

# UFG GOES HANDS ON WITH TESO: MORROWIND!

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One of the great things about certain longstanding franchises is their ability to make the player feel like they belong. Stepping foot into the Commonwealth for the first time in Fallout 4 is a memorable experience. Not just because of the traumatic events that lead to its current state, but because we've ventured through similar locals before; there is familiarity. The same can be said about the Elder Scrolls series, as most of them take place on the planet Nirn, specifically on the continent of Tamriel. The difference between each Elder Scrolls title was the time in which players visited this fantastical place.

For this reason, it's understandable that fans of The Elders Scrolls Online: Tamriel Unlimited are excited for the upcoming Morrowind expansion. That last time anyone had the pleasure of journeying to that region of Tamriel was back in 2002, when The Elder Scrolls III hit the scene. Heading back there fifteen years later is akin to going to a high school reunion after graduating college; despite the numerous monsters, cultists and Daedric hordes trying to kill us, it can be a nice place to visit...



Even though this expansion takes place roughly 700 years prior to the events of The Elder Scrolls III, your hero's journey starts in a similar fashion – that is, it does if you create a new character. The brief intro ends with you being held captive on a slave ship headed towards Vivec City, the capital of Vvardenfell island. Your time in shackles is short lived however, thanks to a sneaky stowaway. Apparently, the ship's captain was kind enough to accrue a large bounty before tossing you amongst his other prisoners. This, of course, resulted in someone coming to claim his head (our stowaway). And because you look like you can handle yourself in a fight, she decides to free you in exchange for the extra muscle. What comes next is a series of fights that minimally act as a tutorial. Once you've dispatched most of the slavers and freed some of their captives, you'll come face to face with the captain. This encounter culminates in his ship going up in flames as multiple explosions erupt from its bowels. From here, you'll again awaken to mixed company. I'd assume with a concussion given the fact that you were knocked unconscious twice in one night.

After you've made it to Vivec City and subsequently cleared your name – the city's guards were concerned after finding you floating amongst the remains of the slave ship – you'll run into some of Lord Vivec's servants. For those that don't know, Lord Vivec is one of the three immortal god-kings of Morrowind and Vvardenfell's guardian. For years, he's helped to maintain peace by defending Morrowind from invasions and such. Things haven't been going so well for him as of late though. Someone or something is draining his power at a rapid pace, leaving him in a weakened state. This is a serious problem given his position as a protector; he's currently keeping a meteor from crashing into the city by suspending it in mid-air using his will alone. To find out what's going on without drawing the suspicion of those in his care (namely the people of Vvardenfell), he secretly sent servants to an ancient tomb not far from his palace. Before they could get on with the business of summoning someone of great importance, they're ambushed by Daedra. This is where you come in.



Going any further into the story could lead into spoiler territory. However, what I can say was that the main quest line is rather entertaining for a longtime Scrolls fan. Some of it has to do with the quests themselves. While they aren't anything we haven't seen before gameplay-wise, at least not early on, the reasons I'm gallivanting all over Morrowind are intriguing. Furthermore, there is this odd sense of nostalgia. Though I'm revisiting a familiar place, it isn't what it once was. This is because of the passage of time or rather, the lack thereof. Take Vvardenfell for instance. One of the first things I noticed was all the construction going on; the city wasn't finished being built.

It's hard to explain the feeling of going to a place "before" the first time you visited years prior...you know, because time travel isn't a thing. Of course, even if it were the same year in ESO time, it would still be different. For obvious reasons, the parts of Morrowind I explored are better realized than in the previous iteration. The mysterious home of the Dark Elves returns, bust in a different way.



Now returning to my comment about choosing to begin a new character, you do have the option to use your previous ESO characters. The reason one might choose to start with a fresh face is because of the new Warden class. This nature-based magic user seems to be a combination of the Dragonknight (Tank) and Sorcerer (damage dealer/healer) classes which is interesting considering its role as a support. The Warden's three skill lines are Animal Companions, Green Balance and Winter's Embrace. The first allows one to summon animals during a fight but not in the way you'd think. Instead of summoning them into battle as NPCs, he or she uses them as projectiles. For instance, the Scorch ability sends a row of Shalks (think giant crab) at enemies in a straight line. It's sure to do a decent amount of damage if properly positioned before casting. That said, the crabs don't stay in the battle like a Sorcerer's Familiar's or Winged Twilights.

The Warden's Animal Ultimate does conjure a powerful ally in the War Bear though. Depending on the circumstance, he can either turn the tide of battle or give you enough time to heal by drawing the attacks of nearby enemies. The Green Balance skill line is all about helping to keep your group alive. The Fungal Growth skill allows the Warden to grow mushrooms that heal allies in a coned-shaped area in front of them. Healing Seed is similar, though it grows healing flowers in a large area. These types of abilities are good, but they don't allow for the Warden to out heal other classes (at least not early on). What makes them stand out though is the Warden's passive abilities, particularly Nature's Gift. At level 1, this passive restores 125 Magicka or Stamina whenever a Green Balance ability is used. While the Warden might not be able to heal very well right away, passives like this allow him or her to use their abilities more often, making up the efficacy deficit of this skill set. Combining this with something like Maturation, which grants "minor toughness" to temporarily increase a player's max health, you start to see how useful this new class can be.



The last skill line, Winter's Embrace, is more on the defensive side of things. Frost Cloak for instance, will wrap all nearby allies with a cloak of ice. This will grant them Major Resolve and Major Ward, increasing their physical and magical resistance, respectively. The Frozen Gate ability is similar to the Dragonknight's Fiery Grip as it allows you to pull enemies to you. It isn't as good on activation because it requires them to run over it before being pulled (or in this case teleported). However, it does root them in place once they've been pulled and if you morph it into Frozen Device, it'll also reduce their damage output.

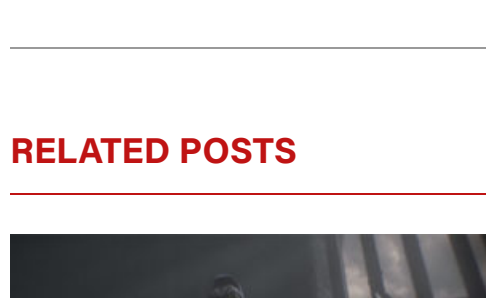
Ultimately, I found myself liking the Warden. I think this class is quite flexible especially if you're looking to dabble in all of the skill lines as opposed to focusing on one. I have some reservations when it comes to how similar it is to other classes at lower levels. They just seem to do the Warden's job better at first. That said, after a few levels the combinations of select abilities and passives make them a jack-of-all-trades...but in a good way. And while I can't speak of any end game variations or special builds given my limited time, I'm sure the Warden will prove to be a valuable asset to any party.



Like always, there's so much to talk about when it comes to games of this ilk. I could write tons on the different locations, promising quest lines, and exciting dungeons. What you really need to know though is that Morrowind is more than worth your time. This is especially true if you've played The Elder Scrolls III. The Warden seems like a good addition to the list of classes; I wish I had time to really dig into the different skill lines. Bottom line, if you've never played ESO or stopped after reaching the level cap, Morrowind is a good reason to jump in or return when it launches June 6th!

**Editor's Note:** Feel free to read our [review](#) of The Elder Scrolls Online. Just know that the game has changed for the better since its release!

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