



MAGIC SWORD

AN EBERRON STORY SEED

KEITH BAKER

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Magic Sword Campaigns	1
The Characters	1
Selecting Roles	1
Character Advancement	3
Beginning the Adventure	3
Setting The Stage	4
Beginnings	4
Beyond the First Victory	4
Sacrifice and Loss	5
Eberron Story Seeds	6
Dyrrn the Corruptor	6
The Cold Sun	6
The Mourning	7
The Queen of All Tears	7
Gifts of the Sword	8
Magic Items	8
The Magic Sword	8
Supernatural Gifts	9
The Bond of the Key	9
The Gifts of the Keeper	9
The Gifts of the Seer	9
The Gifts of the Weaver	10
The Stamina of the Anchor	10

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Disclaimer: Common side effects of the Magic Sword include the attention of immortal beings, the weight of the world on your shoulders, and the evils of the world on your doorstep. Stop using the Magic Sword and call House Jorasco at once if you have any of these serious side effects: dismemberment, death.

PREFACE

The music of Magic Sword reminds me of my earliest days of playing DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. These memories are echoed by the story behind their music: a simple but powerful tale of hope and heroism. When I had an opportunity to run the *Magic Sword: Shadow Marches* campaign for the band (along with Satine Phoenix and Damion Poitier), I naturally saw how I'd adapt this concept to my world of Eberron—but the core idea has a place in any world. Whenever a champion prepares to fight a hopeless battle against evil, there is a chance that the *Magic Sword* will appear, giving them the strength to battle the darkness. This provides a clear, concrete direction for adventure: there is a battle that must be fought, and your adventurers are the only ones who can fight it. Who will bear the *Magic Sword*?

This explores some of the same ideas as my role-playing game *Phoenix: Dawn Command*—a group of champions facing a rising tide of darkness, and a group of immortals who can die again and again if their sacrifice will bring victory. It's well suited to the pulp flavor of Eberron, and this isn't just a quest for gold—it's a battle against epic forces of darkness. In the future, we might go further with this idea, presenting an entire campaign that explores the destiny of the *Magic Sword*. For now, this supplement offers a campaign seed, providing the core ideas that drive a *Magic Sword* story. What you do with them is up to you, and I hope it's a glorious adventure!

—Keith Baker

ABOUT THE BAND

Magic Sword is an ageless tale of good and evil told through ever-expanding graphic novels set against a synth-heavy soundtrack and immersive live performances. With the three mediums intertwined from conception, together they create an epic experience for those bold enough to bear witness and come away with a deeper understanding of the ultimate hero's journey. Armed with a musical and visual aesthetic that has its roots unabashedly buried deep in the golden era of '70s and '80s fantasy and sci-fi, Magic Sword's followers are called to another plane of existence where the struggle between light and shadow becomes all too real. The multiverse has aligned to bring the people of the land together for the birth of their album *Endless*.



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INTRODUCTION

IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS LIGHT... AND DARKNESS. As time passed, evil spread across the multiverse like a plague. In the final moments before light was lost to the shadow for all time, a weapon of infinite power was created to restore balance to the multiverse. And so it was, it shall always be: whenever the need is great, we call upon the power of the Magic Sword.

-The Keeper of the Magic Sword

There is a place beyond the planes, beyond any reality we know. It lies outside of time, and it holds a weapon of great power. Some sages say it was born in the moment of creation, forged to counter the first act of evil. Others believe it a relic of the last moments of the multiverse, cast back to prevent a terrible threat from consuming all realities. This is the *Magic Sword*. Three immortals tend the temple of the Sword. The Seer of All Truths watches every world, studying the strands of fate. The Weaver of Hearts and Minds knows the balance of good and evil in mortal souls. They cannot stop every act of evil; some events are fated to happen, tragedies that hold the balance between darkness and light. But beyond the balance, there lie foul things—forces that could tear apart the tapestry of fate. When the Seer sees such a threat, when the Weaver confirms the danger, they turn to the Keeper of the Magic Sword. But the immortals cannot act alone. A world must have its own champion—someone with the heart of a hero and strength to resist the darkness. If such a Key is found, the Keeper will bestow on them the power of the *Magic Sword*.

The *Sword* is a blessing and a burden. It gives the Key the power to fight the evil threatening their realm—but it also draws the darkness to them. Once the Key accepts the *Sword*, the battle lines are drawn. If the Key doesn't face the darkness, it will seek them out and destroy all that they treasure. The life of a Key ends either in victory or in corruption and horrible death... and victory doesn't assure survival. All that is certain is that if the *Sword* appears, horrifying forces are at work... and if the Key doesn't take up the *Sword*, evil will surely triumph.

This supplement lays the foundation for a *Magic Sword* campaign in Eberron, whether beginning in the Shadow Marches as does the *Magic Sword: Shadow Marches* games streamed on Twitch, or anywhere else in the world. However, the *Magic Sword* can manifest in any setting, and does not require a full campaign; you could encounter the *Sword* simply as an unexpected ally in a single challenging adventure. This supplement also presents the statistics for the *Magic Sword* and traits for the supernatural gifts the *Sword* bestows upon its champion and their allies.

MAGIC SWORD CAMPAIGNS

A horrifying power is on the rise. It may threaten a village, a nation, or even the world itself. One thing is certain: no mundane force can stop it. Left unchecked, evil will sow terror and death across the region. Someone must take a stand, someone with courage and the soul of a hero. This champion is the key to victory, and they will carry the *Magic Sword*—but they will not face the danger alone.

THE CHARACTERS

Three immortals attend the *Magic Sword* and guide those who carry it: the Weaver of Hearts and Minds, the Seer of All Truths, and the Keeper of the Magic Sword. However, the bearer of the *Magic Sword* itself is always a mortal, as are the Anchors that allow the immortals to manifest in the world. All of these roles are filled by player characters in a *Magic Sword* campaign.

SELECTING ROLES

At character creation, each player should select which role they wish to play. Their character gains the supernatural gift associated with that role. There are no limitations on which fifth edition character class each role plays, though some roles may be better suited for one class over another.

There must always be a Key, a remarkable mortal who carries the *Magic Sword*. In games with fewer than five players, the other players should each select a different immortal to play as they fight alongside the Key. Each immortal must possess a mortal body to interact with the world, as discussed in the “Mortal Immortals” sidebar. The DM and players should work together to decide how the immortals manifest in the world: do the players wish to play immortals in the bodies of newly created constructs, or as willing hosts that serve as conduits for the immortals in the mortal world?

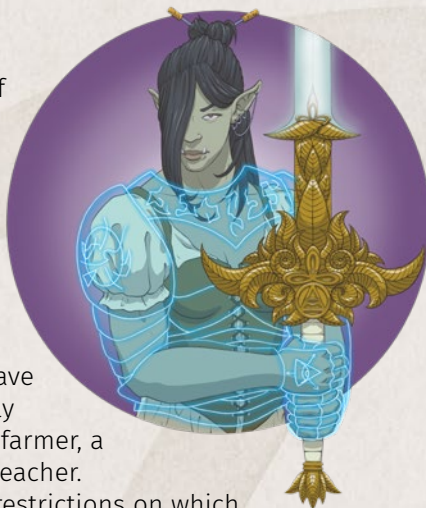
If there are five or more players in your campaign, you can add an additional role: that of the Anchor. The Key wields the *Magic Sword*, but it's the Anchor—or Anchors—that allows the immortals to manifest in the world, rather than the presence of the Key. If all of the Anchors die, the immortals cannot return if their mortal forms die. If you have no Anchors in your campaign, however, it is the Key who anchors the immortals to the world, and they can always return as long as the Key is alive.

Here is information about each of the roles, along with the supernatural gift that they receive (detailed in the “Gifts of the Sword” section).

THE KEY

Only someone pure of spirit and strong of heart can wield the *Magic Sword*. The Key is a character with absolute courage and conviction—but potentially little else! Before receiving the *Sword*, the Key may have been someone entirely mundane—an elderly farmer, a young urchin, a kind teacher.

While there are no restrictions on which class you can play as the Key, the *Magic Sword* enhances a character's martial ability, and thus, your class should shine in melee combat. Paladin is a logical choice, as the Key is a champion of the light. But the Key could be a rogue, a barbarian, even a Hexblade warlock. Whatever class you select, the abilities it grants could be entirely new to your character—you receive your class features through their bond with the *Magic Sword*. You might not look like you have the strength required to even lift the *Sword*, and perhaps you've never even fought a battle—and yet you *know* how to fight as if you've done it all their life. Yesterday, you were a street urchin, but today you're a barbarian, and when you rage, righteous fury flows from the sword. Or perhaps you were a tired farmer, but now you're a paladin, and your Divine Sense and Divine Health are the *Sword* warning you of evil and protecting you from harm.



Regardless of class, as the Key, you're a normal person who has earned the right to wield the *Magic Sword*, not through your experience in battle, but through your courage and conviction. In creating the Key, consider: What is the source of your courage? What is it that you're fighting for? Are you truly prepared to shoulder the burden of saving your world?

The Key receives the Bond of the Key and the Magic Sword. This links your destiny to the *Sword*—and to the immortals who guard you.

THE KEEPER OF THE MAGIC SWORD

The Keeper is an immortal spirit of courage and integrity. You have carried the *Sword* to countless champions over the millennia, and above all, it's your task to protect the Key. As Keeper, you should be capable of fighting alongside the Key, but there are many classes that could serve this purpose, whether fighter, barbarian, ranger, or rogue. The Keeper should be ready to stand firm in the face of any threat.

The Keeper's vessel or host receives the Gift of the Keeper. This allows you to shield the Key and helps you spot possible threats.



MORTAL IMMORTALS

While the three immortals cannot leave their sanctum in the void, they can empower vessels to fight alongside the mortal Key. Choose one of the following two options for how these immortals will interact with the mortal world.

Constructed Vessels. The immortals shape humanoid bodies from wood, metal, and stone. If you use this approach, the player characters *are* the immortals, directly inhabiting these vessels. They appear in the world with no ties to its past, nor any knowledge of its customs. The three immortals should create characters using the warforged race presented in *Eberron: Rising From The Last War*. However, the immortals aren't actually warforged, though they use those statistics, and it doesn't matter if the campaign is set in Eberron—rather, these characters are living constructs created solely for one purpose. When a constructed vessel dies, its body crumbles to dust, but this is not the end. When the Key completes a short rest, the immortal that inhabited the lost body will reform in their presence—fully restored in a new construct body.

Mortal Hosts. The immortals commandeer the bodies of willing mortals of any race. If you choose this approach, these hosts have their own memories, personalities, and lives, but

they allow the immortals to act through them. It's up to the players whether they want the immortal spirit to be in control, or whether their mortal character merely receives guidance and direction from the immortal. If a mortal host dies, they are truly dead, though they can be brought back to life using the world's normal resurrection magic. If the mortal is not resurrected, the immortal spirit can return in a new host body when the Key completes a long rest; however, this new host will have their own life and history, and could have entirely different abilities. The Seer of All Truths could begin in the body of a Diviner wizard, but when that host dies, the Seer might return in the body of a bard of the College of Lore. An immortal's host could use the aasimar or kalashtar race to reflect their dual nature, but this isn't necessary; regardless of race, they receive a supernatural gift (described later in this supplement) that reflects this bond.

Whether they use mortal hosts or construct bodies, the immortals can return after death. However, the Key is mortal, and if they die, the darkness will triumph. If you want to raise the stakes, you can say that the Key can't be raised from the dead—that the bond with the *Sword* traps their soul, and they must not fall. It matters not that the immortals are immortal—if they fail to protect the Key, all will be lost.

THE SEER OF ALL TRUTHS

The Seer possesses ultimate knowledge; it is you who monitors the great balance between good and evil. While you can only transfer a fraction of your knowledge to your vessel, as Seer, you will guide the Key and uncover the secrets of the enemy. Wizard, bard, or warlock are all logical paths, and sage could be a fitting background; while you may be new to this world, the Seer always knows the path to knowledge.

The Seer's vessel or host receives the Gift of the Seer. This allows you to advise the Key and sharpens your knowledge of mystical and mundane history.



THE WEAVER OF HEARTS AND MINDS

The immortal Weaver strives to guide hearts toward the light. In your vessel, you use your powers to heal both psychic and physical injuries.

As the Weaver, you might be a Life cleric, a Valor bard who focuses on insight and inspiration, or an Alchemist artificer who mixes soothing salves.

The Weaver's vessel or host receives the Gift of the Weaver. This allows you to shift the location of the Key and enhances your talents with Insight and Medicine.



THE ANCHOR

(for games with five or more players)

Alone of the adventurers, the Anchor neither gives nor receives spiritual guidance; instead, as Anchor, you make it possible for the immortals to remain in the world—if there is no Anchor, the immortals can't return if their mortal forms die. You can follow any path and fill any gaps in the capabilities of the other adventurers. Like the Key, you should have a concrete tie to the region in which the story begins. As the Anchor, what are you fighting for? Why are you willing to risk your life in this cause?

The Anchor receives the Stamina of the Anchor. This tethers you to the immortals, increases your Constitution, and ensures that while you may not be immortal yourself, you're definitely hard to kill.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

Characters should be prepared to face terrifying threats from the moment a Magic Sword campaign begins. There is no downtime, just relentless action... and if the Key dies, the battle is lost. The DM may want to start characters above 1st level, giving them more options and durability from the very beginning. Starting at 3rd level provides characters with the flexibility of archetypes, while still giving plenty of room for growth as the struggle continues.

Due to the fast pace of a Magic Sword campaign, DMs may wish to accelerate character advancement as the story progresses. The threats should feel like they are constantly escalating; if characters gain a level at each major milestone, they can feel as though their powers are rapidly growing to match this danger.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

A Magic Sword campaign is intense and driven by an absolute purpose. It begins when the Key takes up the *Magic Sword* and ends when the forces of evil have been destroyed—or when the Key is slain and the struggle lost. There should be constant pressure as the Key moves ever close to the heart of darkness. The tone of a *Magic Sword* campaign typically blends pulp action and supernatural horror. At its core, this is a war story, a battle that must be fought with the *Sword*, but there will be challenges that can't be overcome with brute force and mysteries that must be unraveled if the darkness is to be destroyed. Not every innocent can be saved, and there should always be a sense of the price of failure and the cost of delays. The threat may have been building for centuries, but now it's spreading swiftly, and the adventurers must drive to its very heart before it's too late.



SETTING THE STAGE

As the DM, the first step is to establish the scope of the threat. The adventurers must defeat a great evil, but this doesn't have to be a vast struggle that threatens the world itself. It could be an intensely local problem: the darkness is rising in a small village on a distant frontier... but for the Key and their allies, this village *is* their world. If they fail, the terror could spread to engulf all civilizations; if they succeed, the people in the far cities may never know of the struggles that took place on the edge of civilization.

This is the scenario in *Magic Sword: Shadow Marches*. In swamps long shunned by the great nations, world-changing battles are being fought, but the villagers don't have the power or resources of powerful kingdoms.

Once you've chosen the starting location of the campaign, work with the players—especially of the Key and any Anchors—to add details to their home region. This helps it feel personal, giving the characters something to fight for. Here are ideas of questions you could present:

- What's the name of your village?
- What's the most interesting thing about it?
- Do you have any family in the region?
- There's someone in your village that you don't get along with. What's the nature of your rivalry, and what was your latest quarrel?
- Who's your favorite person in the village?
- What's a special place in the region that only you know about?
- Do you have a pet?
- What's a special event happening soon that you're excited about?

These questions focus on a village, but your adventure could begin anywhere—with soldiers stationed at a border fort, researchers exploring an ancient ruin, priests and monks in a remote monastery, or pioneers trying to establish a new community in an unsettled land. The planned length of your campaign may affect its starting location—how far do you want the threat spread? If this village falls, where is the next sanctuary? While the immortals may have no personal stake in this area, their players can still engage in this process. As immortals, they don't have a family—but their hosts do. Even if they're playing in the body of living constructs, the immortals still have personalities and feelings—who's an intriguing person they've noticed, and what interesting details caught their eye upon their arrival in the world?

The goal here is twofold. These questions provide a list of NPCs and details you can work into upcoming adventures. But they also allow the players to picture this place in their mind. It's not just a place that you've told them about; it's *their* village. Is a hated rival working with the forces of evil? Or will the darkness possess one of the Key's relatives—and they'll have to settle their differences with that rival to save the village?

BEGINNINGS

The campaign can begin with a simple battle. The Key—who doesn't yet possess the *Magic Sword*—is going about their daily activities when something goes wrong. Perhaps they hear screams in the distance or come upon a strangely mutilated corpse. Then a figure steps out of the shadows—an aberration covered in blood, a risen corpse, a demonic creature. The Key is unarmed—possibly a mere commoner in statistics—yet they prepare to fight, to defend their people. And then time stands still. The foul creature freezes in place. Read or paraphrase the following:

You see your death frozen before you. Then a spark of light appears between you and your foe, growing until it takes the form of a gleaming sword. A nimbus of light surrounds it, and you feel mystic power radiating from the blade. A voice speaks in your mind.

"Even from the shores of oblivion, we have sensed your great need. I am the Keeper Of The Magic Sword, and with my companions, the Seer of All Truths and the Weaver of Hearts and Minds, we have come to you bearing a gift and a curse: the power to defeat your enemies. A word of caution with this gift: Only the purest of heart and mind may wield the power of the *Magic Sword*. Any other will surely perish. What say you?"

Assuming the character does indeed accept the *Sword*, they become the Key (gaining their class abilities and supernatural gift) and battle begins. The other characters could join immediately, as the immortals enter their mortal hosts or form vessels from stone and wood—or you could have the Key finish the first battle on their own, then have the immortals and the Anchor arrive in the aftermath. Despite this initial victory, it's clear that the village is in danger. The Key's family, pet, favorite tavern—if they don't act immediately, the village will be overwhelmed.

BEYOND THE FIRST VICTORY

The initial adventure establishes the threat: undead? Aberrations? Werewolves? By the end of the first battle, the adventurers have a sense of *what* they are fighting, but they don't know *why* and they don't know what will happen next. Consider a few possibilities...

- The evil forces emerged from tunnels below the village. How deep do these go? Are there ruins in the depths, or even a demiplane?
- There is a mystical portal in the wilds beyond the village. It's growing larger, and every night at midnight, new forces appear.
- A ruined temple has been restored to its former glory, and the powers of darkness are massing there.

The immortals don't know every detail about the threat. They only know that the balance between light and darkness has been upset, that it must be dealt with—and that they (and the Key) can sense the *direction* of the danger. So while the adventurers will have to work to uncover all the answers—why is this happening, how can it be stopped—they'll always have an idea which way to go. They may have time for a long rest, if they're lucky, but the tension and urgency should be kept ever-present, as this threat won't be stopped until it's driven back.

What happens next depends on how far you want the campaign to go. It begins with a quest to save a single village or fortress. But in driving the darkness from the region, do the adventurers discover that it threatens the entire world? Is the most dangerous creature they've defeated merely the servant of a far greater evil that still threatens innocents elsewhere?

SACRIFICE AND LOSS

Rarely do the most interesting stories involve heroes who never fail. Overcoming tragedy and pursuing vengeance are powerful story hooks, and while the adventurers might be able to save their village, they're unlikely to save *everyone*. In a zombie apocalypse, one of the most moving moments is when you face a zombie who was once your friend—or when you have to kill a friend to save them from becoming a zombie. While setting the stage for this campaign, the players collaborated to create places and things that they cared about. These are all things that can be threatened, lost, and corrupted.

At the same time, it's important to remember that this is a story you are building *together*. Some players will seize on the experience of loss as a catalyst, embracing the desire for vengeance or change. However, other players may not be comfortable losing loved ones in this situation, perhaps because of personal loss that it calls to mind, or simply because they don't find it enjoyable. Regardless, leave the agency in the hands of the players, and collaborate with them to craft a story everyone will enjoy.

For example, rather than telling the players, "Your brother's been bitten by a zombie. It's *impossible* to save him," you could offer an option like one of the following.

- You could narrate, "Your brother's been bitten by a zombie. The skills and magic you have available can't save him, and he's going to turn soon. Even though it seems impossible, can you find a way to save him?" Here, you present the player with the option to say, "No, he can't be saved"—if that's the story they want to tell and are prepared to accept the loss. But it also leaves them the option to respond, "I *can* find a way. I'm dragging him to the temple, bathing him in holy water, and using all of my Lay on Hands points... that's got to work!"

- Alternatively, you could raise the stakes while still giving the player agency by saying, "Your brother's been bitten by a zombie. Lay on Hands and *lesser restoration* aren't sufficient to heal him on their own. You need to put something of yourself into the spell to break the curse—to make a sacrifice. What will it be?" In this situation, the player can still choose not to lose their brother. Yes, they will lose something... but critically, *they* get to decide what it is.

Ultimately, this is a collaborative story. You want this to be the story you—and all your players—*want* to experience. The player may want to lose their character's beloved brother, bestowing them with a driving reason to defeat the darkness. Or it could be that they want to succeed in saving him—even if it means giving up an eye, a memory of their parents, or something even more challenging. Don't be afraid to threaten or destroy things the characters care about, but the more you can let the *players* be a part of the story—to make it a thing you do together, not something you do to them—the better.

Though there's always a very real possibility of personal loss, a Magic Sword campaign involves another interesting dynamic—immortality. For the Keeper, the Seer, and the Weaver, death is a temporary inconvenience. While they can be killed, it's never permanently—allowing the DM to raise the stakes of encounters or even create obstacles that can't be overcome without the sacrificial death of a party member. Perhaps there's a bomb that can't be disarmed, but someone could protect innocents by throwing themselves on the explosion. Or maybe there's a demon that can't be defeated, but if someone were willing to meet it on the narrow bridge, they might be able to hold it off long enough for everyone else to escape. As long as the Key and the Anchors survive, it doesn't matter if the immortals die—although if you are playing with mortal hosts, their death is a tragic sacrifice.

THE MAGIC SWORD IN YOUR WORLD

The original story of the *Magic Sword* is that it exists outside the multiverse. It can appear in any world, and it has. However, it's also possible to use the basic concept of the *Magic Sword*—to use the *Sword* and its supernatural gifts—while tying it concretely to a single setting and changing its story to fit your own. The *Magic Sword* could've been created by one of the gods of the world, and the immortals are celestial guides who serve this deity. The *Sword* could have been created by a forgotten order of artificers who opposed the gods, appearing when cruel deities oppress mortals; in such a scenario, the three immortals could be ancient champions who fought the heavens long ago.

In the world of Eberron, the *Magic Sword* could be an incarnation of the power of the Silver Flame, and the three immortals could be couatl guardians; if this is the case, then surely Tira Miron herself was a Key, and her greatsword *Kloijner* was actually the *Magic Sword*!

EBERRON STORY SEEDS

In *Magic Sword: Shadow Marches*, the game that inspired this supplement, the adventurers are dealing with Dyrrn the Corruptor, a daelkyr who is slowly turning the people of the region into monsters. Dyrrn is hidden deep underground, with hordes of gibbering mouters, mind flayers, and other foul creatures in between; can the heroes find a way to defeat the daelkyr before everything that they love is lost?

This section presents more ideas for the above story, as well as a few other stories you could explore in an Eberron campaign. However, the *Magic Sword* can appear in any setting, and the immortals could help the Key battle the forces of Asmodeus, bring down Strahd, or save the world from Tiamat. You can adapt these story seeds for your campaign or create a new threat of your own.

DYRRN THE CORRUPTOR

The adventurers live in the Shadow Marches, the western swamps largely ignored by the developed nations of the east. Long ago, a horde of horrors came to Eberron from Xoriat, the Realm of Madness. These aberrations were led by the daelkyr, and the worst of these creatures was Dyrrn the Corruptor. An order of orc druids, the Gatekeepers, managed to bind the daelkyr using a series of mystical seals—but that was thousands of years ago. Only a handful of Gatekeepers have survived, and the ancient seals are beginning to crack.

The adventurers are all natives of the Shadow Marches. Set the stage by discussing these questions:

- You dwell in the desolate Shadow Marches. Are you a villager? A wandering hunter? A practitioner of the old druidic ways?
- All of you know at least one other member of the group. Who do you know, and what's your connection?
- Describe one person in the Marches you care about. This could be a family member, a mentor—or even a rival you love to hate.
- Describe a location in the Marches that you love.

If you're using immortals with constructed vessels, the first two questions won't be relevant, but they can still describe interesting people and places within the region. They've never met this person or been to this place, but perhaps they know of them through visions they've seen.

Though it's not necessary, this story can benefit from having a character—whether the Key, an Anchor, or the mortal vessel of an immortal—who has some sort of connection to the Gatekeeper druids. In the case

of a vessel or Anchor, they could be one of the few remaining champions of the fading order. If it's the Key, perhaps they've only just begun to study the ancient mysteries; but with the power of the *Magic Sword*, this simple initiate must fight forces even the elders cannot stop.

The threat that Dyrrn poses is one of corruption. While the daelkyr has an army of aberrations—mind flayers, dolgaunts, dolgrims—that can emerge from Khyber, you could present the more disturbing threat of innocent people becoming monsters. Rather than using the standard dolgrims found in *Rising From The Last War*—creatures made from two goblins fused together—Dyrrn could create new dolgrims by fusing together people from the Key's village. It's not just a monster—it's the blacksmith's son and the midwife merged together and imbued with a thirst for blood. You could use a gibbering mouter but describe it as a dozen villagers merged together, or use wererat statistics to represent a corrupted villager that peels off their skin to transform into a grotesque creature. The environment itself could be twisted, with pools of standing water becoming deadly sentient oozes. In all of this, the emphasis is that there isn't merely an army of evil monsters; rather, Dyrrn is turning the people and places the Key loves into horrifying things, and it will only get worse.

As the adventurers investigate, they find that the horrors aren't isolated to their village. Multiple points of corruption have begun to spread, each centered on one of the seals created by the Gatekeepers so long ago. The Key must find each of Dyrrn's seals and use the power of the *Magic Sword* to revitalize the fading power of these ancient artifacts. Initially, the adventurers can reach these seals before they break, but as the campaign goes on, some of the seals may be shattered, increasing Dyrrn's influence over the world.

The challenge increases as the adventurers discover the Gatekeeper seals take many forms. Some are exactly what they sound like—sigils carved into the floor of ancient caverns or gateways of rusting steel or stone. However, some of these seals could be small and portable. A Gatekeeper seal might even be a living creature; if the druid bearing it is mortally wounded, will the seal be destroyed, or could one of the adventurers take up this burden before it's lost?

This campaign can easily take the adventurers far beyond the Marches as they seek the final seals in distant lands. And if too many seals break, the adventurers will have to find a new solution—whether it's crafting a new cage for the daelkyr, or finding a way to truly destroy the Corruptor.

THE COLD SUN

The adventurers begin in a mining town in Q'barra, on the very edge of the region known as Hope. Their village is quite new, but they're working a rich vein of dragonshards and spirits are high. Set the stage by discussing these questions:

- What jobs do the mortal characters in the town hold? Is someone the sheriff? The preacher? The schoolteacher?
- Why is each character here? Is it just for the shards, or are they in hiding from someone?
- There's only one tavern in town. What's an interesting thing about it?

The first skirmish involves lizardfolk attacking the village, determined to slaughter its residents. But the adventurers soon learn these aren't the Cold Sun Federation lizardfolk the miners have a treaty with. These cruel creatures are corrupted Poison Dusk lizardfolk, with mutated forms and eyes pooling with shadow. Even after they're slain, the lizardfolk continue to whisper strange promises in Abyssal.

The next wave of trouble begins with the Weaver and the Seer being drawn to a respected member of the town—who they discover has secretly transformed into a yuan-ti! Something is corrupting the people of the village, turning them into reptilian murderers. After defeating these corrupted yuan-ti, the adventurers find themselves battling a construct of silver and shadowy dragonshards. This construct was thought to be inert, recently recovered on a nearby dig when the miners broke into an ancient subterranean chamber.

Things escalate from here. In their mining, the townspeople unknowingly released a fragment of the demon overlord known as Masvirik, the Cold Sun. It's now exerting its influence over the reptilian creatures of the realm—and transforming mammals into reptilian hybrids like the yuan-ti. Adventurers will have to clear the tainted mine, deal with hidden yuan-ti, and battle scaled demons. As Masvirik's power grows, the light is drawn out of the sun itself. The darkness leaves the reptilian creatures cold yet unnaturally strong, the overlord's power sustaining them. As a chill shadow falls across the land, the champions must go to the ancient citadel of Haka'torvhak and find a way to defeat the avatar of Masvirik—the corrupted dragon Rhashaak.

THE MOURNING

The adventurers live in a town on the very edge of the Mournland, and the Key and Anchors can see the dead-gray mists from their homes. Set the stage by discussing these questions:

- Why haven't the mortal characters left town?
- Who's in charge of the town?
- Have the characters ever recognized a lost friend—or enemy—in the faces that haunt the swirling mists? Who was it?
- Have the adventurers ever ventured into the Mournland? If so, what's the strangest thing they've seen?

The militia is always ready for danger, but they've been watching the mists; they weren't expecting something to come up from the ground below. A massive crab rises from the depths, corpses fused to its shell, and begins to slaughter the people. With the help of the Sword and the immortals, the Key can surely defeat a crab—but why is this happening? Why did this creature leave the Mournland, and what will be next? A group of warforged soldiers is approaching town; are they servants of the darkness, or might they be vital allies in the battle that lies ahead? Will the greatest threat be resurrected soldiers infused with the power of the Mourning, natural animals that have become warped lycanthropes, or demons that have merged with the Mourning to become something even more terrifying? And what will the adventurers do when the dead-gray mists begin rolling forward toward the village?

THE QUEEN OF ALL TEARS

The adventurers are stationed at a remote Karrnathi fortress near the Icewood. They could be soldiers, or part of the support staff—a squire, a scribe, a medic. Set the stage by discussing these questions:

- Did the mortal characters see any combat during the Last War?
- What's one thing they regret?
- What do they think of the commander?
- What's the name of the cook, and what's the best thing they make?

One dark night, the undead troops of the garrison turn on the living. The Key might not be a soldier, but they must take up the *Magic Sword* and defend their friends.

Destroying these undead is simple enough, but it's only the beginning of the party's troubles. The gnome who operated the *speaking stone* is dead, and the fortress can't call for assistance. The spirits of those soldiers slain in the first attack refuse to rest; they rise, first as zombies and then as wraiths. The Seeker necromancer is an obvious suspect—but they aren't behind it, and reveal that something is unleashing unusual amounts of negative energy into the region. The people of the nearby village are surely in deadly danger—can the adventurers save them and bring them back to the fortress?

More powerful undead begin assailing the fortress. People are haunted by visions of their deepest regrets. Further study reveals that the entire region is slowly being drawn into Mabar—the plane known as the Endless Night. The dark power known as the Queen of All Tears feeds on despair, and she intends to add the fortress to her domain. Can the champions enter Mabar and force the Queen to release her hold on the region?

GIFTS OF THE SWORD

This section presents the rules for the powers granted by the *Magic Sword*: the supernatural gifts associated with the *Sword* and the immortals, as well as the rules for the *Sword* itself.

MAGIC ITEMS

This section presents the artifact this story centers on: the *Magic Sword*. DMs can find a wealth of magic items from the world of Eberron, suitable for any of the characters, in *Exploring Eberron* (available on the [Dungeon Masters Guild](#)) and *Eberron: Rising from the Last War*.

THE MAGIC SWORD

The *Magic Sword* is more than mere steel; it's power woven into the idea of a sword. It has taken many forms on many worlds, and whenever it appears, it shapes itself to the needs of the Key. The *Magic Sword* is always a sword, but its form can vary—a rapier, a scimitar—whatever best suits the Key's proficiencies and fighting style. Its appearance should be comforting to the Key; while it's beautiful, the design is of a local style. Once it's bound to the Key, the basic form of the *Sword* won't change. If it takes the shape of a Dhakaani greatsword, it will remain in that form until it fulfills its purpose.

The *Magic Sword* holds tremendous power, but this can overwhelm the champion who carries it. As the Key grows more comfortable with the *Sword*, they can unlock its potential. Three states are described below, each of which increases the power of the *Sword*. The DM should choose the starting state of the *Sword* to suit the needs of the story, increasing its power to match the advancement of the characters. These advancements should be linked to a dramatic event. It's not that the Key wakes up one morning and notices that the *Sword* is more powerful. Instead, the Key might feel a surge of power in the moment they drive the sword into the heart of a fiend, and see new glowing runes appear on the surface of the blade. This is a mechanical benefit, but it should *feel* like a milestone in the battle against the darkness.

THE MAGIC SWORD

Magic weapon (any sword), artifact (requires attunement by the Key)

While it can take many forms, the *Magic Sword* is always razor-sharp, polished to a mirror finish, elegant, and graceful. It begins in its nascent state, and as it advances to vigilant and unleashed, it gains additional powers.

Nascent. The *Magic Sword* grants the following powers in its nascent state:

- You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.
- While you are holding the *Magic Sword*, as a bonus action, you can generate a field of shimmering golden force that serves as armor. When you activate this, choose whether the armor is light (AC 12 + Dexterity modifier), medium (AC 14 + Dexterity modifier, maximum of +2), or heavy (AC 18, you have disadvantage on Stealth checks). This armor lasts until you release the *Sword* or use another bonus action to change the field or dissolve it. While using this power, you're considered to be wearing armor, and you suffer the standard penalties if you aren't proficient with the armor you're wearing.

Vigilant. The *Magic Sword* grants the following powers in its vigilant state:

- The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +2.
- You have a +1 bonus to AC while using armor generated by the *Sword*.
- When an immortal uses Channeled Power to enhance your attack, increase the extra damage by 1d8.
- When the Keeper uses Keeper's Shield to protect you, the bonus to AC it grants increases from +2 to +3.

Unleashed. The *Magic Sword* grants the following powers in its unleashed state:

- The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +3.
- Your bonus to AC while using armor generated by the *Sword* increases from +1 to +2.
- When you hit a fiend, undead, or aberration with the *Magic Sword*, that creature takes an extra 1d8 radiant damage.
- While you are holding the *Magic Sword*, you have advantage on saving throws against magical effects.



SUPERNATURAL GIFTS

The *Magic Sword* grants great powers to its chosen champions. These gifts are granted in the moment that the Key receives the *Magic Sword*, and they remain in effect until the *Sword* has served its purpose and returns to the void. As these gifts can significantly increase the party's combat abilities, the DM may wish to increase the difficulty of combat encounters to match.

This section presents supernatural gifts (as discussed in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) for each character in a *Magic Sword* campaign, which should be bestowed at the same time the Key receives the *Magic Sword*.

THE REACH OF THE IMMORTALS

The gifts of the immortals allow them to use reactions and bonus actions to assist the Key. The immortals *don't* have to be able to see the Key to use these abilities, though they must be on the same plane as the Key. As long as the Key is holding the *Magic Sword*, the immortals instinctively know when their aid is needed. The sole exception to this is the Weaving Strands of Space trait. The character with the Gift of the Weaver doesn't have to be able to see the Key to use this trait, but they must be able to see the space that is the destination of this effect, and that space must be within 30 feet of the Key's current location.

Similarly, each Anchor has an unbreakable link with the immortals and can choose to instinctively take damage on their behalf while anywhere on that plane. However, this presents a dilemma—if the Anchors die, the immortals will no longer be able to return to the Material Plane. Will the Anchor choose to preserve the life of an immortal, risking their own, or let the immortal die and reform?

THE BOND OF THE KEY

You have been chosen to carry the *Magic Sword*. Until you fulfill your destiny, only death can break your bond to the blade. You gain the following traits.

Bound To The Blade. You are attuned to the *Magic Sword*. This doesn't use one of your attunement slots. Neither you nor anyone else can end this attunement, and no one else can attune to the *Sword* while you're alive.

Summon The Sword. While you're on the same plane as the *Magic Sword*, you can summon it to your hand as a bonus action.

THE GIFTS OF THE KEEPER

You are channeling the spirit of the Keeper of the *Magic Sword*, an immortal sworn to protect the champion carrying the *Magic Sword* as they battle the darkness. You gain the following traits while on the same plane as the Key.

Channeled Power. When you first receive this boon, choose one of these features to reflect how you channel power to the Key, gaining its benefit:

- When the Key hits a creature with a melee attack with the *Magic Sword*, you can use your reaction to expend one spell slot and deal force damage to the target of the attack. The damage dealt is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 5d8.
- When the Key hits a creature with a melee attack with the *Magic Sword*, you can use your reaction to choose to spend one or more Hit Dice and deal force damage to the target of the attack, up to a number of Hit Dice equal to your proficiency bonus. Roll the Hit Dice and add your Constitution modifier to each; you deal damage equal to the result.

Eternal Vigilance. You have advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) and Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Keeper's Shield. As a reaction, when the Key is hit by an attack while holding the *Magic Sword*, you can shield them. Until the start of the Key's next turn, they have a +2 bonus to AC, including against the triggering attack.

THE GIFTS OF THE SEER

You are channeling the spirit of the Seer of All Truths, an ancient and immortal sage. The bearer of the *Magic Sword* will rely on your guidance in the struggle that lies ahead. You gain the following traits while on the same plane as the Key.

Channeled Power. When you first receive this boon, choose one of these features to reflect how you channel power to the Key, gaining its benefit:

- When the Key hits a creature with a melee attack with the *Magic Sword*, you can use your reaction to expend one spell slot and deal psychic damage to the target of the attack. The damage dealt is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 5d8.
- When the Key hits a creature with a melee attack with the *Magic Sword*, you can use your reaction to choose to spend one or more Hit Dice and deal psychic damage to the target of the attack, up to a number of Hit Dice equal to your proficiency bonus. Roll the Hit Dice and add your Constitution modifier to each; you deal damage equal to the result.

Arcane Knowledge. You have advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) and Intelligence (History) checks.

Seer's Insight. As a reaction, when the Key makes an ability check or saving throw while holding the *Magic Sword*, you can roll a d4 and add the number rolled to the Key's ability check or saving throw. You can wait until after the Key rolls the d20 before deciding to use Seer's Insight, but you must decide before the DM says whether the roll succeeds or fails.

THE GIFTS OF THE WEAVER

You are channeling the spirit of the Weaver of Hearts and Minds. Your immortal insight allows you to sense emotions, heal injuries, and even twist space. You gain the following traits while on the same plane as the Key.

Channeled Power. When you first receive this boon, choose one of these features to reflect how you channel power to the Key, gaining its benefit:

- When the Key hits a creature with a melee attack with the *Magic Sword*, you can use your reaction to expend one spell slot and deal radiant damage to the target of the attack. The damage dealt is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 5d8.
- When the Key hits a creature with a melee attack with the *Magic Sword*, you can use your reaction to choose to spend one or more Hit Dice and deal radiant damage to the target of the attack, up to a number of Hit Dice equal to your proficiency bonus. Roll the Hit Dice and add your Constitution modifier to each; you deal damage equal to the result.

Deep Insight. You have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Wisdom (Medicine) checks.

Weaving Strands of Space. While the Key is holding the *Magic Sword*, you can use a bonus action to teleport the Key up to 30 feet from their current location to an unoccupied space you can see.

THE STAMINA OF THE ANCHOR

You are a spiritual anchor that allows the immortal guardians of the *Magic Sword* to manifest in the Material Plane. If you die, the spirits will be lost—but you don't die easily. You gain the following traits while on the same plane as the Key.

Anchor of the Guardians. When the Keeper, the Seer, or the Weaver takes damage while on the same plane as you, you can use your reaction to magically take that damage, instead of that creature taking it. This feature doesn't transfer any other effects that might accompany the damage, and this damage can't be reduced in any way.

Remarkable Vigor. Whenever you spend Hit Dice to regain hit points, you regain double the number of hit points you otherwise would.

Tethered to Life. You have advantage on death saving throws and Constitution saving throws.

Uncanny Vitality. Increase your Constitution score by 2, to a maximum of 20.

THE MAGIC SWORD SCENARIO

In a Magic Sword campaign, the *Sword* and its mission are the driving force of the story. Darkness is rising and the adventurers must stop it... and it won't be as simple as one single battle. But what if it is as simple as one single battle? The *Magic Sword* doesn't have to stick around forever. The *Sword* appears when there are specific imbalances between the darkness and the light. It could be that in the cosmic perspective, the Lords of Dust are balanced by the Chamber, and the demon overlords are matched against the Silver Flame. Overall, the heroes don't *need* the help of the *Magic Sword*... until they do. There could be a single, specific threat that stands out—something truly unnatural, perhaps a force from beyond the planes or one that breaks the rules governing fiends and celestials alike. This is a threat that must be dealt with swiftly and decisively, and the adventurers are the only ones who can do it. It seems like a suicide mission... until the *Magic Sword* appears.

When introducing the *Magic Sword* to adventurers in an existing campaign, each character should receive one of the supernatural gifts described in the Gifts of the Sword section. One adventurer is the Key, chosen to bear the *Magic Sword*. The adventurers connected to the immortals are guided by these spirits, but not controlled by them; they can sense their connection to the Key, and channel strength to the bearer of the *Magic Sword*. This is an opportunity for the DM to provide a sudden burst of information as the Seer of All Truths reveals the nature of the threat that has confounded the adventurers. And it's a chance to establish new stakes: *the mists of the Mourning will expand in 24 hours if you don't enter the Mournland and stop the Lord of Blades*.

The drawback to using the *Sword* in this way is that you lose the impact of immortality. The immortals will survive even if their hosts are destroyed, but that's probably not a satisfying result for the player characters serving as their hosts. With this in mind, one or more characters could sit out of the adventure while the player instead controls a construct vessel of one of the immortals. This is also an option in a scenario in which one or more adventurers from a party have been captured or even killed—all hope seems lost for the survivors until the *Magic Sword* appears, and the players whose characters are out of the action take control of immortal vessels.

When using the *Magic Sword* in this way, the main challenge is explaining why it hasn't appeared to help the adventurers before, and why it won't necessarily appear to help them the next time they're in a tight spot. Is it something about this specific threat—that it's far more powerful than their previous enemies? Is it a conjunction of the planes or the favor of a deity? The important thing is to set expectations so characters—and their players—aren't disappointed the next time they want help and it doesn't arrive.