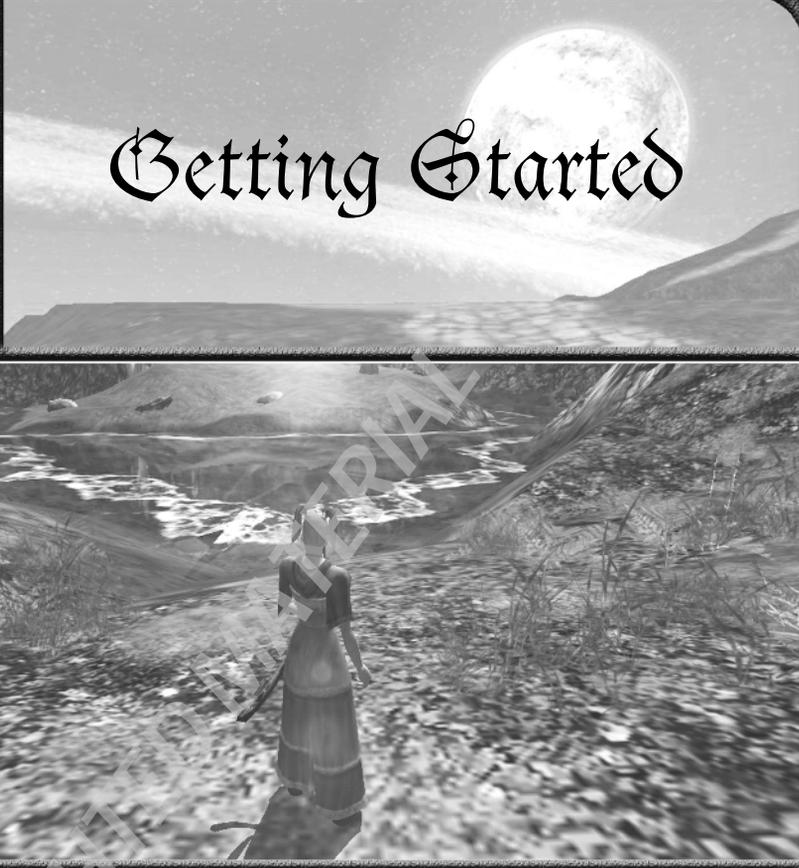




Chapter 1



Getting Started



Getting started in a new game can be daunting for any player. Asheron's Call 2 Fallen Kings is a new game with beautiful new wrappings. It's based on the story of Asheron's Call, taking that story into the distant, post-cataclysmic future. Most of the game mechanics are very different, though. And that might be confusing.

Some players are going to be playing AC2 after playing Asheron's Call for a number of years. For those players, we're offering "The Differences Between AC1 and AC2." Take a look and realize that you won't just be stepping into a future version of Asheron's Call or Asheron's Call Dark Majesty (last year's expansion of AC).

Need a little bit more help getting started? We've put together a Starting Strategy...with pictures! Hopefully, this will help you get your character rolling toward higher Levels as quickly as possible.

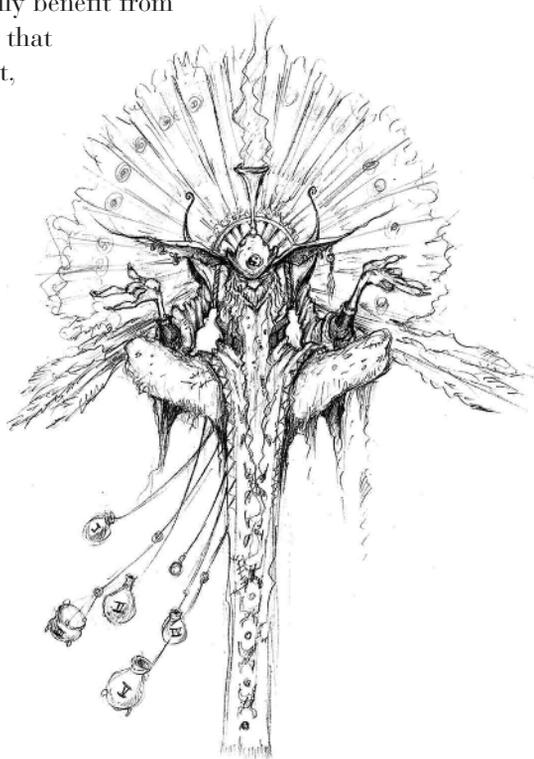
CULTURE SHOCK

Do you remember the scene in “The Wizard of Oz” where Dorothy and her little dog Toto were pulled up by a cyclone and put down somewhere completely different? Well, get ready... because after the twisting purple cyclone puts you down, you won’t be in Kansas anymore, either.

Culture shock is the feeling of surprise and confusion experienced when people switch from a familiar game to a new one. That’s what you’re going to get when you go from *Asheron’s Call* to *Asheron’s Call 2*—it doesn’t matter that the name of the world is the same or that the people you encounter are your old buddies from the alliance you just left. *Asheron’s Call 2* is a completely different experience.

Leveling

- ❧ **Power-Leveling is harder.** The allegiance system is set up differently. Only part of a patron’s experience can come from his or her vassals blood, sweat and tears. The rest has to come from the patron’s own endeavors. In other words, you can’t put a bunch of active players under a “paper” Monarch and expect that Monarch to rise in Level just from pass-up experience alone.
- ❧ **Don’t Hoard.** Don’t hold onto your skill credits with a plan to assign them all at once. That technique is for games where making a mistake in assigning skills is a deadly sin. In *AC2* it’s much more important to actually benefit from your experience...and if you find out later that you’d be better off with a different skill set, simply untrain and reassign the skills.
- ❧ **Generic Newbies.** There’s no real class distinction until Level 15. A pure melee character and a pure caster will use the same armor and weapons at first, so you can’t tell what a newbie can do until she does it—or until she tells you.



Inventory

- ❧ **No ammunition!** Arrows, javelins, etc. ...you never run out!
- ❧ **No town trips.** The lack of consumables is a major difference...you could sit in the woods forever if that’s what you wanted. The only reason to come to town—if you’re not a crafter—is for the portals.

Combat

- ❧ **Min-Maxers.** *AC1* is a good game for people who like to pore over the rules and find the absolute best way to use the system to their advantage. *AC2* is much more adaptable. There is no way to get “the best” setup for a specialization, because you’re never locked into any system.
- ❧ **Vitae penalty.** This can be crippling, and it’s a real hassle to get rid of unless you join a Fellowship.
- ❧ **Big Bad Boogies.** In *AC1* you could conceivably bang heads with any critter in the land (and run for safety if things got out of control). In *AC2* you’ll need to spend more time picking which monsters you want to take on. You can probably survive fighting at or slightly above your Level, but a solo fighter will want to hedge his bets and fight below Level to keep vitae penalty down.



Social Systems

- ❧ **Griefing.** You are dependent on others for items and grouping, so being a griever has a limited lifespan. You *can* do it, of course, but now they have ways to make your life miserable.
- ❧ **Move along.** If you aren’t moving, you’re in danger. There are no real safe places...roaming critters will find you. Stay fast, keep moving.
- ❧ **Buffy.** Don’t ask for buffs from strangers. It’s the sure mark of an immigrant.
- ❧ **Get over it.** There are going to be some major differences in attitude, and just because you’re used to *AC1* doesn’t mean your vote wins. If someone wants something you thought you should have, let them have it...it won’t be too hard to get a better one.
- ❧ **Wanna be Monarch today?** You don’t have to be a lower Level than your patron to swear to him or her. Allegiances can be structured any way that works best without having to worry about sorting through player Levels.

Interface

- ❧ **Remap the keys.** Preset the key commands to something you are familiar with and can use rapidly. If you don’t, you’ll be too frustrated to really enjoy the game.

STARTING STRATEGIES FOR *ASHERON'S CALL 2 FALLEN KINGS*

Some say that a picture is worth a thousand words. Well, hopefully, this section will be helpful to those of us who like to look at the pictures. It takes a heavily pictorial walk down the early character development road. This information was gathered during the Beta phase of *AC2*, so it is difficult to pin down exactly how long it will take you to get to Level 10, but these ideas will help you understand the process and give you some tips to try along the way.

Character Creation

Boy, is this simple in *AC2*! Pick whether you want to be Male or Female Human, Tumerok, or Lugian and what you want your character to look like, as in Figure 1.1.



Figure 1.1: *Pick your character's race and appearance.*

The Sanctuary

Each race has its own sanctuary. They look different, but the drill is pretty much the same. So, since space is limited, Zarozi, a female Tumerok, will be the character we follow for this section.

Tip!

Stop and read each Teaching Stone (Figure 1.2)! They will tell you many things you need to know to get the most fun from your character.



Figure 1.2:
Teaching Stone

What You Start With

Figure 1.3 shows you a sample of how your inventory looks when you first create your character. Lugian and Human inventories look a bit different from this, but the basic functions are the same. You have what you are wearing, a melee weapon, a missile weapon, and an item that will allow you to use magic your magic skill. In *AC2*, you don't have to choose a weapon or "profession" before you get started. You can try things out first.

Check out your Hot Key Bars (Figure 1.4) at the middle bottom of your screen. All of your skills are in Row 1 to begin with; however, you have 10 rows of hot keys, so you might as well get used to them now and organize them. For example:

- 1 Magic: Magic Item—such as a staff, sceptre, or drum—in the first box and icon of the starting spell given to you.
- 2 Missile: Missile weapon in the first box and icon of the starting skill given to you.
- 3 Melee: Melee weapon in the first box and icon of the starting skill given to you.



Figure 1.3: *Your starting inventory*

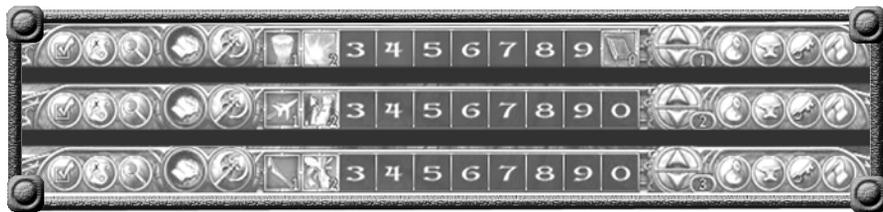


Figure 1.4: *A suggestion for your Hot key Bar setup.*

Tip!

Use your keyboard to help facilitate gameplay. Hit the keyboard **[-]** (hyphen) key to cycle through the Hot Key Bars. Use **[Shift]** to cycle backwards through the bars.

Note

Some magic skills that you can choose later—such as skills to bring back health and vigor—can be used while holding a melee or missile weapon.

Skill	Lugian	Human	Tumerok
<i>Melee</i>	Crumble	Riposte 1	Flay 1
<i>Missile</i>	Revenge	Deadeye 1	Impale 1
<i>Magic</i>	Burst	Mind Lash	Flash 1
<i>Special</i>	Lifestone Recall 1	Lifestone Recall 1	Lifestone Recall 1

You will need to be holding a melee weapon to access your melee weapon skill (or a missile weapon to access your missile weapon skill). You will need to be holding your staff/sceptre/drum to access your magic skill. You can be holding any of these to access your special skill.

Let's Get Out of the Training Sanctuary!

Okay, you've made it through character creation. You've read the Teaching Stones and are now familiar with your screen interface. You've set everything up so it's easily accessible. It's not our purpose to repeat everything you can get from the manual or from the Teaching Stones. We just want to give you a preview of what each of the steps looks like.

Learn to Fight

For those of you who have enjoyed *AC1*, Figure 1.5 will be familiar. Ah, the Straw Drudge. This Level 1 Straw Drudge has 25,000 health and 25,000 vigor. It doesn't fight back, but you would get very tired trying to kill it. Use this opportunity, instead, to try out your different options.

Click on the Straw Drudge to select it as your target. Notice the red and blue lines under its name. Those are the health (red) and vigor (blue) indicators for your opponent.

If you set up your Hot Key Bars as in the previous section, go to your Melee weapon row and press **[1]** on your keyboard to equip your weapon.

Then, stand back and use your melee weapon by pressing **[~]** (the tilde key), or click on the "Axe" icon in the bottom interface to get into combat mode. (If you're using a missile weapon, don't worry about running out of missile ammunition. There's a little invisible creature in your backpack making arrows, javelins or chuckas as fast as you can use them.)

You'll notice a golden flare around a creature when it's vulnerable. This is the best time to use a skill for the potential of extra damage. If you put your skill icon in the second box on your Hot Key Bar, hit **[2]** to use your skill which adds to your regular successful attack's damage, as per the skill description. Two things to remember when using skills:

- 1 You deplete your vigor as you use the skill. Watch *your* vigor (blue) bar in the upper left of your screen. You will still be able to make regular attacks if your vigor goes to zero, but the extra help your skill will give you is very important. Figure out the best time is to use your skills. Then, you'll be able to get loot from a vanquished foe rather than dying yourself.
- 2 There will be a waiting time before you can use the skill again. This is indicated by a gray screen that comes up over the skill icon in your Hot Key bar. It will slide back down as the time ticks off until you can use that skill again. When the icon is again un-grayed, you're ready to use your skill again.

Use your time in front of the Straw Drudge to try out all your attacks and skills. This will be your first taste of how the Combat system works. Become familiar with the sequence here...and then move on to the next part.



Figure 1.5: *The invincible Straw Drudge*

The Lifestone

All right, you've gotten yourself accustomed to your moves through the combat sequence. Now, a bit of lore...the Lifestone (Figure 1.6). In order to keep Derethians alive to vanquish evil, the Emyrean mage Asheron created Lifestones—those places where you are resurrected after you die. There have been recent revelations that the Lifestones are also keeping his fellow Emyreans alive, but that's a discussion for one of the wonderful AC2 websites' lore sections. (See page 234 for Recommended Websites.)

Double-click on the Lifestone here to attune yourself to it. You're about to try out your combat prowess on some real creatures that will fight back.

Each race has a different Lifestone “ritual.” Judicious use of your Lifestone is also a way to get around Dereth through the Lifestone Recall skill, in addition to the obvious—the place you most want to end up after a bastion of evil has its way with you.

Your First Real Combat

You've beaten up the Straw Drudge, you've attuned to a Lifestone...now, the fun begins!

You turn the corner and run into a Cursed Vermin, Figure 1.7.

- 1 Click on it to select it.
- 2 Hit (the tilde key) or click on the Axe icon to go into combat mode. (Make sure you're close enough to use the weapon and skill you choose. Don't worry, the game will tell you over and over if you're not close enough.)
- 3 Press your skill icon, or use the keyboard number for your skill's icon.

Keep at it until the poor, um, dastardly evil rodent is dead. If you happen to lose sight of the creature you killed for some reason, look for the steam-smoke-spirit leaving the corpse.



Figure 1.6: *The Lifestone in the Tumerok Sanctuary*



Figure 1.7: *Attack the Cursed Vermin*

Loot!!

“Pffft!” you say. “I’m not going to bother with the measly loot on these rats.” Don’t be so quick to decide. You would be missing an opportunity to gather materials that you could possibly use later to craft a new sword, drum, javelin, or piece of armor. For now, just take the hint and loot everything you kill.

- 1 Double-click on the corpse to open the loot window, Figure 1.8.
- 2 Double-click each loot item (which puts the loot into the first slot in your inventory) or drag it into any slot you choose in your inventory.

Cursed Vermin will continue to spawn, so kill as many as you need to. Try out all forms of combat and all of your current skills. This is the place where you can soon get the feel for what you like to use the most for that character.



Figure 1.8: *The loot window*

The Mend Statue Quest

Once you tire of killing Cursed Vermin—or you find and kill a Vermin Filcher with a blue orb in his loot that you can’t pick up—you can move on.

Look for the Ancestor Head (Figure 1.9). Double-click on the head and it will give you your first quest. Click on the Key button on the lower right interface to bring up your Quest window. You will find that the Mend Statue Quest is active and what you must do to solve it. Some quests have time limits. If so, there will also be a timer going in this window to let you know how much longer you have. The Mend Statue Quest has a 3 hour timer—more than enough time!

Continue on to an area with many Vermin Filchers (Figure 1.10). Take your pick and kill one. Don’t worry. The others shouldn’t attack you. In the loot, you should find a blue Effigy Orb...just what you were looking for. Your quest advances and the Quest window is updated with the next step: “Put the Effigy Orb in the Statue of Remembrance’s hand.”



Figure 1.9: *Ancestor Head that gives the Mend Statue Quest*



Figure 1.10: *Loot with Effigy Orb*

Complete the Quest and Advance

Continue on in the Sanctuary until you run into a tall statue. Drag the Effigy Orb from your inventory to the statue. The Orb appears in the hand of the statue. You have successfully completed your first quest, mandatory for leaving the Sanctuary, and gone from Level 1 to Level 2! (Figure 1.11)

Click on your character to select yourself and press **[e]**, or click on the magnifying glass, or double-click on your character to bring up the Examine window. You can then see for yourself that you are, indeed, now Level 2.

If you continue on, you'll see a portal that will take you to a sort of intermediate training grounds. You won't be able to go through this portal until you complete the Mend Statue Quest.

Intermediate Learning...

After an interesting movie, your character shows up on a platform in a peaceful area. Before you even step off the platform, hit **[F7]** or click on the Anvil button on the right side of the bottom interface to bring up your Skill Trees for Melee, Missile, Magic, and Special. Skills with a green diamond below them are ones you haven't trained yet, but you are eligible to train. You receive one skill point for reaching Level 2. Think about what you want to do with your character and choose a skill along the branch of the tree you wish to take. (See Skills, page 13.) Click on your selected skill icon and you can see how many skill points it will take to train that skill. If you have enough skill points—and you should for an early skill—click on the big green diamond at the bottom and you've trained your first skill!

Now, you'll see that you have some experience points to spend on your new skill, if you wish. When you click on your new skill now, you will see that the large green diamond had turned into a large green up-arrow. (Figure 1.12) Click on this several times to spend your experience points and increase the Level of your skill. The higher the skill's Level, the more effective it will be. (The small green down arrow is for untraining a skill later, if you decide that you're not going to use it. This is explained in the various Specializations, starting on page 72.)



Figure 1.11: *Finish the quest and move up a Level*



Figure 1.12: *Your skills window*

TEST YOUR SKILLS

Okay, now you can step off the platform and follow the path to The Red Wasp Area (Figure 1.13). Be sure to read all the Teaching Stones along the way. They'll show you how you can swim—a very valuable ability in the AC2 Dereth. And, they'll show you how to use your chat window and emotes to roleplay your character.

One of the Teaching Stones tells you of an area beset with Red Wasps up ahead. Double-click on the Lifestone next to the Red Wasp Area and start ridding the area of wasps.

Loot every kill!



Figure 1.13: *Red Wasp Area*

LEARN CRAFTING

After you've attained Level 3, step away from the active area, spend your skill point and any experience points and look over your loot. Click on an item in your inventory and then press **[E]** to open your Examine window. At the bottom of the Examine window, you'll find a list of traits that make up that item, along with the rating of each trait.

Next, open your Skill Tree window (click on the Anvil button or press **[F7]**) and click on the Craft Tab. This is a collapsing list of crafting recipes. (Figure 1.14). For more detail, see Crafting on page 127.

For now, let's make a new drum for Zarozi. (Drums are needed to use the Tumerok Magic Skills.) Select the Tumerok Weaponsmithing line and click on the down arrow. Then, click on the down arrow in front of Drum to reveal the recipes that Zarozi can use. Right now, the only recipe available is Drum (Basic).

Note

There are several intermediate areas where a character can go through early Levels. If you create your character at the same time as some real-life friends do, your character may not be able to be with their characters in game until you leave the intermediate area for the rest of the world of Dereth.



Figure 1.14: *The crafting interface*

Click on the down arrow in front of Drum (Basic) and you open up the crafting recipe window with a list of the required items for crafting a new Drum. It says, “Requires at least Wood rating 15.”

One of the Blessed Talismans in Zarozi’s inventory has a Wood rating of 17. Drag that item to the Ingredients window and click on the Craft button.

Several outcomes are possible. You could succeed and have a new Drum with better statistics to help you cast more effective Magic. You could fail, in which case Zarozi not only doesn’t get a new Drum, but also loses the Blessed Talisman. You could make a flawed Drum that is probably not the best to use, but could at least be changed into gold.

“Changed into gold?” you ask.



Figure 1.15: Using a crafting recipe

TURN LOOT INTO GOLD

No, this isn’t an infomercial. It’s alchemy! And, it’s very simple. Drag an item from your inventory over the little “Gold” sack in the top left corner of your Inventory window. You will get a window asking if you’re sure you want to change this item into gold. Click “Okay” and you’ve got a coin or two in your coin window.

Why do you need gold in a world without NPCs? (Did we mention that there are no non-player characters in AC2?) Some higher Level crafting recipes require gold as a component. And, you can always use coins to offer to buy something from another player. Who knows what kind of trading economy will grow up in the coming months of AC2.

BACK TO THE RED WASPS

Stay in the Red Wasp Area until you’re at least Level 6. Stop with each Level increase to improve your skills and see if there’s anything else you can craft. Check out the armorsmithing recipes, too. It won’t take long—you’ll get to Level 6 quickly enough.

VERMIN PILFERERS

Celebrate reaching Level 6 by moving down the road to the area with Vermin Pilferers. The loot here will be a little better and you may be able to pick up some armor or a weapon that is better than what you could craft yourself with the earlier recipes. Try to stay in this area until Level 7 or 8. Yes, we know you want to move on.

Tip!

After you master a basic recipe, you get a higher Level recipe. Use your time in this intermediate area to master your basic recipes.

MOVE ON OUT!

The time comes for all good players to move on out of the safety of the intermediate area, into the world of Dereth.

At the end of the path is a portal to one of the low-Level cities, such as Arwic, Kehan, or Millstone. Not everyone will go to the same town, but here is where you can meet up with your friends by using the Gateways and Ringways.

Your Options Now

Once you leave the training area, your options are wide open. You can take your loot to the smithing workshop in the first town you reach, or further down the road. The more popular workshops give you a bonus to your crafting skills, so it would be helpful to go to a workshop to use your higher Level recipes. Alternatively, you can hunt solo or in a Fellowship.

Or, you can go on a quest!

OBELISK QUEST & VAULT DUNGEONS

We recommend that you undertake the Obelisk Quest as soon as you can (Figure 1.16). Double-click the Ancestor Head near where you enter Dereth. It will give you the Obelisk Quest and put the details into your Quest window. This quest will show you how to get around Dereth using the many Ringway and Gateway portals.

Most importantly, it will give you three glyphs that you can use to get into three Vault dungeons (Figure 1.17) and gain more information about the past of Dereth and the cataclysm (Figure 1.18) that made it what it is today. Plus, you get experience!

You'll be Level 15—and able to choose a Specialization—before you know it.



Figure 1.16: *One of the objectives of the Obelisk Quest*



Figure 1.17: *Beginning of the Lost Wish Vault*



Figure 1.18: *Lost Wish Shard of information*