

## **SYBEX Update**

# Asheron's Call: A New Look

## Part One of Sybex's Strategy Guide Update

by Rusel DeMaria

Screen reproductions produced with Collage Complete.  
Collage Complete is a trademark of Inner Media Inc.

SYBEX, Network Press, and the Network Press logo are registered trademarks of SYBEX Inc.  
Mastering, Expert Guide, Developer's Handbook, and No experience required. are trademarks of SYBEX Inc.

TRADEMARKS: SYBEX has attempted throughout this book to distinguish proprietary trademarks from descriptive terms by following the capitalization style used by the manufacturer.

Netscape Communications, the Netscape Communications logo, Netscape, and Netscape Navigator are trademarks of Netscape Communications Corporation.

Microsoft® Internet Explorer ©1996 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, the Microsoft Internet Explorer logo, Windows, Windows NT, and the Windows logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

The author and publisher have made their best efforts to prepare this book, and the content is based upon final release software whenever possible. Portions of the manuscript may be based upon pre-release versions supplied by software manufacturer(s). The author and the publisher make no representation or warranties of any kind with regard to the completeness or accuracy of the contents herein and accept no liability of any kind including but not limited to performance, merchantability, fitness for any particular purpose, or any losses or damages of any kind caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly from this book.

Photographs and illustrations used in this book have been downloaded from publicly accessible file archives and are used in this book for news reportage purposes only to demonstrate the variety of graphics resources available via electronic access. Text and images available over the Internet may be subject to copyright and other rights owned by third parties. Online availability of text and images does not imply that they may be reused without the permission of rights holders, although the Copyright Act does permit certain unauthorized reuse as fair use under 17 U.S.C. Section 107.

Copyright ©2000 SYBEX Inc., 1151 Marina Village Parkway, Alameda, CA 94501. World rights reserved. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, or reproduced in any way, including but not limited to photocopy, photograph, magnetic or other record, without the prior agreement and written permission of the publisher.

# ASHERON'S CALL: A NEW LOOK

## PART ONE OF SYBEX'S STRATEGY GUIDE

### UPDATE

*Asheron's Call* is a persistent world, operating 24x7 except for brief downtimes for maintenance. As such, it is a living world, one that is constantly evolving. The folks at Turbine have been adding, tweaking, and balancing the game since its early beta days, and they continue to make changes as the game grows and changes. We've put together some updates to the strategy guide, *Asheron's Call Official Strategies & Secrets*, published by Sybex. These updates reflect the changes in the game, as well as refinements we, as players, have added to our understanding of the game.

The purpose of this update is to build on the coverage of *Asheron's Call* in the strategy guide. To be sure, much of the information here is useful for people who don't already have the guide. We do assume, however, that you know the game itself, either from playing it or from reading *Asheron's Call Official Strategies & Secrets*. The guide offers a wealth of important and highly useful information that is not included here. Especially for first-time players, we highly recommend that you find a copy of the guide and use it to help you understand the game's fundamental elements.

We'll go through the strategy guide, chapter by chapter, updating and adding content along the way. Note that this article addresses the first six chapters only of *Asheron's Call Official Strategies & Secrets*. The second half of our updates should be ready at this site in a month or so.

---

## A Word of Thanks

In researching and writing the official strategy guide and this update article, I had a lot of help from other players—most notably Stephanie Sonnleitner, Becca Morn, and Kadera, who is one of the Monarchs in *Asheron's Call*. I want to thank them for their substantial contributions.

Also, in the strategy guide we neglected to acknowledge a trio of related sites for their contributions to that book. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank them here. They are all based at the root site, Asheron's Compendium:

<http://clarkzoo.dhs.org/asheronscall>

and include the following:

Asheron's Atlas at

<http://clarkzoo.dhs.org/asheronscall/places>

and AC-Spedia at

<http://clarkzoo.dhs.org/asheronscall/acspedia>

Of course, there are many other excellent Web sites devoted to *Asheron's Call*. You'll find quite a few links on the Zone's AC link page at

<http://www.zone.com/asheronscall/links.asp>.

---

## Some General Comments

One result of the continual evolution of *Asheron's Call* has been many subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) changes to how people play. Several updates to the game code have directly affected various character classes. Many of these changes have attempted to fix what Turbine calls "exploits"—player maneuvers that were never intended by the designers. If you're interested in Turbine's changes, check out the online archives for the game's Build Notes. The best place to start is

<http://www.zone.com/asheronscall/ASHEnewsnews1.asp>.

Many of Turbine's changes have made the game a little harder to play, and they close up a few loopholes that allowed some players to take unfair advantage of certain situations in Dereth. Of course, this doesn't mean that you are prevented from using intelligent play to gain an advantage.

One of the issues still being addressed is *camping*, in which a player stays in one area to loot a chest repeatedly or to kill specific creatures known to carry choice items. Camping is pretty common in certain places in the game, and Turbine is working on ways to make it less so. Also under consideration is a secure trade system, because thievery has become rampant in the game and trustworthy trades are increasingly rare. However, secure trading is not on the immediate list of changes, so don't expect to see it soon.

---

# Chapter 1: A Concise History of Asheron's Call

As the game evolves, so does the ongoing saga of the world of Dereth. Although much could be told here, all of it is available in the game itself—as well as in Zone's Web pages:

<http://www.zone.com/asheronscall/Lore.asp>.

---

# Chapter 2: Creating a Character

The process of creating a character remains of the utmost importance. Some players have wandered Dereth for weeks, even months, only to discover that they made a fundamental mistake when they created their character initially. In the end, they often have to scrap the old character and start all over again. You can avoid this trap by understanding the assumptions of the character type you want to play, and by planning ahead.

We have no changes to the sections on selecting race, appearance, and clothing. What we have for you here is important new information, supplemental to the strategy guide, about your initial choices of attributes and skills.

---

## To Specialize or Not to Specialize

Originally, I thought that specializing certain skills would result in a premium character. For instance, I created a crossbow fighter with Crossbow, Melee Defense, and Unarmed Combat all specialized. Initially, this resulted in a more rapid advancement of these skills, but it came at the cost of training other skills that might have come in handy.

Many players think that specializing any skill is unnecessary, that using the skill points to train additional skills is ultimately more productive. The theory is that the increased proficiency gained from specialization is more useful in the early stages of the character's development but drops off in overall effectiveness when you reach higher levels. At these advanced levels, you typically want other skills, such as another magic school or Lockpick ability.

For instance, I was able to train Arcane Lore, Item Enchantment (and hence Portal spells) and, at Level 45, Creature Enchantment or any other skill requiring 8 skill points. If, however, I had chosen not to specialize the three skills, I could have trained Lockpick and Life Magic as well, or perhaps Alchemy, which is useful for making better ammunition for my crossbow. Ah, the longing for more skill points... It seems endless, and after about Level 45 you have little hope of acquiring many more. (Unless, of course, Turbine adds quests or other ways to gain skill points. They haven't done so yet, but it could happen.)

Specialization still holds merit, but the alternate approach of training more skills is another point of view to be considered.

One argument for specialization involves special-purpose characters or mules—those characters you create using your spare slots, and who you honestly expect will never see the high side of Level 20. For instance, an Alchemy/Fletching mule can become quite useful at Level 10 if these skills are specialized. In another case, a mule with specialized skills in Identification, Arcane Lore, Mana Conversion, and Item magic can be expected—with some buffs from a more experienced Creature mage—to cast Lifestone and Portal Recall with reasonable success as early as Level 6, or even sooner.

---

## Magical Items and the Importance of Arcane Lore

In the strategy guide, not enough importance was placed on Arcane Lore. This skill requires a mere 4 points to train, but it can make a world of difference because it allows you to use magical items such as jewelry, weapons, and armor.

Many items have spells associated with them but have a Difficulty requirement, which translates to your level of Arcane Lore (often referred to in the game as the item's "diff"). Activating these spells can advance your character many points in a specific area. For instance, a ring of Quickness Self IV can increase your Quickness by 25 points, also improving your Run skill, the Melee and Missile Defenses, and other skills associated with Quickness. On the other hand, gaining those 25 points by applying experience points to your Quickness attribute could take hundreds, thousands, or (at high levels) even hundreds of thousands of experience points. So, at higher levels, a ring of Quickness Self IV could equate to many hundreds of thousands of experience points. Having the proper magical items can boost you the effective equivalent of many levels.

There are two downsides to this tactic: One is that items with a higher-level spell generally carry a higher diff or higher Arcane Lore requirement. So boosting Arcane Lore becomes important—but for most Warrior types, who begin the game with relatively low Focus, Arcane Lore gets very expensive at higher levels. The second downside to magical items is that they do use Mana, and their spells no longer work when Mana is gone (at least, until they're recharged). If you become reliant on jewelry, weapons, or armor that use spells, you'll spend some of your time acquiring money for purchasing charged-up Mana Stones ("charges") to keep your items working. The more magic items you have, the more time and money spent on charges. On the other hand, the added effectiveness of your magical items should make it easier to hunt and gain items to sell, so you can afford more charges.

Some mages don't feel the need to train Arcane Lore because they can use spells to accomplish what the jewelry does for other players, and those mages don't use armor or weapons. This is a personal choice. Other mages do use jewelry and other magic-imbued items.

---

## Using Magic

The strategy guide gives some players the impression that we assume a clear demarcation between Warriors and magic users. This is not entirely true. Almost every player uses some form of magic. A few have eschewed magic altogether, but most Warriors do use either Item or Creature Enchantment, if not both.

Some Warriors use Life Magic for its ability to "debuff" an enemy and even drain its Health or Stamina through walls. Other players consider a bow or crossbow fighter with Unarmed Combat, Life Magic, and Item Enchantment to be one of the ideal characters in the game.

Item Enchantment—especially advantageous for its Portal spells, which let you teleport to various locations—is also quite useful for adding to a weapon's attack and defense qualities, for adding special protection to armor, and even for weakening locks and making items easier to appraise.

Creature Enchantment is particularly versatile, allowing players to cast various forms of protection, to boost attributes and skills, to cast Mastery spells on themselves or others, to deploy unusual skills, and so forth. Creature Enchantment has the widest variety of spells and the most spells overall.

---

## More About Preset Classes

In the strategy guide, we suggested some improvements to the preset classes available in the character creation system. Time and experience has taught us to reassess our thinking somewhat, however. Here are some new thoughts on creating specific classes of characters.

Having experienced the process of raising a character to a relatively high level, the most significant change in our approach is to acknowledge that all attributes are important. Ultimately, unless you're going to play a very pure mage or Warrior, you'll be raising all your attributes to create a well-rounded character.

All Warrior classes will want high Coordination, high Strength, and high Quickness. In addition, so they can use various kinds of magic, Warriors will need increased Self and Focus. Everybody needs higher Stamina and Endurance. Mages and Warriors use Stamina ("stam") differently. When a Warrior fights and defends, stam is the basic energy expended. In contrast, for mages the major expenditure is often from a repository of stored Mana, which can be replenished by using the Life Magic Stamina-to-Mana spell. In any case, all the attributes and secondary attributes (Health, Stamina, Mana) clearly are important to almost every character.

In terms of class development, let's revisit mages in general and the Archer class.

## Creating the Ideal Mage

**Note:** For updated information about mages, I've consulted my good friend Stephanie Sonnleitner, who also helped me with the initial research on magery. Here's what she has to say on the subject of creating and playing a mage character.

**Figure 1: [Mage Template.jpg](#) "Start a mage character with the maximum Focus and Self."**

A mage is most effective using spells for protection as opposed to wearing armor or using protection items. A mage with a Robe is indeed powerful, since she can cast item spells and overall protection spells to enhance her armor level. At sufficiently high levels, this can be over 400 points in overall protection by casting two spells. An additional two spells

can provide near invulnerability to a given attack type, such as Bludgeoning.

For instance, a mage who casts Impenetrability V and Bludgeoning Bane V on her robe and casts Armor V and Bludgeoning Protection V on herself will take little damage from even a dangerous Tusker Guard. Change that to Acid and Piercing protections and banes, and Olthoi will do much less damage yet. Increasing these further to Level 6 will be even more effective. The level of spell you might cast under ordinary circumstances and against ordinary enemies may not be sufficiently strong against more powerful enemies such as Tusker Guards and Olthoi. Clearly, you shouldn't go up against Olthoi with Level 2 buffs, but they *will* help against other critters within the capabilities of a mage with only Level 2 buffs.

There is some debate about whether a mage should take Melee Defense. Having Melee Defense will allow you to be a "tank" mage, who can stand up to all the nasty critters toe-to-toe. There is some merit to this, but be aware that a mage holding a wand will not get the same benefit from Melee Defense as a Warrior holding a weapon, even with comparable skill levels. Holding a wand appears to decrease the effectiveness of Melee Defense. Given that Melee Defense is costly (10 skill points), there is a trade-off in terms of which skills you'll be able to train.

Also arguable is whether a four-school mage has any real use for Arcane Lore. Usually, a mage can cast better buffs on herself than any jewelry she is likely to use at a given level. If I can cast Level 4 spells, I likely will have an Arcane Lore that lets me use Level 4 items but not Level 5 items. I may not even be able to use the Level 4 items by the time I can cast Level 4 spells. The spells cast by a mage benefit from the spell economy and may have higher values than the items. The items always give the middle value for the buff, so that a Level 4 item will always increase a skill or attribute by 25 points. A Level 4 spell, on the other hand, may add 29 or 30 points. The trade-off is that you need to keep refreshing the spells, whereas an item continues running without interruption for a much longer time.

The main issue in these arguments is that skills cost points. If you take Arcane Lore, you spend 4 skill points on something you might not really need. Would your points be better saved for Melee Defense or Lockpick? The same question occurs for Melee Defense. It costs 10 skill points. Would you be better off taking another magic school? Or perhaps adding a crossbow or bow as a backup weapon, especially if you have interest in becoming a Player Killer.



Most mages now realize that having all four schools of magic is a very powerful resource. Even though you might specialize and thus increase your skill in War or Life (at the cost of enough skill points to effectively have all four schools), a Life or War mage without Creature and Item magic is crippled in major ways. Ignoring for a moment the convenience of Portal magic, consider that the ability to increase protections on your armor using bane spells and Impenetrability is easily worth more than 200 to 300 points in Armor level. Creature Magic at higher levels can increase skill in the other schools of magic by as much as 70 points. No amount of specialization, or of stacking points into the advancement of that school, can offset this kind of improvement. Certainly some of this can be duplicated with items that cast the same spells, but they will never be as effective as the spells themselves. Moreover, the Arcane requirements are so high that the usable items are typically one or two levels below what you could cast. The Item Magic advantages cannot be provided by any items except some armors, but then you have to deal with the Burden issues caused by wearing good armor.

One template often suggested for mages involves training all four schools of magic to start, along with Mana Conversion (an absolute must for mages). Select Gharu'ndim if you want the free ID skill and the staff as a backup weapon, or choose Aluvian if you prefer Dagger, or Sho if you are partial to Unarmed. In any case, then take Melee Defense at Level 12, and Lockpick (or Crossbow) at Level 26. This will set you up with better defenses for most kinds of combat, and prepare you very well for higher levels. You'd be able to take Arcane Lore at Level 45 or wait until Level 55 for either Lockpick or Crossbow. Bow is lighter but costs 2 more skill points, so you have to defer using it for about 10 more levels, on the average. To start, be frugal with points in Coordination, if any at all, and make sure to put 100 points each into Focus and Self. The remaining points should be distributed between Strength (no more than 30), Quickness (maybe 40–50), and Endurance. If you plan to use a bow later, you might start with a little higher Coordination, which will also help your Melee Defense. Never, however, increase these at the expense of Focus or Self. Remember, you will never be as fast or as strong or as accurate as a Warrior or Archer, so don't worry about it.

## **Creating an Archer**

The Archer's most important attribute is Coordination; however, to be particularly effective, you'll ultimately need all the other attributes. Start with Coordination high and Strength fairly high. Probably the majority of Archers train Item Enchantment, both for the Portal spells and for the

ability to “buff” the bow. A few players have chosen to go with Creature Enchantment instead, so they can buff their own abilities. Still others, over time and with accumulated skill points, get *both* Item and Creature Enchantment.

**Figure 2: [Archer Template.jpg](#) “The most important attribute for an Archer is Coordination.”**

In addition, you’ll probably want to train and raise Arcane Lore so you can use various items and armor; for this reason, don’t ignore Focus and Self entirely. Start out with at least at 30 points each, or if you can’t justify that, make your Focus 30 and Self 15, and later pump points into Self and your total Mana as soon as you can.

I recommend also that you train Healing, Melee Defense, and Fletching. (By the way, a side benefit of starting with at least 30 Focus is that your Healing and Fletching skills will be that much better.) There’s nothing much worse than running out of ammunition far from a town, so Fletching is a must. If you have skill points left over, consider Alchemy, although many Archers create an Alchemy mule (see “More About Mules”) to make the oils needed for special arrows or quarrels.

Each Heritage Group has its own special weapons and skills. For instance, creating a Sho Archer gives you Unarmed Combat for free. Unarmed fighting is very effective and is a good complement to the bow if you train both skills together.

Alternatively, there are a good many Aluvian Archers out there who’ve discovered that daggers—especially Gertahr’s Dagger or an Atlan Dagger (both quest items)—are amazingly effective Melee weapons when enchanted with Item Magic buffs. This is particularly true because the Dagger skill, free for Aluvians, depends on Coordination and Quickness, two attributes that are Archer’s best friends.

And finally, let’s not forget the Garu’ndim. The staff is probably one of the most underrated weapons in *Asheron’s Call*. Although it’s difficult to find a good one, there are some enchanted and high-damage staves available out there, and many monsters are more vulnerable to Bludgeoning damage (for example, the dreaded Olthoi). More than a few Garu’ndim mages lately are dusting off unused Staff skills, getting themselves a nice Golem Jo or a good staff with high (6–12) base damage—or better yet, a Peerless Atlan Staff. Slap a few Item Enchantments on such a weapon, and a seemingly weak mage suddenly becomes a Melee powerhouse. There is

no reason why Garu'ndim Archers cannot take advantage of the same strategy.

In choosing whether to train a bow or a crossbow, you must consider various factors. The bow is slightly faster, and a good Yumi is almost as powerful as a good Heavy Crossbow. However, the Heavy Crossbow is more powerful alone because it has a high basic attack modifier. Turbine has recently added the modifier statistics to bows, so now you can tell what you're getting. Some crossbows have a modifier of +140%. These are very powerful, indeed. The crossbow's downside is that the animation sequence for loading and reloading is considerably slower than that of a bow, and you may take some free hits during the time you are reloading. Of course, crossbows are supposed to be slower than regular bows, with the trade-off being greater average damage inflicted.

Another important issue is that, even with Melee Defense trained, you are far more vulnerable when wielding a bow than when using a hand weapon such as a sword or an unarmed weapon. And since you can't use a shield, which is quite valuable in close-quarters battle, you are doubly handicapped. This is not to say Archers cannot stand up to direct attacks, but they are much more vulnerable than Melee fighters at the same level.

All in all, however, the Archer is arguably the most powerful character in the game at this point. It seems that many creatures have weaker resistance against Missile attacks, so Archers can often do significant damage to creatures that normally outmaneuver other character types. This generally makes up for the Archer's comparative weakness in Melee combat.

## Healing Skills

One of the truisms of life in Dereth is that you will need some means of healing your injuries if you expect to survive in the wilds or in dungeons. Unfortunately, many of the preset classes lack any means of Healing—but at the other end of the spectrum, the Life Mage is given both Life Magic *and* Healing skill!

No one wants to lie down and wait for tens of minutes at a time—longer, at higher levels—to heal injuries. Not everyone travels with a Life Mage or someone with Healing skills. The only other alternative is to buy Healing Potions, which can cost a fortune and are heavy to carry.

For fighters and Melee types and anyone who *doesn't* have Life Magic trained, taking the Healing skill is just about essential. If you have neither of these *and* are a low-level character, you might just want to think

about starting over, or consider spending any accumulated skill points to get Healing as soon as possible.

On the other hand, there is another option...and even those who have Healing often use this technique as a back-up. First, find yourself a Life Magic Mastery wand. It doesn't matter if it's only a Level 1 wand, just get one—anything you can equip with your current Arcane Lore score. Put some points into your Self attribute, and build up your total available Mana to 30 or so.

Then, go to the local mage shop, buy a few components, equip that wand, and learn two spells: Heal Self I and Stamina-to-Health I. With a Magic Mastery wand, unless you've trained the magic school in question, you won't be able to cast anything better than Level 1 spells, but that's not important.

Particularly for a Melee fighter, Stamina-to-Health can be a real lifesaver because of the huge number of Health points regained relative to the spell cast. Another good time for this spell is when you're at less than 50% of your total max Health, because it's generally known that the nearer to death you are, the harder it is to use Healing kits to repair yourself.

**Note:** When using Healing kits, be aware that it gets harder to heal yourself as your Health decreases. If you have only 10–20% Health left, it's almost certain you'll fail with a Healing kit.

If you care to take this a step farther, learn a few more Level 1 spells—Infuse Stamina, for instance. Your mage friends will love you for this one (and for Infuse Mana, too) when they're resting up to recover their own Stamina and Mana. While you're at it, learn Heal Other I, so you can help your comrades. One other good spell to learn is Stamina-to-Mana, which you're sure to hear mages using all the time because Stamina always recovers much faster than either Health or Mana. Since most nonmages don't have Mana Conversion trained, the Stamina-to-Mana spell is a great way to get the Mana for casting an extra spell or two.

## More About Mules

**Figure 3: [Portal mule.jpg](#) “Mules are used for many purposes. One who has Portal spells is particularly useful.”**

The strategy guide's section on mules is pretty much unchanged. Worth noting is that Archers, in particular, often create Fletching and/or

Alchemy mules to create their specialized arrows and quarrels. It's relatively easy to create a good Alchemy mule, whose most significant attributes are Coordination and Focus. It may be easier to let your mule make the oils, using Alchemy, and have your main character become a Master Fletcher and actually make the arrows or quarrels.

**Figure 4: [Alchemy Mule.jpg](#) “An alchemy mule is very useful for making the oils used in making special arrows and quarrels. Oils are also used to make special food items.”**

Here's a good trick if you have two AC accounts (and multiple computers and phone lines): Create a mule, then pledge a new fighter character to that mule. Fellowship the two and then take the fighter out and gain points. Some of those points will filter to the mule, which it can distribute to its main skills. We know at least one person who created a mule that earned Portal Magic by Level 6 in just that way. If you don't have multiple AC accounts, find a friend who will help you raise your mule's stats.

---

## Fact Check: Stat Corrections for Chapter 2

In Table 2.1 (page 18):

- Alchemy requires 8 points to train.
- Crossbow requires 6 points to specialize.

---

## Chapter 3: Reading the Interface

The *Asheron's Call* interface has changed very little since the game was launched, and *Asheron's Call Official Strategy & Secrets* remains an excellent reference and guide.

There are a few new emotes. (The only ones we're sure of are \*snowangel\* and \*blow on hands\*, both of which were added during the “white” period of AC's winter.)

The chat interface has improved so that it stays in the mode you last used until you explicitly change it. For instance, if you want the Talk to Fellows mode to communicate with people in your Fellowship, you can

choose that option under the Chat button and continue in that mode until you decide to change it.

You can still use the single-letter functions to communicate with a specific person (such as @t <name>, which is short for @tell <name>). Use @say to speak to people nearby.

Other than these minor additions, Chapter 3 is very helpful as is. For a complete list of @ commands, type @? in the Chat line.

**Note:** You can use the forward slash key (/) in any spot where you'd use the @ key. Many players find / much more convenient than @.

Turbine has made another recent change. Now, when you use @squelch <name> to silence chat from a particular character in the game, it is a permanent effect. It does not effect other characters played on the same account however. To start receiving messages from that character, use @unsquelch <name>. If you want to see who you have squelched, type @squelch without an argument and you'll see a list of people you have squelched.

---

## Chapter 4: Attribute, Skill, and Level Advancement

**Figure 5: [Low Level XP.jpg](#) “At lower levels, raising various statistics requires very few points.”**

It has come to our attention that some of the experience charts in the strategy guide may not be accurate. The original tables came, unaltered, from Turbine, but they are sometimes difficult to interpret. Following is a new table, graciously provided by Turbine. This chart shows how many points it takes to go up one new level of character, attribute, secondary attribute, or skill (trained or specialized).

**Figure 6: [High Level XP.jpg](#) “As you gain levels, raising skills and attributes will get more and more expensive.”**

All characters start at Level 1. In the Character Level column, you can see that it costs 1,000 points to move from Level 1 to Level 2, and 2,777 points to go from Level 2 to Level 3. However, the other columns are

less explicit, because the number of points depends on the base level where you began. For instance, suppose your Strength attribute began at 90. To raise it to 91 you'd need to spend 110 points. Raising it to 92 would cost 277 points. If your Strength attribute began at 50, then raising it to 51 would cost 110.

What determines the required number of points is the *number of times you raise a skill or attribute*. And, of course, it costs fewer points to raise a specialized skill than it does to raise one that is merely trained.

	<b>CHARACTER LEVEL</b>	<b>ATTRIBUTES</b>	<b>SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES</b>	<b>TRAINED SKILLS</b>	<b>SPECIALIZED SKILLS</b>
1	0	110	73	58	23
2	1,000	277	183	138	56
3	2,777	501	331	243	97
4	5,697	784	517	372	149
5	10,248	1,125	743	526	211
6	17,031	1,527	1,008	704	282
7	26,784	1,988	1,312	908	364
8	40,391	2,511	1,658	1,138	456
9	58,895	3,097	2,044	1,395	558
10	83,511	3,746	2,472	1,678	671
11	115,645	4,459	2,943	1,988	795
12	156,898	5,238	3,457	2,326	931
13	209,088	6,084	4,015	2,693	1,077
14	274,259	6,998	4,619	3,089	1,236
15	354,692	7,982	5,268	3,515	1,406
16	452,925	9,038	5,965	3,971	1,589
17	571,762	10,167	6,711	4,459	1,784
18	714,286	11,372	7,505	4,980	1,992
19	883,872	12,654	8,352	5,534	2,214
20	1,084,206	14,015	9,250	6,122	2,449
21	1,319,289	15,459	10,203	6,747	2,699
22	1,593,459	16,988	11,212	7,408	2,963
23	1,911,400	18,604	12,279	8,107	3,243
24	2,278,153	20,311	13,406	8,846	3,539
25	2,699,136	22,113	14,595	9,625	3,850
26	3,180,153	24,012	15,848	10,448	4,180
27	3,727,407	26,014	17,169	11,316	4,527
28	4,347,513	28,122	18,561	12,230	4,892
29	5,047,517	30,341	20,025	13,192	5,277
30	5,834,900	32,676	21,566	14,206	5,683
31	6,717,600	35,132	23,187	15,273	6,109
32	7,704,021	37,716	24,893	16,396	6,559

33	8,803,044	40,434	26,687	17,578	7,031
34	10,024,047	43,293	28,574	18,821	7,529
35	11,376,914	46,301	30,559	20,130	8,052
36	12,872,048	49,465	32,647	21,508	8,603
37	14,520,384	52,795	34,845	22,958	9,183
38	16,333,408	56,300	37,158	24,485	9,794
39	18,323,161	59,991	39,594	26,092	10,437
40	20,502,261	63,878	42,160	27,786	11,115
41	22,883,912	67,975	44,864	29,572	11,829
42	25,481,915	72,295	47,715	31,454	12582
43	28,310,688	76,851	50,722	33,438	13376
44	31,385,275	81,659	53,895	35,533	14213
45	34,721,359	86,737	57,247	37,743	15,098
46	38,335,275	92,102	60,788	40,078	16,031
47	42,244,029	97,775	64,531	42,545	17,018
48	46,465,302	103,775	68,492	45,152	18,061
49	51,017,472	110,128	72,685	47,911	19,165
50	55,919,623	116,858	77,126	50,830	20,332
51	61,191,556	123,991	81,834	53,921	21,569
52	66,853,809	131,559	86,829	57,196	22,879
53	72,927,666	139,591	92,130	60,668	24,267
54	79,435,170	148,124	97,762	64,350	25,740
55	86,399,136	157,194	103,748	68,259	27,304
56	93,843,170	166,843	110,116	72,409	28,964
57	101,791,673	177,113	116,895	76,818	30,728
58	110,269,863	188,053	124,115	81,506	32,603
59	119,303,784	199,715	131,812	86,493	34,597
60	128,920,317	212,153	140,021	91,800	36,720
61	139,147,200	225,429	148,784	97,451	38,981
62	150,013,037	239,609	158,142	103,472	41,389
63	161,547,311	254,762	168,143	109,890	43,956
64	173,780,397	270,967	178,838	116,736	46,695
65	186,743,581	288,306	190,282	124,040	49,616
66	200,469,064	306,870	202,534	131,838	52,736
67	214,989,984	326,756	215,659	140,167	56,067
68	230,340,425	348,070	229,726	149,067	59,627
69	246,555,428	370,928	244,812	158,582	63,433
70	263,671,011	395,453	260,999	168,758	67,504
71	281,724,178	421,779	278,375	179,646	71,859
72	300,752,932	450,054	297,036	191,301	76,521
73	320,796,288	480,434	317,087	203,781	81,513
74	341,894,292	513,091	338,640	217,149	86,860
75	364,088,025	548,210	361,819	231,474	92,590



76	387,419,625	585,992	386,755	246,830	98,732
77	411,932,296	626,654	413,592	263,297	105,319
78	437,670,319	670,432	442,486	280,959	112,384
79	464,679,072	717,582	473,604	299,911	119,965
80	493,005,039	768,378	507,130	320,252	128,101
81	522,695,823	823,122	543,260	342,089	136,836
82	553,800,159	882,136	582,210	365,539	146,216
83	586,367,933	945,773	624,211	390,727	156,291
84	620,450,186	1,014,414	669,513	417,789	167,116
85	656,099,136	1,088,469	718,390	446,871	178,749
86	693,368,187	1,168,386	771,135	478,129	191,252
87	732,311,940	1,254,649	828,069	511,735	204,694
88	772,986,213	1,347,781	889,536	547,871	219,149
89	815,448,050	1,448,351	955,912	586,735	234,694
90	859,755,734	1,556,972	1,027,602	628,540	251,416
91	905,968,800	1,674,311	1,105,046	673,517	269,407
92	954,148,054	1,801,089	1,188,719	721,913	288,765
93	1,004,355,577	1,938,088	1,279,139	773,996	309,599
94	1,056,654,747	2,086,155	1,376,862	830,054	332,022
95	1,111,110,248	2,246,205	1,482,495	890,401	356,161
96	1,167,788,081	2,419,233	1,596,694	955,370	382,148
97	1,226,755,584	2,606,314	1,720,167	1,025,326	410,131
98	1,288,081,441	2,808,613	1,853,685	1,100,659	440,264
99	1,351,835,695	3,027,394	1,998,080	1,181,791	472,717
100	1,418,089,761	3,264,023	2,154,256	1,269,177	507,671
101	1,486,916,445	3,519,983	2,323,189	1,363,308	545,324
102	1,558,389,948	3,796,877	2,505,939	1,464,714	585,886
103	1,632,585,888	4,096,444	2,703,654	1,573,965	629,586
104	1,709,581,309	4,420,567	2,917,575	1,691,679	676,672
105	1,789,454,692	4,771,285	3,149,049	1,818,520	727,408
106	1,872,285,975	5,150,808	3,399,533	1,955,205	782,082
107	1,958,156,562	5,561,528	3,670,609	2,102,508	841,004
108	2,047,149,336	6,006,039	3,963,986	2,261,264	904,506
109	2,139,348,672	6,487,148	4,281,518	2,432,373	972,949
110	2,234,840,456	7,007,896	4,625,212	2,616,806	1,046,723
111	2,333,712,089	7,571,580	4,997,243	2,815,610	1,126,244
112	2,436,052,509	8,181,768	5,399,967	3,029,917	1,211,967
113	2,541,952,200	8,842,327	5,835,936	3,260,945	1,304,378
114	2,651,503,203	9,557,443	6,307,913	3,510,009	1404004
115	2,764,799,136	10,331,656	6,818,893	3,778,529	1,511,412
116	2,881,935,203	11,169,877	7,372,119	4,068,034	1,627,214
117	3,003,008,207	12,077,431	7,971,105	4,380,177	1,752,071
118	3,128,116,563	13,060,084	8,619,656	4,716,738	1,886,695

119	3,257,360,317	14,124,082	9,321,894	5,079,638	2,031,855
120	3,390,841,150	15,276,190	10,082,286	5,470,950	2,188,380
121	3,528,662,400	16,523,738	10,905,668	5,892,911	2,357,165
122	3,670,929,071	17,874,666	11,797,280	6,347,931	2,539,173
123	3,817,747,844	19,337,572	12,762,798	6,838,614	2,735,446
124	3,969,227,097	20,921,773	13,808,370	7,367,765	2,947,106
125	4,125,476,914	22,637,359	14,940,657	7,938,414	3,175,366
126	4,286,609,098	24,495,261	16,166,873	8,553,825	3,421,530
127		26,507,320	17,494,831	9,217,523	3,687,009
128		28,686,361	18,932,998	9,933,309	3,973,324
129		31,046,278	20,490,543	10,705,283	4282,113
130		33,602,120	22,177,399	11,537,868	4,615,148
131		36,370,190	24,004,326	12,435,837	4,974,335
132		39,368,147	25,982,977	13,404,336	5,361,735
133		42,615,120	28,125,979	14,448,918	5,779,567
134		46,1318,28	30,447,007	15,575,574	6,230,230
135		49,9407,19	32,960,875	16,790,764	6,716,306
136		54,066,105	35,683,629	18,101,461	7,240,585
137		58,534,323	38,632,653	19,515,183	7,806,074
138		63,373,901	41,826,775	21,040,043	8,416,017
139		68,615,745	45,286,392	22,684,790	9,073,916
140		7,4293,328	49,033,597	24,458,865	9,783,546
141		80,442,912	53,092,322	26,372,451	10,548,981
142		87,103,777	57,488,493	28,436,532	11,374,613
143		94,318,471	62,250,191	30,662,960	12,265,184
144		102,133,083	67,407,835	33,064,516	13,225,807
145		110,597,540	72,994,377	35,654,992	14,261,997
146		119,765,922	79,045,509	38,449,264	15,379,706
147		129,696,811	85,599,896	41,463,378	16,585,352
148		140,453,665	92,699,419	44,714,647	17,885,859
149		152,105,222	100,389,447	48,221,744	19,288,698
150		164,725,942	108,719,122	52,004,816	20,801,927
151		178,396,483	117,741,679	56,085,593	22,434,238
152		193,204,214	127,514,781	60,487,519	24,195,008
153		209,243,776	138,100,892	65,235,884	26,094,354
154		226,617,688	149,567,674	70,357,967	28,143,187
155		245,437,001	161,988,421	75,883,199	30,353,280
156		265,822,007	175,442,525	81,843,326	32,737,331
157		287,903,011	190,015,988	88,272,594	35,309,038
158		311,821,164	205,801,968	95,207,949	38,083,180
159		337,729,361	222,901,379	102,689,242	41,075,697
160		365,793,227	241,423,530	110,759,467	44,303,787
161		396,192,167	261,486,830	119,465,000	47,786,000

162	429,120,520	283,219,543	128,855,871	51,542,349
163	464,788,799	306,760,608	138,986,049	55,594,420
164	503,425,038	332,260,525	149,913,755	59,965,502
165	545,276,249	359,882,324	161,701,793	64,680,717
166	590,610,001	389,802,601	174,417,913	69,767,165
167	639,716,134	422,212,649	188,135,201	75,254,081
168	692,908,610	457,319,683	202,932,500	81,173,000
169	750,527,522	495,348,165	218,894,860	87,557,944
170	812,941,268	536,541,237	236,114,028	94,445,611
171	880,548,904	581,162,277	254,688,979	101,875,592
172	953,782,704	629,496,585	274,726,480	109,890,592
173	1,033,110,914	681,853,203	296,341,707	118,536,683
174	1,119,040,753	738,566,897	319,658,907	127,863,563
175	1,212,121,655	800,000,293	344,812,110	137,924,844
176	1,312,948,783	866,546,197	371,945,902	148,778,361
177	1,422,166,831	938,630,108	401,216,255	160,486,502
178	1,540,474,151	1,016,712,940	432,791,424	173,116,570
179	1,668,627,219	1,101,293,965	466,852,915	186,741,166
180	1,807,445,467	1,192,914,009	503,596,527	201,438,611
181	1,957,816,530	1,292,158,910	543,233,477	217,293,391
182	2,120,701,915	1,399,663,264	585,991,620	234,396,648
183	2,297,143,157	1,516,114,484	632,116,749	252,846,700
184	2,488,268,472	1,642,257,192	681,874,018	272,749,608
185	2,695,299,977	1,778,897,985	735,549,461	294,219,785
186	2,919,561,502	1,926,910,591	793,451,636	317,380,655
187	3,162,487,055	2,087,241,457	855,913,403	342,365,362
188	3,425,629,996	2,260,915,797	923,293,832	369,317,533
189	3,710,672,964	2,449,044,157	995,980,273	398,392,109
190	4,019,438,644	2,652,829,505	1,074,390,578	429,756,231
191		2,873,574,933	1,158,975,507	463,590,203
192		3,112,691,986	1,250,221,316	500,088,527
193		3,371,709,687	1,348,652,558	539,461,023
194		3,652,284,316	1,454,835,090	581,934,036
195		3,956,210,003	1,569,379,334	627,751,734
196		4,285,430,197	1,692,943,784	677,177,514
197			1,826,238,790	730,495,516
198			1,970,030,642	788,012,257
199			2,125,145,977	850,058,391
200			2,292,476,532	916,990,613
201			2,472,984,268	989,193,708
202			2,667,706,901	1,067,082,761
203			2,877,763,869	1,151,105,548
204			3,104,362,767	1,241,745,107

205	3,348,806,291	1,339,522,517
206	3,612,499,722	1,444,999,889
207	3,896,959,013	1,558,783,605
208	4,203,819,496	1,681,527,799
209		1,813,938,117
210		1,956,775,777
211		2,110,861,944
212		2,277,082,451
213		2,456,392,890
214		2,649,824,107
215		2,858,488,130
216		3,083,584,558
217		3,326,407,464
218		3,588,352,825
219		3,870,926,558
220		4,175,753,170

---

## Chapter 5: Social Systems

Most of the information on social systems in Chapter 5 is still relevant. As the game evolves, however, people are learning more about the workings of large Allegiances. We know of one very high level Monarch whose character is already well above Level 50, who simply got tired of being a Monarch and instead pledged to another high Monarch who didn't mind the pressures of heading a group of hundreds of people.

In order to fill in some of the gaps in how Allegiances work, I consulted one of my friends, Kadera, who has had some experience being the Monarch of a large Allegiance. What follows is her take on how Allegiances work.

One aside, however. There are many ways to handle the role of Monarch, Patron, or Vassal. Many people take the role of Monarch or Patron very seriously. They worry about their Vassals and try hard to keep them happy. Others have a more *laissez faire* attitude, expecting their Vassals to be independent and only keeping contact for friendship or in times of real need. Still others carefully avoid having a lot of Vassals and prefer to stay within a more intimate group of friends who play together.

So, there are many ways to play Allegiances. Kadera is an example of a Monarch who prefers to keep people happy, creating a neat organization with identity and purpose. For many players, these are the best Patrons and Monarchs because they are there to provide help over and over.

---

## Large Allegiances

**Note:** As mentioned, this section on Allegiances was written by Dereth Monarch Kadera.

**Figure 7: [Allegiance Meeting.jpg](#) “As allegiances get bigger, many groups use the new meeting halls to conduct their meetings, safe from portal storms.”**

Of all the creatures in *Asheron's Call*, among the strangest are the Allegiances. Why “creatures”? Because they are born in unexpected ways, growing and mutating almost daily—and sometimes they even die.

At its simplest, an Allegiance will form with perhaps two or three friends who get together, swear to one another, perhaps bring in their mules...and voilà! An instant Rank 3 or maybe even Rank 4 Monarch. Such a small monarchy is trivial to manage—because it's rather more like a small tribe of like-minded friends than anything else.

Over time, though, things can change radically. This small Allegiance might get absorbed by a larger one. Or it can accumulate new members. Often, when a group grows to over 100 members, a kind of snowball effect takes hold. Literally overnight, the group may double or triple in size, just with the addition of a larger submonarchy.

## Managing an Allegiance

As brilliant as the Allegiance system is, size does matter. Managing a large Allegiance presents some challenges. Limitations to the chat system quickly become apparent as an Allegiance grows:

- You can't talk with people who aren't online.
- You can't see who in your Allegiance is online, save those in your friends list, your direct Vassals, your Patron, and your Monarch.
- Anyone in the Allegiance can talk to the Monarch (if the Monarch is online) via that @m chat command, but there is no universal “@all-vassals” command for the Monarch to make announcements to all online members.

Basically, except for the friends list, a Monarch has no way of knowing which followers are online, or even of determining who is in the Allegiance beyond the Monarch's own direct Vassals.

Sounds a little daunting, and it is. Some Monarchs have discovered ways to cope, however, and here are just a few of their many tips and workarounds:

- Get organized while your Allegiance is still small. A number of tools and utilities are available for charting an Allegiance tree. You can find these tools on the ACSage website at <http://www.acsage.com/>. Follow the link to "guild hosting." Use them while your numbers are manageable, because filling in a tree after the group grows into the hundreds becomes exceedingly difficult.
- Have regular Allegiance meetings. There are meeting halls in all the major towns, and they're good for more than just hanging out. Put them to their designed use! Meetings help folks get acquainted and build camaraderie and kinship. These gatherings also present the opportunity to distribute loot from the overladen mules of high-ranking Allegiance members.
- Create an Allegiance Web site. Nearly all major Allegiances in Dereth have made use of sites to post messages, report news, and help keep track of members via online Allegiance tree utilities. One site offering Allegiance Web-site hosting is <http://www.acsage.com>.
- With or without an Allegiance Web site, many Monarchs exchange e-mail addresses or create simple mailing lists to connect people outside of Dereth. Many online services provide free mailing-list hosting.
- Write an Allegiance charter. This can be as simple as a bulleted list of the ideals and rules intended to help govern the Allegiance, or even a detailed compact or code of conduct.
- Try to keep a handle on who joins the Allegiance by emphasizing the responsibility of having Vassals. In addition, give a high priority to keeping the Allegiance tree up-to-date.

**Controlling Behavior:** Inevitably, in any growing organization, you'll get some bad apples. And guess who gets the complaints when someone in your group misbehaves? That's right, you. As Monarch, you may get a message out of the blue from someone you've never heard of, complaining about a Vassal you didn't even know you had, demanding that

you do something about that Vassal RIGHT NOW. What's a Monarch to do? The better you know your organization and the people in it, the better your chances of finding and ejecting that bad apple—assuming, of course, that's what you want to do.

**Assigning Jobs:** If you're Monarch of a growing Allegiance, learn to delegate. Don't try to do everything yourself. Rather than go ballistic, let close friends and comrades who want to help be part of running the Allegiance. Create a Mages Council to handle matters related to magic and wizardry. Form a Rescue Squadron for handling the inevitable requests for high-level aid in recovering lost bodies. Appoint a Scribe to manage the Allegiance Web site. Let an Armor Master get new recruits outfitted and equipped. Perhaps a Chatelaine can be responsible for organizing and scheduling group hunting and quest expeditions. In short, do what Monarchs have done throughout history: Look at the jobs that need doing, confer some nice fancy titles, and delegate!

## The End?

There may come a time when you realize the Allegiance thing just isn't working out. Perhaps you've collected too many bad apples. Maybe you're just burned out. Or you might simply want the freedom of being on your own again, responsible to no one and for no one.

There's always the obvious out: Dissolve the Allegiance. More than one famous Monarch in Dereth has completely severed ties with all of their vassals and started over again, one person at a time, being much more discriminating the second time around.

Yet another option for the weary Monarch is to find another organization to join. Or consider commissioning a higher-level person of good reputation who might be willing to run things temporarily or even permanently.

The choice is always yours.

---

# Chapter 6: Town, Trade, and Travel Basics

Most of Chapter 6 is fairly current in its information for being in town (with the exception of advice about the rise in thievery, covered a bit

later in this article). Outside of town is another matter. The game is in constant flux, and there are some new dangers.

---

## AC Explorer

Many great online resources are devoted to *Asheron's Call*, and you'll find links to many of them on the AC Web site. For navigation through and around Dereth, however, someone has created an awesome tool called AC Explorer. We highly recommend that you look into it at <http://www.zuggsoft.com/ac/ac.asp>. It's loaded with incredible features and it's free. Check it out.

---

## Sticky Melee

“Sticky Melee” is what people are calling the most significant change to exploring the Wilderness. In an attempt to make it easier to fight while chasing a monster, Turbine has changed the code a little so that you can sort of stick to the back of a running creature and hit it with more accuracy than before. This can be useful to Melee fighters. Be aware, however, of the side effect: Those same monsters can stick to *your* back while *you're* running.

Ordinarily, this won't be too great a problem, but it makes a good argument for improving your Run skill. If you're considerably fleet of foot than the monster you're running from, you should escape. On the other hand, if the monster is faster, you stand a good chance of being hit a few times. If the monster is weak and you are strong, again you're in good shape. But it's wise to stay as far away as possible from things that can truly hurt you.

The farther away you are from a pursuing creature, the less likely you'll get caught, even if the creature is faster. But if you come in very close, or if you've been fighting a critter, running can leave you open to additional attacks. You should eventually escape, since most creatures won't stray too far from their “home” area, but realize that Sticky Melee does make the environment more dangerous.



---

# Fighting Tricks and Techniques

There are almost as many tricks and techniques as there are players, and no end to the ways people have chosen to engage the enemy. Following are just a handful of effective tactics.

## Stick-and-Run

For Mages and Archers who're after something that might cause significant damage if it gets too close, here's a trick that works if you're patient. I call it stick-and-run. It works like this:

1. Get to within radar range of the enemy, close enough to hit it with your bow or favorite spell.
2. Fire or cast the spell and then immediately run. The creature will come after you, but you'll have a good head start. Your pursuer should give up the chase after a while.
3. Return and repeat until you've killed the creature.

Variations on this technique include the run/turn/fire/run again technique, and another one I call "drop 'em in your lap." The first is self-explanatory: You run a ways, turn and fire, then run some more. This works best with slower enemies such as Golems. In "drop 'em in your lap," weaken the creature with the stick-and-run maneuver and then let it get close so you can deliver the killing blow. There's some risk involved, it's true—but if you succeed it'll be easier to loot the corpse. This is especially important when your enemy's "home" position is among other dangerous creatures.

## Isolating an Enemy

You'll often run across large groups of the same enemy – a bunch of higher-level drudges or a group of shadows, for instance. When you attack one of them, they all come after you. Being attacked by a large group can be overwhelming, even where fighting one or two at a time is within your capacity. One technique that sometimes works is to attack a particular monster in a group, then run immediately. They'll all chase you, but will give up after a short time. Return and attack the same creature again. In some cases, only the attacked creature will come after you the second time, and you can dispose of it without having to deal with the group. Be aware that some creatures will issue a death cry, which will cause the group to come after you again. Be prepared for that.

## The Simultaneous Debuff/Attack

Mages who have both Life and War magic can take advantage of a specific timing effect. It happens that debuffing spells, such as Fire Vulnerability Other, hit the target immediately, while a War spell takes time to reach the target, depending on the level of spell to be cast and the distance from the target. Therefore, if you cast a War attack spell, then immediately follow it with a “vul” spell, the two will hit at about the same time. The victim will be made more vulnerable and instantly hit with an attack. This can be very effective, unless one or both spells fizzles of course.

## Bufs and Banes

Here and there you can expect to fight a particular type of enemy, or you’ll be in the Wilderness and come across something very dangerous. You’re brave and ambitious and want to fight. In these situations, knowing what kind of attack to expect is very important. For instance, the dreaded Tusker Guard uses Bludgeoning (as do Golems). By wearing items with Bludgeoning protection and/or using spells, you increase your chances of survival many times over.

Melee fighters can equip themselves with a shield, and cast protection spells on it as well. For instance, when fighting Olthoi, I cast Piercing and Acid banes on my shield and wear Piercing- and Acid-protected items, along with the other items I use to improve my armor level. Know your enemy, and you stand a greater chance of survival.

**Note:** If you don’t know the magic needed to cast buffs and banes, consider traveling with a Mage who does.

---

## Thieves, Scammers, and Scoundrels

Just like the real world, the lands of Dereth are populated with different kinds of folks: from the most noble, kind, and generous people you might want to meet, to some of much less sterling repute.

At last report, Turbine was working on a system of secure trade. But even if it is implemented, it won’t stop the scoundrels bent on taking advantage of the naive newbie, the careless, and the overly trusting. In all honesty, some of this thievery is true sport to certain players and can be accepted part of the role-playing environment. There may even be some

humor to it. In most such cases, however, the people involved are really not very nice, and their victimization of others can be upsetting.

You can protect yourself by studying the following known tricks of the trade employed by these blackhearts. By no means is this a complete list, and new cons and scams enter the arena all the time, so stay alert.

## The Ctrl-V Drop-and-Grab

Newbies are the ones most frequently hit by this trick, because experienced players know better. The thief will tell you, “Hey, select your weapon there and hit Ctrl-V for a free 5-point power-up!” or some other enticing line. Unless you’re a newcomer to Dereth, you know that the V key is mapped to drop the selected object by default. If you fall for the trick and press Ctrl-V, the thief quickly snatches the item on the ground and either runs away or logs out.

Sad, isn’t it? We had no idea there was such a huge market for practice nabuts, spears, and short swords.

**Note:** Most people have remapped the V key to some other benign function, just to avoid dropping something accidentally.

## The Wandering Scribe

In this scam, most often run on newcomers, someone will come up and message you, “Hey, I’m a wandering Scribe. It’s my personal quest to inscribe items, and as a result, you can guarantee you’ll never lose that valuable armor or weapon you have there.” Another variant has the Scribe explaining that those Trade Notes need to be inscribed before they’ll be accepted by merchants.

It’s the same ruse as the Drop-and-Grab: The unsuspecting person hands over their items, and the erstwhile Scribe runs away or logs out.

The only solution to this one is simply to know better. *Never* hand your belongings to anyone unless you really know and trust him or her. There is absolutely nothing you can do to make someone give back what you’ve freely handed over.

## The Snatch-Grab Thief

Similar to the pickpocket, or even more so the purse snatcher, the Snatch-Grabber looks for two people exchanging items. The thief darts

between the two victims, hoping to snag something good because of an inadvertent drop of the mouse button.

Although popular early on, of late this method has been generally eschewed by experienced (and greedy) thieves because of the completely haphazard nature of snatched items.

In most cases, it's easy to spot the Snatch-Grab thief. You'll notice them darting from place to place in a crowded area, standing between or even on top of people making exchanges. These pirates identify their targets by listening for the distinctive "ding" of items being passed between characters. So keep an eye out for this type of activity. Generally, it's best not to make repeated exchanges of items between two characters in any crowded spot—just move away from town, and watch to be sure you're not followed.

## The Muling Burglar

The vast majority of *Asheron's Call* players have only one game account on one computer. When they want to transfer items from one character to another on that account, they have to drop the items, log out, log back in as the second character, and pick everything up again. During that crucial time while the loot is on the ground, literally anyone can come along and grab it. This is probably the single most common way to lose items—as much as a bag full of stuff at a time.

Luckily, there are many ways to protect yourself. Here are just a few, rated in terms of overall security offered:

- Have a friend hold the items for you while you change characters. If you can't find a friend, someone generally known to be trustworthy can often be persuaded to assist as long as you're quick about it. This tactic is highly secure, vulnerable only to Snatch-Grab thieves.
- Do your muling *way* outside of towns and other populated areas. This isn't a very secure solution, however, because you have to be sure you're not being followed. And during the critical log-out period, your items can still be nabbed with a well-timed hit of the bracket ( ] ) key.
- Use a chest in some distant locale to store items temporarily while you change characters. Though somewhat secure because it protects your items from theft with the bracket key, you still can't stop someone from taking your stuff if they know you're there.

- A variant of the chest hiding solution is to go out in the countryside, reasonably far from town, and kill some small critter known to have little of anything in the way of loot—such as a Rabbit, Drudge Skulker, or Gnawer Shreth. Open the body and put your loot on it. Log out, log in, reopen the body, and take your stuff. This method is better than a chest, but also can be defeated if someone knows you're out muling.
- Finally, here's a solution for those with the money and the means—namely two registered copies of *Asheron's Call* under two separate Zone IDs, and two computers connected to the Internet. With these resources you can do your own 99%-secure muling between two characters logged in simultaneously. The only remaining risk here is the Snatch-Grabber, so it's a good idea to do your transfers in a relatively secluded and uncrowded spot.

## The Trade Scammer

Not much need be said about this one. You spend about 10 or 15 minutes working out the details of a trade with someone you've just met. They might mention they were ripped off recently by a thief, and so they want you to hand over your trade item first. You give it to them, and they run or log out. Many of these cheaters include a final parting taunt, such as "I'm a thief!" or "Sucker!"

Avoid this deceit by trading only with people you know personally and trust, or by conducting your trades through a trusted third party. Both traders hand their items to the third party, who makes the exchange. There are many of these agents in Dereth—some who've been around a long time and are possibly of high level.

**Note:** A major warning sign that you're dealing with a scammer is when they refuse to work through a third party.

Unfortunately, even third-party trades can be prone to deception. Read on...

## The Trade Mediator

Ah, so you're smart enough to conduct your trades with a third party. You set up the deal and look around for a mediator. Hey, whad'ya know, someone just happens to come along and offer to be that third party. You give your item to the trade mediator, and both he and your customer

disappear! So look out. Some thieves are working in teams in this fashion. Be sure you know the third-party trade mediator.

## **Famous Mules**

In this scam, a character claims to be the mule of a high-level and usually well-known someone, maybe even wearing the name “So-and-so’s Mule.” Lower-level members of Allegiances were being hit hard by this one until word got out about it. A character would impersonate the mule of a high-ranking Monarch and entice the victim into handing over armor or weapons, by promising something better in return. Most times, though, the mule would just claim to belong to some other high-level character of good reputation, as assurance of integrity.

One protection against this scam is to ask the mule to log off and then log back in as the person they’re claiming to be, thus proving their identity. Some folks have simply opted to avoid trades with mule characters of any sort.

## **Member of a Respected Allegiance**

Few Allegiances in Dereth have escaped this trick, due to limitations inherent in the way Allegiances are organized. Basically, the “trader” will claim to be—or might even actually be—a member of another established Allegiance. “I’m in The Lonely Guardsmen, under Laird Smithie. You’ve heard of him, right? So you can trust me!”

Some of these charlatans don’t even bother to join (infiltrate, actually) the Allegiance in which they claim membership. They’ll just say they’re a mule belonging to a particular Allegiance member.

This is an especially irksome problem for Allegiance Monarchs, who all too often receive complaints of thievery about some member they didn’t even know they had. Beyond their own direct Vassals, Monarchs can only depend on word-of-mouth to know who is and isn’t in their Allegiance, and for those with more than a hundred or so Vassals—well, conducting a full “roll call” is near to impossible. Moreover, due to the fluid nature of Allegiances, such a member listing is almost sure to be inaccurate as soon as it’s completed.

Another implicit weakness in the system is that, by default, the character option is set to “Accept allegiance requests”—meaning if you’re not paying attention, someone could swear allegiance to your character without your knowledge. Thus, that mule offering really fantastic armor for

trade may be able to actually prove themselves to be members of an Allegiance. There's really nothing to guarantee the people of that Allegiance will even know about the erstwhile infiltrator.

Essentially, make it a practice to look upon all claims of legitimacy—whether it's membership in a respected Allegiance or being the mule of someone famous—as red-flag warnings that you are dealing with a scammer.

## Top 6 Warning Signs of a Thief

**Figure 8: [Thief dialog.jpg](#) “This mock conversation shows how some thieves work in Asheron's Call.”**

Here's a quick checklist of clues to keep handy that can tip you off to the fact you're dealing with an unscrupulous character:

6. They claim to be a mule of someone else, usually well known, but they refuse to verify their identity by logging out and logging in as that person.
5. They claim membership (whether true or not) in a given Allegiance as assurance they can be trusted.
4. They refuse to conduct the trade through a trusted third-party trade mediator.
3. They say they're not a mule, but they're below Level 10 yet decked out in the finest armor you've ever seen and so overburdened with loot they can barely move.
2. They state they've been ripped off recently by a thief, and so the only way they'll do the trade is if you hand over your item first.
1. And finally: If the deal sounds too good to be true, there's a very good chance it is. *Caveat emptor!*

## Getting Help with Problem Players

First, the bad news: Being a jerk or even a thief in *Asheron's Call* is not against the Microsoft Game Zone Code of Conduct (CoC). People can get away with an amazing amount of deception because it's not prohibited by the CoC—and for that matter, who are we to say that role-playing a jerk, a braggart, or even a bully isn't a valid option?

Now the good news: There are limits to what people can do, and it behooves you to become familiar with the CoC. Certain behavior is outright illegal, including deliberate harassment, crude or obscene language, and gross interference with the gameplay of another person. (Sorry, line jumping at a camped dungeon or stealing your kills don't qualify. "Gross interference" in this case is someone who follows you wherever you go and tries deliberately and repeatedly to get your character killed, for example.)

There are three levels of enforcement available to address the problems that inevitably crop up when you have a few thousand players all interacting in one virtual realm.

**Advocates:** First, there are the Advocates, the in-game helpers. They're not really law enforcement, but rather simply there as friends to newbies and other players who are stuck or lost. Advocates tend to respond mainly to in-game, non-CoC help calls but will sometimes show up to help mediate player disputes. Do note that Advocates won't provide you with exact answers to quests or solutions to puzzles. Nor can they give you anything or aid you in muling, for example. Their job is to provide basic information or offer advice on how best to proceed from wherever you are.

**Figure 9: [Advocate and Sentinel.jpg](#) "Advocates and sentinels are there to help you in case of need. You will rarely see a Sentinel, but they are on duty in case of need."**

**Sentinels:** The Sentinels constitute the true enforcement arm of *Asheron's Call*. Sentinels respond to CoC calls. They also have the power to get people "unstuck" in Dereth (someone trapped by a program flaw, perhaps unable to move a character from behind some object deep in a dungeon). Sentinels have relatively limited powers, but they can, with cause, ban someone temporarily from playing. Usually, the troublemaker will be kicked out for just a few minutes, but a Sentinel has the authority to ban for up to 24 hours, depending on the severity of the situation. If necessary, they'll forward serious or habitual offenders to managers for further action.

Sentinels also have the power to observe you unseen, so watch your language in public or you might find yourself booted from the game.

How do you get help from these agents? One thing you can do is use the chat @list command to see if any Advocates are on duty in town. If so, send them an @tell message directly. In addition, there are two help functions in the Character screen (key F11):



**Figure 10: [Abuse screen.jpg](#) “If you have a complaint about someone’s behavior in the game, you can use the ‘Report Abuse’ option.”**

- **Report Abuse** Use this when you feel that another player is abusing you personally in a fashion that violates the Code of Conduct. This action alerts a Sentinel, who will try to respond within 15 minutes. If you don’t get a response within that time, submit the Report Abuse again. Sentinels have to monitor multiple worlds, and it’s possible for them to miss your message when things get extremely busy. Report Abuse also allows Admins to review logs of a situation later if they need to consider other action.

**Figure 11: [Urgent Assistance.jpg](#) “If you have urgent need of help – for instance, you have gotten stuck behind something in the landscape and can’t escape – use the ‘Urgent Assistance’ option.”**

- **Urgent Assistance** This function pages either a Sentinel or an Advocate and lets them know you need help right away. If you’re physically stuck, you can expect a Sentinel to respond. If you’re generally confused about a situation or have a particular questions, an Advocate will come to your aid. As with Report Abuse, you should expect a response within 15 minutes.

**Zone Admin:** Finally, the Zone-level administration can be reached via e-mail through

- [complaints@asheronscall.com](mailto:complaints@asheronscall.com), for *Asheron’s Call* specific issues, or
- [zmaster@microsoft.com](mailto:zmaster@microsoft.com), for Zone-related problems

Writing to these folks should be your last resort and only if the Sentinels are unable to help. For example, a Sentinel cannot see if you are being harassed via private @tell messages. You’ll need to capture screenshots of the offending behavior and write to the [complaints@asheronscall.com](mailto:complaints@asheronscall.com) address as soon as possible, explaining your situation.

Rest assured that the folks behind *Asheron’s Call* want Dereth to be a reasonably safe and hassle-free environment—at least as far as player interaction goes. They do care what happens and will follow up on every

matter brought to their attention and found to have grounds for further investigation.

---

## Fact Check: Correction for Chapter 6

There's one small correction to the existing text of Chapter 6. Corpses, which have sometimes held pretty good items, very rarely do now. It might still be worth looking, but typically you'll only find relatively worthless stuff like Skewers and Neutral Balms.

---

## Coming Soon

We're excited about what's happening in *Asheron's Call*. In the next installment of this update, we'll alert you to changes in items, armor, and weapons, as well as new monsters and new behaviors. We'll also take a look at some of the new quests, reveal new stuff about the magic system, update the strategies on death and being a Player Killer, and more.