

SF

RUNEBLADES



52-IN-52

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Product Code: RGG5220Jan05

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RUNEBLADES

“Hither came Krona, the Merciless Night and Midnight Serpent, from the drowned lands of Dom’daiel now long lost to memory. At her hip swung Shadowclaw, the soul-drinker, a blade older than the knowledge of humanity. None could say which controlled the other, but all who faced them perished.”

*—From the opening credits of “Game of Ungol”
(3D version)”*

Runeblades are among the most powerful weapons ever forged by mortals, though the secret of their construction is nearly lost. They are empowered by ancient true runes, sigils of ineffable power that have defined the nature of reality since long before any language or society existed to try to understand them. A character may find a runeblade linked to their destiny early in their career, even have said weapon be the cause of the circumstance that makes them

The existence of runeblades is well understood by academics and technomancers, and their existence is common enough knowledge that they are often the focus on 3D shows, digitronica songs, and vesk war-poems, but their true nature is not. They are generally considered little more than unusually powerful magic items, perhaps on the scale with lost relics and ancient artifacts. In truth runeblades are more than that in one crucial aspect. Unlike other powerful rune-empowered weapons (such as the Sword of Kings, or Soul Swords), runeblades don’t just use runes, they attempt to alter them.

Each runeblade has a themed name that represents the runes that it primarily draws power from, but also has a purpose. Each purpose is a function the runeblade tries to carry out or create. The weapons are not intelligent (as most philosophers understand that term), but instead their very nature causes them to try to alter the universe around them. This is a result of each runeblade being a warp in the fabric of runes, a lens that twists and bends the reality around it to match it’s own runic existence. While runeblades are not normally sentient or sapient, they do have a drive of PURPOSE, which their innate nature attempts to enforce on both their wielder’s actions, and the universe around them.

To create a runeblade you create the name first, then add a purpose. Each runeblade has an effective item level, though how that is determined varies based on how the GM decided to add runeblades to a campaign (see Runeblade character Options, near the end of this product).

RUNEBLADE NAMES

Gythus tore a chunk of bread off the loaf with his teeth, but kept his eyes locked on the pulsating darkness at his companion’s hip. Even in the reflection of his eyes, light by the campfire, that sword was a spindle of total darkness.

“If it’s so ancient, why is called Shadowclaw? Did its makers think to foresee what language we would use today?”

One corner of Krona’s mouth quirked upward slightly, but it would be too generous to call the expression a smile.

“If Shadowclaw was made by creatures capable of what we would recognize as thought, they certainly did not spare any for us or our language. But you are asking the wrong question. It is not, why does this ancient weapon carry a name we recognize in our tongue. It’s why did Shadowclaw and its fellow runeblades mold our language to match its name?”

“And even if we knew the answer to that question, I doubt we would like it.”

*—From the “Game of Ungol: Season Six
(3D version)”*

Each runeblade has a name, which is the best-possible translation of its runic existence into a common tongue. In any language the name is at best an approximation of the true moniker of a runeblade, but anyone touching it (including those struck by it) know the closest their native language can get to its true name.

Runeblade names (and thus themes and secondary powers) are drawn from either iconic names representing emblems (runic symbols to be admired and emulated, often seen as positive or intimidating traits) or foes (things to be fears and killed, with names designed to suggest the foes are doomed in the in the presence of the runeblade). Whether a runeblade is built around an emblem name or a foe name, the steps for building one are the same. You can roll randomly (roll 1d20, 1-10 emblem name, 11-20 for foe name), or just decide if you want a given runeblade to be representation and inspirational, or dreadful and threatening.

Once you know if the weapon has an emblem name or foe name, you determine a prefix and

suffix, which define the runeblade's final name, and 2/3 of the runeblade's minor, moderate, and major powers. As a GM you can just select these, or determine each element randomly by rolling 1d6 and consulting the appropriate table. If you are a player who had the GM's permission to begin play with a runeblade as one of the Runeblade Character Options (see that section, toward the end of this product) you should propose what runeblade name and themes you would like to have as part of your character (but ultimately, the GM has final say over what runeblades are allowed into a campaign).

Once you have the runeblade's name, 2/3 of its powers are set. While the powers of each name element are set and based on the meaning of that part of the name, you can alter the actual name to match your vision of the runeblade. Each prefix and suffix has a number of suggested alternatives listed in parenthesis after the main name element (and if you wish to be truly random, you can roll 1d4 to determine which of the 4 listed name elements you use). You can also replace name elements with elements that make more sense for your campaign – if dragons don't exist but kaiju are common, having *Kaijusong* as a runeblade makes more sense than *Dragonsong*.

With any suffix, you may wish to make the name two words, or even place a possessive 's on the prefix. Thus you can have the foe runeblade name *Dragondoom*, *Dragon Doom*, or *Dragon's Doom*. The same is true of the alternate prefixes and suffixes. That same weapon could be *Drakebane*, *Sphinx's End*, *Wyrms Fall*, or any combination of those elements.

Any name element powers that allow a saving throw have a DC of 10 + 1/2 runeblade's effective item level + wielder's key ability score modifier. Any that needs a caster level or effect level uses the runeblade's effective item level unless it says otherwise. Any spell granted by the runeblade is a spell-like ability unless it says otherwise.

EMBLEM NAME PREFIXES

EMBLEM NAME PREFIXES		
1	Dragon	drake, sphinx, wyrm
2	God	angel, demon, devil
3	Pyre	ash, fire, flame
4	Shadow	nightmare, secret, shade
5	Tide	lake, sea, water
6	Twilight	black, dark, night

1. DRAGON (ALIEŃ, DRAKE, WYRM)

POWERS

Minor: Select one energy damage type (acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic). When you attack with the runeblade, you can choose for half of it's damage to become this energy type.

Moderate: You gain a breath weapon of the same energy type as for the runeblade's minor power. Choose for it to be a 30-foot-cone, or a 60-foot-line. It does 1d6 damage per effective item level of the runeblade, and allows a Reflex save for half damage. Once you have used this ability, you cannot do so again for one hour.

Major: Select one of the following benefits. Once this choice it made, it cannot be changed until you gain a new character level.

Tail: You gain a tail as a natural weapon. You may treat it as a basic melee weapon (in which case its base damage is 1d12 per 2 effective item levels of the runeblade) or as a basic melee weapon with the operative weapon special property (in which case its base damage is 1d12 per 2 effective item levels of the runeblade). It has the block, disarm, reach, and trip weapon special properties. It has the knockdown critical hit effect.

Wings: You gain a 60-foot flight speed.

2. GOD (ANGEL, DEMON, DEVIL)

POWERS

Minor – Select 3 0-level spells from any spell list. You may cast these at will.

Moderate – Select two spells from the same class's spell list that have a spell level no greater than 1/5 the runeblade's effective item level and do not have a target of personal. You can cast these spells a total of twice per day (each spell once, or one spell twice). You can change the selected spells whenever you gain a level, or the runeblade gains an effective item level.

Major – Select a spell from the same class spell list that your moderate power spells came from, that has a spell level no greater than 1/3 the runeblade's effective item level and does not have a target of personal. You can cast this spell once each day.

3. PYRE (ASH, FIRE, FLAME)

POWERS

Minor: The runeblade gains the aurora, bright, and fiery special weapon properties.

Moderate: The runeblade gains the ignite special property, with burn damage of 1d6 per 4 effective item levels of the runeblade.

Major: You may choose to have anything you reduce to 0 or fewer hit points with the runeblade (including things that have already been killed or broken but still have a physical form, such as a corpse) that is flammable to turn to ash and blow away, as if destroyed by a *disintegrate* spell.

4. SHADOW (NIGHTMARE, SECRET, SHADE)

POWERS

Minor: You gain choose to roll a Stealth check twice, and take the better of the two results, a number of times per day equal to 1/3 the runeblade's effective item level (minimum 1/day).

Moderate: You can a constant *invisibility to technology* spell. It also works against magic sensors and methods of detecting you.

Major: You can cast *dimension* at will as a swift or move action. It has a maximum range equal to your land speed, and both the point you depart from and the one you arrive in must be in dim light or darkness.

5. TIDE (LAKE, SEA, WATER)

POWERS

Minor: You gain a swim speed of 20 feet (or add +20 feet to an existing swim speed), and attacks with the runeblade suffer no penalties to attack or damage rolls underwater.

Moderate: You gain the aquatic subtype, but can still breathe and move normally on land (if you could do so previously). Your swim speed increases by an additional +40 feet. You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls if you are in contact with water, and a +1 bonus if your target is in contact with water. These bonuses stack.

Major: You can transform into a vortex of swirling, churning water once every 10 minutes. This ability functions identically to the whirlwind ability.

6. TWILIGHT (BLACK, DARK, NIGHT)

POWERS

Minor: You gain low-light vision and darkvision. If you already had low-light vision, you instead gain scent which only functions in dim or no light. If you already had darkvision, add 60 feet to its range.

Moderate: You can cast *gloom mote* five times per day. It acts a spell with a level equal to half the runeblade's effective item level.

Major: You can cast *shadow body* once per day. You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls against creatures in dim light or darkness.

FOE NAME PREFIXES

FOE NAME PREFIXES

1	Dragon	foe, horror, monster
2	God	angel, archon, demon, devil
3	Giant	king, hero, titan
4	Mage	curse, hexer, sorcery
5	Shadow	night, secret, thief
6	Sword	axe, claw, weapon

1. DRAGON (FOE, HORROR, MONSTER)

POWERS

Minor: The first time each day you take acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic damage, you gain resistance to that energy type equal to half the effective item level of the runeblade (minimum resist 1) for the rest of the day. This applies to the damage that triggers this ability.

Moderate: Your attacks, spells and abilities ignore the DR, SR and resistance of dragons, and grants SR 10 + the runeblade's effective item level against the spells of all creatures of the dragon type, and that have dragon, drake, or draconic in their species, theme, class or archetype name (such as a the dragonblooded theme).

If the GM uses this name element to represent some other type of creature, this benefit can apply to creatures of that type and spellcasters linked to those creatures.

Major: The runeblade is *vorpal* against the creatures its moderate power functions against, and it's SR applies to any supernatural abilities of such creatures.

2. GOD (ANGEL, ARCHON, DEMON, DEVIL)

POWERS

Minor: Once per day when you fail a saving throw against a spell or supernatural ability that has an effect other than damage, you may choose to reroll the saving throw. You roll your new saving throw twice, and take the better of the two new results.

Moderate: Your attacks, spells and abilities ignore the DR, SR and resistance of outsiders, and grants SR 10 + the runeblade's effective item level against the spells of all creatures of the outsider type, and that have a god's name, "priest," or an outsider species name in their species, theme, class or archetype name (such as a the priest theme).

Major: The runeblade is *vorpal* against the creatures its moderate power functions against, and its SR applies to any supernatural abilities of such creatures.

3. GIANT (KING, HERO, TITAN)

POWERS

Minor: You can carry additional bulk of equipment equal to half the runeblade's effective item level.

Moderate: You do not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Major: Every time you damage a target with your runeblade, you can also target it with a *directed denial of strength* as a free action.

4. MAGE (CURSE, HEXER, SORCERY)

POWERS

Minor: You gain a resistance bonus to saving throws against spells and supernatural abilities equal to 1/4 the runeblade's effective item level (minimum +1).

Moderate: You gain SR equal to 10 + the runeblade's effective item level.

Major: You gain SR equal to 12 + the runeblade's effective item level. When a creature you can see and hear casts a spell on you, as a swift action or reaction you may choose to allow the spell to affect you without overcoming your SR.

5. SHADOW (NIGHT, SECRET, THIEF)

POWERS

Minor: You gain choose to roll a Perception check twice, and take the better of the two results, a number of times per day equal to 1/3 the runeblade's effective item level (minimum 1/day).

Moderate: You can cast *see invisibility* as a swift or move action at will.

Major: You are always allowed a saving throw whenever an illusion or spell or effect with the shadow descriptor would affect you (even if the spell does not normally allow a saving throw). On a successful save, the spell has no effect on you.

6. SWORD (AXE, CLAW, WEAPON)

POWERS

Minor: You gain DR X/- with a value equal to 1/4 the runeblade's effective item level.

Moderate: You gain a +4 bonus to attack rolls for sunder combat maneuvers made against weapons.

Major: When used to make a sunder combat maneuver, the runeblade acts as though it was an adamantine weapon, and it deals +2d10 damage.

EMBLEM NAME SUFFIXES

EMBLEM NAME SUFFIXES		
1	-Bringer	beacon, caller, kin/kith
2	-Claw	fang, roar, talon
3	-Edge	blade, fist, might
4	-Dawn	light, morning, sun
5	-Elder	ancient, progenitor, source
6	-Song	storm, thunder, voice

1. -BRINGER (BEACON, CALLER, KIN/KITH)

POWERS

Minor: Once per day you can cast *summon creature* of a spell level no greater than 1/3 the runeblade's effective item level. Regardless of what you summon, it takes an appearance similar to and gains any type and subtype appropriate to the runeblade's name (*Dragon Bringer* summons creatures that look like dragons and are of the dragon type, *God Bringer* summons outsiders that look like divine servants, *Pyre Bringer* summons creatures with the fire subtype, and so on).

Moderate: You can now use your summoning ability twice per day. You can expend two uses of this ability to cast the spell as a standard action. All the creatures you summon share one language of your choice.

Major: You can now use your summoning ability four times per day. You can expend four uses of this ability to cast the spell as a swift or move action.

2. -CLAW (FANG, ROAR, TALON)

POWERS

Minor: You gain a bonus to your AC against any combat maneuver targeting your runeblade equal to 1/3 its effective item level (minimum +1).

Moderate: When you attack the same target more than once with the runeblade in the same round, the runeblade gains a +1 insight bonus to the second and subsequent attacks and does an additional +1d6 damage for each previous hit. This resets at the beginning of each round.

Major: When the runeblade scores a critical hit against a target, or damages it with an attack that exceeds the target's AC by 4 or more, the target is staggered for 1d4 rounds.

3. -EDGE (BLADE, FIST, MIGHT)

POWERS

Minor: Your runeblade counts as a force effect.

Moderate: Your runeblade functions as being made of any metal, and doing any physical damage type (bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing) for purposes of bypassing DR, ending regeneration, or triggering vulnerabilities.

Major: Once you have your runeblade in your close proximity for at least 24 hours, as a move action you can teleport your runeblade to you as if it cast *interplanetary teleport*. This ability ceases to function if some other creature qualifies to use it. Additionally the runeblade is immune to any ability that requires a dispel check, such as *dispel magic*, and heals 1 hp per minute if damaged.

4. DAWN (LIGHT, MORNING, SUN)

POWERS

Minor: Your runeblade can create light. A number of times per day equal to half its effective item level (minimum 1/day) it may shed a glow lasting up to 1 hour, shedding normal light in a 20-foot radius centered on you and dim light 20 feet beyond that range.

You can end the light effect as a swift action.

Moderate: When your runeblade creates light you may double its duration, or to increase its intensity to bright light in a 20-foot radius (with normal light 20 feet beyond that and dim light 20 feet farther out). In addition, you can expend an additional daily uses of your ability to increase the radius of either effect to a 60-foot radius.

The runeblade gains the lightveiled weapon fusion.

Major: The runeblade gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and does an additional 3d10 damage against creatures with vulnerability or sensitivity to light (such those with light blindness), as well as creatures with the velstrac graft.

5. ELDER (ANCIENT, PROGENITOR, SOURCE)

POWERS

Minor: You gain choose to roll any skill check made to recall knowledge twice, and take the better of the two results, a number of times per day equal to 1/3 the runeblade's effective item level (minimum 1/day).

Moderate: You are immune to fear effects. If you are already immune to fear effects, you can grant this immunity to a single creature within 30 feet of you that you can see and hear. The immunity lasts until you grant it to an additional creature.

Major: You can cast *true seeing* as a spell-like ability twice per day as a swift or move action. You have no maximum age.

6. -SONG (STORM, THUNDER, VOICE)

POWERS

Minor: You gain choose to roll a Diplomacy check twice, and take the better of the two results, a number of times per day equal to 1/3 the runeblade's effective item level (minimum 1/day).

Moderate: The runeblade becomes an *ominous thundering* weapon.

Major: You are immune to language-depend and sense-dependent effects.

FOE NAME SUFFIXES

FOE NAME SUFFIXES

1	-Death	gallows, grave, tomb
2	-Doom	bane, end, fall
3	-Master	king/queen, lady/lord, tyrant
4	-Slayer	hunter, killer, knight
5	-Smasher	crusher, hammer, smiter
6	-Wraith	echo, ghost, memory

1. -DEATH (GALLOWS, GRAVE, TOMB)

POWERS

Minor: You can use your runeblade to perform a *coup de grace* as a standard action. The target must still be a legal target of a *coup de grace*.

Moderate: When the runeblade damages a target, it must succeed at a Fortitude save or its regeneration and fast healing stop for 1d4 rounds, and it cannot benefit from magic healing for 1 round.

Major: The runeblade gains the bleed critical hit effect (for 4d6 bleed). This critical hit effect also activates if your attack roll with your runeblade is a 15 or greater (the d20 shows a 15-20), and the attack hits and damages your target.

2. -DOOM (BALE, END, FALL)

POWERS

A Doom weapon has a specific creature type (or similar category) as its antithesis, as determined by its name prefix and defined below:

1. Dragon (dragons), **2. God** (outsiders), **3. Giant** (humanoids), **4. Mage** (spellcasters and those with

spell-like abilities of a spell level at least ¼ the runeblade's effective item level), 5. **Shadow** (undead), 6. **Sword** (constructs, vehicles, structures, traps)

Minor: Against attacks and effects from your runeblade's antithesis, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to your AC and saving throws.

Moderate: When you score a critical hit with the runeblade against its antithesis, you can force the target to make a Fortitude save. On a failed save, you can either cause it to be unable to use any spells, spell-like abilities or supernatural abilities for 1d4 rounds, or reduce its DR and Hardness (if any) by half until it is fully healed.

Major: When a significant enemy that is your runeblade's antithesis has, within the past minute, made an attack roll against you or forced you to make a saving throw, as a standard action you can cast on yourself *mystic cure* (as a 6th level spell), *greater remove condition*, or *regenerate*. If your runeblade's antithesis kills you, there is a 50% chance your runeblade casts *mystic cure* (as a 6th level spell) on you to bring you back to life. This power can be used twice per day, but not more than once a minute.

3. -MASTER (KING/QUEEN, LADY/LORD, TYRANT)

POWERS

Minor: You can cast *command* twice per day as a move or swift action. Any creature with an Intelligence of 3 or greater and that knows any language is subject to this, and is considered to understand the language you use for your *command*.

Moderate: You have a permanent *zone of truth* that only affects creatures damaged by your runeblade in the past day.

Major: Once per day, you can cast *suggestion* on a creature you damaged with your runeblade in the past 24 hours. This effect has no maximum range, but the target must be on the same plane as you.

4. -SLAYER (HUNTER, KILLER, KNIGHT)

POWERS

Minor: The runeblade gains the staggered critical hit effect.

Moderate: The runeblade's critical hit effects activate if your attack roll with your runeblade is a 19 (the d20 shows a 19), and the attack hits and damages the target. This is not a critical hit for any other purpose.

Major: Once per day when you damage a target with your runeblade you can force it to succeed at a Fortitude save or die. This is a death effect.

5. -SMASHER (CRUSHER, HAMMER, SMITER)

POWERS

Minor: Your runeblade can do its normal damage type, or bludgeoning damage. If it already does bludgeoning damage, it deals extra damage equal to 1/4 the runeblade's effective item level (minimum +1). Three times per day, when you do bludgeoning damage to a target with your runeblade, you can force it to attempt a Fortitude saving throw. If it fails, it is staggered for 1d3 rounds.

Moderate: When you do bludgeoning damage with your runeblade, if your attack roll exceeds the target's AC by 3 or more, you may knock it prone.

Major: You can use the combat maneuver option of the *telekinesis* spell at will.

6. -WRAITH (ECHO, GHOST, MEMORY)

POWERS

Minor: You can cast *invisibility* as a move or swift action three times per day. It has a duration of 1 round.

Moderate: You can cast *greater invisibility* as a move or swift action once per day.

Major: You can cast *ethereal jaunt* as a move or swift action twice per day.

SPECIAL PURPOSE

Gythus swore as Hrulden Hel's head went flying, severed from the fat sorcerer's body by one blow of Krona's accursed weapon.

"You fool! We needed to question him."

"Oh yes, we did." Krona held Shadowclaw at full arm's length, and for the first time Gythus saw some reflection in the blade. The light flickered faintly, but the face of Hrulden Hel could be made out in the light, expression shocked, mouth agape in a silent scream.

"And I suspect he'll be much more cooperative this way."

*—From the "Game of Ungol: Season Seven
Premiere (3D version)"*

Each runeblade has a special purpose which grants powers in addition to its thematic powers drawn from its name elements, but also imposes an onus on the wielder. A runeblade wielder can fight this

onus, but in time it nearly always wins out, at least in part, unless the wielder finds the strength to put down the blade and walk away.

When an onus calls for a saving throw to resist its compulsion, the DC of the save is 17 +1/2 the runeblade's effective item level. Some actions that allow a character to avoid or fulfil such an onus note they have specific alignment descriptors, such as being described as an evil act. Undertaking such an act has the same consequences as any act of that type—a single evil act will not change your alignment, but a GM and player may need to have a conversation about a character's alignment if such actions occur regularly.

You can select an appropriate purpose that matches the runeblade's overall description, or you can roll 1d6 to determine its purpose randomly.

PURPOSE DESCRIPTIONS

TABLE: RUNEBLADE PURPOSES

1	Gate-Crasher
2	Luck-Bender
3	Siege-Breaker
4	Soul-Drinker
5	Spell-Breaker
6	Vampiric

Each purpose, along with its powers and onus, are described below.

1. GATE-CRASHER

A gate-crasher runeblade wishes to tear down and destroy defenses. It gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls against foes that have shield or cover bonuses to AC. You lose this bonus, and take a -1 penalty to all your attack rolls, if you benefit from a cover bonus or shield bonus against an attack that misses you. The lasts until the end of your next round.

Minor: Your runeblade gains the breaching weapon special property.

Moderate: You can replace any attack made with your runeblade with a sunder combat maneuver (and may make these maneuvers at range if your runeblade makes ranged attacks).

Major: Your runeblade ignores the hardness of structures and vehicles. Your runeblade can score critical hits against objects. If it scores a critical hit against a structure under circumstances where stress or distraction would normally prevent you

from taking 10 on a skill check (such as combat), it does triple damage (rather than double damage).

Onus: If a foe has a shield, vehicle, or defensive position, the wielder must attempt to damage, disable, or remove it at least once every other round of combat. Ignoring this onus requires a Will save, with the DC increasing by 1 each time the wielder ignores it. Anytime you fulfill the onus, the DC of Will saves to resist it resets. If you successfully resist the onus, you take a -1 penalty to AC until you successfully damage a non-ally's shield, vehicle, or defensive position.

Damaging a non-ally's shield, vehicle, or defensive position for the sole purpose of removing this AC penalty is an evil act.

2. LUCK-BENDER

A luck-bender runeblade exists to see unlikely things happen. This both causes it to reward dangerous, irresponsible behavior, and (sometimes) give assistance when the wielder would normally fail at a task. The wielder may choose to invoke the runeblade as a free action at the beginning of their round as a free action. Roll 1d12. On a 1-6, the wielder gains a +1 luck bonus to all attack rolls, skill and ability score checks, and saving throws. On a 7-9, the wielder gains no bonus. On a 10-12 the wielder takes a -1 penalty to the same rolls and checks and cannot spend a luck point from the runeblade that round.

The wielder has a pool of luck points. These reset to one luck point each day, and the pool can have a maximum number of luck points equal to ¼ the runeblade's effective item level (minimum 1), plus the wielder's key ability bonus (minimum +1).

You can spend luck points using the powers of the runeblade, and gain them under specific circumstances as detailed below.

- If you have less than a 25% chance of succeeding at an action that has significant consequences if you fail (see onus, below), you gain one luck point for attempting it as long as you do not spend any luck points on the attempt.
- If you roll a natural 1 on an attack roll, skill check, or saving throw while attempting actions that have significant consequences if you fail (see onus, below), you gain 1 luck point.
- If a foe scores a critical hit against you, you gain 1 luck point.

You can spend all current luck points to reroll any one result that is entirely random (not affected by level, ability scores, skill ranks, and so on, such as there being a 50% chance a given town has a cleric in it.)

Minor: You can spend a luck point to add a +1 luck bonus to any skill check or ability check. You make this decision after you know your die roll total, but before you know the result of the roll.

Moderate: You can spend a luck point to add a +1 luck bonus to any saving throw you make. You make this decision after you know your die roll total, but before you know the result of the roll. Additionally, your skill check luck bonus becomes +2.

Major: You can spend a luck point to add a +2 luck bonus to any attack roll you make. You make this decision after you know your die roll total, but before you know the result of the roll. Additionally, your saving throw luck bonus becomes +2.

Onus: The owner of a luck-bender runeblade is consistently pressured to take risks. Each day if the owner does not attempt one attack roll, skill check, or saving throw that requires a roll of 15 or better on the d20 to succeed, the maximum number of luck points available from the runeblade is reduced by 1 until the owner does attempt such a check. Such a roll must be one with real potential consequences as defined by the GM, such as when fighting a significant enemy or making a check failure of which results in noteworthy damage or penalties.

A character can take needless risks to fulfill this requirement and reduce their chance of success on a check to only functioning if the roll is 15 or higher—making a fancy behind-the-back weapon attack, adding an unnecessary flip to a jump, mumbling an insult every few sentences during a negotiating, and so on. Doing so is a chaotic act.

3. SIEGE-BREAKER

A siege-breaker runeblade exists to change the odds of an outnumbered, defensive force. It encourages bold assaults against large numbers of foes, and leaving allies and defenders behind to directly assault the heart of an opposing force. You gain a +1 bonus to AC against attack from the second and subsequent creatures each round to attack you.

Minor: You gain a +1 bonus to saving throws against the second and subsequent saving throws you attempt each round.

Moderate: When you are outnumbered by foes within 30 feet of you, and have no allies within 30 feet of you, you gain a +1 insight bonus to attack rolls and AC.

Major: As long as you are not mounted or carrying an ally, you take no AC penalty when you charge, can charge to any square able to attack your foe, can charge through difficult terrain and allies creature's spaces, and do not have to charge in a straight line. You still must end your charge within a melee attack against a foe.

When you are outnumbered by foes within 30 feet of you, and have no allies within 30 feet of you, you gain fast healing 2, and under these circumstances immediately heal a number of hp equal to a target's HD or level when you kill a foe or knock them unconscious.

Onus: If the wielder cannot attack and be attacked by multiple foes, and there is a position from which the wielder can attack and be attacked by multiple foes, the wielder must take at least a move action each round to move toward that position. This onus can be resisted with a successful Will saving throw. If you resist this, you suffer a -1 penalty to Reflex and Fortitude saves until you do take a position where you can attack and be attacked by multiple foes.

Starting a fight with group of creatures specifically to lift the onus penalty is an evil and chaotic act.

4. SOUL-DRINKER

A soul-drinker runeblade takes some vital spark of animation from the soul of creatures it is used to kill. It does not drink their entire soul—their spirits can still be found as normal in the afterlife, but a crucial element of their soul that attaches them to the knowledge and concerns of the mortal realm is removed.

A creature slain by a soul-drinker runeblade cannot be turned into an undead or returned to life without a successful caster level check (DC 1 + runeblade effective item level). When you gain the runeblade's minor power, this increases by +4, when you gain its moderate power by an additional +5, and when you gain its major power by an additional +5.

Minor Power: Once per day you can use *speak with dead* to ask one question of the last creature slain by the runeblade. This functions as if the creature's entire corpse was available, and you automatically share a language with the creature. If its alignment is within one step of yours it does not answer cryptically (though it is still brief and may not know

the answer), and even if it receives and succeeds at a save against the effect it gives you at least a hint or clue to the question's answer without attempting to deceive you.

Once you have asked a specific slain creature one question, you cannot ask it more questions at a later date using this minor power.

Moderate: As the minor power, but you receive on question per 2 effective item levels of the runeblade.

Major: Once each week you can cast *speak with dead* targeting any creature you have slain with the runeblade at any time, as if its body was present and fully intact.

Onus: If you go 7 days without killing a sentient, sapient creature with the runeblade, you suffer a -5 penalty to all skill checks until you do so. Each additional day that passes, your penalty increases by 1, to a maximum of -10.

Killing a sapient, sentient creature purely to satisfy the runeblade's onus is an evil act.

5. SPELL-BREAKER

A spell-breaker runeblade specifically wants to end magic effects and harm spellcasters. It gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls against any creature with spells or spell-like abilities. The wielder also gains a +1 bonus to all saving throws against spells and spell-like effects, and a -1 penalty to all other saving throws.

SPELL-BREAKER RUNEBLADE POWERS

Minor: Your runeblade can attempt to dispel effects as if you had the Dispersing Strike feat.

Moderate: You can cast *dispel magic*. Once you have done this, you cannot do so again until you regain Stamina Points after a 10-minute rest.

Major: You can cast *greater dispel magic*. Once you have done this, you cannot do so again until you regain Stamina Points after a 10-minute rest.

Onus: If there is a spell aiding foes or harming or hindering allies, the wielder must attempt to dispel it if the wielder is capable of doing so. This includes if the wielder can reach a place where a Dispersing Strike attack against it is possible by running, charging, or taking a full turn of any movement form the wielder has. If the wielder cannot get within such range in a turn, they must at least take a move action to get closer to being able to do so, if that is possible. A successful Will save allows the wielder to overcome this onus, but all saving throws

against all effects thereafter suffer a -1 penalty until the weapon is used in an attempt to spell-break.

Ignoring good tactics or a plan agreed upon with allies just to appease spell-breaker is a chaotic act, as is needlessly working to find a spell that aids foes or harms or hinders allies.

Alternatively a spellcaster wielding a spell-breaker runeblade can sate its desire for destroying spells by sacrificing their highest-level spell slot or prepared spell to it each day, as long as that is of a spell level at least 1/4 the wielder's character level. This is also a chaotic act.

6. VAMPIRIC

A vampiric runeblade specifically wants to taste bloody wounds. It gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls against living creatures able to bleed, and a -1 penalty to attack rolls against anything else (including inanimate objects, things immune to critical hits, things without blood (or a near facsimile such as ichor) and anything specifically immune to bleeding.

VAMPIRIC RUNEBLADE POWERS

Minor: Your runeblade gains a bleed critical hit effect (1d6 damage per 4 effective item levels of the runeblade, minimum 1d6).

Moderate: Whenever your attack roll with your runeblade is a 15 or greater (the d20 shows a 15-20), and the attack hits and damages your target, you recover 1d6 hit points per 5 levels of the runeblade (minimum 1d6), to a maximum number of hp equal to the damage dealt to the target.

Major: You are immune to death effects, energy drains, level drains, and bleed effects.

Onus: Once the blade is drawn, it cannot be sheathed again until it has tasted deep blood. Any successful attack made against a creature that is not an ally that does lethal damage and made to the best of the wielder's ability qualifies as deep blood. Otherwise, the wielder must cut themselves before sheathing the blade, damage equal to 5 hp, +1 hp per effective item level of the runeblade.

A successful Will save allows the wielder to overcome this onus, but all attack rolls made with the runeblade thereafter suffer a -2 penalty until it next tastes deep blood.

Attacking a creature just to satisfy this need, or keeping a creature as hostage or prisoner in case there is a need to satisfy it later, is an evil act.

RUNEBLADE POWERS BY LEVEL

Krona leaped back from the giant's mighty hammerblow, disappearing into a deep shadow cast by the evening sun across the old keep's ruins. Gythus clenched his teeth, and raised his shield. Despite years of partnership, even time she left his sight in a battle, he feared this was the time she would truly abandon him.

But as the misshapen King of Basalt Tor advanced on him, iron hammer the size of a tree raised about its head, Gythus saw Krona dash out from a different shadow, dozens of feet from where she disappeared, and bury Shadowclaw into the giant's ankle. Blood sprayed, and the monstrosity's skin toon on a shadowy paleness he has seen many times before. It fell to its knees, its eyes an expression of shock, and then collapsed onto its side, motionless.

Gythus marched up to the victor, and the woman who wielded it. He did not entirely lower his shield's guard.

"Since when can it do that? Carry you from shadow to shadow?"

Krona shrugged. "Just now? This month? A week? The important thing is, the Keep of Basalt Tor is ours!"

Gythus was convinced she did not include him in that declaration of plural ownership.

—From the "Game of Ungol: Season Seven
Finale (3D version)"

A runeblade has powers defined by its name elements and purpose, and granted over time at different levels. How to determine the runeblade's level depends on which runeblade character option you select (see below), but the following table shows which powers are gained when.

A runeblade can be any weapon type, but normally finds its way into the hands of a creature able to wield it with great skill (a GM generally should make a runeblade a weapon the character receiving it is most proficient with, and allow a player taking a runeblade as part of their background to select what kind of weapon it is). A runeblade can change its form each time it gains a new effective item level.

RUNEBLADE CHARACTER OPTIONS

Krona slumped in her throne, her drunken eyes wandering aimlessly through the great hall. Dancers danced, revelers drank and sang, but none of it touched her heart. Her remaining withered, liver-spotted hand rested lightly on Shadowclaw's pommel, one long, gnarled finger gently tapping on it.

With speed none expected, she leaped to her feet and swung the deadly weapon in an arc that ended a hair's breadth from the neck of a young jester, who crouched motionless in wide-eyed shock where he had been when he dared touch the weapon.

Krona's voice was a growl. "For a thousand years, this curse has found the blood of my family to serve it. And you think you can just take it? Make the horrid thing yours? Then you may have it, fool!"

There was no sounds in the hall as Krona shoved the unshining, black blade at the hapless servant, who raised his hands up and away from it, falling away from her onto his backside, scrambling to escape as quickly as he could by kicking his legs and scooting awkwardly across the floor.

"No? Don't want it after all?! Does anyone?"

The hall was silent. Krona sat once more, but slowly, in obvious pain.

"But yet, perhaps it is time. Perhaps my sentence is served. Gythus!"

The elderly man approached, alone of all those in the hall to not show open fear. His long white beard was braided, his head bald and pale as an egg.

"Yes, my queen?"

"You have found them?"

He nodded. "Five girls, with vastly distant but true ties to your bloodline, all between the ages of 17 and 27. The first, Elrykka, is training to be an alchemist..."

Krona silenced him with the wave of her hand.

"I shall decide what they are to be. Bring them all to me. Now."

Gythus bowed once, then turned and walked from the throne.

"Sing, damn your hides." Krona grunted. "Dance! Bring me mead!"

Nervously, but not without energy, the hall burst into movement again.

Krona returned to the same posture on her throne, the same finger tapping the ebony pommel.

"Or, I suppose You shall decide what they are to be, Old Devil. One of them, anyway."

—From the "Game of Ungol: Season Eight
(3D version)"

RUNEBLADE POWERS BY LEVEL

These are when a runeblade gains its various powers, based in its effective item level. When upgrading the base weapon, always choose the highest-level weapon that matches the general weapon type the wielder prefers for a weapon.

Level 1: The runeblade is a hybrid item and is considered magic for purposes of penetrating DR, but does not give a magic enhancement bonus to attack or damage rolls. Its item level is treated as 2 higher than its effective item level when determining its HP, hardness, and saves.

Level 2: Minor Power from Name Prefix

Level 3: Minor Power from Name Suffix

Level 4: Upgrade the Soul Sword base weapon, up to an item level 4 weapon. Add +2 to damage dealt with the Soul Sword (+1 if it is an operative weapon or a small arm) for every level below 4th the base weapon's item level is.

Level 5: Minor Power from Purpose

Level 6: Upgrade the Soul Sword base weapon, up to an item level 6 weapon. Add +2 to damage dealt with the Soul Sword (+1 if it is an operative weapon or a small arm) for every level below 6th the base weapon's item level is.

Level 7: Moderate Power from Name Prefix

Level 8: Upgrade the Soul Sword base weapon, up to an item level 8 weapon. Add +3 to damage dealt with the Soul Sword (+1.5 if it is an operative weapon or a small arm) for every level below 8th the base weapon's item level is.

Level 9: Moderate Power from Name Suffix

Level 10: Upgrade the Soul Sword base weapon, up to an item level 10 weapon. Add +3 to damage dealt with the Soul Sword (+1.5 if it is an operative weapon or a small arm) for every level below 10th the base weapon's item level is.

Level 11: Moderate Power from Purpose

Level 12: Upgrade the Soul Sword base weapon, up to an item level 12 weapon. Add +3.5 to damage dealt with the Soul Sword (+2 if it is an operative weapon or a small arm) for every level below 12th the base weapon's item level is.

Level 13: Upgrade the Soul Sword base weapon, up to an item level 13 weapon. Add +3.5 to damage dealt with the Soul Sword (+1.5 if it is an operative weapon or a small arm) for every level below 13th the base weapon's item level is.

Level 14: Upgrade the Soul Sword base weapon, up to an item level 14 weapon. Add +4 to damage dealt with the Soul Sword (+1.5 if it is an operative weapon or a small arm) for every level below 14th the base weapon's item level is.

Level 15: Major Power from Name Prefix

Level 16: Upgrade the Soul Sword base weapon, up to an item level 16 weapon. Add +4 to damage dealt with the Soul Sword (+2 if it is an operative weapon or a small arm) for every level below 16th the base weapon's item level is.

Level 17: Major Power from Name Suffix

Level 18: Upgrade the Soul Sword base weapon, up to an item level 18 weapon. Add +4 to damage dealt with the Soul Sword (+2 if it is an operative weapon or a small arm) for every level below 18th the base weapon's item level is.

Level 19: Major Power from Purpose

Level 20: Upgrade the Soul Sword base weapon, up to an item level 20 weapon. Add +5 to damage dealt with the Soul Sword (+2 if it is an operative weapon or a small arm) for every level below 20th the base weapon's item level is.

Runeblades are similar enough to the *Sword of Kings* and *Soul Swords* (see the eponymous books describing those weapons) to use the same methods of determining its effective item level as those runic weapons do. However, runeblades are also classically an integral part of a character concept from the character's origin. Whether the runeblade is an inheritance from a bygone age, a gift to the family from the gods, or is considered the true "player character," with the actual PC presented as a meat puppet, some character concepts work better if a runeblade is part of the character's class features from the jump.

And that can be done with the Runeblade Wielder archetype.

RUNEBLADE WIELDER ARCHETYPE

If you want to allow a character to begin play with a runeblade as an integral part of their theme and class, you can use the Runeblade Wielder archetype.

RUNEBLADE CLASS FEATURE

You can choose to take this archetype at 1st level, in which case you gain a runeblade at 1st level but do not gain the benefit normally granted by your theme at 1st level (other than the +1 to an ability score, which you receive normally). This runeblade in the form of a 1st-level weapon of your choice that your class gives you proficiency with.

Alternatively, you can take this archetype at 2nd level, and gain your runeblade at that time.

Your runeblade's effective item level is equal to the effective item level of the class you add this archetype to. If the runeblade is lost or destroyed, it somehow returns to your or is rebuilt when you next gain a level, or 91 days later, whichever comes first.

POWERS LOST

This archetype is considered to replace the class features a class sacrifices at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 9th, 12th, and 18th level for archetypes with class features at those levels.

TRUE ARTIFACTS

Faferdra adjusted the heavy wait of the dratted sword once more, trying to find a comfortable position for the strap that held it over her shoulder.

"Are you sure you want that thing?"

The big northern woman smiled at the tiny woman Grayheldkin, whom she had traveled with so many miles already.

"It bought my aunt a kingdom didn't it?"

"A kingdom now in awash in blood and flames."

Faferdra shrugged. "She wasn't a very good queen. Left no heir, barely left her throne room the past few years. I'd have you to help me be better."

Grayheldkin shot her a dubious look.

"Besides," Faferdra continued as if she hadn't noticed. "It whispers to me in my sleep."

"Is that supposed to make me feel better?"

"It should! Because its whispers tell me my aunt never found it's true potential. It's great now, yes. But it could be... more."

—From the "Game of Ungol: Series Finale (3D version)"

The runic weapons in the January 52-in-52 releases — the *Sword of Kings*, *Soul Swords*, and runeblades are among the most powerful weapons likely to fall into PC hands, but in generally they fall short of being as powerful as true artifacts. They can be boosted to minor artifact status by just giving them their 15th-20th level powers without requiring a character to pay any price for that benefit. But if you want to take them to the next step of true artifacts, you may wish to combine two such weapons, and then add the general guidelines for artifacts (which may be indestructible, or only have one way they can be destroyed, be beyond the effect of any mortal spell, weapon, or ability and so on).

You can also create a rock-paper-scissors situation if you wish. The *Sword of Kings* might be beyond the power of any other item... except the rune-warping purpose of runeblades. Runeblades, in turn, can ignore the effects of nearly every device and item, but are themselves subject to the soul-fueled power of *Soul Swords*. *Soul Swords* can survive and recover from nearly any damage or effect, except the might of the *Sword of Kings*.

This is a purely narrative choice on the GM's part, but it's a fun way to add some depth and potential plot concerns to a campaign that use these powerful weapons, and can lead to its own narrative possibilities if the players decide they must seek one such weapon to deal with another.

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