

Reading your forest

Your role is a forest; this chapter is about walking it. First, learn to read the map from where you stand.

Follow the arrows. Within a tree, arrows run from a prerequisite up to the more advanced skill. The path *is* the prerequisite chain — you can't take a skill before the skills below it, and you don't have to guess the order, because the order is drawn.

Check the roots before entering a tree. Beneath each tree sit its roots — skills the tree depends on but doesn't contain. They're what you need *before* you can meaningfully start. Eyeing the Frameworks tree? Its roots tell you what to bring to the door.

Read levels, not just skills. Each skill is either yes/no or three-level (beginner → confident → expert, each level a prerequisite of the next). "Knowing a skill" always means knowing it *to a level* — so your position on the map is a set of skills, each with a level attached, not a list of checkmarks.

And the single most useful reading habit in the whole method:

If something feels impossibly hard, look down. A skill that won't click almost never means you're not capable — it nearly always means a skill *underneath* it is missing or weaker than you rated it. The frustration you feel up the tree was caused down the tree. Look below, find the gap, fill it, and the impossible thing usually turns merely difficult, then routine.

Where your rank fits into this picture — and how it defines your next big step — is the ranks page in chapter 4; this chapter takes it as read.



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