



BLACKGUARDS 2

Strategy-Guide

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first Steps

Welcome back to Aventuria!

If you have already played Blackguards 1, you can probably skip ahead to chapter 2 on page 18. For everyone else we have assembled a quick introduction into the general gameplay mechanics of Blackguards 2 and will guide you through the first maps. You will learn how the game works and how to master the first challenges. Afterwards you should be roughly on the same level as the veterans who already accompanied Naurim, Zurbaran and Takate on their first big adventure.

Our story begins in the labyrinths underneath the arena of the depraved city of Mengbilla, a metropolis where slave traders and a ruthless upper class rule. Cassia of Tenos used to be part of this upper class – but now she wakes up to the dark tunnels of the labyrinth, without even knowing which crime she has been accused of. But Cassia decides to rebel against her fate. Her goal is simple: escape from captivity and oust her former husband Marwan from the throne of Mengbilla.

But in the beginning she can do little but talk to her guards or wander around the labyrinth. So you should click on the symbol for talking to the guard on the first screen and then, when you have exhausted the options, leave the room by clicking the exit.

Map No 1 The Labyrinth

Movement, interactive objects and first steps in combat

Cassia ends up in a remote part of the labyrinth. The map you will be moving across is segmented into six-sided tiles, so-called hexes. By scrolling the mousewheel you can change the perspective.

Click left onto a blue-hued tile to move Cassia over to it. These highlighted tiles tell you how far she can move in a single combat-round. You will notice the tiles are highlighted in different colors. Cassia can move to the white-rimmed hexes, but will have no action left in the same round. If she only moves to the completely blue, closer tiles, she keeps another action. If she moves as far as possible, her round automatically ends. If you want her to move along a specific path, click each hex after another, beginning right at her feet.

Interacting with objects is also rather simple. On the left side, there is a treasure chest. You will regularly find similar chests in the game and it will pay off to plunder them for more money and new equipment. Reaching them is usually paired with a small new challenge.

In this case a few, rotted boxes block your way. Clicking left on the boxes will prompt Cassia to smash them with her club, opening up the way. To open the chest, click left again.

You also only have to click the lever in the middle of the room to make Cassia turn it over and thus open the exit into the rest of the labyrinth. This is pretty obvious, but you will have to keep your eyes peeled for hidden levers and mechanisms on other maps later on in case you seem to be stuck.

Unfortunately, your actions have also summoned three aggressive spiders and since now there are several units on the map, the turn-based element of Blackguards becomes important: Cassia and the spiders will now take turns. After the spiders have finished their action, you can simply click one of them and Cassia will squash it. In a single round, a character can either move a small distance and perform an action (for example attacking, interacting or casting a spell), move twice as far (the white-rimmed tiles) or simply perform an action. A character's turn always ends after the action.

If you take damage during the fight, Cassia's vitality-bar underneath her portrait will shrink. But do not worry. Some nice labyrinth-dweller has placed small fountains of a healing liquid everywhere. Simply click those to regenerate vitality. On the right side of the map you will find another lever which will open a second door. Now you can finish the map.



At the end of every map a loot table appears showing how many adventure points you have earned and how much gold and other loot you have found. For now, you simply click “Take all”.

Level Up and Equipment

After this first short adventure, Cassia has already earned a few adventure points. You can use them to upgrade her abilities. To do this, you should first decide on which weapon Cassia is going to specialize in in the future. Do not worry: You can also train her to become a mage or a ranged fighter.

But first click on “Cassia’s Collection” and drag and drop the shown weapons into the inventory in the middle of the screen. Just take everything.

A bastard sword, for instance, deals a lot of damage, but in the beginning you will have to use it with two hands and it is more unwieldy than a dagger or a club. The defense with a bastard sword is not very good, either.

You can find your inventory by clicking the button in the upper right corner. Equip your hero with those weapons by dragging and dropping them on Cassia’s portrait. Equip Cassia with the belt and healing potions that you just won by doing the same. To be able to use the chosen weapon, switch to the character screen - the button is also located in the upper right corner - and invest your adventure points in the suitable weapons talent. Two-handed swords for a bastard sword, for instance. You can spend the points by holding the “plus”-button. But do not spend them all at once, because there are more possible options. Afterwards, you can use the slider to decide how much Cassia will concentrate on

attack or defense. Most players prefer an aggressive style for melee characters. But if you want to turn Cassia into a mage, you should probably choose a more defensive setting. You can change the slider’s position between offense and defense later at any time.

The settings you have chosen directly influence your current stats which you can see on the character screen below: those are not only derived from talents and skills, but also from items equipped in your inventory. If you level up a talent, but do not have a suitable weapon equipped, your stats for offense and defense will not show the changes. If you have a suitable weapon equipped, though, you will immediately see the changes. The stats in offense and defense are derived directly from your weapons and the points you invested in the weapons talent. They allow you to immediately assess your chances for attack and defense depending on the way you have invested your points.

Lernen - Der gute Herrscher

Cassia
975
AP

Zweihand-Fluchschwert

Zweihand-Fluchschwert sind die mächtigsten Schwerter. Sie bieten wenig Schutz, sind aber weniger unhandlich als zweihändige Hieb- und Stichwaffen.

Stufe 1: 100% Schaden
Stufe 2: 120% Schaden
Stufe 3: 140% Schaden
Stufe 4: 160% Schaden
Stufe 5: 180% Schaden

Werte

Schaden	100	Geschwindigkeit	100
Offense	100	Abwehr	100
Defense	100	Abwehr	100
Werte	100	Abwehr	100

Regenerationswerte

Abwehr	100	Abwehr	100
Abwehr	100	Abwehr	100
Abwehr	100	Abwehr	100

Other talents, skills and spells have to be learned from tutors and books. Luckily, Cassia has already found one. Choose “learn from the book” to advance your character a different way.

You can immediately teach Cassia her first spells. Under the tab “Special Abilities” you can raise vitality, endurance and astral energy as well as the regeneration of these stats. Dodge increases your defense, several other special abilities are requirements for the usage of different kinds of armor, shields or dual wielding.

Under the tab of “Special Maneuvers” you find effective methods to stun or overwhelm your enemies with stronger attacks, which cost resources – like spells. Talents offer eight basic ways to raise your stats, build resistences, to move faster or to gather information on your opponents.

What exactly is useful depends on what kind of character you want Cassia to become. As a melee fighter you should raise her vitality, choose a weapons talent to invest in and maybe buy a special maneuver. As a ranged fighter you will have to pick the suitable talent and special maneuvers, but since she will mostly stay behind the frontlines, you can focus on endurance instead of vitality. As a mage, you will invest your points best if you buy astral energy and spells.

Map No. 2 Back into the Labyrinth

Traps, Circle UI and Sequence of Turns

You are now ready for the second map. Again, Cassia will try to fight her way through the labyrinth and again she will be waylaid by spiders. This time, traps will offer a new challenge. Basically you only have to watch out that you do not end your turn on a trap and you will be safe. This may sound simple, but when moving up to ten units on bigger maps later in the game, it will get much harder to keep track of this.

The spear traps on this map activate every second round and do not pose a threat in between, the fire trap activates at the end of each round. This means you may have to wait a turn before you can keep going. You can do this by opening the circle UI with a right click. Here you find more detailed orders for Cassia, among them “End Turn”. You can also find all spells and special maneuvers in this UI. If you want to cast a spell or hit an enemy with a mighty blow, you have to use the circle UI, choose the action and then click the enemy – or you click right on the chosen enemy unit to open the circle UI and then choose the action. If you want to access these maneuvers more quickly, you can open the hotkey-bar by clicking the button in the upper right corner and drag and drop the abilities into the slots. Afterwards, you can simply use them by pressing the matching buttons.

So, if in doubt, end your round to wait for the traps to activate. This also means that enemies might move while you wait. Later in the game traps may be hidden and you will have to use the talent “Perception” to find them.

You will also find the familiar combinations of levers, doors, treasure chests, boxes and healing fountains on this map. Again you have to open

doors by using the levers to move on or open chests and again this will attract spiders. In the middle of the map you can smash several boxes to gain access to one of these levers.

Because of the greater number of enemies in combination with the traps, the succession of turns becomes very important on this map. At the bottom of the screen you see the portraits of all units on the map. The order of the portraits from left to right shows who will be acting next, based on the unit's initiative. The marker shows when a new round will begin. The background color of the portraits displays which side the unit belongs to and you can get additional information beyond the bars for vitality, endurance and astral energy in a mouse over-popup.

If you plan your actions and wait at the right spot or even backtrack a few steps through the labyrinth, you can lure the spiders into the traps and keep away from their bites. You will not have to rush towards the enemy in other maps, either. Wait for them at tight junctions, of which there will be many in the labyrinth, so you can only be attacked by one spider at a time. But you do not have to forego the complete round if



you want to wait for an opponent's move. Click on "Wait" at the bottom of the circle UI and the enemies will act first. Afterwards, you can still use your action.

In this mission, you get arrows and a bow as loot. This could be the opportunity to invest in Cassias ranged talents and try them in the next mission to decide whether you like the playstyle or not. You can raise the weapons talent for bows just the same as the melee talents and add the special maneuver "Targeted Shot".

Map No. 3

Labyrinth, Third Part

Magic, Ranged Combat and the Inventory

After you have spent your adventure points and talked to the guard a second time, move into the labyrinth again. This time you will have two more units on your side: a tame spider and another poor soul lost in the catacombs, who luckily turns out to be a magician.

The biggest problem on this map are the skeleton archers on the platform in the middle. One of their arrows will probably kill the spider instantly. So you make it seek cover by using the circle UI (upper left) and the lost man will draw the attention of the skeletons. Cassia can help if she has learned ranged combat or spells. Otherwise she will have to leave the skeletons to the lost man - only the spider can reach the platform by crawling across the webs.

The lost man knows a very useful spell, Thunderbolt, which works like a simple ranged attack. Spells, like ranged attacks, have a maximum distance, though. This means the lost man will have to move closer to

the skeletons to cast the spell. Remember the blue hexes: the lost man should only move as far as the completely blue tiles, otherwise he will not be able to use a second action to cast his spell. Move as close as possible to the skeletons without leaving these tiles. Then choose the spell on the upper right of the circle UI and then click on the left skeleton. It will take damage from the spell and now the archers will take aim at the mage.

The lost man will probably take a lot of damage in this fight if Cassia cannot help. This will not be a big problem since he also knows a healing spell which he uses the same way as an attack spell – or he could use potions in his belt. Items that have been placed in a belt-slot before a fight starts can be used as an action – and luckily a healing potion is among those. You can choose the belt-slots on the left in the circle UI. Of course, Cassia has the same option.

Afterwards you have to practise teamwork. The lost man flips a lever to the right to allow Cassia to pass a grate (after plundering the chest to the north). She passes another door, but before she uses the next lever, have the lost man click on the drawing bridge twice so he can cross over to help her. Cassia will need him, because as soon as she flips the last lever, the exit will open, but more spiders will appear.

You do not have to bother with the rest of the map, the rest of the hidden secrets will be important in another chapter of the game ...

Map No. 4 Takate's Arena

Dialogue-Options and Environmental Damage

After escaping the labyrinth we find ourselves in a jungle: Cassia wants to convince the great gladiator Takate to join her cause, but he throws her into his arena instead. Side by side with her interpreter she will have to survive an attack by swamp apes.

Because of several magma flues the heat on the map is very intense, so do not exhaust yourself by running across the map. Instead, wait for the apes on the edge of the map by using the "Wait" command. After each wave of enemies, Takate will ask you several questions: he wants to know why he should join you. These dialogues are an important element



of Blackguards 2 and your answers will decide how the story progresses both on the bigger and smaller scale. As long as you do not choose the right answer, Takate will keep on sending monsters into the arena, but you have to at least fight the tiger. Tell him he can increase his reputation and promise him a remarkable death. He will join the group afterwards.

Map No. 5 The Great Escape

Setting Traps and Hinderling Enemies

Before you can go on fighting, visit Naurim first. He will tell you to scam, no matter what you say. In the next scene, you can buy Zurbaran out of slavery and have the option to get new items and level up your party in a city. Before you return to Naurim, you should spend your adventure points – for Takate and Zurbaran, too. You should also buy new weapons and armor from the merchants and equip your heroes, if your finances are good enough. You can turn Takate into a capable archer with bow and arrow - or into a quick melee fighter if you equip him with a spear. For Zurbaran, aggressive spells are important, but some like Paralyze and Fortifex Arcane Wall can also come in very handy.

Trading works just like Cassia's stash in the labyrinth, but it costs money. If you have learned the talent Traps, you might also want to buy some of those from the merchant. After you have spent your money and your adventure points, go back to Naurim.

The map is a simple escape mission: You do not have to kill any opponents, but simply move all your heroes to the escape zone on the right.

On your way you have the opportunity to plunder four chests - and you should, because you are going to need the money.

In this escape mission you will be able to place traps at the beginning – the same as in the defense missions later in the game – to hinder your opponents.

When placing your traps, activate the stack of boxes on the bottom left and then place some mantraps a little farther to the right. This is where the thick of the fighting is going to be when several enemies will try to stop you. Place your traps at choke points where the enemies have to step on them.

You can also turn oil puddles into traps which Zurbaran can ignite with an Ignifaxius aimed at the covered tiles. Of course he can also stop the



enemies by casting an Arcane Wall or by using Paralyze on an opponent in a bottleneck. If you are able to place traps as a talent, you can put down a few extra obstacles in front of your enemies.

When the hunt for your heroes begins, split your party into two groups to make the enemies stretch out and to make sure you can reach all the chests. The southern group should pass the first stack of boxes and then post one member there to topple it once everyone has made it past.

You might want to click on unstable scaffolding to bury your enemies, but it will cost you time and offer your opponents the chance to surround one of your units – and you cannot allow that, because it practically means you will lose. You should also make sure that your heroes do not block each other's paths when they have to open chests, break down barriers and use a drawbridge. You have to spend three turns to lower the bridge to escape. Several heroes can help out with this task, but you should have the others keep guard so they will not be surrounded by enemies.

Map 6 The Prison of Assakal

After the last mission you should have enough money to buy better equipment for your heroes. At least some clothes for Zurbaran and shoes for Cassia should be affordable.

Do not forget to keep on spending your adventure points. Zurbaran, for instance, should work on his Ignifaxius and the rest of the heroes can invest in weapons talents, special maneuvers or vitality.

Then move on to Assakal to free the Silent Legion, the first mercenaries you will be able to recruit.

To win this map you have to open all four prison doors and kill the guards. Right at the beginning of the fight, one guard will move to the bell in the middle and ring it to call for backup. You should stop him, before he reaches his goal. Zurbaran and Takate as ranged combatants can be of help, if they have learned the spells or talents necessary. But it will not be easy. Do not worry: Even if the bell is rung, the enemies will need several rounds to move in in full force. You should use the time to open the four doors. Faramud and his men will then enter the fight on your side.

If you have made it this far, you have learned about all basic gameplay elements in Blackguards 2. In the next chapter we will go into more detail and present those features that are new to the series.

New features in Blackguards 2

Blackguards 2 keeps to the core of the Dark Eye-system, but simplifies the presentation. It also broadens the tactical possibilities by introducing several new features that we will explain on the following pages. The changes are based on the constructive criticism and ideas of the fans and will both streamline the gameplay and offer more tactical depth.

Simplified Statistics

The most obvious change, if you look at the character screen of Blackguards 2, is that it seems less cluttered. Part 1 used the Dark Eye rules with almost no changes to the tabletop-game. In the second part, the rules have been streamlined without discarding the basics. The changes cut down on the element of pure chance in Blackguards, which makes the combat quicker, more strategic and less frustrating. The times when two units could stand in front of each other and keep missing or parrying for several rounds are over.

The tab with the basic values is simply gone. Strength, Charisma - you will not have to worry about those attributes any more. In Blackguards 1, you had to raise them as a prerequisite to using several talents, weapons talents, spells or special abilities or to be able to equip your hero with a high-level weapon. Now they will be raised automatically in the background. You invest your points directly in weapons talents, special maneuvers and talents or, under the special abilities-tab, your vitality, astral energy or other abilities that raise your regeneration, resistance and initiative.

This gets rid of a whole screen you will not have to keep in mind when allotting your points.

In the first game, your base values and weapons talents influenced secondary stats like attack, parade, dodge, ranged combat and speed. This has also been streamlined. You basically only need the statistics for offense and defense in combat. They are directly derived from a base value which is combined by using the stats for the weapon you have equipped and how many points you have invested in the accompanying weapons talent. The different weapons classes are more aggressive or more defensive, depending on their nature. The points you have bought for a weapons talent can then be split freely into offense and defense – and you can change this any time between fights. You can invest up to 100 points in each weapons talent and split them for offense and defense. They are then added to the weapon's stats. Your changes are immediately adapted in the stats on the bottom right of your character screen, so you can instantly see what they will change. If you manage to raise the offense to 100, for instance, you have a 100 percent chance of hitting with this weapon.

This makes it easier to see how good your character is at a task, instead of doing the math to find out how good “attack 15” actually is.

You can keep raising offense and defense by buying special abilities like Dodge or Weaponmaster Melee. These offer you a straight bonus, but you will not have to worry about when a character will actually be able to dodge.

Handling your spells has also become easier. There will be no more fumbles while casting spells which makes magic much more powerful - but the same is true for your enemy's magic.

Endurance

Endurance is a completely new stat in Blackguards 2. It was part of the 4th Edition of the tabletop game, but was not used in Blackguards 1. It is basically an equivalent to astral energy for non-mages: it is the resource for special maneuvers like power blow, the same as using astral energy to pay for spells. Of course mages also have an endurance stat, but it is far less important for them.

In Blackguards 1, your heroes could use power- or hammerblow or other special maneuvers as often as they wanted in a fight to cause more damage or secondary effects. Using them simply lowered the hit chance. This has been completely reworked. Every single maneuver costs endurance which is displayed as a yellow bar beneath the vitality. This is also the case for enemies, so the game does not get harder because of it – but you should think a little longer about when to use a maneuver and when not to.

The Strategy Map and the Nonlinear Progress

In Blackguards 1 the story was presented in a rather linear way. There were several forks and side-quests, but the main route was clear. Blackguards 2 works a little differently. After the first six maps you can access the strategy map of the lands around Mengbilla. On this you can see all the townships under the control of your enemy, Marwan. At the beginning you only control a single town. Marwan's realm of influence is marked by purple flags, yours by dark blue ones.

Now you can freely choose which town or village you want to free first. You might not be able to jump from Heroes' Edge to Mengbilla in one

go, but your little army moves along the roads from one place to the next and so you always have several settlements to choose from. Hover over the places to see how strong the defenses will be - but also how rich the loot will be: gold, better equipment or a higher amount of adventure points, for instance. Some of these settlements are strategically important and have to be taken – other ones are bonus missions and you can take them on as optional content.

Depending on the way you choose to follow through southern Aventuria – and combined with the decisions you make in dialogues – the flow of the story will change. Those changes might be small things or come in really big dimensions, allowing for lots of different nuances of the finale and the fate of your followers. Will they all survive or will they turn against each other after finishing their quest? Will Cassia rule over Mengbilla – and what kind of ruler will she be?

But one thing is for certain: the strategy-map is no static thing, your enemy will not just retreat and give up. Now and then Marwan will gather his forces and strike back. Then he will attack one of your settlements and suddenly you will find yourself in the role of the defender. We will explain about that below when talking about defending maps. Marwan can only attack places he has a direct route to, though.

The mercenaries and their Abilities

In the first game you only had a handful of heroes as allies, never more than five. This has also changed. Thanks to the mercenaries, your group can now consist of up to ten units. Apart from the heroes Cassia, Takate, Naurim and Zurbaran you can also take nine mercenary units into battle, but one hero always has to take part. Before each mission, you pick the units for the map from a roster. Mercenaries come in different classes, though: you can choose from archetypes, including – later in the game – heavy hitters like black ogres, mages and assassins. You can control these mercenaries directly, just like your heroes. They can also gain better equipment and new abilities if you conquer special settlements. Which settlements give you a perk is again shown in a mouse over-popup. You can look up the character screens for your mercenaries at your camp.

Which units you choose for a battle can be an important factor. If you cannot win with your current roster, simply start the mission again and choose another combination - depending on whether you need speed or brute strength.

You will not have to actually pay the mercenaries by giving them your plundered gold. You do not have to worry about such details in Blackguards 2. They take what they need and their leader, Faramud, follows you for religious reasons. But you have to unlock the mercenaries on special maps.

You can also interact with your mercenaries off the battlefield: by bartering with them or training on special maps.

Placing Units

The ability to place your units on the battlemat yourself is also new. At the start of a mission you can choose between highlighted tiles where you want to place your heroes and mercenaries before the first round begins. Depending on the map the options can be more or less broad. In the beginning, it is only about small differences of a few hexes. Later in the game these decisions will become very important. By using your spies and questioning prisoners you can unlock extra deployment zones for several maps that you otherwise could not use, gaining an important tactical advantage.

Either way you should make sure to place your units so they will not hinder each other. Little is more frustrating than realizing that the unit which is first to move is caught between the rest of your troops. This would probably mean that you lose a whole turn – and that you might as well start the map over.

So you should place your mages and archers in the back and your quick melee fighters at the front. Keep in mind that you can fire arrows and sling spells over the heads of smaller units (yes, we are talking about Naurim) and those who duck.

The Line of Sight-Tool

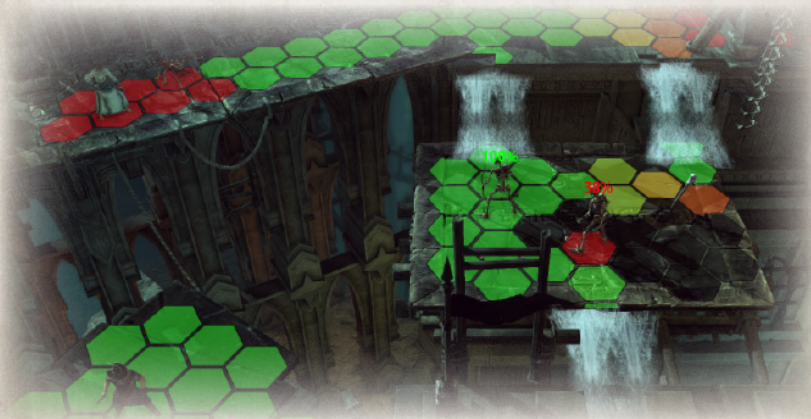
To give you a better overview of the battle we incorporated the line of sight-tool. By pressing and holding X you can light up the battlefield in different colors: the hexes are displayed in colors depending on your chances of a hit from your ranged unit on each tile. For this to work it has to be the active turn of the ranged unit and you have to hover the

mouse over this unit. The hit-chances are displayed as the following: 100 percent on green tiles, zero percent on black tiles. Yellow, orange, and red mark the chances in between.

Holding X and moving the mouse over the map will show you from which tile the chosen unit will have which hit chances. A ghost-like version of the unit will mark the hex you are hovering over - a tile next to an enemy, for instance - and you will see the hit chances for the character as they would be if you moved it to that tile.

This is a very helpful tool for analyzing the situation and you should use it often to plan your moves.

Pressing V will highlight all interactive objects on the map and the exit zones, if there are any.



Cover Mode

The heroes in Blackguards 1 had it tough: they could either move, use their standard action, wait - or stand around uselessly and let themselves be stabbed, shot or clobbered down. Now they can try to avoid damage by using the cover mode. A unit can decide - or rather, you can decide - to duck into cover for one round and so keep away from enemy attacks. Especially ranged units will have a harder time hitting this character.

Cover mode is more effective if there actually is any cover like boxes or other obstacles on the battlefield. A unit can also duck down into cover mode to make it easier for an archer standing behind it to aim his shots. A unit can also use ranged attacks in cover mode - at the end of its turn it will duck back down, even if it used its action.

Defending Maps and Placing Traps

When talking about the strategy map we already mentioned that your enemy Marwan will try and take back settlements that you have already conquered. This happens randomly, but usually after every third battle. He will then send out his henchmen to attack one of the lost settlements or forts. This puts you in the position to defend your own map for the first time. You have to fend off the attackers, using not only your mercenaries, but also traps. You can place them at the beginning of a battle as you see fit: you can choose from tripwires, mantraps, or stacks of boxes and similar obstacles. The "guard" maneuver can also prove to be very effective: You can order ranged units to defend specific parts of the map.

For ranged fighters among the heroes, you have to buy this option by learning the special maneuver "Guard". When giving the order to guard

the map, you can specify which part of the battlefield the unit will cover in arrows or bolts. Up to three enemies will trigger this ability. Of course you can also use this maneuver on offense maps.

If you should lose such a defense map, it does not mean game over. You will have another chance to take the settlement back – but it will probably be a lot harder since Marwan will now be prepared.

The Camp: Training, Prisoners and Spies

The camp of Cassia's small army is another new feature. Inbetween missions you can relax in this small hub and have a chat with your companions. There are also options to actually advance your game. There is a small training area, for instance, where you can work on your tactics. You can play around with different rosters and strategies in a special map. You can also shop or learn talents, special abilities and spells from your private tutors in the camp. A little further off, so the screams will not be heard, several cages hold your prisoners. Cassia can interrogate them in dialogues and use more or less drastic measures, free them or have them executed. You can not only gain new information from the prisoners, but also influence the story by talking to them.

You can unlock new deployment zones for maps, for instance, opportunities for traps or places where you can plunder better equipment. Should you not gain important information by choosing the wrong methods, you might walk into a trap yourself.

You can also get information by paying the spy Riz.



General Pointers

Now that you know all about the basics we also want to talk about a few strategies that will help you survive the world of Blackguards 2.

Strategies of War

Before we take a look at tactics on the battlemaps, let us switch over to the strategy map. How can you plan your campaign most effectively?

It will usually pay off to pay your spy Riz a few gold coins for information. He will tell you details about which hindrances and rewards are waiting for you in the battles to come.

The roads to the next big city to be taken usually branch out. The information you gather will allow you to choose the most effective route for you.

But you should also not leave enemy fortresses behind your lines. To avoid this, you should also conquer the alternative routes, as long as you have the time. These smaller places will also offer you adventure points, equipment and gold. Additionally, every settlement you control will be another buffer against Marwan's armies and their retaliation strikes.

Before attacking a big city or a fort you should first level up your units on smaller battlefields and gather better equipment for them. Make sure before each battle that your mages have enough astral potions and that your warriors have enough healing potions, that you have equipped enough arrows for the archers and that you have traps in your inventory. Do you have adventure points left to spend or one last piece for a set of armor left to buy? Get those, especially since armor sets give special bonuses.

Tactics on Battlemaps

When placing your characters on the battlemap you already have to make decisions that can decide the outcome of the fight. They should not hinder each other and archers and other less armored units should be placed at the back.

It is also important to not simply rush the enemy on every map. It often makes more sense to make the enemy come to you. Choose the order to wait in the circle UI instead of ending the round. This allows you to act after the enemy units have used up their actions. This works best when waiting for the opponents at a choke point and when you fight against greater numbers.

But watch out for units with spears – they can attack across two tiles. You should also use this ability of your own spear-fighters.

Make sure to place your archers to your advantage: use the line of sight-tool to decide which position will offer them the best overview, but do not forget to protect them with melee units, since archers are rather useless over short distances. The guard-option that we already mentioned is also very useful for archers and not limited to defense missions.

Mages should use their astral energy efficiently and always deliberate on whether to use a powerful spell if a smaller version will be enough to take out an already weakened enemy. In return, you should try and get rid of enemy sorcerers quickly, just the same as with units trying to call for backup.

If you should get in trouble on the battlefield, remember you only have to hover the mouse over a unit to see which effects are currently active and whether an enemy is still able to dodge or parry or whether he alrea-

dy used up his parry in a previous encounter in the same round. If the unit is unable to defend itself, it presents an easy target. The initiative-bar also helps you to plan your moves – you should take care of those who can still hurt you in the same round first.

Remember to heal your units in time. Since the talent for healing has been canceled, you can only use magic or potions. So do not skimp on those and the belts you need to use them.

Using the Environment

Interacting with the environment has become much more important than in Blackguards 1. You can still kick over boxes and bring down scaffolding to hinder your enemies or send them directly to the god of death, Boron. Choke points like runways and tight caves are extremely important strategic points. Traps can prove to be deadly for both your heroes and your enemies and some of them are hidden so well that you will only find them by using the talent Perception.

If you see the shimmer of oil on the ground it is practically an invitation to draw enemies over and then set them on fire using an Ignifaxius spell. Same is true for swamp gas. Those spots can also be dangerous for you, of course, just as slippery patches will be. Chandeliers are great to be dropped stylishly onto you enemies, but heroes have been known to take out their own friends with those.

As we already mentioned, you can place your own traps on maps to stop your enemies – ideally at choke points. Your own units will not be hindered by mantraps and tripwires.

Plundering

You will only get treasures from chests if you plunder them while the map is still active – only the loot that is always tied to a map will be yours without a little extra effort. So go and plunder those chests before the last opponent goes down and robs you of this chance. If possible, open all the chests you can find – changing the perspective helps to get a glimpse behind obstacles. Press V to highlight all interactive objects, chests included.

Effective Leveling

Leveling up in Blackguards 2 is much easier than in the first game and you see immediately which changes you get from the invested points. But there still are some ways to use your adventure points most effective.

Decide on which way to play a character early on and specialize each hero. If you cannot decide on just one role in battle, use one more alternative way, maximum. If you determine which weapons and abilities each characters will use right from the start, you can push your heroes to become masters of their chosen style pretty quickly. Instead of investing points in two different weapons talents, choose special maneuvers instead.

And in case you actually make some less fortunate decisions while leveling your heroes, the mercenaries are able to fill many gaps in your roster.

Generally, you should switch the weapons talents for warriors over to offense and those of mages to defense. Remember you can always change this.

As for spells, you should also decide on a handful of aggressive spells and not go into too broad of a spectrum. This allows you to reach fourth tier spells quicker. You should rather choose a wildly different, obscure spell than one which does practically the same as one you have already mastered - so do not invest all your points completely into different ways to cause damage, even a single spell that allows you to control or hinder enemies might also prove to be very useful.

Cassia is able to progress in every way you want her to. But it will probably be a good idea to at least teach her some magic, since you only gain access to wizard mercenaries much later in the game and a second spellcaster is always a great help.



Efficient Spellcasting

Astral energy is an important resource and you should not waste it on useless spells. If you run out of it, pull your mage back and let him take a turn off from fighting to drink an astral potion or to use cover until his regeneration has restored enough points.

You should always try to keep the mages away from the thick of the fighting. If there is no natural cover, you can use Fortifex Aracane Wall or Fastness of Body to protect them.

Mages should be aware of their surroundings. Natural phenomena like oil and swamp gas tend to increase the effectiveness of fire spells.

Spells with an area of effect look great and are a lot of fun. But they are also very costly. You should only ever use them if you can take out more than two enemies in one fell swoop.



Heroe-Guide

Skills Zurbaran

Role: Offensive or Support Caster

Recommended Special Abilities: Astral Might, Astral Regeneration, Power Control, Iron-affine Aura (allows wearing armor)

Recommended Spells: Ignifaxius, AoE spells

Recommended Weapon Talents: Two-handed Slashing Weapons (Defensive)



Skills Takate

Role: Nimble ranged or spear fighter

Recommended Talents: Traps, Perception, Warcraft

Recommended Special Abilities: Vitality, Dodge

Recommended Weapon Talents: Spears (offensive), Bows



Skills Naurim

Role: Tough Tank or Damage Dealer

Weakness: Slow

Recommended Special Abilities and Weapon

Skills: Shield Combat or Two Handed Slashing Weapons, Armor Training, Endurance

Recommended Special Attack: Hammer Blow



Monster-Guide



The Leapers

Created from: Corpses

Special Attacks: Leap great distances and overwhelm opponents. They can push characters off ledges or drain their life.

Counter Measures: Scatter

Sand Wraiths

Created from: Sand

Special Attacks: Attack single targets, can cast sandstorms that knock down multiple targets, however. Very fast.

Counter Measures: Magic damage

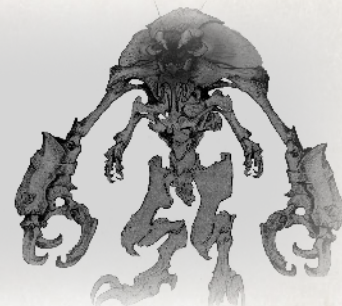
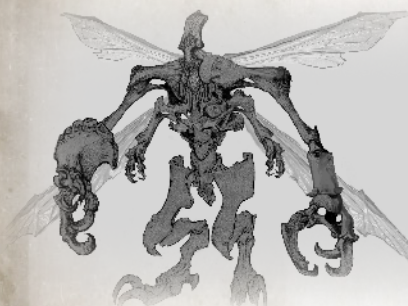


The Insectoids

Created from: Humans and Insects

Special Attacks: Multiple. Their four arms give them a variety of weapons and combat styles. Some are able to fly, other can even cast spells.

Counter Measures: Special attacks that ignore armor will also penetrate their carapace.



The Jesterwood

Created from: Wood, Flesh and Metal

Special Abilities: Powerful sweeping strikes, ranged combat with roots, protected by swarms of bees. The bees persist after the Jesterwood's death.

Counter Measures: They move slowly, are vulnerable to fire damage and their protective swarms can be killed by ranged attacks.



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and many more

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