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# SWORD OF KINGS



52-IN-52

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5e Compatible

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# SWORD OF KINGS

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It has many names, from many languages. LArgentyne. Caelfydch. Dakana. Haelgard. The Sword of Kyuth. Siegebreaker. Regardless of the exact name used, most sages agree on its description. It is the Sword of Kings. A runic blade that contains within it the rune of rulership, smelted down through means beyond mortal ken, alloyed with silver and iron both, and turned into a symbol of royalty as much as a weapon for defeating foes.

Descriptions of it are as varied as the names it is called. A greatsword with wavy blade and dragonwing crossguard. A khopesh marked with rod and scorpion. A longsword bearing the skulls and bones of ancient lords and ladies. It is always a sword of some kind, though some older tomes make it sound more like a sharpened tusk or wooden club lined with shark's teeth.

Its history goes back to before mortals kept written records, and even angels and devils don't claim to know its origin. Some speculate it is the First Sword, made by some wise one to aid the strongest member of the tribe in ruling well. Others suggest it is all that is left of the king of the First Pantheon, elder deities or even-older beings long since faded into the distant past. Though many histories have been written about it's travels through more recent centuries, even these do not agree on who truly held it, and who simply claimed ownership to bolster a weak regime or borrow a veil of legitimacy for new monarchies. Did the Shepherd King truly raise the Peaceful Land with the Sword of Kings, only to cast it into the sea moments before his death? Was the warrior-lich the Polemarch commanded by its bearing, making it the only thing that can command her to put down her sword and shield? Did Khernalbovg carve the bloody borders of the Dreadlands with its commanding edge? Perhaps... or perhaps those legends grew in the retelling.

But a few things are agreed upon. The Sword of Kings is not just a magic weapon, it is the ephemeral concept of a destiny forged into physical form. To own the blade is to be set on the path of a king, making rulership over some kind of demesne inevitable. It might be as traditional as a castle surrounded by lands and borders, or a more fluid empire ruled by the King of Rogues or the Landless King of Justice, but it will be named, have a people, and rise and fall by the strength of the Sword of Kings.

## THE SWORD OF KINGS IN A CAMPAIGN

The Sword of Kings (referred to as SoK from here on out, since you may wish to give it your own name and legend to match your campaign) can be used many different ways by a GM. At its base, it's a progressive magic item that can always serve as an appropriate weapon for a character of a given level. As a GM you can add it to a game as just a fun magic item—since it requires attunement a player picking up the SoK simply keeps attuning to it to gain it's higher-level powers and can't ever attune to more than two other items. Used this way the item is nothing more than a bit of flavor attached to a versatile magic item a character can enjoy for their whole career.

Alternatively, the SoK can be used in much the same way an artifact can without the same level of impact to the balance of a campaign. It can serve as a MacGuffin for players to seek, or protect from others that seek it out to use for evil purposes. One or more players can benefit from wielding the SoK as long as it's in their hands (and as the GM if you want to make a group all the "owners" you certainly can), and the PCs remain at a power level typical encounter rules can handle—unlike handing out an artifact even temporarily, which can radically skew what kinds of challenges your group can handle.

As a third option, the SoK can either be the narrative force of a campaign, or work with a similar narrative force. If you want to add the idea of nation-building to a game without focusing too much on nation-building rules, the SoK automatically adds concepts related to governance and rulership without requiring any more attention be spend on it than everyone enjoys. It can also augment a game that does use more complex nation-building rules, giving players multiple avenues to enjoy the idea of becoming the heads of nations, whether those are actual lands around an old keep they claim, or more virtual nations of like-minded people such as a guild or even a social movement.

# SWORD OF KINGS

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## OWNERSHIP BENEFITS SoK's Form

Various powers listed for the SoK note they are "Ownership Benefits." These are abilities someone attuned to the SoK gets even when the blade isn't in hand. Even when the blade isn't anywhere nearby. As long as a character is attuned to the SoK, they receive the benefits listed as ownership bonuses. This represents the influence the SoK has on the character's fate, the not-so-gentle pull of its runic power to add the concept of being a monarch, ruler, and guide to the flow of events that impact the character.

## ATTUNEMENT

The SoK requires attunement, and it has special attunement rules. First, it's attunement is broken into 20 levels, and each level of ability requires you be that level before you can attune to that power. As a result, each time a character attuned to the SoK gains a new level, they must attune with it again. This replaces any previous attunement with the SoK.

Further, attunement with the SoK is more durable than with most magic items. If you give it away willingly, sell it, are captured or killed and it taken from you as spoils of conflict, your attunement ends. Normally (after the SoK has been more than 100 feet away for at least 24 hours, you die, or if another creature attunes to the item). otherwise, the SoK remains attuned to you, even if more than 100 feet from you, for a year and a day regardless of who holds it. You lose none of its ownership benefits in this time, and no one else can attune to it without the acceptance of all current attunement holders.

If the GM decides to allow it, the SoK can actually be attuned to multiple creatures at once. However, this is only possible if every creature currently attuned allows a new attunement, and only if all those attuning are linked by some loyalty. For example, if 5 knights of the same order agreed to all attune to the SoK, they could do so. Each creature attuning must do so over a separate Short Rest. Only the ownership benefits apply to anyone attuned but not wielding the blade.

Additionally, a runecaster (see *Master Class: The Runecaster*) can attempt a DC 20 Wisdom check once per month to break all previous attunement to the SoK, if it has been in their possession for the past 28 days.

While the SoK always takes the form of a sword of some kind, exactly what type of sword doesn't matter as far as it's mystic powers go. It generally takes the form of whatever swordlike weapon its owner is most skilled with. A kind GM can have this happen when the SoK is first acquired, a more mischievous one may wait for its 1<sup>st</sup> level ownership bonus to kick in.

## POWERS BY ATTUNEMENT LEVEL

These are the SoK's powers as granted with each level of attunement.

**Level 1:** You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls made with this magic weapon.

*Ownership Bonus* When the owner gains a new level or attunes with the SoK, the SoK can become any type of sword the owner prefers and is proficient with.

**Level 2:** *Ownership Bonus* You have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks.

*Ownership Bonus* If the SoK is lost or forgotten but not taken by a thinking creature (left behind in a tavern or washed away down a river, for example), it returns to an attuned owner in 1d8 days through apparently random means.

**Level 3:** You can use an action to cast *command*. Once you have used the sword in this way, you can't do so again until after the next dawn.

**Level 4:** You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

**Level 5:** The SoK counts as a silvered weapon.

**Level 6:** *Ownership Bonus* Loyalists

The very fact you carry the Sword of Kings has caused small bands of citizens to become your supporters, actively working to aid and assist you when they can. These are not adventurers, but expert bakers, herbalists, and sages who see you as an important figure worthy of their loyalty, assistance, and support.

For every effective level of the SoK, select one safe location. This may be a city or town, a ship, or even something as broad as any church of a specific faith of chapterhouse of a specific order or guild.

When the owner is at this safe location, he can gain all of the following benefits:

- Information or services that can be obtained. The loyalists, as a group, can attempt any one Intelligence (Arcana, History, Investigation, Nature, or Religion) skill check. They are considered to have a total bonus equal to +5. One skill check can be made each day
- The GM selects two spellcasting classes at random that are among the loyalists at a given location. You can receive a casting of any one common spell (with a spell level no greater than 1/3 the SoK's attuned level) available those two classes. While there is no charge for the spellcasting itself, the owner does have to pay for any expensive materials required.
- Free housing and food for a number of creatures equal to the SoK's attuned level.

**Level 7: Ownership Bonus** You gain the Inspiring leader feat.

**Level 8:** You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls, and a +2 bonus to damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

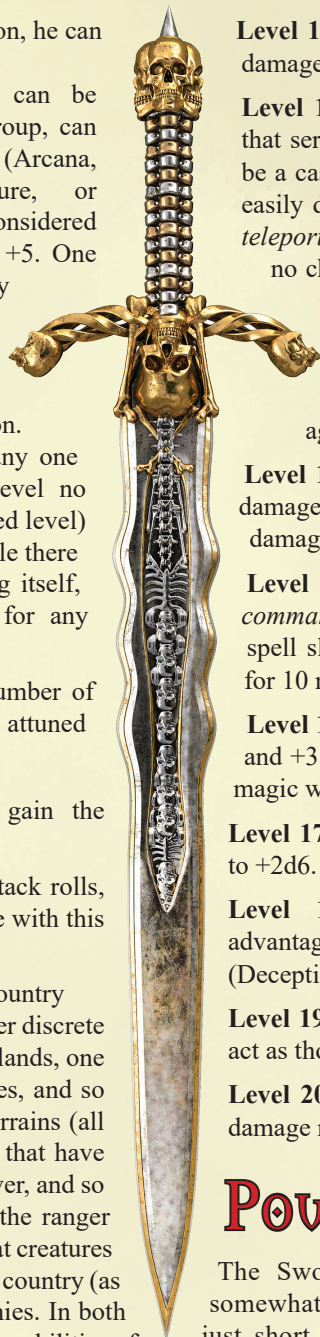
**Level 9: Ownership Bonus Patron Country**

The GM selects one country or other discrete terrain (such as one island, the Northlands, one culturally related set of small villages, and so on) or easily defined collection of terrains (all dwarven mines, all farms, all towns that have raised the flag of the Coalition of Silver, and so on). You gain Natural Explorer (as the ranger ability) for the entire country, and treat creatures you know to be sworn enemies of the country (as defined by the GM) as favored enemies. In both cases these abilities work as the ranger abilities of the same name.

The character also buys goods and services more cheaply there (gain a percent discount to prices equal to the SoK's attuned level).

**Level 10: Ownership Bonus** You have advantage on Charisma (Intimidate) checks

**Level 11:** When you use the SoK to cast *command*., it now acts as if cast by a 3<sup>rd</sup>-level spell slot and functions even if the target is an undead.



**Level 12:** You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

**Level 13:** The GM selects a single location that serves as a base of operations. This may be a castle, warship, guildhall, or any similar easily defined specific location. You can cast *teleport* to travel to the base of operations with no chance of mishap, or to travel from the base of operations to the last location you used this ability that is outside the base of operations. Once the SoK is used this way, it cannot be again until after the next dawn.

**Level 14:** The SoK does an additional +1d6 damage with every successful attack. This damage is not multiplied on a critical hit.

**Level 15:** When you use the SoK to cast *command*, it now acts as if cast by a 4th-level spell slot and you also benefit from *tongues* for 10 minutes.

**Level 16:** You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls and +3 bonus to damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

**Level 17:** The SoK's bonus damage increases to +2d6.

**Level 18: Ownership Bonus** You have advantage on all Charisma checks that are not (Deception) or (Performance).

**Level 19:** All attacks made with the SoK now act as though you had the Sentinel feat.

**Level 20:** You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

## POWER OF THE SoK

The Sword of Kings grows from being a somewhat better-than average weapon to being just short of artifact-level power (well above even a typical legendary item). A GM wishing to dial back this power level someone may decide attuned to higher-level powers of the SoK count as a second, or even a second a third attunement. When using this option, allow a runecaster (see *Master Class: The Runecaster*) who has access to the SoK to give up one rune known in exchange for counting as having attuned to the SoK one more time than their actual number of attunements.

# SWORD OF KINGS

## TWO ATTUNEMENT OPTION

Attuning to the SoK gives you access to its listed attunement powers of a level up to half your level (minimum level 1). You may attune to it a second time, which counts as being attuned to two separate items for purposes of your maximum. This gives you access to its listed attunement powers of a level up to your full level.

## THREE ATTUNEMENT OPTION

Attuning to the SoK gives you access to its listed attunement powers of a level up to 1/3 your level (minimum level 1). You may attune to it a second time, which counts as being attuned to two separate items for purposes of your maximum. This gives you access to its listed attunement powers of a level up to 2/3 your level (minimum level 2). You may attune to it a third time, which counts as being attuned to three separate items for purposes of your maximum. This gives you access to its listed attunement powers of a level up to your full level.

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