barely squeaking to +100% at level 20.

Hydra (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Enchant, Warmth)

Another holdover from Diablo, the Hydra spell summons a three-headed flame sprite that rapidly spits Fire Bolts at any unfriendly unit that comes within view. The damage isn't huge, but you can cast a few Hydra near each other to increase the damage potential. The best use for these guys is to place them at the end of a corridor, where they will fire at any nearby enemies, just to let you know if there's anything unfriendly there. You can also cast them in areas you can't quite reach, especially among the rivers of Act III, to let them take care of



anyone nearby. They can't be killed, though they disappear within a few moments.

The damage dealt by their Fire Bolts begins at 6 – 12 damage, and increases by 2 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 44 – 50 damage at level 20. The duration of the Hydra begins at 12 seconds, and increases by 1 second with each additional skill level.

Lightning Skills

The Lightning Skill tree is by far the most difficult one for a Sorceress to concentrate in. Most Lightning Sorceresses will have to put some Skill Points into Ice Blast or Inferno just to survive Act I, as the Lightning Tree has no spells that are good for long-range attacks until Lightning at level 12, and even that isn't very good. Lightning and Chain Lightning can deal a lot of damage, but since their minimum damage never increases above 1 hit point, they are just as likely to barely scratch an enemy as they are to kill him outright. Thunder Storm, at level 24, is the only real powerhouse skill among the bunch, but it comes too late to really make this tree a true option as a specialty. Of course, multiplayer Sorceresses will be able to tag along behind more powerful characters until they gain enough experience to access the higher-level spells, but single-player, Lightning-oriented Sorceresses will have a tough time in the first two Acts. Static Field will be the only spell from this tree that all Sorceresses, no matter what tree they specialize in, should consider as a "must-have". It will be the single best tool for dispatching bosses and other tough enemies for the Sorceress class.

Charged Bolt (available at character level 1)

Charged Bolt is the earliest offensive spell in the Lightning tree, and it will be the mainstay of Lightning mages until Lightning comes along at level 12. It sends out a number of small Lightning shocks that travel across the screen until



they come into contact with an enemy, to whom they will then deliver a Lightning jolt. The number of shocks that are sent out increases with the level of the skill, but the skill suffers from the fact that the Bolts are only slightly directable. In other words, you can choose the basic direction they head in, but they weave back and forth, so they may or may not hit the enemy you want them to. Your chances, of course, increase as you get closer to the foe, but that's generally not where a Sorceress wants to be.

The casting cost for this spell starts at 3 Mana and increases by 0.5 Mana with each additional level. The damage dealt begins at 2 – 4 damage, and increases by 1 point to both minimum and maximum damage with **every other** Skill Point added, until it reaches 11 – 13 damage at level 20. The number of Bolts issued forth begins at 3, and increases by 1 with each skill level.

Static Field (available at character level 6)

Static Field is perhaps the most powerful spell the Sorceress has in her arsenal. Once you reach Nightmare and Hell difficulties, one casting of Static Field will deal more damage to your enemies than any number of Meteors that fall on their heads. This is because, no matter how tough the foe, Static Field automatically takes away one-third of their remaining life. You can cast it multiple times to reduce their health to a mere fraction of what it initially was, then switch to your most powerful spell to finish them off. The only drawback is that you have to be fairly close to the enemy for the spell to work, but most enemies will swarm near you anyway, so that shouldn't be a problem. Since it expands outward from you, you can cast it a few times, then switch to your favorite Nova spell and use that to destroy all those enemies that were getting hit by the Static Field. Combining this with Frost Nova is a good way to smash large groups of enemies that might otherwise be resurrected.

The casting cost for this spell stays at 9 Mana. The radius of effect begins at 3.3 yards and increases by 0.6 or 0.7 yards per skill level.



Telekinesis (available at character level 6)

Another holdover from the original Diablo, Telekinesis was pretty much useless in that game, and it upholds that proud tradition here. Like the original spell, Telekinesis can be used to pick up objects, open doors or chests, blow up barrels, or other actions, except from a distance away. The main usefulness of this is to open items that might be trapped, like barrels and urns, but even that isn't something you're really going to have to worry about. You can cast this on an enemy to deal a minor amount of damage to them, and stun them for a moment, but it's such a minor amount of damage, it's hard to imagine anyone ever actually using this in a combat situation.

The casting cost for this spell stays at 7 Mana. The damage dealt begins at 1 – 2 damage, and increases by 1 point to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 20 – 21 damage at level 20.

Nova (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Static Field)

Like Static Field, this spell issues forth a ring of Lightning that damages any enemies it encounters. It works well against low-level foes, but the health of enemies rises too rapidly for it to keep pace, even if you pour points into it. You'll probably want one or two points in Nova, especially if you're playing single-player, as it can affect a number of enemies at one time and deal some good damage at the same time, something that the Lightning tree lacks at early skill levels.

The casting cost for this spell starts at 15 Mana and increases by 1 Mana with each additional level. The damage dealt begins at 1 – 20 damage, and increases by 7 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 134 – 153 damage at level 20.

Lightning (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Charged Bolt)



Lightning, as the standard damage spell in this skill tree, could be worse, but it could also be a lot better. Like in the original game, it sends out a stream of Lightning in a straight line from the caster, passing through and damaging all enemies it hits. The damage range is pretty good, even at level one, but the bad part of it is the maddening inconsistency. The minimum damage is a measly 1 hit point at level 1, and it never increases. Even at level 20, when the damage range is 1 – 192, you're just as likely to deal 10 points of damage as you are to dish out 180. This makes Lightning not a real option for a workhorse spell, as the randomness of the damage makes it too unpredictable for the real tough enemies that come later on.

The casting cost for this spell starts at 8 Mana and increases by 0.5 Mana with each additional level. The damage dealt begins at 1 – 40 damage, and increases by 8 points to the maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 1 – 192 damage at level 20.

Chain Lightning (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Charged Bolt, Lightning)

The frustration that is the Lightning tree continues with Chain Lightning. Like regular Lightning, it sends a stream of electricity out toward the enemy, but this splits into five beams upon impact, damaging nearby foes as well as the original target. The minimum damage stays at 1 point, however, making this another exercise in randomness. The maximum damage increases a little faster than Lightning does, making it a better choice overall, but it's still very unpredictable.

The casting cost for this spell starts at 9 Mana and increases by 1 Mana with each additional level. The damage dealt begins at 1 – 40 damage, and increases by 10 points to the maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 1 – 230 damage at level 20.



Teleport (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Telekinesis)

One of the most useful non-combat spells available to the Sorceress, Teleport acts the same way it did in the first game, with a few minor tweaks. This time around, Teleport only works to move the Sorceress to a spot within her line of sight, but that isn't a big deal with the large, open spaces of Diablo II. It can still be used to escape a pack of monsters, or to jump over a river, or to do anything else requiring rapid movement. It's fairly expensive, but luckily the Mana requirements drop off with additional Skill Points. The cost begins at 24 Mana, and decreases by 1 point per skill level.

Thunder Storm (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Charged Bolt, Lightning, Chain Lightning, Static Field, Nova)

This spell creates a Thunder Storm that follows the Sorceress around, periodically sending a bolt of Lightning at a nearby enemy. Luckily, the damage from the Lightning is finally able to break the minimum damage barrier, which in fact jumps 10 points per skill level (and the maximum damage ain't bad, either). This is the skill that Lightning mages will wish to dump their points into once it becomes available.

The casting cost for this spell stays at 19 Mana. The damage dealt begins at 1 – 100 damage, and increases by 10 points to the minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 191 – 290 damage at level 20.

Energy Shield (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Charged Bolt, Lightning, Chain Lightning, Telekinesis, Teleport)

This very helpful skill will absorb a percentage of the damage received by the Sorceress, draining Mana instead of life for the percentage absorbed. Since most Sorceresses will have more Mana than life, this will be advantageous, but it can leave her drained of Mana fairly quickly, leaving her vulnerable. The best



way to use this skill is to combine it with a high Warmth score or lots of Mana potions. It's a far cry from the essential invulnerability that was Mana Shield in Diablo, but it's still better than nothing for the weakest class.

The percentage of damage absorbed begins at 15% and increases less rapidly as you add points to this skill, hitting 40% at level 5 and 63% at level 20. The duration of the spell begins at 144 seconds and increases by 48 seconds with each Skill Point allocated. The cost stays at 5 Mana.

Lightning Mastery (available at character level 30)

Topping off the least impressive skill tree for the Sorceress, Lightning Mastery is probably the worst of the three masteries. Instead of increasing the damage that Lightning spells do or something useful like that, Lightning Mastery instead reduces the Mana cost of all of your Lightning Spells by a certain percentage. Sure, it's useful, but since most Sorceresses will have hundreds of Mana points by the time they reach level 30, and a few points in Warmth, it won't be something you need to dump points into. A few will be nice, since it'll let you just go crazy with Chain Lightning, but the benefit does drop off as you add more points into it. The reduction in Mana costs begins at -15%, hits -40% at level 5, and reaches -63% at level 20.

Cold Skills

Cold Skills will be useful for any Sorceress, no matter what her specialty. Most of these spells will either slow the target down or freeze them completely, making them quite handy in a multiplayer situation, or when facing enemies that can be resurrected. The damage for these spells isn't quite as huge as Fire spells sometimes reach, but the freezing effect will generally be more than enough to compensate for that.

Ice Bolt (available at character level 1)



The remedial low-damage Cold Spell, Ice Bolt sends out a small, slow-moving bolt of ice that slows the target down when it hits. Put a point here, and wait for Ice Blast at level 6 to invest more Skill Points in.

The casting cost for this spell stays at 3 Mana. The damage dealt begins at 3 – 5 damage, and increases by 1 point to the minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added, until it reaches 22 – 24 damage at level 20. The duration of the slowing effect begins at 6 seconds, and increases by 1.4 seconds for each Skill Point added.

Frozen Armor (available at character level 1)

This is the first of the Armor spells designed to help protect Sorceresses in melee combat. It not only increases her Defense by a certain percentage, but also temporarily freezes any foe that makes contact with her, allowing her party members a small amount of time to dispatch the foe without having to fear a counterattack. This can be a lifesaver if you get swamped by fast enemies, like the Panther Women of Act II, freezing them long enough for you to get away to safety. Don't sink too many points into this one, though, as the superior Shiver Armor is coming along at level 12.

The casting cost for this spell stays at 7 Mana. The Defense bonus begins at 30%, and increases by 5% with each additional Skill Point. The duration of the freezing effect begins at 1.2 seconds, and increases by 0.1 seconds for each Skill Point added. The duration of the Defense bonus begins at 120 seconds, and increases by 12 seconds for each Skill Point added.

Frost Nova (available at character level 6)

Like the Nova spell for Lightning Sorceresses, this skill sends a ring of energy outward from the caster, dealing damage to all enemies it touches. In addition to damaging them, however, Frost Nova also slows the enemies down, making it an effective way to reduce the combat effectiveness of a whole bunch



of foes at one time. The slowing length is fairly substantial as well, even if the cold damage isn't going to be killing any monsters beyond Zombies and Fallen. Since the radius of effect doesn't increase with more Skill Points, and the damage is always going to be fairly low, you'll probably just want to keep it at a low skill level and use it for the slowing effect exclusively, especially when there are a number of players in the game.

The casting cost for this spell starts at 9 Mana, and increases by 2 Mana with each Skill Point. The duration of the chilling effect begins at 8 seconds, and increases by 1 second for each Skill Point added. The damage dealt begins at 2 – 4 damage, and increases by 2 points to the minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added.

Ice Blast (available at character level 6; prerequisites: Ice Bolt)

An upgraded version of Ice Bolt, Ice Blast deal more damage and freezes the target instead of merely slowing them down. While it doesn't deal much damage, the freezing effect will be quite useful against more powerful enemies that might otherwise swamp you. This and Frost Nova will be your only offensive weapons until level 18 and Glacial Spike comes along, so you'll have to add a few points here.

The casting cost for this spell starts at 6 Mana, and increases by 0.5 points with each level. The damage dealt begins at 10 damage, and increases by 7 points with each Skill Point added. The duration of the freezing effect begins at 3 seconds, and increases by 0.2 seconds for each Skill Point added.

Shiver Armor (available at character level 12; prerequisites: Frozen Armor)

Arguably the most useful of the three Ice Armors, Shiver Armor increases the Defense bonus that Frozen Armor gave, slows any enemy that damages you in melee combat, and also gives a bit of cold damage to the attacker. Most



Sorceresses will want to put a few points into this skill and keep it active all the time, since it doesn't cost very much and can last quite a long time.

The casting cost for this spell stays at 11 Mana. The Defense bonus begins at 45%, and increases by 6% with each additional Skill Point. The damage dealt begins at 6 – 8, and increases by 2 points to both the minimum and maximum with each Skill Point. The duration of the chilling effect stays at 4 seconds. The duration of the Defense bonus begins at 120 seconds, and increases by 12 seconds for each Skill Point added.

Glacial Spike (available at character level 18; prerequisites: Ice Bolt, Ice Blast)

Glacial Spike is going to be one of the most-used offensive spells for the Sorceress, coming as it will in the early portions of Act II, with a while of gameplay time before Blizzard comes along at level 24. Acting somewhat like the Freezing Arrow of the Amazon, the damage dealt is substantially more than Ice Blast, and the freezing effect spreads out from the point of impact, so that a group of enemies will all take damage and be frozen at the same time. Unfortunately, the radius of effect doesn't increase from the base 2.6 yards.

The casting cost for this spell starts at 10 Mana, and increases by 0.5 points with each level. The damage dealt begins at 16 – 24 damage, and increases by 7 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added. The duration of the freezing effect begins at 2 seconds, and increases by 0.1 seconds for each Skill Point added.

Blizzard (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Frost Nova, Ice Bolt, Ice Blast, Glacial Spike)

The most powerful spell an Ice Sorceress will have in her arsenal, casting a Blizzard will create a medium-sized torrent of hail on the target, slowing them down and dealing a large amount of cold-based damage each second it remains



in effect. You can cast as many Blizzards as Mana permits on top of each other, increasing the damage done per second, making an extremely dangerous killing zone for any foes that wander into the storm. While it doesn't freeze the enemy, Blizzard deals enough damage to generally kill them within a few seconds anyway.

The casting cost for this spell starts at 23 Mana, and increases by 1 point with each level. The damage dealt begins at 16 – 24 damage per second, and increases by 4 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added. The duration of the Blizzard begins at 4 seconds, and increases by 1 second for each Skill Point added.

Chilling Armor (available at character level 24; prerequisites: Frozen Armor, Shiver Armor)

The most advanced armor spell for an Ice mage, Chilling Armor increases the Defense rating of the caster, and also sends out an Ice Bolt in retaliation toward; any enemy that hits you with a ranged attack. The duration is a bit better than Shiver Armor at first, but increases in smaller increments. In addition, the damage dealt by the Ice Bolts are actually lower than Shiver Armor's damage, and the defensive bonus is less as well. In general, it's best to keep your points in Shiver Armor and just used a ranged attack against any enemies that like to attack from a distance.

The casting cost for this spell stays at 17 Mana. The Defense bonus begins at 45%, and increases by 5% with each additional Skill Point. The duration of the Defense bonus begins at 144 seconds, and increases by 6 seconds for each Skill Point added. The damage dealt begins at 4 – 6, and increases by 1 points to both the minimum and maximum with each Skill Point.

Frozen Orb (available at character level 30; prerequisites: Frost Nova, Ice Bolt, Ice Blast, Glacial Spike, Blizzard)



Frozen Orb, as befitting a level 30 spell, deals huge damage to a large amount of enemies all at once. While the damage potential isn't quite as huge as it is for multiple Blizzards, the ability to damage and slow so many enemies simultaneously will make Frozen Orb an excellent skill to shoot into Blizzards, or where your melee party members are taking on multiple foes. When you cast this spell, a small ball of ice travels outward from you, sending Ice Bolts in all directions. A great way to deal damage around corners and across barriers, like rivers. The damage dealt is also constrained to a very small range, so you'll know exactly how much you're going to hurt your enemies with future castings as soon as you see how much the first casting reduces their health bar.

The casting cost for this spell starts at 25 Mana, and increases by 2 points with each level. The damage dealt begins at 32 – 35 damage, and increases by 6 points to both minimum and maximum damage with each Skill Point added. The duration of the slowing effect begins at 8 seconds, and increases by 1 second for each Skill Point added.

Cold Mastery (available at character level 30)

Cold Mastery acts to reduce your opponent's resistance to Cold-based magic by a specific percentage, increasing the damage they take when you damage them with one of your spells. Of course, since this will increase the effectiveness of all of your spells, you'll want to put a few points here.

The percentage reduction in your foes' Cold resistance begins at –23% and increases less rapidly after the first few Skill Points, hitting –55% at level 5 and reaching –85% at level 20.



General Information, Hints, and Tips

This section provides, oddly enough, some general info that will help you out in your journeys through the world of Sanctuary, as well as a few tips for the old hands at Diablo II.

Repair before you Sell

In Diablo II, your main source of gold will be selling the magical items that you find on dead enemies or in treasure chests. Most items will yield a few hundred gold, some will fetch a few thousand, and some (mostly high-defense Armor, Staves, Scepters, and Wands) will even go for the maximum amount of gold for which you can sell an item, 25,000 (once you reach Nightmare difficulty). If you're looking to make the most gold from these items, you should always repair them before you sell them. Sometimes, repairing items you find on the ground can cost thousands of gold, but the rough rule of thumb is that when comparing the price of the non-repaired item to the repaired item, the difference will be twice as much as the item cost to repair (unless the repaired item hits the selling cap). So you should always pay to have your items repaired before you sell them. Of course, if you have 200,000 gold in your stash, you probably won't need to worry about it, especially in Act III, where Hralti is a bit out of the way compared to your Town Portal destination.

Difficulty Level

In the original Diablo, Nightmare and Hell difficulties were available that enhanced the toughness of the monsters, made many of them more resistant to magic effects, and provided greater rewards for treasure hunters.

Diablo II is no different. Nightmare and Hell difficulties are back, and are available in single-player and multi-player after the host of the game has beaten Diablo in Act IV. Nightmare becomes available after Normal mode is beaten, and



Hell difficulty is available once Nightmare is beaten. The main differences between Normal mode and the harder difficulties are listed below:

- Monsters are much, much tougher. They will have many times the amount of health they had when you first encountered them in Normal mode.
- Monsters drop more gold.
- Monsters give much more experience.
- Unique and Super Unique monsters are given one extra attribute, i.e. Teleportation, Stone Skin, etc., apparently at random if a Super Unique.
- The maximum amount of gold for which items can be sold is capped at 25,000 gold.
- Mercenaries available in town are tougher, with higher levels and more damage.
- You will now find “exceptional” items. These items are super-powered versions of normal-difficulty items. For example, instead of a Sash with 2 Defense, you might find a Demonhide Sash with 30 Defense (more information is given on these items below).
- When you die, instead of simply losing gold, you also lose a percentage of the experience that you gained since your last level-up (the percentage is higher on Hell difficulty than on Nightmare). You will never lose a level because of this experience loss, so try and do anything really dangerous immediately after gaining a level.
- Your resistances to Lightning, Cold, Fire and Poison are all reduced by 20% on Nightmare difficulty, and by 50% on Hell difficulty.

Nightmare and Hell are going to be where most high-level characters will be spending the majority of their time once they access them. Sad to say, Normal mode is simply not challenging enough for advanced players, and thus, few will be returning to go through it again, except maybe with multiple party members,



increasing the difficulty. The changes listed above give rise to a few unique problems, though.

Most noticeable, some skills that might have helped greatly in Normal mode will be much less helpful, to the point of worthlessness, in Nightmare and Hell. The majority of these are skills that do a set amount of damage each time they are activated. For example, the Amazon's Immolation Arrow does around 30-60 damage per second when you raise it between skill levels 5 and 10. This might decimate enemies in Acts 3 and 4 of Normal mode, but when you reach Hell mode, and there are normal monsters with thousands of hit points, it will quite obviously barely be denting them, let alone dealing enough damage to kill them. The class with the most problems in this area is the Sorceress. Since pretty much all of her skills deal damage within a certain small range, she'll have quite a bit of trouble with the more advanced monsters and their massive reserves of health. Static Field will become as important when dealing with normal foes on Hell as it was when taking out the bosses in Normal mode. Other than that, most Sorceresses will want to pick a high-damage spell, such as Thunder Storm or Frozen Orb, start packing points into it until it's maxed out, and use that almost exclusively on the harder difficulties. Even that will be mostly ineffectual when you get into Act IV on Hell mode. Indeed, guiding a Sorceress through the game on each successive difficulty level in single-player mode might be the most challenging task in Diablo II.

The other classes each have at least a few skills that will enable them to survive in the harder difficulties. The Barbarian is probably going to have the easiest time adapting, since he has very few skills that directly deal damage. Instead, most of his skills add a certain percentage to the damage he deals, making them even more effective as he adds points to Strength and gains better weaponry. What works for a Barbarian in Normal mode will probably continue to work for him as he advances on to Nightmare.



Amazons will find themselves utilizing a smaller group of their skills as they progress onto harder difficulties. Most will drift away from the direct-damage skills, and instead go for the damage modification skills like Fend and a high-level Jab. Bowazons will probably be using Multiple Shot and Strafe almost exclusively. Ice Arrow and Freezing arrow will both be at least partially necessary, as these are the only skills that let the Amazon freeze enemies, and their damage is dealt on top of the normal damage of your bow. Ice Arrow might be the preferable choice here, especially if you invest in Pierce, as it's much cheaper than Freezing Arrow and freezes the enemy for a longer duration. All types of Amazons will want to focus on the Valkryie once she becomes available at level 30, especially for single-player games. As the Valkryie skill gains points, the Valkryie gains health, deals more damage and successfully attacks more often. All Amazons will want to increase their Critical Strike and Penetrate skills to enable them to deal more damage, and strike more often. All of the passive skills will continue to affect your Amazon through Nightmare and Hell, so don't ignore them.

Necromancers are lucky in that they have a few ways to turn the power of the enemy against themselves, making them uniquely adaptable to the conditions of the battlefield. Corpse Explosion will be the single most important skill for Necromancers on harder difficulties, as its effects are based on the health of the dead monster, which of course will make it adjust perfectly to the harder enemies on Nightmare and Hell. The general strategy is to use a Fire Golem or Revived monster to attack the enemy, and then set off a Corpse Explosion chain reaction to kill the remainder. Skeletons are going to be too weak to really survive for long on the harder difficulties, so sink your points into Skeleton Mastery and Revive in order to bring back the tougher enemies to fight your foes. Amplify Damage and Iron Maiden will also be useful.

Paladins will be hard pressed to find a more useful skill than Thorns for Nightmare and Hell. Since this is directly affected by the damage your enemies



deal, it ramps up nicely as you proceed. Of course, enemies with ranged or magical attacks, including bosses like Mephisto and Diablo, will need a more proactive solution, so pump up Zeal, Fanaticism, or Conviction to increase your damage potential. You should always try and engage the enemy up close, though, to use Thorns to knock their health down. This, of course, means that you'll be taking massive amounts of damage, so higher Defense will probably be more important to a Paladin than the magical attributes of his armor.

As mentioned before, you will occasionally find "exceptional" items on harder difficulty levels. These exceptional items use the same graphics as normal versions, but will have increased damage or armor class, as appropriate, as well as increased Strength / Dexterity requirements (but sometimes decreased durability), and will sell for much more than a comparable normal item. So, instead of a Long Battle Bow, you might find a Long Siege Bow, and instead of a Great Helm, you might find a Winged Helm. Even regular, non-magical versions of these exceptional items will appear with a frequency somewhere closer to Rare items than Magical items, so they are quite difficult to come by. Magical versions of exceptional items are very scarce, and Rare versions, with 3 – 5 attributes, are almost unheard of. In addition, exceptional items are more common on Hell difficulty than on Nightmare, so you'll probably run into some more good stuff after you beat Diablo for the second time. When you do find magical exceptional items, though, they seem to have a better chance at the truly excellent attributes, so you'll sometimes find things like a Berserker's Dimensional Sword, which gives +2 to all Barbarian skills, but has a paltry five durability points. If you do find any of these awesome items, you would do well to hold on to it and try to trade it. You'll find that players of the appropriate class will often be willing to part with some great stuff if you'll let them take it off your hands.



Nightmare and Hell difficulties are where most elite Diablo II players will be spending most of their time, so you'll definitely want to plan for the increased challenge as soon as you begin playing with your character.

Gamble

As you move on to Nightmare and Hell difficulties (and even, sometimes, during the later parts of Normal mode), you'll find yourself with hundreds of thousands of gold pieces sitting in your stash and on your person. Instead of letting this money sit in your inventory, you should gamble it away at a merchant that lets you do so (Gheed in Act I, Elzix in Act II, Alkor in Act III, and Jamella in Act IV all let you gamble). As your character gains levels, the quality of merchandise that you can find increases, but unfortunately, no exceptional items seem to be up for sale. Of course, you can still try and fit that inventory slot that doesn't have a really good item, and you'll always be able to gamble on rings and amulets, which have no exceptional counterparts. You'll still strike out with junk more often than you find really good stuff, but it's better than having a ton of gold with no use for it (there is no interest rate on the stuff, anyway).

Visit the Moo Moo Farm

Ah, the cows. As hinted at by an early April Fool's Day screenshot of Diablo II last year, there is a secret Cow level in the game, available after you've beaten Diablo for the first time. Once you've completed the game, start up a new game on the Normal difficulty and move back to Act I. Once you're in the Rogue Encampment, place Wirt's Leg and a Tome of Town Portal into the Horadric Cube and Transmute them both. If you don't have Wirt's Leg, you can head over to Tristram and grab one from his body. Once you transmute those two items, a red portal will open up to the Secret Cow Level.



There will be a few hundred of these cows in the Moo Moo Farm, so be careful as you run around.

The Moo Moo Farm is filled with hundreds and hundreds of Hell Bovines, a level 28 monster that wields a polearm. Their range in melee combat is exceptional and the damage they do is also huge. There are an incredible number of them, as well, so you'll have to be careful as you run through the area. Amazons and Sorceresses will have a fairly easy time with the cows, simply by running around and firing area of effect spells at them (Multiple Shot, preferably combined with a Mana-stealing item, works extremely well for the Amazon). The main thing to be careful of is to not let the cows swarm around you. If they manage to box you in, they'll start swinging away and you'll be killed in just a few moments. Luckily, they're fairly slow, so this should be avoidable for most



characters. Paladins and Barbarians will have a bit more trouble than the long-range classes, simply because there are so many foes here. You'll have to proceed very slowly, attracting the attention of a few cows at a time, then dispatch them and move on. It's a bit laborious, so you might want to team up with a friend that will share the rewards with you.

And what rewards there are. The main point of heading to the Moo Moo Farm, besides the huge amounts of experience and dropped items (including a dozen or so gems), is to kill the Cow King, a Lightning Enchanted Super Unique monster hidden in the fort-like structure somewhere in the level. Like all Uniques, his name is in gold, and he has a pack of minions hanging around, so he shouldn't be too hard to spot once you find him. He's tough, but once he dies, he'll drop a Rare or Unique item. The quality of the Rare varies a bit, but they'll mostly be high-level items like rings and plated armor that any character will find useful. You'll even occasionally find some really exceptional stuff, like Rare Ancient Armor, or even some of the better Uniques, like the Silks of the Victor Ancient Armor that gives +1 to all skill levels for the user, or the Blastbark, a unique Long War Bow that gives +1 to all skill levels for the Amazon. Unfortunately, since the 1.02 patch, you can no longer visit the Moo Moo Farm multiple times, so you'll only get one shot at a good rare.

Items and Equipment

The pursuit of treasure is, of course, the main motivation for players of Diablo II. The search for ever more powerful equipment will keep most players busy even after they've completed the game on all the difficulty levels. Each character will have the ability to pick up and wear 9 or 10 pieces of equipment: a helmet, boots, a belt, gloves, a suit of armor, two rings, one amulet, a weapon, and perhaps a shield (or another weapon, in the case of a Barbarian). There are a few different types of equipment that you'll encounter in your travels.



The longer you keep your character alive, the better the equipment you find will be.

Standard Equipment: Like an awkward formality before you move on to the “real thing”, standard equipment is normal and non-magical. You’ll probably wear some of this for most of Act I, but before long, you’ll replace all of your standard equipment with magical items. Standard equipment comes in a variety of qualities, from Cracked and Damaged items that are significantly worse than normal, to Superior items, with enhanced attributes.

Socketable Equipment: These items show up with dim gray names when you hover your mouse over them. Socketable items allow you to insert gems into them, enhancing them with various magical attributes. Whether or not you ever



actually use gems will depend on the quality of the magical items you find. Gems can make powerful equipment, but by the time you increase their quality enough to really make some good stuff, you will probably have already found better magical or rare items. Only weapons, helmets and shields are socketable. You can find socketable items on dead monsters, in treasure chests, or from any merchant that sells armaments.

Magical Items: The names of magical items are displayed in blue when you hover your mouse over them. You have to identify these items, either by using a Scroll of Identify or talking to Cain, before you can tell exactly what properties the item has, however. There are a large number of possible magical attributes, from the relatively mundane, to the powerful and exotic attributes that will make for some impressive items. Magical items generally only have one or two attributes, however. Magical items will generally sell for a nice amount of gold in town, especially armor.

Rare Items: Rare items are essentially the same as magical items, but they will have more magical attributes, between three and five, and their names are displayed in yellow. Like magical items, you'll need to identify the object before you can tell exactly what it does. As the name implies, Rare items are fairly difficult to come by. They're dropped randomly, but you'll probably see 75 – 100 magical items dropped by enemies before one drops a rare item. Diablo drops a Rare item the first time you kill him on each difficulty level, and the Cow King drops a rare each time you kill him as well. High-level characters are probably going to outfit themselves exclusively with rare items, so be on the lookout for them, especially in the later Acts, where you can find rare versions of better items.



Set Items: The names of Set items are given in green. These items are fairly powerful unique tools by themselves, but when you can complete a full set of 3 – 6 items, there is an added bonus applied to your character. The number of items and their names will be shown when you find one of the items, so you can decide whether or not you want to spend the time trading around trying to complete the set. You can use these items piecemeal, i.e. you don't have to have the entire set to use just one of the items if you really like it. The drawback to these sets is that it can take a long time to trade for the complete set, and the benefits are sometimes not worth it. Most players will just want to use these items as they find them, if they're worth it, and not attempt to complete the entire set.

Unique Items: Unique items are one-of-a-kind items, pre-made by Blizzard and dropped extremely rarely by monsters and treasure chests. Some of these are quite powerful, and some of them are not, but all are interesting in their own way. There are around 150 distinct Unique items in the game, but most characters won't see more than a dozen or so dropped by enemies throughout their entire life (of course, if you play a heck of a lot, you'll see more). Since these items are pre-made, they will sometimes have special attributes not seen on magical or rare items, like a Piercing attack for bows (where the arrows automatically pass through the enemy when they hit) or a chance for Open Wounds with some axes (where the monster will slowly bleed to death). Like all item varieties, some Uniques are fairly weak, while some are amazingly powerful, like the Silks of the Victor Ancient Armor and the Stone of Jordan ring, and are highly prized and sought-after on Battle.net.



Bestiary

You're going to see hundreds of distinct enemies while journeying through the world of Diablo II. To maximize their art resources, Blizzard utilizes what is known as a "palette shift" to recycle enemy designs as you proceed through the game, making "new" enemies without having to create a completely new monster. For example, in Act I, you encounter the red-skinned Fallen very early on, while later on in the act, you run into blue Carvers, gold Devilkin, and black Dark Ones, all based on the same monster archetype. The behavior of all of these monsters is generally the same, but their hit points and attack damage increase as you move along. Here, we've grouped these monsters together by the name of the first type that you encounter, if a better, better-known name isn't available. Also included is the level of the monster. Your foes' level isn't tremendously important knowledge when it comes to gameplay, but it can help you see how likely you are to hit a certain type of enemy (by hovering over your Attack Rating on the Character screen). The levels given are for Normal difficulty; add 25 to these numbers if you're playing on Nightmare, and 50 (!) to them if you're playing on Hell. In general, for the best amount of experience and chance of actually hitting the enemy, you'll want to be fighting opponents that are no more than five levels higher or lower than your character. If you charge into Nightmare mode with a level 25 character, you're going to find it pretty tough to even hit the enemies, let alone kill them.

The following descriptions are for normal, run-of-the-mill enemies. Descriptions of Champion, Unique, and Super Unique monsters follows.

Normal Monsters

Fallen Ones

These goblinessque little imps generally attack in smallish packs of five to seven, though occasionally you'll run across smaller or larger groups. Reappearing from the first Diablo, the Fallen retain their distinctive combat



strategy. In other words, they'll attempt to swamp you on all sides, only to become frightened and run when you strike down an enemy in the area, and then return to give you another go, all while crying out the names of their heroes to summon a bit of courage. (You can actually find Rakanishu and Bishibosh running around in Act I. Their deaths will no doubt serve as a stunning blow to the Fallen morale.) This running motion can make them frustrating to deal with for melee characters, as you'll often have to track down each one individually before you can kill them all. You can always stand in one spot and let them run toward you, but you'll usually have to go through several cycles of running in and out before they're all dead. Characters with ranged attacks won't have much of a problem with Fallen, as they can pick them off as they run.

Complicating matters are the Fallen Shamen. These leaders are capable of reviving dead Fallen, as well as shooting a Fire Bolt at you when you're nearby (their range is around three quarters of a screen). Since revived creatures yield no experience, gold, or items when you re-kill them, you should target the Shamen before you begin to dispatch the Fallen soldiers. While the normal Fallen will occasionally have torches, the Shamen will always be light sources, making them fairly easy to spot when it's dark (they'll also cast a distinct purple glow when encountered underground).



Everyone loves the Fallen!

Name	Level	Act
Fallen	1	I
Fallen Shaman	2	I
Carver	5	I
Carver Shaman	6	I
Devilkin	7	I
Devilkin Shaman	9	I
Dark One	10	I
Dark One Shaman	11	I
Warped One	26	III
Warped One Shaman	27	III



Spike Fiends

Fun creatures that everyone remembers from the Stress Test, Quill Rats and their ilk will notice you from up to two screens away and fire quills at you. As you meet up with more advanced versions, the number of quills shot increases, as does the damage inflicted. Needless to say, you'll want to close with these vermin quickly and eliminate them before they can overwhelm you. Not very dangerous individually, but in large groups (such as encountered in the Inner Cloister of Act I), they can be deadly.

Name	Level	Act
Quill Rats	1	I
Spike Fiend	5	I
Thorn Beast	8	I
Razor Spine	9	I
Jungle Urchin	18	III

Zombies

The dark forces at work in the world aren't content with meddling with the living; they also reach beneath the earth to fill their armies with undead abominations. The many forms of Zombies are a harsh reminder of Diablo's power. These foes are the reanimated form of the recently deceased (many of whom were undoubtedly killed by Diablo's minions, adding insult to injury). Slow, shambling creatures, zombies will often ignore you until you attack them, or pass close enough to be seen by their rotting eyes. When they do attack you, they'll increase their speed a slight amount, but they'll still be a fairly slow opponent. Since they attack by mauling you with their arms, you shouldn't have a problem avoiding them if you just want to run past. Like all undead, blunt instruments work well against Zombies. Also like other undead, Poison has very little effect on Zombies.



Name	Level	Act
Zombie	1	I
Hungry Dead	2	I
Ghoul	12	I
Plague Bearer	17	II
Drowned Carcass	22	III

Notes: The Plague Bearers in Act II will transmit poison, in addition to their normal melee attack.

Skeletons

Helping you live out your Jason and the Argonauts fantasies, Skeletons will generally attack in smallish groups of three to five enemies, with a variety of weapons and sometimes shields. While they're quicker than Zombies, their maximum footspeed is still slow enough to allow you to easily avoid them if you wish. Their brittle bones make them especially susceptible to damage from blunt weapons, such as maces and clubs. They're fearless, so they attack until dead, without retreating. Like Zombies, these are resistant to Poison.

Name	Level	Act
Skeleton	2	I and II
Returned	6	I and II
Bone Warrior	7	I and II
Burning Dead	13	II
Horror	14	II and III



Notes: The Burning Dead are enchanted with fire magic, lending extra damage to their attacks and making them resistant to fire in return. Horrors give you the same problem, except they're enchanted with Lightning.

Skeleton Archers

Not content to chop you to ribbons, many Skeletons find bows and shoot at you from afar. As usual with Skeletons, your best bet is to use a mace or other blunt weapon to make quick work of them.



You can expect to see about a million skeletons during the lifetime of any given character.

Name	Level	Act
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Skeleton Archer	5	I
Returned Archer	8	I
Bone Archer	9	I
Burning Dead Archer	13	II
Horror Archer	18	II

Notes: Burning Dead and Horror Archers, fitting with the theme of those two subspecies, are imbued with burning arrows and Lightning arrows, respectively.

Skeleton Mages

First encountered in the Tamoe Highlands of Act I, Skeleton Mages will be your constant nemesis through Acts I and II. Each type represents a different element, with Returned Mages sending out Poison, Bone Mages having Cold magic, Burning Dead Mages sending out Fire magic, and Horror mages coming in random flavors, including Lightning.

Name	Level	Act
Returned Mage	8	I and II
Bone Mage	10	I and II
Burning Dead Mage	14	II
Horror Mage	17	II

Wendigos

These massive beasts are slow, but will pummel you with a powerful melee attack if you get too close. Like Zombies, they often shamble along toward you until they either reach you, or you hit them with a ranged weapon, in which case they'll become enraged and rapidly close the distance to you. They have a fairly slow rate of attack, but low-level characters are warned not to let these beasties surround them, as they can quickly overwhelm unprepared adventurers.



Wendigos often travel in packs, so be careful that you aren't surrounded.

Name	Level	Act
Gargantuan Beasts	2	I
Brute	5	I
Yeti	9	I
Crusher	19	II
Wailing Beasts	23	III



Blood Hawks

These little birdies are encountered quite a bit in the overland sections of Act 1, both in stand-alone groups and as spawn of Nests. The Nests will periodically spit out more Hawks when you encounter them. Unfortunately, you gain no experience from killing any of these spawned enemies, so it's best to go after the Nest first, since they're not very tough. As far as the Hawks themselves go, they're not very difficult to kill. They'll generally charge at you from off the screen, make a single attack, then float around until they're in position to charge at you again. When they're floating around, you can give them one good whack to dispatch them.

Name	Level	Act
Foul Crow	4	I
Foul Crow Nest	3	I
Blood Hawk	6	I
Blood Hawk Nest	8	I
Black Raptor	16	II
Black Raptor Nest	15	II
Cloud Stalker	22	III
Cloud Stalker Nest	22	III

Corrupted Rogues

Victims of Andarial's demonic corruption, these once-virtuous Rogues now seek to further the will of their dark makers. They're quite adept at melee combat, and can give quite a chase if you attempt to run away. Their footspeed is excellent, and they'll often rush in to face an opponent, slowing down warily for the last few steps. They come in a wide variety, and generally either favor close-range combat with weapons like axes or maces, long-range combat with spears, or to attack with bows from a distance away.



Name	Level	Act
Dark Hunter	2	I
Dark Spearwoman	2	I
Dark Ranger	4	I
Vile Hunter	5	I
Vile Lancer	5	I
Vile Archer	5	I
Dark Stalker	8	I
Dark Lancer	8	I
Dark Archer	7	I
Black Rogue	9	I
Black Lancer	9	I
Black Archer	10	I
Flesh Hunter	23	III
Flesh Lancer	24	III
Flesh Archer	24	III

Goatmen

Goatmen are quite powerful and quite quick on their toes, as well. If you let them take a few swings at you, you'll notice your health going down quite rapidly. Luckily, they stick to melee combat and have no ranged attack (though the Hell Clan appears to use fairly long-range polearms), so you should be able to pick them off from a distance if that's your thing.

Name	Level	Act
Moon Clan	4	I
Night Clan	6	I



Blood Clan	7	I
Death Clan	10	I
Hell Clan	19	II

Hell Hounds

The various types of Hell Hounds throughout the game all act in a similar fashion. They'll usually come right up to you when you first encounter them and attempt to take you down with their biting attack. After you strike them, they'll back off a bit, then turn and start to fire their Lightning Ball attack from a distance. They'll also use their ranged attack if you play hard to get and run away, so go ahead and take them out as soon as they get close to you.

Name	Level	Act
Misshapen	5	I
Disfigured	8	I
Tainted	11	I
Afflicted	12	II
Damned	27	IV

Spiders

Fairly standard melee fighters, Spiders have a nice death animation where they kind of pop open, spilling their insides all over the place. If you injure them, they'll often retreat, leaving a gooey trail behind them, slowing your character and making it difficult to follow. They're not incredibly tough or fast, so you probably won't have too many problems with them. The Poison Spinners of Act III will infect you with poison if they hit you, though, so stay away.

Name	Level	Act
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Arach	11	I
Poison Spinner	21	III
Flame Spider	22	III
Spider Magus	23	III

Fetish

These oddly named little guys will prove to be one of the most annoying enemies in Act III, though they make a brief appearance toward the end of Act I as well. They generally try to swarm you, charging in and surrounding you, stabbing frequently with their knives. Some of them hang back and attack with blow guns (these are still named the same as the knife-wielders, though). Some kind of close-range area effect spell is advantageous in controlling these guys, such as the Barbarian's Howl, or any of the Sorceress' Nova spells. You'll also encounter a number of undead varieties of these little men that attack in the same manner.

In addition to the regular warrior varieties, there are also a few Shaman for the various Fetish clans. These act similarly to Fallen Shaman, but possess a devastating Inferno breath that will singe your hair if you get too close. Once you "kill" a Fetish Shaman, the little Fetish that was holding the other guy on his shoulders will attack you. Very cool animations for them.

Name	Level	Act
Rat Man	10	I
Rat Man Shaman	11	I
Fetish	21	III
Fetish Shaman	22	III
Flayer	22	III
Flayer Shaman	23	III



Soul Killer	23	III
Soul Killer Shaman	24	III
Stygian Doll	24	III
Stygian Doll Shaman	24	III
Undead Fetish	21	III
Undead Flayer	22	III
Undead Soul Killer	23	III
Undead Stygian Doll	24	III

Vampire Lords

Ugh. Grunts of disgust are about all you can really use to respond to the mention of the various Vampire Lords in Diablo II. These spell-casting wizards will use a variety of fire-based spells on you, and whenever they deal damage, they'll gain life as well. They are surprisingly hardy for wizards, too, so you'll need to deal quite a bit of damage to send them back to the underworld. As with any fire-based enemy, fire resistance will be crucial when dealing with these guys, even more so when you begin to encounter the Ghoul Lords in Act II, which will often cast Fire Walls under you if you stand still for too long. The more advanced Blood Lords and Dark Lords in Act III will even be capable of casting Meteors on you, making them incredibly aggravating, especially when they hide behind melee enemies. Luckily, they often retreat after taking 75% or so of their total damage capacity, usually attempting to hide in a corner. Their distinctive glow makes it impossible for them to hide for long, though.

Name	Level	Act
Banished	12	I
Ghoul Lord	19	II
Night Lord	23	III



Dark Lord	24	III
Blood Lord	25	III

Wraiths

Wraiths are wispy little guys that float about, closing in on characters and attacking from a short distance. Though they appear to be insubstantial, they can actually take quite a bit of damage if you're not using magic against them, as they're resistant to physical attacks. In addition to a minor amount of health, they'll also drain your Mana when they connect with you. Since Wraiths are noncorporeal, they will often stack on each other, resulting in a large group of enemies occupying essentially the same space, making area effect spells particularly useful against them. Don't spare the magic against them, as they'll probably suck you dry of Mana if you let them get too close.

Name	Level	Act
Ghost	7	I
Wraith	10	I
Specter	19	II
Apparition	20	II
Dark Shape	22	III

Sand Raiders

While they might carry four swords in four different arms, it doesn't seem to do the Sand Raiders much good, as they're too coquettish to really come in and attack. Instead, they seem to enjoy walking around your character, as if they're sizing you up, only to wade in timidly after a few seconds. Though they're usually encountered in packs, they seem to generally attack in waves, with one or two coming in, then another couple, then a few more, until they're all dead.



They don't appear to be too much of a threat, though the differing varieties offer either a fire or cold-based attack, so be cautious.

Name	Level	Act
Sand Raider	13	II
Marauder	17	II
Invader	18	II
Infidel	24	III
Assailant	26	III

Mummies

Mummies don't possess an incredible amount of power, being reanimated corpses as they are, but they do sprout a cloud of poison gas when they die, similar to the poison trap some Urns and treasure chests in Act II have (they even give off clouds of poison if you use an ice attack to smash their bodies). Amazons (except for Spearazons) and Sorceresses won't have a problem avoiding this, and Necromancers won't have to worry about it if you use a minion to do the killing, but Paladins and Barbarians are going to find themselves being hit by this (fairly weak) poison more than once. The best way to deal with it is to hold down the shift key as you attack, which will prevent you from walking over the body if you're the "frantic click until they die" type. The cloud won't hit you unless you actually move after they die, so you don't have to worry about it as long as you stand still. Just wait for a couple of seconds until the cloud dies out, and then move on, or try and find a path around it.

Also, it's worth pointing out that during your adventures in the tombs of Act II, you'll come across a few Mummy Sarcophagi. These creature generators will issue forth a number of Mummies, but only while you actually stay within a screen's distance or so of the Sarcophagus. Like the Foul Crow nests, you get zero experience from Mummies that pop out of the Sarcophagi, so either take out



the Sarcophagi first, or just leave it alone and run away. If you stick around long enough, the Sarcophagi will crumble on its own, but that won't happen until 10-15 Mummies have come out, so it's best to just leave.

Name	Level	Act
Dried Corpse	13	II
Decayed	15	II
Embalmed	18	II
Preserved Dead	23	II and III
Cadaver	25	III

Greater Mummies

Oh, man. The most annoying enemies in Diablo II by far, the Greater Mummies are first encountered in the form of the Super Unique Radament in the Sewers beneath Lut Gholein. Unfortunately, they appear all throughout the various tomb locations in Act II and have a small cameo appearance in the Sewers beneath Kurast in Act III. Not only do they possess a poisonous breath attack that's pretty much unavoidable if you have to use melee combat against them, they're also capable of sending bizarre, shimmering balls of energy out over about a 1.5 screen range. Their claim to fame, however, is their ability to resurrect and heal any undead enemies in their area. In the context of Act II, this will include Mummies, Skeletons, and Apparitions. It's much quicker than the resurrection abilities of a Fallen Shaman, though: if you wipe out an entire group of 20 Skeletons near a couple of Unravellers, and run away to restore some health or regroup, the Unravellers will be able to resurrect the entire group within 30 seconds or so. Of course, when larger groups of Mummies are encountered concurrently, the problem is multiplied, making it impossible to really deal with the hordes until you dispatch the Greater Mummies. This can make for some incredibly frustrating experiences. In the various Tombs of Tal Rasha, for



instance, it's quite common for melee characters to become trapped in doorways, fighting off a horde of Skeletons that regenerate faster than they can be killed. And when you encounter a Unique Greater Mummy and a horde of his minions, along with 30 or 40 Skeletons? Let's just say you better be packing some kind of ice spell to smash the skeletons so they don't come back to life.

Seriously, though, if you have problems with Greater Mummies in the tombs, keep in mind that the Skeletons aren't tied to them the way Minions are tied to their Unique masters. They can be lured away and dispatched beyond the range of the Greater Mummies' resurrection ability (between a screen and a half and two screens worth of distance). This is probably the best way for Barbarians to deal with them, unless you can Leap Attack into the fray and dispatch the Greater Mummies, and then deal with the horde of Undead. Either way, they're quite nasty. Just wait until you encounter them on Nightmare difficulty.

Name	Level	Act
Hollow One	15	II
Guardian	18	II
Unraveller	20	II
Horadrim Ancient	23	III

Leapers

These little guys love to jump around and swarm characters passing through their territory. They're hard to hit, but don't deal an incredible amount of damage. They're mostly just annoying, especially when you're dealing with a group of Huntresses that are throwing spears against you. Anything that can deal damage without needing to target is useful here, from the Amazon's Strafe skill to the Sorceress' Nova spells, will be useful. Sand Leapers back up each time you hit them, so attacking them with a sword or other short-range weapon will be



difficult at best. Barbarians might want to try a Taunt to lure them into fighting range.

Name	Level	Act
Sand Leaper	14	II
Cave Leaper	15	II
Tomb Creeper	17	II
Tree Lurker	22	III
Cliff Lurker	27	IV

Saber Cats

These bizarre humanoids are probably the fastest enemies you'll face off with in Diablo II. Well, the melee variants are; the spear-throwing versions seem to take a more laid-back approach. There's nothing subtle about the melee Cats; they close in and swarm you before you can register their approach. There's no outrunning these ladies, as they will be more than able to run you down, unless perhaps if you have boots that give you the Fastest Run/Walk attribute. If you pause for even a moment, they'll instantly surround you and start pounding away, so stick to a hit and run approach if you're using a ranged weapon. They can't take a lot of damage, though, so Barbarians or Paladins will be able to take them out with Double Swing or Zeal fairly easily.

The spear-throwing variants of the Saber Cats, as mentioned, are fairly slow on their feet. They tend to spread out in a circle around your character if you allow them to, throwing spears from the sidelines while the melee Cats attack you. They're quite accurate with their spears; if you don't actively dodge them, you'll almost definitely take damage. Some of them even use poison or exploding potions!

Name	Level	Act
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Huntress	14	II
Slinger	14	II
Saber Cat	15	II
Spear Cat	15	II
Night Tiger	17	II
Night Slinger	17	II
Hell Cat	19	II
Hell Slinger	19	II

Vulture Demons

Vultures are fairly slow little beasts that crawl through the deserts of Act II and the wilderness of Act III, traveling in small groups. They can fly, though, which allows them to sometimes bypass obstacles that other enemies wouldn't be able to (Bone Walls, for instance). If you stand still, they'll fly above you, then land next to you and attack. While they might look fragile, they can attack very rapidly, and if you take them on before you're ready, you can find yourself in a stun-lock situation, where they hit you twice before you can recover from the first blow, making any kind of reaction, whether a counterattack or escape, impossible. They don't stop at two blows, though, obviously. Even a single one of these birds can take out a poorly armored adventurer, and a pack that manages to circle their target can quickly wear down even the mightiest Barbarian. The best defense is to simply stay away from them if possible, or beef up your armor so their chance of hitting you is fairly low. The Barbarian can also use his Concentrate skill to overcome the stunning effects of their blows.



These vulture demons are much more dangerous than they look, so keep your distance.

Name	Level	Act
Carrion Bird	14	II
Undead Scavenger	15	II
Hell Buzzard	22	III
Winged Nightmare	23	III

Swarms

These masses of insects are fairly lightweight foes, though they make up for their weakness in sheer numbers, with 20 or 30 discrete swarms often grouping up. They drain your stamina when they connect, but that won't be a big



deal for most characters, as stamina recovers fairly quickly. The best bet for melee characters is to take them on a few at a time, dispatching those nearest to you, then backing up a bit and letting a few more approach. If you have any minions, let them move out ahead and shoot the enemies from afar. Like Ghosts, they will often occupy the same space at the same time, making them juicy targets for area effect skills.



The Swarms won't be incredibly dangerous individually, but in large numbers, they can be overwhelming.

Name	Level	Act
Itchies	16	II
Black Locusts	17	II



Plague Bugs	21	II
Hell Swarm	22	III

Sand Maggots

Sand Maggots are mostly found in the desert areas of Act II, but they are also encountered in certain sections of Acts III and IV. They attack by spitting poison at you from a distance, while a horde of their young swarms around you, attacking at short range. Occasionally, when they take a lot of damage, they'll burrow underneath the ground, only to pop up nearby a few seconds later. They also lay eggs that will pop out four or five Maggot Young after 20 or 30 seconds of gestation. You can, of course, run over and attack the eggs to prevent this from occurring.

Name	Level	Act
Sand Maggot	16	II
Rock Worm	17	II
Devourer	19	II
Giant Lamprey	21	III
Blood Maggot	27	IV

Ape Beasts

These huge monkeys only possess a melee attack, so you don't have to worry about them if you're firing at them from across a river. They don't react well to pain, so once you knock 75% or thereabouts of their health away, they'll run away from you.

Name	Level	Act
Dune Beast	18	II



Jungle Hunter	21	III
Doom Ape	22	III
Temple Guard	24	III

Viper

The various versions of the Viper are mostly found throughout Act II, though the Serpent Magus is encountered in Act III. These quick foes mostly attack with their swords in melee combat, though they also have a freezing attack that can act over a small distance. They're generally only dangerous in large numbers, so as long as you can take them out as you encounter them, you should be fine.

Name	Level	Act
Tomb Viper	11	II
Claw Viper	15	II
Salamander	18	II
Pit Viper	22	II
Serpent Magus	24	III

Scarab Demons

Yikes. Scarab Demons are mostly confined to Act II, thankfully. They're not extremely tough offensively or defensively, but they do emit electrical sparks when they're damaged, so you'll definitely have to stay away from them if at all possible. If you can throw a minion at them, you should be able to avoid the sparks as long as you stay about three-quarters of a screen away, and attack from a distance.

Name	Level	Act
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Dung Soldier	14	II
Death Beetle	16	II
Scarab	17	II
Steel Scarab	19	II
Bone Scarab	24	III

Bats

Bats are fairly low-power enemies that won't give you many problems. They attack with electrical shocks, though, so you might want to stay away from them if possible. They can also fly, so you won't be able to shoot at them from across the water in the Sewers, for instance, without them coming over and attacking you.

Name	Level	Act
Desert Wing	15	II
Fiend	19	III
Gloom Bat	22	III
Blood Diver	24	III
Dark Familiar	27	IV

Blunderbore

Blunderbores are possibly the single largest enemies you'll be facing off with in Diablo II, with the exception of the bosses. These huge beasts attack with large clubs, and combine the Barbarian's Bash and Stun skills into one, often knocking you back and stunning you at the same time. The stun effect doesn't last very long, so it's not something to worry too much about, but at the same time, the amount of damage they can do should be motivation enough to avoid them or take them out quickly. Predictably enough, they're fairly slow, though the Urdars in Act IV can be somewhat sprightly.



Name	Level	Act
Blunderbore	18	II
Gorebelly	20	II
Mauler	25	II
Urdar	32	IV

Frog

Frogs are nasties that pop up quite frequently during the outdoor areas of Act III. They'll spit Fire Bolts from a distance, making them quite annoying, especially when you're surrounded by Flayers. The most interesting thing about them is the way that they can hide under the water, only to pop up when you approach.

Name	Level	Act
Swamp Dweller	21	III
Bog Creature	22	III
Slime Prince	24	III

Mosquito Demons

These little guys never seem to materialize into much of a threat. Like a more advanced Insect Swarm, they'll suck your stamina when they hit you, but they'll also steal your Mana. Fortunately, they are easily dispatched. You'll sometimes run across Sucker Nests, which will spit out Suckers from time to time.

Name	Level	Act
Sucker	21	III



Sucker Nest	6	III
Feeder	23	III
Feeder Nest	9	III

Zakarumite

These fanatical warriors are only encountered during the Lower Kurast – Travincal sequence in Act III. They're similar to an advanced Goat Warrior, with their polearms making for a long range, and powerful melee attacks. The Zakarumite Priests that they hang out with can heal them, but not resurrect them from the dead.

Name	Level	Act
Zakarumite	20	III
Faithful	22	III
Zealot	24	III

Zakarumite Priest

The Priests in the Kurast areas will make themselves known well before you can actually see them, generally by throwing a Blizzard on top of you or hitting you with Lightning. They aren't incredibly hardy enemies, and they heal Zakarumites and other Priests, so you should definitely head for these guys first when you know they're nearby.

Name	Level	Act
Sexton	22	III
Cantor	23	III
Hierophant	24	III



Willowisps

These Ghost-like creatures are one of the only monsters that can turn themselves invisible. Well, perhaps not completely invisible, but close. They will often flit about in a translucent state, giving off a barely perceptible glow. Once they materialize, they'll shoot Lightning bolts at you, damaging you as well as draining your Mana. They're quite fast, so melee classes might have a hard time tracking them down. Any kind of homing attack, like the Amazon's Guided Arrow or Strafe, will come in handy, as you can still hit the Wisps when they're invisible.

Name	Level	Act
Gloam	21	III
Swamp Ghost	23	III
Burning Soul	26	IV
Black Soul	28	IV

Thorned Hulk

The Thorned Hulks will be one of the most common enemies in Act III, so be prepared to deal with them. They're similar to the Blunderbore in that they deal quite a bit of damage, but are very slow. The best way to deal with them is to use some kind of fire-based magic, such as Immolation Arrow or Meteor. They seem to be quite weak against fire, so these should chew through them in a few hits.



If you can attack these lumbering creatures while they can't reach you, you can destroy them easily.

Name	Level	Act
Thorned Hulk	21	III
Bramble Hulk	22	III
Thrasher	23	III
Spike Fist	27	IV

Tentacle Beasts

Watchers are water-based enemies that will periodically show up in Act III, particularly in the Great Marsh, Sewers, and Travincal. The head portions of their bodies will spit poison over a great distance, more than a full screen, and their



tails will whip anyone who comes close enough to hurt them. They'll generally be close enough to land for the melee classes to attack, but if not, just avoid them. If you feel the need to attack them, go for the head first, as the tails will then disappear beneath the water.

Name	Level	Act
Water Watcher	18	III
River Stalker	20	III
Stygian Watcher	22	III

Hell Casters

These bizarre creatures from Hell possess an odd red homing missile attack that will lock on to you and drain Mana when they connect. They're not extremely tough, and their homing missiles are generally slow enough to run away from. They can be pretty annoying, though, especially when they hang back and attack while you're surrounded by Damned or Pit Lords.

Name	Level	Act
Doom Caster	25	IV
Strangler	27	IV
Storm Caster	30	IV

Regurgitator

Fun for the whole family, Regurgitators will travel around the plains of Hell, looking for corpses to consume, and then spit back at you. They'll also attack from short range with a biting attack if there aren't any dead bodies around. The same tactics you use around monsters that resurrect their minions can be used against Regurgitators; either destroy the body with a Corpse Explosion, freeze the enemies so that they don't leave corpses, or raise the bodies as Skeletons



before they can be eaten. If you can't do any of these, just keep your distance, as the corpse missile is fairly slow, making it easy to dodge if you're a ways away from the Regurgitator.

Name	Level	Act
Corpulent	24	IV
Corpse Spitter	27	IV
Maw Fiend	30	IV

Flesh Spawner

These guys act as something like the Sand Maggots of Hell (the Blood Maggots of the River of Flame notwithstanding), spitting up smaller versions of themselves quite quickly to swarm around you. Like all creature generators, you'll want to charge at these monsters and eliminate them before dealing with their brood. This can become fairly difficult when you're battling on the walkways above the River of Flame, though.

Name	Level	Act
Flesh Spawner	24	IV
Grotesque	30	IV

Hell Knight

One of the most difficult enemies in the game, Hell Knights come in three flavors that will keep you busy throughout your visits to Hell. The Doom Knights and their melee attacks won't be too hard for most characters to handle, but the more advanced versions act much like some of the earlier Skeleton Mages, each enchanted with either Ice, Fire, Lightning, or poison magic. Some are even Fighter / Mages that will cast Bone Shield on themselves, so be ready to cut down on their defenses before you can even hurt them. The Abyss and Oblivion



Knights will often use any number of the Necromancer's Curse abilities on you and your minions, most notably Amplify Damage. There's no real way to prevent this or lessen the effects, and it will also remove the effects of any time-duration shrines. You can warp back to town and talk to Jamella to get it removed if it really bothers you, but they'll usually just cast another one on you as soon as you get back, so it's best just to deal with it, or send a minion ahead while you wait for the curse to wear off. As with all undead, any blunt weapon will be handy, as well as spells like Holy Bolt.

Name	Level	Act
Doom Knight	24	IV
Abyss Knight	27	IV
Oblivion Knight	30	IV

Hell Lords

Another holdover from Diablo, Hell Lords attack with large scimitars and Inferno breath once they get close to your character. A pack of these can kill anyone very quickly, as their Inferno attack deals damage much more quickly than any potion can recover health. When you have three or four of these attacks damaging you at the same time, you'll generally be dead within seconds. The best bet for classes that have to fight up close is to try and deal with them in small groups, then regroup and fight against the next few. If you can attack from a distance, you probably won't have too many problems with these guys.

Name	Level	Act
Balrog	24	IV
Pit Lord	27	IV
Venom Lord	30	IV



Champion Monsters

As you play through Diablo II, you'll come across packs of Champion enemies. You'll be able to tell that they're Champions by the color of their skin, which will differ from other creatures of their race, usually becoming a distinctive purple or green. Their name will also display as "Fallen Shaman Champion" or whatever is applicable to your enemy. They're rarely encountered alone, and often travel in packs of as many as four or five.

Champions differ from normal monsters mostly in the amount of damage that they can take, though they are more powerful offensively. The average Champion will take about as much damage as a Unique foe of the same type of enemy, but they will not be enhanced with any special attacks like Unique monsters are. Once they die, they generally drop a large amount of gold, as well as healing potions. They also seem to have a higher chance to drop magical items, but it's not guaranteed. In areas where a certain number of Unique monsters are supposed to appear, one pack of Champions will take the place of one Unique monster.

Unique Monsters

Unique monsters will be the most reliable source of your magical items in Diablo II. These nasties are super-powered versions of a Standard monster type, with their own magical abilities and a group of Minions that are themselves more powerful than normal monsters. They come with a random magical attribute to make them even tougher (note that Uniques on Nightmare and Hell difficulties come with more than one of these), a list of which is given below. When they die, they'll almost always drop a random magical item, so be sure to pick these up to use or sell in town.

Aura Enchanted: This attribute will give them a random Aura from the Paladin's Offense Aura skill tree, with Sanctuary, Blessed Aim and Concentration being the



only three that aren't possible for a Unique to have. These auras will spread to the Unique's Minions and often to other monsters in the area.

Cold Enchanted: When a Unique is Cold Enchanted, his or her damage is supplemented by Cold magic, giving them extra damage and the ability to slow characters that they hit. They are also more resistant to Cold-based damage than normal monsters are. When these Uniques die, they give off a Frost Nova, so you'll want to keep away.

Cursed: Luckily, the only Curse that Uniques can possess is Amplify Damage. On about half of their hits, they will automatically cast an Amplify Damage curse on you, doubling the amount of damage you will take. Note that this curse will affect all friendly characters within a certain radius of the character (or minion) that is originally afflicted, so be sure to stay away from your Golem when he's taking on a Cursed Character.

Extra Fast: This gives the Unique and his Minions a doubling of their speed, as well as a slightly increased attack rate for the Unique only. For some species, this can be almost irrelevant, because they're faster than your character at their normal speed (Saber Cats) or are still slower than you, even after their speed is doubled (Zombies).

Extra Strong: Obviously, this allows the monster to deal an increased amount of damage with their normal attacks. If you are playing a weak character like the Sorceress, you might just want to stay away from these foes.

Fire Arrow: When you face off against a Unique monster from an Archer archetype, occasionally they will be imbued with Fire Arrows, from the Amazon



skill of the same name. They'll deal a little extra damage with these arrows, so be careful.

Fire Enchanted: Like Cold Enchanted enemies, Fire Enchantment gives the Unique extra damage and increased resistance to Fire damage. There is no Nova spell when they die, however.

Lightning Enchanted: Lightning Enchanted monsters gain extra damage, imbued with the power of Lightning, and increased resistance to Lightning damage.

Magic Resistant: Creatures with this skill are highly resistant to Cold, Fire, and Lightning damage.

Mana Burn: Like Wraiths and other monsters, Uniques with Mana Burn will drain a bit of your Mana with each successful shot.

Multi-Shot: Uniques with ranged attacks, from Shaman to Corrupted Archers, gain two extra missiles with this skill. If you're playing single player, you don't have to worry about this skill, as only one of the missiles will hit you.

Spectral Hit: Something of an all-in-one skill, Spectral Hit allows the enemy to imbue their attacks with Cold, Fire, Lightning, or Poison attributes at random. In addition, they deal more damage and have a better chance to hit you.

Stone Skin: As the name would indicate, monsters with Stone Skin take less damage and are harder to hit.



Teleport: Uniques that Teleport can be quite a challenge, especially on harder difficulty levels. Teleportation allows the enemy to warp to a random area of the screen when their health falls beneath a certain level. The problem is that the enemy will regain some of their lost hit points, which can heal them quite quickly, or at least prevent them from taking much more damage. On Nightmare and Hell difficulties, they will regain health more quickly than you're likely going to be able to deal it to them, so you'll probably just want to avoid these guys.

Thieving: This rare attribute allows the enemy to steal a potion from your Belt with each hit. The potion will drop onto the floor next to your character, allowing you to pick it up at the safest opportunity.

Super Uniques

Super Unique is simply a name given to those special monsters that are permanent, and will always appear at the same place in the game. Some of these are more or less unavoidable, like Hephasto the Armorer in Hell, while some are completely optional, like Bishibosh in the Cold Plains of Act 1. These guys will often be a little tougher than normal Uniques, and will generally have more than one of the magical attributes listed above, to provide an extra challenge. Like Uniques, they will always drop a magical item when beaten, so take them down when you feel the need to (or have to).



Walkthrough

As you likely already know, Diablo II is divided into 4 Acts, each of which has a 'town,' which serves as a sort of home base for the Act. The town is filled with several Non-Player Characters, or NPCs, with whom you can interact. You'll also explore numerous areas, or dungeons, in your travels; it is from these towns that you'll be assigned either five or six quests per Act; completing each quest will yield some sort of reward. Once all quests for an Act are completed, you'll move on to the following Act. In this walkthrough, we'll explain the services of each NPC, give tips for completing each quest, and detail the contents of each area.

Act 1 - Rogue Encampment

You begin your quest to destroy Diablo in the Rogue Encampment, an outpost of civilization in an otherwise overrun land. The surrounding fields used to be populated, but as the evil spread by Diablo began to engulf the land, the settlers were either destroyed by the monsters or left for greener pastures. Since the Rogue sisters stand vigilant at the gates, the Encampment is the only place where travelers can find refuge from the evil that runs rampant throughout the Western realm. The notable Non-Player Characters (NPCs) you'll encounter include:

Akara: This high priestess will fully heal your health and Mana when you speak to her, as well as removing any poison or curses that may be afflicting you. She'll be the catalyst for a couple of quests, in addition to selling a number of useful magical items, such as potions, scrolls, and staves for the three magic-oriented character classes.

Charsi: The Rogue blacksmith, Charsi will buy, sell, and repair your weaponry and armor.



Deckard Cain: Once you complete the Search for Cain quest, Cain will be available in the middle of the town to dispense wisdom on your various quests. His ability to identify any magical items that you're carrying will be tremendously useful, as it'll remove the need to constantly stock up on Identify scrolls from Akara. He'll travel with you from Act to Act, so you'll never really need to carry Identify scrolls again (though you probably should, just to identify any little things that might come along in between trips to town).

Gheed: This businessman will offer a slightly more expensive set of wares than Charsi does. He'll also allow you to gamble, which will give you an array of unidentified items to buy. They'll all be extremely expensive, and you won't know the quality of your purchase until it's complete. The only guarantee is that all of the items will be magical, but you'll often wind up spending tens of thousands of gold for a Helm of Light, or something ridiculously underpowered like that. Very rarely, though, you'll wind up with a unique, rare, or set item that will make your purchase worthwhile.

Kasha: The leader of the remaining Rogues, Kasha is initially mistrustful of you, but eventually will allow you to hire some of her Rogues to help you in your quest.

Warriv: A stranded caravan owner, Warriv needs you to cleanse the Rogue monastery in order to open his passage to Lut Gholein in the east. He doesn't provide any necessary services, but he will talk to you about the quests you undertake.



Quests:

Den of Evil: This first and easiest quest in the game is given to you when you speak to Akara for the first time. She'll explain that a cave near the Rogue Encampment has been overrun by monsters, and that she wishes for you to cleanse the cave of all the enemies within.

Before you head into the Den, run around on the Blood Moor and kill enemies until you've gained a few levels. Once you've gained some Skill Points and have increased your stats, find the entrance to the Den and head down. It'll be at the end of one of the road branches, so follow the trail until you find it (if you run into the Stony Field, head back to the fork and take the other path).

The Den of Evil is a single-level cave with 40-50 monsters in it. You'll be facing a mixture of Fallen, Zombies, and Gargantuan Beasts, so characters with ranged attacks shouldn't have too much trouble. There is one Unique monster in the Den, a Super Unique in fact, by the name of Corpsefire. He's a Zombie with the Spectral Hit attribute, but he's not going to be a real threat to you, even at this early juncture of the game.

Work your way through the cave, destroying everything you see. Sometimes, the Fallen that you encounter will flee from you in the direction you came from, so you might have to double back and eliminate any stragglers. The Quest menu will read you back the number of enemies you have left when you start to approach zero. Once all of the enemies are destroyed, light will somehow pierce the solid rock above and begin shining into the cave, and your character will say something to indicate the completion of the quest. Head back to Akara and receive your reward, a free Skill Point. Use it wisely!

In future games, the Den of Evil will become a simple cave, though Corpsefire will always be there. Oddly enough, Akara doesn't seem to have a problem with it refilling with monsters.



Sisters' Burial Grounds: After completing the Den of Evil quest, talk to Kasha to open up the second quest in this act. She'll inform you that one of Andarial's lieutenants, Blood Raven, has been spotted hanging around the Rogue cemetery, raising the dead there to serve as soldiers in some evil zombie army. She wants you to go to the cemetery and destroy Blood Raven.

To get to the cemetery, head out of town and through the Blood Moor, onto the Cold Plains. Look around for the first waypoint, which should be near the corridor leading from the Blood Moor. You might want to poke around in the Cold Plains for a bit, gaining a few levels and perhaps finding some equipment, before taking on Blood Raven, as she can be fairly tough. You can also take a dip into the Caves beneath the Cold Plains, as you'll find plenty of Unique monsters there, as well as a gold chest.

Once you're ready to take on Blood Raven, head to the Burial Grounds by following the path through the Cold Plains. This one will actually fork twice, once to reach the Caves, and once to head on to the Stony Field. Once you actually find the Burial Grounds, you'll come across a large cemetery filled with Hungry Dead and Skeletons. Blood Raven will be in the middle, surrounded by her army. She can be a fairly difficult enemy for low-level characters, as she's very fast and quite powerful. She strikes with a bow, and can imbue her arrows with a fire attack, though this only occurs with every fifth arrow or so. She'll periodically stop to raise a few more Zombies from the ground, so don't even bother dealing with them. Head straight for Blood Raven and start to attack her. If you have any kind of ranged attack, that's always helpful, since she'll often just run away when you get close enough for a melee attack. Be sure you have enough healing potions to survive, and once you deal enough damage, Blood Raven will die, taking all of her minions with her in a burst of Lightning. You can head back to town to heal up if you want to. Once you complete the quest, Kasha will let you hire Rogue warriors to fight alongside you, and she'll give you one right away for free.



Before you head on to the third quest, you'll probably want to head back to the Burial Grounds and explore the Crypt and Mausoleum nearby. Each of these will have a couple of Unique monsters within, as well as a gold chest, so you might even wish to go through a couple of times (after re-starting the game) to get a few magical items.

The Search For Cain: Talk to Akara once the Blood Raven quest is complete to activate the Cairn Stones quest. She'll ask you to travel to Tristram and see if Deckard Cain, the last of the Horadrim, is still alive.

The first step to take here is to head back to the Cold Plains waypoint and head out for the Stony Field. Once you reach the Stony Field, you'll need to find three things: the entrance to the Underground Passage, the Moldy Tome that will give you the Forgotten Tower quest, and the third waypoint for the Act. Once you reach the Underground Passage, head into it and start looking for the exit to the Dark Wood. The caves are huge, though, so you'll probably be looking for a while.

Once you reach the Dark Wood, you'll need to find the Tree of Inifuss. You'll know it when you see it; it's a large tree in the middle of a barren patch of land. Treehand Woodfist, a Super Unique Brute that sounds like he was named after an Ent, will be in the area, so be prepared to fight him and his minions. Actually, you can just avoid them if you want, but this wouldn't be Diablo if you just ran away from every scary monster, would it? Once you click on the Tree of Inifuss, a scroll will pop out. Clear a 2x2 space in your inventory for it, and pick it up. Do not warp back to town! Instead, find the waypoint somewhere in the Dark Wood and use it to get back to town. If you miss the waypoint, it's all too possible that you'll have to use the Waypoint in the Stony Field and go through the Underground Passage again.

Once you get back to town, talk to Akara. She'll decipher the scroll and tell you what order you need to hit the Cairn Stones in order to open the portal to



Tristram. Head back to the Stony Field and find the Cairn Stones. You probably saw them your first time through the area, but if not, they are a set of five large pillars, each with a glyph, set in a pentagram formation. Rakanishu will be guarding them, if you didn't take him out earlier. He's a Fallen, and of course that goes hand in hand with weakness, so you shouldn't have a problem with him. Right click on the scroll to read it, and click on the Cairn Stones in the given order to open the spooky red portal to Tristram.



This red portal brings you back to Tristram, or what's left of it.

They booby-trapped the cows. That's the first bit of information you'll need to survive in the now burning Tristram. It's changed a bit since you last visited in



Diablo, as now it's overrun by Carvers, Returned, a few Uniques, and one mean undead blacksmith by the name of Griswold. If you intend to fight Griswold, you should try to clear out an area of other enemies before you take him on, as he'll take a bit of whittling before he falls. He's fairly tough, and quite strong, but very slow, so you can run away and get him with ranged attacks without getting scratched. If you're a Barbarian or Paladin, you can probably take him on toe-to-toe. If you have an Armor Class of 100-120, he won't be able to connect very easily. And seriously, avoid clicking on the cattle corpses, as they will explode when you do.

You can find Cain in his gibbet in the clearing near the center of the map. One click on him, and he'll be released and head back to town through a portal. You can follow him through your own portal, or stick around and mop up the area. Don't miss Wirt's body in the western corner of town. Poor little guy...he wasn't so bad for a money-grubbing little kid. Click on his body to receive a couple hundred gold and Wirt's Leg, a unique club (see the Hints and Tips section for more info on this little item).

Once you get back to town, Cain will thank you for rescuing him, and start identifying items for you. Akara will give you a ring for your services. Once you speak to both of them, the quest will be over.

The Forgotten Tower: This relatively straightforward quest begins when you read the Moldy Tome in the Stony Field. Apparently, an evil countess was burned alive, and all that remains of her formerly majestic castle is a single tower. Predictably enough, you're supposed to go and kill the now risen Countess.



This book will trigger the Forgotten Tower quest.

Once you get the quest, head to the Black Marsh and start scouting around for a tower (be sure to hit the waypoint in the area before you head down). It's easy enough to spot, being the only large stone construct in the area. Once inside, you'll descend through four smallish levels before you reach the Countess on the fifth. Each of those four levels will contain either a unique monster, a group of Champions, or no monsters at all.

Once you reach the fifth level, you'll face one unique monster in the main hall of the Countess' inner sanctum. The countess herself will be hiding in the rear room, surrounded by a pack of Dark Stalkers. There are two entrances to the room, though the Countess will initiate a permanent Fire Wall on both of them as soon as she detects your presence. Her Dark Stalkers won't stray too far from



their master, but you can often lure them into one of the side rooms to dispatch them without alerting the Countess. The Countess herself won't leave her chamber, so you can use a Rogue mercenary to dispatch her minions as they run in and out of the side rooms, if you stand in the right spot. Once you've thinned out her clique, you can take her out relatively easily. As the Fire Walls probably indicated, she's Fire Enchanted, so be ready for that with some ice magic if it's available. Once she's dead, her nearby chest will pop open, spilling out a large amount of gold. Nab the booty, and search the rest of the level for the gold that's lying around in the other rooms.

Tools of The Trade: After completing the Forgotten Tower quest, speak to Charsi and she'll ask you to find a magical hammer that she left behind when she fled the monastery. The Horadric Malus is in the Barracks, one of the first indoors levels you encounter when you reach the Rogue Monastery. Head to the Black Marsh waypoint, and travel from there to the Tamoe Highlands. There's no waypoint in the Highlands, but there is a set of caves underneath it that you can explore if you wish. If not, follow the trail to the Monastery Gate. This is a short transition level that will lead into the Outer Cloister. Hit the waypoint in the middle, and find the door nearby that leads into the Barracks.

The Barracks contains a good amount of Devilkin, Bone Mages, Bone Archers, and other nasty creatures that will probably start taxing your damage-taking capacity. Survive as best you can, and start scouting around for the Smith. He'll yell something threatening when you approach ("I'll make weapons from your bones!" or the like) and start running around trying to hit you. He's Extra Strong, but as long as you don't let your health get too low, you can take him fairly easily. If you have a ranged attack, just run away from him, turn and fire, and run again. If you need to go melee, keep a full belt of health potions and run away when you start to get low on health. Keep a Town Portal open nearby in case you die, so you won't have to go through the waypoint and run back.



Once the Smith is dead, grab the Horadric Malus and head back to town. Give it to Charsi, and she'll tell you that she's able to imbue a single item for you. Once you select the "Imbue" option in Charsi's menu and place an item on her forge, she'll take it and give it a few random magical properties, making it into a Rare item while she's at it. You can't imbue any magical, rare, set, throwing, or socketed item. What does that leave you with? Well, you'll probably want to use a superior-class item of your choice, but know this: any special attributes of the item will probably be erased by Charsi when she makes it rare. For example, if you spend 20,000 gold on a staff that gives +2 to Frost Nova and Ice Blast to complement your Lightning-based Sorceress, then have Charsi imbue it, you'll probably wind up with some enhanced damage and a bonus to your attack rating, but without the spell bonuses that you paid so much for. You might want to just wait until later on in the game to use this ability, when you can imbue a more powerful item. Rare items are always going to be difficult to come by, so make sure you put this ability to good use.

Sisters to the Slaughter: Once you have completed the first five quests in Act 1, the sixth and final quest will become available. Talk to Cain in the town to activate it. Simply put, you have to find and kill Andarial in the bowels of the Rogue Monastery. Only by doing this can you open the passage to the east, allowing you to travel with Warriv and his caravan to Lut Gholein (and the second act).

Stock up on sundries before you head out to face Andarial. Warp to the last waypoint you marked, and keep on moving. If you activated this quest immediately after killing the Smith, then you'll have to head through three levels of Jail, the Inner Cloister, the Inner Cathedral, and three levels of Catacombs before finally encountering Andarial in her throne room below the Catacombs. It's a long journey, but there are three waypoints along the way, on the first level of



the Jail, in the Inner Cloister, and on the second level of the Catacombs (this last one is especially important).

Once you finally reach the fourth level of the Catacombs, your Quest button will pop up, helpfully reminding you to kill Andarial, as if you could miss the half-naked Mistress of Anguish with poison breath and four claws growing out of her back. There are two rooms that you pass through before entering Andarial's throne room. One, the stair room, is relatively empty, and should be your regrouping point during the fight. The second, something of a hellish antechamber, is filled with Dark Ones and Dark Shamen. Needless to say, make sure everything is dead before you open the door to Andarial's room.

Once it's open, fire a few ranged attacks into it if you can. This should draw out any nearby enemies, so you can deal with them before tackling Andarial. If you hear Andarial coming, get ready to fight. Don't charge into her room, as there are too many monsters around. If you have to take on a dozen Dark Ones and Andarial at the same time, you'll die quite quickly. Instead, lure Andarial into the antechamber and start attacking her. She's the easiest of the four bosses to defeat, but she'll still be fairly tough at this point in your character's development. She has three main attacks: a powerful close-range jab with her four pincers, which will poison you if it hits, a long-range poison breath attack that's difficult to avoid, and a Teeth-like poison bolt that she will periodically fling at you. She runs about as fast as your character can run, so it's difficult to do a hit-and-run attack against her, unless you're using some kind of ice attack to slow her down. The Paladin and Barbarian should just hack it out with her, keeping plenty of potions in the belt to counterattack the poison. The Amazon and Sorceress should probably try and use some kind of cold-based ranged attack. There should be plenty of Dark One bodies in the room for the Necromancer to raise, as cannon fodder Skeletons to keep her busy while he casts spells from afar. All of the character classes will want to hire a mercenary in town to give



Andariel another target before attempting to take her on. Your Rogue won't last long, but it'll generally be enough to give you time to get a few whacks in.



For the first boss you'll be facing, Andariel isn't incredibly tough.

As mentioned, Andariel isn't too tough if you've worked your character up enough. You'll probably want to get to level 12 before you take her on, just to access the level 12 skills that will come in handy. Once Andariel dies, you can scout out the rest of her lair to find a few piles of gold. Don't miss the gems that she'll drop.



Once you're back in town, talk to the various NPCs to receive their congratulations. Talk to Warriv and select the "Head East" option to travel on to Act II.

Areas:

Blood Moor

Enemies: Zombie, Quill Rat

Notes: Nothing challenging here. The Den of Evil is located somewhere in this area. After you complete the Den of Evil quest, it will revert to a regular Cave.

Den of Evil/Cave

Enemies: Zombies, Fallen, Fallen Shaman, Gargantuan Beasts

Notes: One Super Unique monster here: Corpsefire, a Zombie.

Cold Plains

Enemies: Gargantuan Beasts, Fallen, Fallen Shaman, Dark Spearwomen, Dark Hunter

Notes: One Super Unique somewhere here: Bishibosh, a Fallen Shaman. He'll raise the other Fallen Shaman nearby when you kill them, so target the green one first. There is a set of Caves somewhere in this area.

Caves

Enemies: Hungry Dead, Skeletons, Dark Rangers, Fallen

Notes: There are 2-3 uniques on the first level of the caves. There will be a few Fallen encampments around, packed with Fallen and a few Shaman, so be ready to come across a couple dozen enemies all at once. On the second level of the caves, you'll encounter another couple of uniques, as well as a gold chest.

Burial Grounds



Enemies: Hungry Dead, Skeletons

Notes: This is the area where you encounter Blood Raven. See the section "Sisters' Burial Ground" under Quests for more information. Also nearby are the entrances to the Mausoleum and Crypt, both containing Hungry Dead, Skeletons and one gold chest.

Stony Field

Enemies: Foul Crow, Foul Crow Nest, Dark Ranger, Moon Clan, Carver, Fallen, Hungry Dead

Notes: You should find the Moldy Tome somewhere in this area, as well as the entrance to the Underground Passage. The Cairn Stones are also here, with Rakanishu, a Super Unique Fallen, guarding them.

Tristram

Enemies: Returned, Returned Archer, Carver, Carver Shaman

Notes: The two important things here are Cain's Gibbet in the center of town and Wirt's Body in the eastern corner. Other than that, there will be a couple of unique monsters, as well as Griswold.

Underground Passage

Enemies: Skeleton Archers, Misshapen, Carver, Vile Hunter

Notes: The top level of this cave system is quite large. You'll be encountering a significant number of enemies with ranged attacks for the first time, so be ready for them. The second level contains up to three uniques, as well as a gold chest.

Dark Wood

Enemies: Spike Fiend, Carver, Vile Lancer, Brute



Notes: The Tree of Inifuss is somewhere here, guarded by Treehand Woodfist, a Super Unique Brute. Click on it to get the Scroll needed by Akara in the Search for Cain quest. Don't miss the waypoint.

Black Marsh

Enemies: Night Clan, Carver, Returned

Notes: The passage to the optional Hole area is somewhere in this area, as well as the Forgotten Tower.

The Hole

Enemies: Misshapen, Vile Archer, Carver, Brute

Notes: After turning on the waypoint in the Black Marsh, you can head into this system of caves to find a gold chest on the second level.

Forgotten Tower

Enemies: Blood Clan, Dark Archers, Ghosts, Dark Stalkers

Notes: There are five levels to this dungeon, the first four with one unique or group of champions each. The last level contains the Countess. Beat her to complete the Forgotten Tower quest.

Tamoe Highlands

Enemies: Thorn Beast, Dark Stalker, Returned Mage, Returned Archer, Disfigured, Devilkin

Notes: The entrance to the Monastery Gate is at the end of the path in this area. There's also yet another cave system here, the Pit.

The Pit

Enemies: Devilkin, Dark Archers

Notes: One gold chest on the second level here.



Monastery Gate

Enemies: Various

Notes: This is an extremely short area, just a bridge between the Tamoe Highlands and the Outer Cloister. It shouldn't take you more than 10 seconds to get from one end to the other.

Outer Cloister

Enemies: Devilkin, Razor Spine, Yeti

Notes: Be sure to hit the waypoint here.

The Barracks

Enemies: Devilkin, Death Clan, Bone Mage, Bone Archer, Black Rogue

Notes: The Smith, along with the Horadric Malus, is in this area.

Jail

Enemies: Bone Mage, Bone Archer, Death Clan, Wraith, Dark One, Gargoyle
Trap

Notes: There are three levels of the Jail before you emerge at the Inner Cloister. Don't miss the waypoint on the first level.

Inner Cloister/Inner Cathedral

Enemies: Bone Mages, Tainted, Dark One, Wraith, Razor Spine

Notes: The Cloister will have a waypoint, while the Cathedral will contain quite a few enemies, as well as a couple of Unique enemies.

Catacombs

Enemies: Tainted, Rat Man, Dark One, Dark Shaman, Arach, Ghoul, The Banished, Afflicted, Gargoyle Trap



Notes: Quite a few tough enemies here, particularly the Banished that will be giving you a hard time. Waypoint is on the second level here.

Andarial's Lair

Enemies: Afflicted, Dark One, Dark Shaman, Ghoul

Notes: Technically, this should be called the fourth level of the Catacombs, but "Andarial's Lair" sounds better. Predictably, you'll be facing Andarial here, as well as a horde of her hangers-on.



Act II - Lut Gholein

Act II of Diablo II takes place in Lut Gholein, a city in the desert. It's much larger than the rogue encampment, so take a few minutes at the beginning to get accustomed to the city and the NPCs that are hanging around.

Atma: The owner of a pub in Lut Gholein, Atma will give you the first quest in this act when you speak to her.

Cain: Coming along for the ride, Cain will appear in the town square to give you advice and identify items for you.

Drogan: This man acts like Akara did in the first act, selling Tomes, Scrolls, Wands, Staves, and Scepters.

Elxiz: One of the innkeepers in Lut Gholein, he'll sell weapons and armor similar to the quality you could get from Gheed in the first Act (generally of lesser quality than Fara's wares). He'll also let you gamble.

Fara: This former Paladin will heal you when you speak to her. She's the all-in-one item seller in Lut Gholein, offering a large assortment of powerful weaponry and armor, as well as acting as the town's blacksmith.

Geglash: The town drunk, Geglash can be found in Atma's pub. You never have to speak to him if you don't want to.

Griez: This mercenary captain will hire out spear-wielding soldiers when he's not busy guarding the entrance to the sewers. Unlike the Rogues in Act I, these soldiers can only utilize melee attacks, so they aren't quite as versatile



Jerhyn: The mayor of Lut Gholein, Jerhyn will welcome you to the town at the beginning of the act, and then pace around his palace worriedly until you begin the Arcane Sanctuary Quest.

Kaelan: This laconic palace guard has an epic two lines of dialogue.

Lysander: Lysander occupies the town square of Lut Gholein. He'll sell a wide variety of potions.

Meshif: This ship captain will eventually provide your transport to Act III.

Warriv: After bringing you here from the Rogue Encampment, Warriv will hang out in the city. He won't do anything important here, though, so feel free to ignore him if you wish.

Quests:

Radament's Lair: The first quest in this act is given to you when you speak to Atma, the pub owner, for the first time. Apparently, a "horrid creature" has taken up residence in the sewers beneath Lut Gholein. Since it killed Atma's son and husband, she asks if you wouldn't mind heading down there and destroying it.

The oddly sewageless Sewers can be found beneath the Trap Door near Griez, or through the door in the south end of the city. They're full of Burning Dead, Burning Dead Mages, Burning Dead Archers, and poisonous Dried Corpses, so Fire and Poison resistances will be quite handy. You might want to hire a mercenary from Griez before heading down, as it's always helpful to give the beasts another target.

As you make your way through the Sewers, be sure to completely scout the second level for the waypoint. Radament is located on the third level of the sewers, and he'll be your first encounter with a Greater Mummy, one of the most



incredibly aggravating monster types you'll be facing in Diablo II. They're essentially mini-Andarials, complete with damaging melee attack and short-range poison breath. In addition, though, they can raise any undead you happen to kill, and quite quickly, too. This ability seems to be restricted to their line of sight, so if you can lure Radament's groupies away from him and kill them somewhere else, he'll be much easier to kill by his lonesome. Of course, the easiest way to prevent him from raising them is to use a weapon or spell enchanted with Cold damage, to smash their bodies.



Radament can be very challenging, especially if you're facing him alone.



Even disregarding his minions, Radament himself is one tough customer, capable of taking plenty of damage and dishing out plenty in return. His poison breath isn't particularly venomous, but you might want to bring along some antidote potions just in case. For melee characters, your best bet is to just thin his crowd out a little bit, and then start hacking away at him. If he's preoccupied with attacking you, he won't be able to raise the dead around him, though he'll rarely engage you without having at least two or three minions around. The Barbarian's Double Swing or the Paladin's Zeal skills will be handy at engaging Radament and whatever skeletal foes that are attacking you simultaneously.

Once Radament dies, he'll drop a book that will give you a free Skill Point. Search the gold chest nearby for the Horadric Scroll and bring it to Cain.

The Horadric Staff / Tainted Sun: Once you deliver the Scroll to Cain, he'll send you on your second quest, the search for the Horadric Staff, which handily includes the complete third quest, Tainted Sun. He'll give you a shopping list of ingredients you'll need to gather in order to assemble the staff.

The first item you need is the Horadric Cube. It's located in the Halls of the Dead in the Dry Hills outside the city. Be sure to hit the waypoint in the Dry Hills before heading into the Halls, as it'll be easier to just use a Town Portal from the bottom of the Halls than walking all the way back out. In order to get to the Dry Hills, you need to head out of town and pass through the Rocky Wastes. Once you reach the Halls of the Dead, you'll have to descend through two sprawling levels of tombs before you reach the third level, where the Horadric Cube is hidden in a gold chest. There's a waypoint on the second level of the Halls you should activate if you want to avoid a real long walk back in case you die. Once you fight off all of the monsters and find the Cube, warp back to town and talk to Cain. He'll explain what the Cube is, and what it does (see the Hints and Tips section for more information on this cool little item). For now, all you really need to know is that it has a 3x4 inventory space within it, a nice little expansion from



the 2x2 space the Cube itself takes up. Opening it and closing it every time you want to add something to your inventory is a bit frustrating, however, so you might just want to keep it in your Stash for now.



The Greater Mummies that inhabit the Tombs in Act II are among the most frustrating enemies you'll encounter in the entire game.

Once you have the Cube, head back to the Dry Hills waypoint and find the exit to the Far Oasis area. Again, you'll need to find the waypoint here, as you'll soon be delving into another dungeon. Once you tag the waypoint, start looking around for the entrance to the Maggot Lair. This underground area is filled with Sand Maggots and Rock Worms, with the occasional Black Locust thrown in just to be extremely annoying. The narrow, twisty halls of this area make minion



management quite difficult, so be prepared to recast your Golems or Skeletons fairly often as you wander around. On the plus side, there are a lot of treasure chests in the various dead ends, which have a higher than average chance at containing magical items.

When you reach the third level, you're going to want to scout around for the lair of Coldworm the Burrower, a huge, immobile Sand Maggot, somewhat akin to a subterranean Jabba the Hutt. He (she?) is surrounded by regular-size Sand Maggots, and a few dozen Sand Maggot Young for good measure. Obviously, some kind of area effect skill will be advantageous here. If you are a Barbarian or Paladin, don't even bother with the minions; just go straight for Coldworm and start attacking. He doesn't have any real attacks, but there seems to be an ambient poison field in the cave that will infect you over time. Once Coldworm dies, though, the fun really starts as he explodes in a poison shower that will infect anyone in the room. Not your garden-variety poison, either; this stuff will work quickly to drain your health, so you might want to warp back to town immediately, or have some antidote potions at the ready. The speed of the poison will be increased in Nightmare and Hell difficulties, almost to the point where using a Greater Health Potion won't stop the downward swing in your little red globe of life. In these cases, especially, you should just use a Town Portal as soon as she dies, and get the heck out of there. You can also weaken Coldworm until he's almost dead, then run away and let a mercenary finish him off, but that wouldn't be very nice. The Horadric Staff is in the nearby gold chest.



Coldworm isn't incredibly difficult, but his large number of minions and the poison explosion that results from his death can combine to kill any adventurer.

Once you have the Staff, you need to get the Headpiece in the Claw Viper Temple, underneath the Valley of Snakes. Head back to the Far Oasis and search for the entrance to the Lost City area. There's a waypoint somewhere in here that you should hit. You'll notice a strange darkness falling shortly after you enter the Lost City; this marks the beginning of the Tainted Sun quest, which handily overlaps the Horadric Staff quest. Warp back to town and talk to Drognan to get more information on what could be causing the strange darkness. He'll inform you of his theory that a race of desert-dwelling snakes may have initiated an evil eclipse. Oddly enough, he's correct, so you'll have to delve into the Claw Viper Temple to put an end to the false eclipse.



Once you find the Valley of the Snakes, you'll see the entrance to the Claw Viper Temple near the center of the area. The main enemies you'll be facing here are Claw Vipers, Salamanders, and Embalmed. Once you reach the main Temple room, predictably enough filled with Claw Vipers, you'll need to click on the altar in the center of the room to break the eclipse spell, and the Viper Amulet will pop out. This is actually the headpiece to the Horadric Staff, so warp back to town and use the Cube to Transmute the Shaft and Headpiece. The Horadric Staff will appear in the Cube, and you can move on to the next Quest.



Once you destroy the Claw Viper altar, you'll find the Horadric Staff's Headpiece, and the sun will resume shining.



The Arcane Sanctuary / The Summoner: Talk to Drognan after you get the Horadric Staff put together. He'll send you on the Arcane Sanctuary quest, which overlaps with the Summoner quest, and tell you to talk to Jerhyn in front of the palace.

Once you talk to Jerhyn, he'll tell you of trouble within the palace itself. It appears as though some kind of portal has appeared deep within the palace, and foul beasts have been rising ever higher within, even reaching to the harem near the surface. He wants you to explore the area...and explore you shall.

The Harem and the Palace Cellar beneath it contain a number of enemies, including the new Blunderbore. These huge beasts can stun a character with their massive...rolling pins? Anyway, they're tough, so stay away. There are also plenty of Horror Archers and Horror Mages around. These are similar to Burning Dead, except they're enchanted with Lightning, so tread carefully. Also, don't miss the fact that you can click on the large circular beds to have an item pop up.

Once you hit the waypoint on the first level of the Palace Cellar, head down to the third level and search for the portal. It should be somewhere toward the center. There will be a unique monster somewhere nearby, so be prepared for a fight. In order to activate the portal, simply click on it; a blue field similar to a Town Portal will appear, which you can step through.

You arrive in the Arcane Sanctuary (hit the waypoint!). One of the most distinctive areas in Diablo II, the Sanctuary is similar to the Maggot Lair in that the walkways that you'll be moving along are very narrow, making the coordination of a horde of skeletons quite a chore. The three main enemies here are the Hell Clan, Specters, and GhouL Lords. Any of these would be difficult by themselves, but the three of them together makes for one extremely tough area. You'll often be facing situations where the Hell Clan Goatmen are hacking away at you while GhouL Lords are raising Fire Walls underneath your feet, and Specters are draining your Mana (in addition to your health). Needless to say, be very careful here, and pack plenty of potions. Any kind of ranged attack will be



helpful. The Barbarian's Leap or Leap Attack and the Sorceress's Teleport skills will come in handy here, as you'll often be facing GhouL Lords that will be attacking you from areas that are blocked by hordes of Blood Clan, and you'll generally want to destroy the GhouL Lords before dealing with the Blood Clan. The Necromancer can use his Golems to great effect here, summoning them on platforms that would take him a while to walk to, and let them remove the enemies for him. On the plus side, there are three treasure "rooms" in the area, and the GhouL Lords frequently drop excellent items, such as Grim Wands and Gnarled Staves, that you can sell for a hefty amount of gold.



Any attack that affects multiple enemies, like Multiple Shot for the Amazon or the Nova spell of the Sorceress, will be helpful in the Arcane Sanctuary.



The reason you're here, though, is to find a clue as to the location of Tal Rasha's tomb. One of the four main branches here will contain Horazon's Journal, a book that contains the exact information you need. It's guarded by The Summoner, a creepy little guy who will greet you with a laugh once you get close enough. You'll know when you're near to him, as the Quest button will appear on your screen. He's surrounded by a gaggle of enemies, and will use Ice Blasts and Fire Walls on you as you approach. He can do quite a bit of damage, but he's quite weak. One good whack with a Leap Attack can finish him off, but if you have the capability, you might just want to use a ranged attack, such as the Amazon's Multiple Shot, to fire away at him from a distance until he falls. You can also use the aforementioned remote Golem trick to place a minion near him, while you hang back and watch the fight. In any case, he'll drop a magical item when he dies, and you can go ahead and read Horazon's Journal. Once you do, a red portal will open to the Canyon of the Magi. Go ahead and go through the portal, and use the nearby waypoint to warp back to Lut Gholein.

The Seven Tombs: Talk to Jerhyn. The sixth and final quest will be given to you. Heal up, and head back to the Canyon of the Magi.

Your mission now is to find the tomb of Tal Rasha and hopefully intercept Diablo before he can free his brother Baal from the dual prison of the Soulstone and Tal Rasha's body. Unfortunately, the Horadrim managed to hire enough contractors to construct not just one, but seven different tombs, each with the possibility of being Tal Rasha's tomb. Luckily for you, Horazon's Journal gave you the marker of the real tomb. Open your Quest window and click on the sixth quest button; the sigil for the tomb of Tal Rasha, randomized each game, is given below.



You can expect to see a lot of foes in the Canyon of the Magi.

You still have to actually find the tomb, however. The seven tombs are located along the northern and eastern sides of the Canyon of the Magi. From left (northwestern corner) to right (southeastern corner), they are as follows: Circle, "U" shape, Square, a sun-like symbol with four Lightning bolts, an odd symbol that resembles two V's placed on top of one another, Triangle, and a Circle with a "U" underneath. All of them are referred to as Tal Rasha's tomb when you hover the mouse over them, but only one is the true tomb. The other six are optional areas that you can visit if you want to gain a few levels or find some treasure. All seven of them are filled to the brim with nasties, including



large collections of Greater Mummies, and the six false tombs each contain a gold chest to give you some kind of reward.

But assuming you head straight for the true tomb of Tal Rasha, you'll need to explore the cavern thoroughly until you find the Circle of Seven Symbols. It's extremely important to clear a path from the doorway to this Circle, as you're going to be finding the end boss of the act quite difficult, and you'll be dying frequently before you beat him. Of course, this is just a precaution, as you'll probably be wise enough to use Town Portals before you attempt to fight the boss.

At any rate, once you find the Circle, clear the room of monsters and place the Horadric Staff in the receptacle (the interface is similar to Charsi's Imbue skill). The wall nearby will be smashed, revealing the entrance to Tal Rasha's Tomb. Cast a Town Portal here, as you probably won't have time to when you enter the next chamber, and you won't be able to come back through the door.



This is the portal that leads you to Duriel.

And why won't you have time to cast the portal? Because you'll be dead as soon as you arrive. Well, probably not, but if you stand still for a couple of seconds, Duriel will just annihilate you. Duriel is going to be a huge challenge for any character at this stage of the game, seeing as he combines incredible strength, a slowing effect that lasts longer than could possibly be necessary to beat him, and the fastest speed of any enemy encountered so far, it's fair to bet. He can cross the screen in a second and pound you flat as soon as he reaches you.

As far as strategy goes, well...try not to die. Hire a mercenary before you head down to face Duriel; he'll be dead after one blow, but it's better than nothing. You should definitely reach level 24, and might even want to reach 25,



before facing Duriel, as the advanced skills that will open up to you then will be quite useful. As far as class-specific advice goes, your tactics will depend on how you want to handle him. If your character is Hardcore, or you simply have an aversion to dying, you'll probably want to queue up a Town Portal scroll into your belt, to make for an instant portal when you want to escape, because opening up the inventory and right-clicking on your Tome will generally give Duriel enough time to wipe you out. Thawing potions will also be essential for running away when you need to wait for a potion to charge your health up.

If you don't particularly care about dying, then you might want to try and go toe-to-toe with Duriel, leaving a present behind when you do wind up dying. When you die, and the "Hit ESC to Continue" screen pops up, anything that you've managed to target Duriel with will still hurt him. For instance, if you're playing as an Amazon, you can back up against a wall, wait for Duriel to charge you, and fire as many Immolation Arrows at him as possible before you die (you can rapidly eat potions to attempt to stay alive, but you'll probably just delay the inevitable). Once you die, stay at the death screen for a few moments until the Immolation Arrows fire dies down. You'll notice that Duriel still takes damage as long as he stays on top of the fire, even though you're dead. You can restart in town, buy some cheap equipment, head through your portal (you did remember to make one in the Circle room, right?), and repeat the process until he dies. The same goes for many of the Sorceress spells, as well. After using Static Field to knock his health down substantially, you can wrap things up with a Blizzard or Meteor and hope he stays in the same spot until the fire burns out. If you're using Lightning skills, you might just want to cast a Thunder Storm and run around, hoping he'll eventually die from the thunderbolts. The Necromancer will want to attack from a distance, if possible, while his minions are smashed into tiny bits by Duriel, perhaps cursing him with Iron Maiden or Amplify Damage. The Paladin and Barbarian are probably best served by hacking it out. The Barbarian should Concentrate, Double Swing, or Bash as much as Mana permits, and use



Thawing and Health potions to stay alive and unfrozen as much as possible. The Paladin should be able to avoid many of Duriel's swipes with his high Armor Class (you do have a good shield, don't you?), so Zealing him to death shouldn't be too huge of a problem. The character that will probably have the most problems is the Sorceress, but with the right party members in tow, you should be able to avoid Duriel's attacks and simply cast spells from a distance. Of course, in single player, you're on your own, and you'll need to whittle him down over the course of a few lives until he's dead.



It'll take a while to kill him, but seeing Duriel explode makes the effort worthwhile.

Once he is dead, some pyrotechnics will result, and the portal to Tal Rasha's Tomb (finally) will open up in the north wall. Head on through, and free



Tyrial. Once you've spoken to him, you can return to town and wrap things up with the NPCs. Say your farewells, and talk to Meshif to head to Act III.

Areas:

Sewers Beneath Lut Gholein

Enemies: Sand Raider, Dried Corpse, Burning Dead Archer, Burning Dead, Burning Dead Mage, Horror

Notes: Home to Radament and his minions, the Sewers contain a waypoint on the second level.

Rocky Wastes

Enemies: Slinger, Sand Leaper

Notes: Nothing to see here, except for the entrance to the optional Stony Tomb.

Stony Tomb

Enemies: Horror, Burning Dead Mage

Notes: One level here, and one gold chest to match.

Dry Hills

Enemies: Saber Cat, Spear Cat, Undead Scavenger

Notes: The entrance to the Halls of the Dead, as well as a waypoint, is somewhere in this area.

Halls of the Dead

Enemies: Hollow One, Spear Cat, Desert Wing, Decayed Corpse, Burning Dead

Notes: The Horadric Cube is located somewhere inside this area, in a gold chest, as well as a waypoint on level 2.

Far Oasis



Enemies: Spear Cat, Itchies, Sand Maggot, Death Beetle, Black Raptor

Notes: Another waypoint here, and the entrance to the Maggot Lair.

Maggot Lair

Enemies: Sand Maggot, Rock Worm, Black Locust, Death Beetle

Notes: The narrow, winding corridors will make a horde of Skeletons pretty difficult to manage. Lots of chests with magical items, but your goal is Coldworm the Burrower on level 3, who's guarding the Horadric Shaft.

The Lost City

Enemies: Marauder, Night Tiger, Plague Bearer, Fire Tower, Tomb Creeper

Notes: Another waypoint in this area, along with an entrance to the Ancient Tunnels, an optional dungeon.

Ancient Tunnels

Enemies: Horror Mage, Embalmed, Invader, Plague Bearer

Notes: One gold chest down here somewhere. You should probably hit the waypoint in the Lost City before heading down here, as it'll be easier to just warp back to town than walk out.

Valley of Snakes

Enemies: Fire Tower

Notes: Short, transitory level leading to the Claw Viper Temple.

Claw Viper Temple

Enemies: Claw Viper, Salamander, Embalmed

Notes: The Headpiece to the Horadric Staff (a.k.a. the Viper Amulet) is located here.



Harem / Palace Cellar

Enemies: Blunderbore, Horror Mage, Horror Archers, Dune Beast, Invaders

Notes: This area can be pretty tough due to the mixture of powerful melee enemies and numerous ranged attackers. The large circular beds act as treasure chests. Waypoint on level 1 of the Cellar.

Arcane Sanctuary

Enemies: Specter, Hell Clan, GhouL Lord

Notes: One of the best areas in Act II for gaining levels, equipment, and gold, the enemies here in the Arcane Sanctuary will give any player a challenge. Three of the four main branches end in treasure rooms, while one will result in an encounter with the Summoner.

Canyon of the Magi

Enemies: Hell Cat, Hell Slinger, Crusher, Devourer

Notes: Large, open area containing a waypoint and the entrances to the seven tombs of Tal Rasha.

Tomb of Tal Rasha (True and False)

Enemies: Preserved Dead, GhouL Lords, Burning Dead, Unraveler, Gorebelly, Apparition

Notes: The Unravelers here resurrect any of the undead that you kill, including skeletons, mummies, and even the Apparitions. The six false tombs will each contain a gold chest, while the true tomb will contain the doorway to Duriel's arena.



Act III - Kurast

Welcome to Kurast Docktown, a water city near the overrun ruins of Kurast proper. The city itself is rather spread out, so be prepared to do some running around when you come here in between adventuring sessions. As usual, there will be all manner of NPCs hanging around to help you out.

Alkor: The local potionmeister, this man will also allow you to gamble.

Asheara: The local mercenary captain, she will rent out her warrior mages for you. She also sells magical armor and weapons, as well as arrows and bolts.

Cain: Back by popular demand.

Hralti: This priest is the local blacksmith, as well as selling high-quality armor, both magical and mundane.

Ormus: The magic-man of the Docks, Ormus will be your healer, as well as Wand/Staff/Scepter dealer.

Meshif: Meshif hangs around the docks just in case you have to get back to Lut Gholein.

Natalya: Another non-essential NPC, Natalya will talk to you about whichever quest you're on, but will never be a necessary stop during a visit to town.

Quests

The Golden Bird: The first quest in Act III is a relatively easy one. Head out of town and start exploring. When you kill the first Unique monster you meet, it will drop a Jade Figurine. Warp back to town, ask Cain about it, and then take it to



Meshif. He'll want the Jade Figurine for his collection, and give you a Golden Bird in exchange for it. Take this to Alkor. He'll make a potion for you from the ashes inside the Golden Bird that will give you a permanent extra 20 Life.

Blade of the Old Religion: When you next talk to Hralti, he'll tell you of the enchantment he placed on the Docks, to keep the demons out of the city. Unfortunately, the enchantment is weakening, so he needs you to retrieve a sacred blade to revitalize the enchantment, a blade called the Gidbinn.



This is the Flayer altar you need to find to complete the Blade of the Old Religion quest.



The Gidbinn is in one of the Flayer villages in the Flayer Jungle, a huge outdoors area. It'll take quite some time to map it out, so you might want to hire a mercenary to help you out with the Flayers in the area. Once you actually find the Gidbinn, a small shrine-like construction, click on it. A gang of Flayers will spawn nearby, and their leader holds the sacred blade you need. Kill them, retrieve the blade, and warp back to town. Ormus will give you a rare ring as a reward, and Asheara will give you a free mercenary as a token of gratitude for lessening the load on her troops.

Khalim's Will / The Blackened Temple: Speak to Cain to receive the next quest on the docket. In order to gain access to the lair of Mephisto, you'll need to gather four relics of Khalim, an ancient priest, and Transmute them in the Horadric Cube. This quest overlaps with the fifth quest in this Act, The Blackened Temple.

The first relic you should go after will be the Eye of Khalim, located in the Spider Cavern beneath the Spider Forest. Be careful not to go into the Arachnid Lair, a similarly themed area, nearby. Both of the caves contain similar monsters and one gold chest, but only the Spider Cavern will have Khalim's Eye.



The Spider Cave will prove fairly challenging, especially for characters with low poison resistances.

Once you have the Eye, you're going to want to head for the Flayer Jungle. Somewhere around here is the Flayer Dungeon, a three-level dungeon filled with Undead Flayers, Water Watchers, and Dark Shapes. The Super Unique monster Witch Doctor Endugu guards the gold chest that holds the Brain, so take him out and warp back to town.

The third piece of the Puzzle is Khalim's Heart, located in the Sewers beneath Kurast. You can reach the sewers from either Upper Kurast or the Kurast Bazaar, but the area below is randomized, so you're going to have to do plenty of searching either way. The sewers are fairly dangerous, containing Horadrim Ancient (tougher versions of the Unravelers) and Stygian Watchers in



the water, as well as plenty of other baddies. There's a gold chest somewhere on the first level, but the Brain is located on the second level. The entrance is located next to a lever that will open it. Once you're down on the second level, you'll have to fight off the Stygian Watchers in the large pool of water in the center of the room if you want to search safely. Occasionally, there'll be a pack of Undead Soul Killers down there with them, so be careful. Once the Watchers are dead, head around, opening the chests in the area. The Brain will be in the gold chest, but all of the chests have an excellent chance for containing magical items, making this a great place to come back to when you initiate future game sessions.

The last item you need, Khalim's Flail, is held by one of the Council Members in Travincal. When you reach Travincal for the first time, warp back to town and speak to Ormus. He'll tell you that you should destroy the High Council of Zakarum, a group of monsters that were once esteemed priests, charged with the overseeing of Mephisto's prison. These guys are extremely tough, so you might want to bring along a mercenary to give them another target.

Once you reach Travincal, you'll notice a raised walkway that travels around the perimeter of the area. If you have any kind of ranged attack, you should run around the walkway and attempt to shoot any of the Zealots or Heirophants that appear. There are Night Lords in the area that can cast Meteors at you, though, so be prepared.



This raised platform that runs around the town can be used as a sniper's roost for characters with ranged attacks.

When you clear out the central area of the town, head toward the large building at the north end. Three of the Council Members will be in this area, so you'll probably want to try and lure them out one at a time. They're tough little guys, so make good use of the space available to you, especially if you're using a ranged attack. Shoot, run, shoot, run, and repeat until dead. One of them will drop Khalim's Flail, the last ingredient in the Khalim recipe. Warp back to town and Transmute all of his relics to make Khalim's Will, a unique Flail that can be used to smash the Compelling Orb, opening the way to Mephisto's Lair.



You've gotten this far, but will you be able to reach Mephisto?

Lam Esen's Tome: Once you reach the Kurast Bazaar, you can speak to Alkor to receive the fourth quest. This one will actually come in the middle of the two quests described above, so be sure you don't miss it. Alkor will ask you to retrieve a book written by Lam Esen that describes the way the Prime Evils can affect the mortal realm.

Much like the Seven Tombs quest in Act II, this one will send you searching through multiple areas. Unfortunately, there's no way to know which one will contain Esen's Tome ahead of time, so you'll just have to get ready for some footwork. In the Kurast Bazaar, Kurast Causeway, and Upper Kurast, you'll notice that some buildings are displayed with stairways on your map. There



should be six of these in total. You can click on the bloody altar in each of these buildings to reveal stairways that lead down into a mini-dungeon. You'll have to search each of them until you find the tome. The five false dungeons don't contain gold Chests; rather, they're filled with bloodthirsty monsters.



The Blood Lords in the six tombs will cast Meteors on you, so keep your eyes open and run when you see the rings at your feet.

Once you actually find the Tome, bring it back to Alkor. He'll give you five free Stat points to use.

The Guardian: Once you've used Khalim's Will to smash the Compelling Orb, the gate to Mephisto's lair will be opened. The Durance of Hate, as it's called, is



a three-level dungeon filled with treasure chests and enemies, with Mephisto residing on the third level. Plenty of tough enemies here, as would be expected of the final dungeon.

Mephisto is surrounded by Council Members and Blood Lords, advanced versions of the Ghoul Lords that gave you so much grief in the Arcane Sanctuary. When you reach the third level, begin by clearing out the large room you begin in, and then start inching your way toward Mephisto, who's hiding in the upper portion of the level. It's very important to kill any monsters you encounter before riling Mephisto up, as he'll be more than you can handle just by himself. Whatever you do, don't run up the steps behind Mephisto, as there are a good half dozen Blood Lords waiting around up there, and if you get them angry, you'll never be able to kill them all while Mephisto is attacking you.

So, once you manage to clear out Mephisto's minions, you're left to deal with the Lord of Hatred himself. As you can probably imagine, taking down a Prime Evil will not be an easy task. Mephisto has a number of devastating attacks, most of which are Lightning based. He can shoot a Lightning Ball, similar to the attack of Hellhounds (Afflicted, Tainted, and the like). He also has a regular Lightning attack, copied from the Sorceress skill of the same name, which he'll generally use to wipe out any of your minions that approach him. His main medium-range attack is a flurry of 8-10 Charged Bolts, which not only deal Lightning damage, but also slow you as an ice attack would. He can also poison you at close range.

Basically, if you can attack from a distance, it's the only way to go. The Lightning Bolts and Charged Bolts will rip any character that closes on Mephisto to shreds, unless you have an ungodly amount of Lightning resistance. Thankfully, there's something of a trick you can use to attack Mephisto without taking any damage. Once he notices you and starts to attack, quickly run back to the left or right until you're on the opposite side of the small stream of blood that the Portal is on top of. Mephisto might be able to hover, but he can't fly, and he



won't be smart enough to maneuver around the stream to reach you. If you manage to walk back far enough so that Mephisto is barely visible in the top left corner of your view, you will be able to fire as many arrows at him as you want, without suffering any return fire from him. This should work for any character class, so even if you're a Barbarian, you might want to invest in a good magical bow before making the trip down to face off against Mephisto.



If you can attack Mephisto from this spot, you'll probably be able to kill him without taking any damage in return.

Once Mephisto falls, he'll drop his Soulstone, as well as a few magical items. The bridge to the portal will open, letting you move on to the fourth and final Act. There's a stunning cutscene coming up, so sit back and enjoy.



Areas:

Spider Forest

Enemies: Fetish, Fetish Shaman, Jungle Hunter

Notes: It's generally best to face off against the Fetishes on one of the many bridges throughout the area, as this will prevent them from surrounding you. The entrances to the Spider Cavern and Arachnid Lair are in this area.

Arachnid Lair / Spider Cavern

Enemies: Giant Lamprey, Poison Spinner, Fiend

Notes: These areas are similar, but the Spider Cavern is the one that contains Khalim's Eye. The Arachnid Lair contains a gold chest.

Great Marsh

Enemies: Swamp Dweller, Gloam, Bramble Hulk, River Stalker, Fetish, Fetish Shaman

Notes: This huge area isn't necessary to explore, but there are a couple of rare above land gold Chests guarded by Fetishes.

Flayer Jungle

Enemies: Flayer, Flayer Shaman, Soul Killer, Soul Killer Shaman, Winged Nightmare

Notes: Contains the entrance to the Flayer Dungeon.

Flayer Dungeon

Enemies: Water Watcher, Dark Shape, Undead Flayer

Notes: Witch Doctor Endugu guards Khalim's Heart on the third level of this dungeon.



Lower Kurast

Enemies: Hell Buzzard, Tree Lurker, Doom Ape

Notes: Plenty of chests scattered around in the houses here.

Kurast Bazaar

Enemies: Thrasher, Zarakumite, Sexton, Faithful, Hell Swarm

Notes: There will be two entrances to the Sewers here, as well as a few of the possible hiding places for Lam Esen's Tome.

Sewers

Enemies: Gloombat, Horadrim Ancient, Stygian Watcher, Horror, Undead Soul Killers, Preserved Dead

Notes: The top level here has one gold chest. The second level contains Khalim's Heart and 10 or so chests, each with a high chance for finding a magical item.

Six Temples

Enemies: Night Lord, Spider Magus, Wailing Beasts, Flesh Hunter, Serpent Magus, Flesh Archer, Blood Diver

Notes: Only one of the six temples will contain Lam Esen's Tome; the other five are relatively empty, except for the monsters. Luckily, they're all small, so searching won't take too long.

Upper Kurast

Enemies: Thrasher, Faithful, Sexton, Cantor, Winged Nightmare

Notes: Two more entrances to the Sewers here, as well as another waypoint.

Travincal

Enemies: Night Lord, Heiropant, Zealot, Council Member



Notes: The passage to the Durance of Hate is located in the northernmost building.

Durance of Hate

Enemies: Cadaver, Undead Stygian Doll, Dark Lord, Blood Lord, Council Member

Notes: Something REAL bad happened here, as evidenced by the copious amounts of blood scattered around each of the levels. A large number of chests and stashes make exploration a little less numbing. Don't miss the waypoint on Level 2 before heading on to face Mephisto.



Act IV - Hell

Well, welcome to Hell. The Pandemonium Fortress appears to be an outpost of Heaven near the burning wastes of Hell itself. Fittingly enough, this is where you will launch your assault on the fortress of Diablo.

There isn't much in the way of NPCs in Hell, but there are four people hanging around to talk to.

Cain: He's going the distance with you. He'll be around to chat and identify items for you.

Halbu: An armor dealer, Halbu sells some weapons, but you'll probably mostly be visiting him for his magical armor and his blacksmith skills.

Jamella: Paladin warrior, Jamella sells armor, weapons, scrolls, and potions, and will heal you when you visit her.

Tyrael: The Archangel should be well known to you from the cutscenes by now.

Quests

The Fallen Angel: Once you speak to Tyrael for the first time, he'll send you on the Fallen Angel quest. One of Tyrael's former Lieutenants, Izual, has had his spirit imprisoned within the body of a foul demon, and now roams throughout Hell. Tyrael feels that he has suffered enough, and asks that you free Izual by slaying the demon that acts as his prison.

You'll find Izual walking about the Plains of Despair. When he spots you, he'll yell out "Save yourself!" and charge. His main attack is a melee strike with his blade, which will slow you down to around 20% of your normal speed. He also can send out a Frost Nova that will slow any players within about a one-third screen distance.



The main problem you'll encounter when tackling Izual will be the number of enemies around him. Since he's out in the middle of the level, instead of being in his own enclosure like so many other tough enemies, you can easily begin to attract a horde of monsters that will make the fight that much more difficult. You should probably work your way out from the stairs leading to the Outer Steppes, clearing all of the monsters that you find. When you happen across Izual, trace your steps backward a few screens, so that the two of you can dance in relative peace. Other than that, there's really not much to be said about Izual. He likes to bang on you with his sword. Anything that increases your resistance to Cold, or reduces freeze durations, will obviously be helpful. There aren't any mercenaries you can use to give him another target, so it'll generally just be you and him, unless you have minions to summon.



Izual's spirit leaves his prison after you've killed the demon.

Once Izual is dead, you can talk to his spirit, and you'll receive two Skill Points as a reward. Head back to town afterwards.

The Hellforge: Now that Izual is defeated, it's time to head for the second quest, where you'll have to shatter Mephisto's Soulstone on the Hellforge. The Hellforge is located in the River of Flame beneath the City of the Damned, so look around for the stairs leading down in the City, and be sure to hit the waypoint.

Once you arrive in the River of Flame, you'll need to start scouting the area and looking for the Hellforge. There are plenty of tough enemies here, so take the opportunity to clear them out and gain some experience. There's nothing



tricky to navigation in the area, but be sure you don't miss any areas. You'll know you're getting close to the Hellforge when you see a brick path and some torches set up. A little further in, you'll encounter Hephasto, the guardian of the Hellforge (note to Blizzard: Haphaestus was a *good* god).

Hephasto is quite a toughie, with the Extra Strong, Cursed, and Magic Resistant attributes. Luckily, he only has one attack, a powerful melee blow with his hammer. How you choose to deal with him is up to you; an effective way is to combine a cold-based ranged attack (Glacial Spike or Ice Arrow work well) with a lot of running away. Hephasto is quite fast, though, so he'll often be able to get a whack in as you turn to fire. He can take plenty of damage, so keep a Town Portal nearby to run into if you get into trouble. Any kind of minion, whether a Decoy or Golem, will be useful to keep him busy.

Eventually, he'll die and drop the Hellforge Hammer. Equip it and click on the Hellforge to smash Mephisto's Soulstone. A number of gems will pop out, including at least one perfect gem. Collect the spoils of war, and head back to base to gird up for the battle with Diablo.

Terror's End: Well, it's time to put an end to all of this madness. Diablo awaits you in his Chaos Sanctuary, and it's up to you and you alone (unless, of course, you're playing on Battle.net) to kill him, and prevent the forces of Hell from overtaking the world, plunging civilization into endless night. Or something like that.

Take the waypoint to the River of Flame. If you didn't hit that, go back through your Town Portal from the Hellforge and start looking for it. Diablo's lair will be guarded by a long set of broad walkways, filled to the brim with all of the nasties that you've encountered in Hell thus far, and some that you haven't. You can expect Pit Lords, Urdars, Maw Fiends, Blood Maggots, Doom Knights, and more. The Blood Maggots and their young will make this area an especially nasty chore, as they can quickly overwhelm you with sheer numbers, though they



aren't as tough as some of the other enemies that you might be facing. If you have the ability to summon minions, such as Golems or Valkyries, you can summon them across the rivers of lava, and let them deal with the enemies while you attack from afar.



There are a LOT of enemies guarding the path to Diablo's lair.

In any case, you'll need to slog through a couple hundred enemies before you finally reach the Chaos Sanctuary. Diablo's Lair is mostly filled with Pit Lords, Storm Casters, and the lovely threesome of Doom, Abyss and Oblivion Knights. Obviously, this is going to be a tough, tough area for any adventurer. You'll need to constantly warp back to town for more Health Potions, as the Knights alone will be able to knock your health down a significant fraction in just a few seconds.



Once you reach the large pentagram in the middle of the Sanctuary, you'll have to travel around, opening the five seals that Hadrial should've told you about at the gate to the walkways outside. Nothing tricky here, just click on them and they open. The important thing to note here is that you should have the entire area cleared of enemies before you open the seals. Why? Because three of the seals magically spawn small armies of foes when they're opened, and you'll be much better off dealing with them by themselves.

So, once you clear the area completely, start clicking on the seals. In a random order, you'll spawn a Venom Lord army, with the Super Unique Infector of Souls as the leader, a Storm Caster battalion led by the Grand Vizier of Chaos, and a collection of Oblivion Knights with Lord De Seis as commander. The tricky part is that some of the seals are at the end of fairly narrow corridors, and the enemies will appear behind you, effectively boxing you in and pounding you down without giving you anywhere to run to. If this is a problem for you, you might want to create a Town Portal before opening the seal, then jump out if they box you in. You can then head back to the River of Flame waypoint and walk back to the Chaos Sanctuary. Yeah, it's a bit of a hike, but if you die, recovering the items on your body is going to be one tough chore when it's surrounded by a horde of the toughest enemies you've seen so far in the game.

That said, when you're fighting off these three armies, the important thing is to avoid getting surrounded. The Venom Lords, especially, will rip you to shreds with their Inferno breath within seconds if they manage to surround you. You don't have to worry about it with the Oblivion Knights, though, as they'll all turn out to be of the Mage variety, and will attack you from afar. You merely have to worry about a wide variety of enchanted magical bolts coming your way.

At any rate, once all of the seals are opened and all of the enemies in the area are dead, the main attraction will appear in the middle of the large pentagram. Diablo, as expected, will give anyone a run for his or her money. He's not as quick as Duriel was, so most characters will be able to avoid him if



they so desire, but he often uses a Bone Cage to trap characters that run away, as well as to block off any Town Portals in the area. He has four main attacks. The least dangerous is the expanding ring of fire that he periodically throws out. It's comprised of discrete modules of fire that drift apart as it expands, making it perfectly easy to slip through the gaps from a screen or so away. Even if you're too close to dodge it, it won't deal a huge amount of damage to you, especially if your fire resistance is at a respectable level. He also will periodically throw out a bizarre Fire Wall-type spell that sends dual streams of fire at you. This one moves fairly slowly, and moving to the side makes for an easy dodge. If you can't avoid it, you can just sit it out, as the flames only last a couple of seconds. If you get trapped in the flames, though, you'll probably find yourself in a stunlock situation where you can't move, leaving you open to other attacks. Like almost every other monster, Diablo has a pummeling melee attack, where he'll rush at you on all fours and strike at you with his fist. His most deadly weapon, though, is a stream of red Lightning that he'll shoot out at you when you get too close to him. It can be avoided, but the closer you are to him, the harder it will be to get out of the way. If it does hit you, you can often find yourself rendered immobile by the rapid damage that sweeps over you. In general, as soon as you get hit even once by the Lightning, your only way to survive will be to immediately hit one of your Greater or Super Healing potions, and hope it can partially counteract the rapid decline of your health. As soon as you see the animation for this attack begin, you should run away from Diablo, as well as to the side. He can't move the Lightning from side to side very quickly, so you should be able to avoid it if you get a head start.



You can expect a tough fight from Diablo, but if you keep your distance at the right times, you should be able to survive the battle.

The key to taking Diablo out will be in the knowledge that most of his attacks will be issued when he's standing still. The red Lightning, fire circle, and Fire Stream attacks can only be used when Diablo isn't moving, so you'll have a small window of opportunity to use an area effect skill to hopefully damage him before he moves away. He'll start moving once you get too far away from him, though, so you'll want to stay on the same screen as him if you try to roast him. This tactic works especially well for the Amazon and Sorceress, with spells like Immolation Arrow and Meteor that punish Diablo for staying in the same spot for too long. With a bit of luck, you can cast a spell just as he's beginning a flurry of spells that will keep him in the same spot for 5-10 seconds. If you can pile on a



few Immolation Arrows while he's standing still, you'll begin to see his health take a noticeable downswing.

As far as melee classes go, well, your best bet is to float like the butterfly and sting like the bee. You should try and beef up your fire resistance as much as possible, and simply avoid the red Lightning. You might want to warp back to town, drop all of your equipment, and buy some cheap armor and weapons, just to get a feel for Diablo's attacks without risking all of your good stuff. Once you feel prepared to take him on, you should choose your attacks carefully. If you just stand next to him and hack away, he'll eventually blast you with the Lightning. You have to know when he's about to shoot it, and quickly move away. If your Lightning resistance is at a high level, you might try and just take the damage, but it'll still be pretty tough. Melee classes should always keep a Town Portal open nearby, as you'll be using health potions like they're going out of style.

Eventually, Diablo will fall, dropping a rare and one or two magical items. Pick up the spoils and return to town to speak to Cain and Tyreal. You can go ahead and talk to Jamella and Halbu, but they seem altogether unimpressed.

Now, if you thought that was easy, feel free to move on to Nightmare mode. But be warned...this isn't your father's Nightmare mode. Blizzard, after getting feedback that the original Diablo was a little too easy for advanced characters, upped the ante on Nightmare and Hell difficulties in Diablo II. You'll find them much more difficult than Normal mode was, so be prepared. Nothing can quite prepare you for having your level 28 character be killed by a pack of *Fallen*, for God's sake.



Areas:

Outer Steppes

Enemies: Flesh Spawner, Corpulant, Venom Lord, Flesh Beast, Doom Knight, Cliff Leapers

Notes: Large, open area. The stairs to the Plains of Despair are somewhere around here, generally on the bottom left side of the map.

Plains of Despair

Enemies: Flesh Spawner, Burning Soul, Doom Knight

Notes: Izual is somewhere around here, as well as the stairs to the City of the Damned.

City of the Damned

Enemies: Damned, Pit Lord, Dark Familiar, Strangler, Black Soul

Notes: The stairs to the River of Flame, along with a waypoint, are in this area.

River of Flame

Enemies: Pit Lord, Maw Fiend, Urdar, Blood Maggot, Doom Knight, Burning Soul, Grotesque, Storm Caster, Abyss Knight, Strangler

Notes: Very tough area here, with plenty of challenging enemies. The Hellforge and Hephasto are in this area, along with a waypoint near Hadrial. Fantastic graphics here, with the shimmering heat effect over the lava. If you look closely enough, you might see the skeletal remains of one of a damned soul attempt to climb out of the River, only to be pulled back in.

Chaos Sanctuary

Enemies: Venom Lord, Doom Knight, Abyss Knight, Oblivion Knight, Storm Caster

Notes: The five seals of Diablo, along with Diablo himself, reside in this castle.