

### **Soul Blade**

Throughout history, heroes have roamed the land, whether seeking adventure or following a cause of some type. Then, hideous villains have stalked the world, as well, twisted, soulless wretches who make their way in life over the twisted corpses of others. Some are known by all. Still others, much more frequently, are cut down before they ever reach their true potential. These would-be heroes are too frequent to begin to list. Nevertheless, the common bond between all heroes is that each leaves behind an item worthy of them: a devastating sword, a mighty mace, an invincible shield, a foul and rotting hand, or an all-seeing eye twisted by evil. Each of these powerful items was made by the wielder, for better or for worse, and the world was shaped by their wielders as much as by the devices themselves.

The player characters typically fall into the second category; cut down like fresh wheat before their true abilities are even known, much less acted upon. In a harsh world, even the strong usually fall prey to encroaching darkness. On the other hand, a true hero can rise above the horrors of the game world, and end up just as legendary and powerful as any of the aforementioned people. Their effect, too, will be felt long after their death.

The Soul Blade is an incredibly unique item type. While termed a *Soul Blade*, it can be a mace, an axe, a crossbow, or even a spiked chain or set of throwing daggers. The catch-all term describes a weapon that is shaped by the character who is wielding it, for better or for worse, and which bonds its wielder to it as surely as the blade becomes bonded to the wielder. In game terms, treat the Soul Blade as a prestige class, available to weapons of any type that are *not* enchanted at all. This prestige class is only available to a weapon specifically enchanted to be such a weapon, but the enchantment can never be copied by any NPC or PC, so the items tend to be quite rare. The enchantment, if it is ever found, is only found on weapons that do not run out, so while shuriken or throwing daggers can be found to bond to the soul (they can be retrieved), blowdarts or arrows can never, ever be Soul Blades (they break). In all cases, Soul Blades gain experience just as characters do, although the leveling is mainly up to the DM, since the Players most likely have absolutely no clue what a Soul Blade is (this can lead to some pretty funny situations). The weapon gains experience if used against creatures in the same manner as a normal class does (i.e. if it is disabled before the end of an encounter, but *did* participate, it gets experience) but never detracts from the total experience. Instead, it gains an amount of experience equal to exactly half of what its wielder gained through an adventure or encounter, again, not detracting from the full share that the wielder gets (if the wielder gains 4 exp, he still gets 4, but the weapon also gets 2). On the other hand, if the wielder uses the blade in a very personal manner (speaking to it, personifying the weapon, swearing on it and the like) then the item gains the exact same amount of experience that the wielder does.

### **Requirements**

To qualify to become a Soul Blade, a weapon must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Quality: Masterwork only Enchantment: Must be a dormant Soul Blade

Alignment: Absolute neutrality (True Neutral, or Neutral on both axes)-Changes with wielder

Special: A Soul Blade must be wielded once in combat to attune to its wielder

Lvl.	Enh. Bonus	Int. Stat	Wis. Stat	Cha. Stat	Special
1st	+0	--	--	--	Bond of the Spirit
2nd	+1	--	--	--	Enchantment, Unity
3rd	+2	25%	25%	25%	Intelligence, Prime
4th	+3	50%	50%	50%	Enchant, Extraordinary
5th	+4	75%	75%	75%	Prime, Bond of Flesh,
Unity					
6th	+4	Full	Full	Full	Enchant, Boost, Perfect
use					
7th	+5	Full+1	Full+1	Full+1	Prime, Extraordinary,
Boost					
8th	+5	Full+2	Full+2	Full+2	Enchant, Boost, Unity
9th	+5	Full+4	Full+4	Full+4	Prime, Bond of Souls,
Boost					
10th	+6	Full+6	Full+6	Full+6	Enchant, Extraordinary

### **Class Features**

All of the following are class features of the Soul Blade prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** The Soul Blade automatically grants proficiency with itself to anyone who wields it, regardless of the Blade's level.

**Appearance Shift:** A dormant Soul Blade always appears to be an incredibly unwieldy and pathetic piece of work. Regardless of its type, it will appear to be rusted, nicked, dented, bent slightly, rotten, infested with termites, or simply of exceedingly poor craftsmanship. Any attempt to detect magic on the item results in a truly bizarre aura of power that is completely impossible to identify, although a very well-learned sage may make a Knowledge [Arcana/Weaponry] (either) check at DC 30 to attempt to identify the item as a Soul Blade. Conversely, anyone who has had direct experience with a weapon of this sort that views the Soul Blade's aura may make a similar check with a DC of 20 to identify the item (such as if a local hero uses a Soul Blade, a local knowledge check may be made). This aura of power grows gradually over the progression of the weapon, until it is a blinding mass of energy that is still completely baffling. If a character even bothers to pick up the malformed and ugly weapon, though, he or she will immediately discern that it is immensely powerful, or at least that it is a great deal more than it appears to be. After continued use, the sword will incredibly gradually appear of better and better make ("You know, this old hunk of junk isn't really half bad. Maybe I'll keep it, as a souvenir of that time I had to pull it out against the Orcs"). Once the blade reaches level 2 and gains its first +1 enhancement bonus, it will appear to be a masterwork weapon, although the wielder almost certainly won't have noticed by then. Others who saw the weapon, and left, and saw it again at its higher state, will know immediately magic is at work. After the enchantments kick in, the sword will undoubtedly be recognized (it's tough to miss a *Flaming Burst Longsword*).

**Increased Skill through Unity:** Regardless of wielder, a Soul Blade grants automatic proficiency with its own class to the wielder. If the wielder is already proficient with that type of weapon, that wielder gains Weapon Focus with that weapon, regardless of whether or not the wielder is a fighter of at least 4th level. If the wielder *is* a fighter of at least 4th level and already has Weapon Focus with that type of weapon, then the wielder deals an additional step of damage on a critical hit (x2 becomes x3, x3 becomes x4) and can make an additional attack each turn at -5 below their lowest attack rating. Note that the increased critical damage is counted after all other critical-hit improving skills, spells, or enchantments. These abilities are only usable if the wielder understands that the sword is more than it appears to be, most likely after the sword informs him.

**Feat Enhancement:** Even if prohibited by class or any other reason, a wielder of a Soul Blade can take proficiency with the weapon as a feat. Also, if the wielder is not a fighter, and regardless of their level, they still gain access to the Weapon Focus feat, only on the Soul Blade.

**Bond of the Spirit:** Once a Soul Blade has been wielded in combat, it attunes itself to its wielder. Henceforth, it considers the wielder to be its true master and will always attempt to stay with the wielder. Because the sword bonds itself to the one using it, it is nearly impossible to disarm, granting the wielder a +5 bonus against a disarmament check, and the sword actively repels others, causing anyone other than the wielder who tries to use the sword to feel incredibly uneasy, suffering -1 morale at all times until the weapon is given back. At higher levels, others wielding the blade gain -1 negative levels for each 2 levels of Soul Blade the weapon possesses, to a maximum of 5 negative levels, until the sword is put away or given back. If the wielder is killed in combat, while the sword is being actively wielded by the user, and fails a willpower check with a DC of 15 +1 per Soul Blade level, the blade is burned out, losing all special abilities and reverting back to its original state (this effect only occurs at true death, not within 2d12 hours of the death of the wielder of a level 10 Soul Blade - See Bond of Souls). Another hero may use the weapon after this reversion, but if the original wielder is revived, the blade may or may not revert back to the form it was in when the original was killed when he comes to retrieve it, depending on which of the two wielders had raised it to the highest level. Make an opposed willpower check between the two personalities of the sword, adding 1 to either side for each level it is higher than the other, and adding 5 to the intelligent one if one of the users had never brought it to intelligence. Whichever wielder's personality is ousted immediately knows, and will immediately understand that the only way to retrieve the prize is to slay the other. In this case, the blade immediately reverts to the form of the wielder left alive.

**Enchantment:** Soul Blades gain their powers from the wielder of the weapons, and become more powerful in directed ways. For every 2 levels a Soul Blade increases, it gains the ability to become an enchanted

weapon, with the enchantments being valued at +2 at most. Thus, a second-level Soul Blade might manifest abilities identical to those of a *Chaotic* weapon (market price +2), or those identical to a *Flaming, Defending* weapon (market prices +1 each). Conversely, the sword may elect to keep its enchantment "points" and save them up for a more powerful ability. By this token, a level 4 Soul Blade that had been previously unenchanted might suddenly function as a *Dancing* weapon (market price +4) might. The enchantments that manifest will always be determined by the alignment and purpose of the wielder, so a mace belonging to a cleric and paladin will almost certainly end up as a *Holy* weapon, and most likely a *Lawful* and *Defending* one besides. The enchantments are gathered directly from the mind of the wielder, though, and are totally uncontrollable. If, for instance, an unholy priest of an evil deity has cleverly infiltrated a party of lawful good adventurers, his Soul Blade would still manifest *Unholy* qualities, and he'd have some fancy explaining (or quick running) to do.

**Unity:** Beginning at second level, a Soul Blade becomes more and more closely linked with its wielder. It gradually grants the wielder abilities impossible for normal humans, until the sword and wielder seem almost one. At second level and every 3 levels thereafter, the Soul Blade grants the wielder, and only the wielder, one ability from the following list: Uncanny Reflex: Wielder gains an additional attack of opportunity against any foe who misses or is blocked by the wielder. Hypnotic Feint: The wielder can perform a feint (using the Bluff skill) with a +4 bonus, and as a move-equivalent action, rather than as standard action. Parrying Blur: On any turn in which the wielder even attempts an attack, he gains a +2 bonus to his armor class. Subtle Awareness: The wielder can sense creatures or objects within a 5-foot radius, even if they are invisible or in pitch darkness. Penetrating Attack: The wielder can treat any object struck as though it had an armor class 2 points lower than it actually was. Dual Awareness: The wielder is not ever flat-footed, even if totally surprised, and can not be flanked unless by a rogue 4 levels higher than double the level of the Soul Blade. These abilities mimic combative feats, but do not require feats on the part of the wielder of the Soul Blade.

**Intelligence:** At level 3, the Soul Blade has linked to its wielder enough that it begins to gain intelligence. The Soul Blade is semi-sentient at the lowest levels, and the table above reflects the progression of the Soul Blade's intelligence, as related to the statistics of the Wielder (i.e. at level 5, a Soul Blade has 75% of the wielder's Intelligence, Charisma, and Wisdom). Once the weapon reaches level 6, it is as intelligent as the wielder, and continues to advance, adding 1 to each of its statistics at level 7, 2 at level 8, 4 at level 9, and 6 at level 10. The weapon is treated exactly as an intelligent item of any other type, except that it always uses its wielder's save throws, and is always treated as having a special purpose, with it being the current purpose of the wielder. If the wielder does not currently have a specific direction, the weapon has no special purpose and loses its Special Purpose Power (Table 8-36, page 230 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), gaining a different power once the wielder again sets out on a quest or in a direction. The item has a personality exactly that of the wielder, and will never, ever attempt to rebel or control the wielder.

**Prime/Extraordinary:** Unlike a normal intelligent weapon, the Soul Blade gains abilities directly through combat, and through its wielder. Thus, its stats are never important when determining the number and scope of its abilities. At each level marked with "Prime", give the weapon one Primary Ability from table 8-33 on page 229 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and at each level marked Extraordinary, give the weapon one Extraordinary Ability from table 8-34 on page 229.

**Bond of Flesh:** Once a Soul Blade reaches a high enough level, the wielder is as surely bonded as the blade. At this level, the Soul Blade's wielder will not suffer the blade to be taken from him unless he is (heavily) restrained or unconscious. The wielder is capable of locating the blade from any distance, and can find the blade immediately upon discovering its location, bypassing secret trapdoors, rugs thrown over clever indentions, or thousand of perfectly duplicate magical weapons laid out in a dizzying array of patterns. The wielder also fully understands all of the abilities of the weapon and always knows anything the weapon does. Once this bond is formed, the wielder is inextricably linked to the weapon. The Soul Blade's magic cannot be destroyed unless the wielder is dead first, even by Mordenkainen's Disjunction or a similar powerful ability, although direct divine intervention can rip the blade from the wielder, most likely killing both. If the Soul Blade is destroyed (*much* easier said than done), the wielder must make a fortitude save (DC 20 +1 per Soul Blade level +1 per level the wielder has gained with the Soul Blade) or lose 500 experience per level of the Soul Blade and 750 experience per total character level. If this save is succeeded, the wielder only loses 500 experience per total character level. Directly following this save, regardless of its outcome, the wielder must make a willpower save (DC 20 +2 per level the wielder has gained with the Soul Blade) or permanently lose 1 Wisdom per Soul Blade level and temporarily lose 1d10 Constitution, 1d10 Intelligence, and 1d10 Charisma.

**Perfect Use:** The wielder of the Soul Blade exists simultaneously within himself and his weapon, and thus can use the weapon in ways no one can fathom. He immediately gains +1 to all attack rolls with his weapon, and +2 to all damage, and can make an additional attack with his highest base attack bonus when using the weapon. These abilities can never be taught to another, even another bonded with a different Soul Blade, as the usage is absolutely unique to each pair.

**Boost:** The Soul Blade grants its wielder insight as it becomes more powerful. At each level marked "Boost", add 2 to the Charisma, Wisdom, and Intelligence of the wielder of the Soul Blade. These stat boosts are permanent, existing even if the Soul Blade is destroyed or leaves control of the wielder. This means the stats of the Soul Blade are never greater than the Wielder.

**Bond of Souls:** The Souls of the Blade and Wielder are one. There is absolute freedom between the two, and the Wielder exists in either, as does the Blade. If either are left alive, and the other is killed, an exact duplicate of the spell *True Resurrection* may be cast by either simply by coming into contact with the other, within 2d12 hours. If the wielder of the blade is dying (less than 0 hp)

but the sword is still in capable condition, then the wielder automatically stabilizes and begins healing. At all times, the wielder of the blade heals at twice the normal rate, and the blade repairs itself at the natural healing rate of the wielder, without reforging or any other such repairs. At this point, the wielder *is* the blade, so to speak, but exists in two places, so add a +5 bonus to any mind-affecting spell or other effect that does not target both the wielder and the blade. For any spells or effects that have a more beneficial effect for the wielder at higher levels, count the wielder's level at +5 his actual level, as the blade's experience is his. Take note that the blade is absolutely loyal to the true personality of the wielder, and that a sudden shift in ideas, thoughts, or emotions will bring about a battle between the newly estranged pair, with opposed willpower saves determining which personality will continue to exist. If a wielder of this caliber is altered by a spell or effect, such as by an unlucky draw of *Balance* from a *Deck of Many Things*, add +5 to the willpower roll of the blade, and on a success for the blade, it maintains its personality while the wielder stays in his magically enforced state. Note that the blade, the incarnation of everything the original *was*, will attempt to get aid for its other body, utilizing every ability it has.