

# Keen Edge of History

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## Introduction

*Keen Edge of History* is a role playing game in which you get Conan's riddle of steel wrong. In this case, it is the sword that's important, not the hand that wields it. There are still gallant heroes on mighty quests out to do all kinds of heroic things, but you're not playing them. No, you're playing the sword.

Swords in this game are ancient things that contain great power. They have already left a mark on the world, and they aren't done with making history yet. In fact, that's what they, and by extension, you, are after. After all, swords don't care about amassing wealth, buying gear, or winning kingdoms.

But the story attached to how that kingdom was won, especially if the sword was the symbol that signaled the final, victorious charge, *that* they care about. That is the crux of this game. In playing the sword that is your character, you go on quests to amass more stories to attach to your legend, and as you name grows, so too does your power.

## A Few Notes on Blades

First of all, don't let the specific language present in the rest of this text box you in. While swords certainly imply fantasy, they don't necessitate it. This game assumes a setting in which swords can play an important part, and in which legends spread through the culture. Outside of that, *Keen Edge of History* doesn't require anything from your setting. Of course, this game works perfectly well in a pseudo-medieval European setting, but you could just as easily port it over to a steampunk game, or place your tale in the blasted wasteland of a post-apocalyptic world where the technology and society have regressed. You could play a game set in a time analogous to the Civil War in which the blades are cavalry sabers. The heavy Japanese influence present in much cyberpunk literature lets you give that setting a whirl with this system as well.

Also, while this game presents some specific rules on how to define your sword, you're free to describe it however you like. This goes beyond blade shape and adornments. This game assumes the use of a sword, but it can be whatever kind of sword you like. You want a traditional longsword? You got it. But if you'd prefer a claymore, it's yours. If you see a shortsword as more your style, there's no rule against that. Hey, if you'd prefer a matched pair of swords that works too. All of that is pure aesthetic, and it's yours to do with as you please.

Finally, it's important to note that while your character is in fact a sword, *Keen Edge of History* does not assume that this sword is sentient, intelligent, or capable of communication. The swords might seem to have a will of their own in how fate twists about them, but they do not talk to nor argue with their wielders, not in the default rules anyway.

## Forging Your Sword

The first step in creating your sword character is coming up with its legend. Swords enter this game already ancient. Generations of heroes have wielded your blade in battle, worn them during political negotiations, and overcome unimaginable opposition. Your blade has a ballad, and it is from this that it derives power.

## Write the Ballad

Since your sword's story defines it, it follows that you need to know what that tale is. A paragraph in general terms will do, and don't sweat the poetry; there's no need to reproduce Beowulf here. Instead, write a handful of sentences about the biggest events in the sword's past. While none of the following questions are mandatory, you can look to answering some or all of the following for inspiration:

- What are the sword's origins?
- Who was the first to wield the blade?
- What are the notable characteristics of the sword?
- What is the single largest thing someone accomplished with the blade?
- Is there an especially noteworthy wielder in the blade's history?

*Soulsear is a longsword designed as a prison. Inside its brass blade burns the soul of a mad wizard banished so long ago none remember his name and the twelve fire demons tasked to be his eternal torturers. Despite the magical matrix embedded in the blade, it contains too much magic to completely lock all the power away, and it freely bursts into mystical fire. For a time, Soulsear served as the magical implement of Fire Lord Hedrian, who claimed the ability to reach into the blade and contact the mage trapped within for aid in his sorcery, but it disappeared with fall of the Order of Burning Sages, and while bodies found at the order's tower were all burned to charcoal, some swear the victims were tortured first. Since then, mages have tended to give the blade a wide berth.*

*Above is a jagged blade of some indeterminable, luminescent material. It glows with a soft white light at all times, and while the blade itself is crude, its hilt is a masterpiece of delicate gold and silver piping, slathered in religious iconography from the church's earliest days. It is said to be a shard of the firmament itself, a fragment of absolute purity. The church of course claims only priests are worthy of wielding it, but history has shown that Above does not concern itself with the ordination of its wielders. Indeed, twice in its history simple peasants have led revolts against the Church itself, Above in hand.*

*To grasp Hunger's hilt, a wielder must reach inside the distended mouth of the decapitated head that sits at its base. Said to be the head of the vampire from whose bones the rest of the blade was forged, this massive-mouthed head still retains its fangs, and can bite the wielder's sword arm. It no longer steals blood, but instead infects the wielder with an intense hunger for the living, which turns him into a ravenous madman and a terror on the battlefield. Resistant to final destruction, numerous heroes and kingdoms have attempted to entomb Hunger to lock it away from history forever. The*

*blade, however, refuses to be denied, and as recently as twenty years ago it clamped on the arm of the barbaric warlord Bone Chewer as he went on a twelve city sacking streak.*

## Get an Initial List of Abilities

Your sword character is an enchanted blade, or at least empowered somehow. Your setting might not include magic, so this could be a psychic weapon, or one that injects chemicals into the wielder, or something tapped into the world's collective unconscious. The metaphysics are left in your hands. What's important is that the sword conveys power to those who wield it. Determining what that means specifically is what this step is all about.

Swords have two kinds of abilities:

- *Ambient abilities* are those that are always active. As soon as the sword chooses a wielder, he receives the benefits of these abilities, and continues to do so for as long as the sword remains in his possession. These are often passive augmentations to the wielder and his actions.
- *Invoked abilities* are those that require activation. They are temporary in duration, and can only be called upon once per quest. Invoked abilities also carry a cost with them; something about the gift requires payment of some form.

Have a look at the story you wrote about your sword and use it as a basis for abilities that it provides a wielder, noting if these are ambient or invoked. This is just a preliminary list. You're not obliged to take everything you come up with in this step. You're also not strictly limited to the text of your initial sword story; feel free to use that as a jumping off point to determine what sorts of abilities the blade may have.

*Soulsear can burst into flames at will. While this seems like an invoked ability, it can do this whenever, wherever, and it asks nothing from the wielder in return, so it's actually an ambient ability that can be turned off. The sword also contains the soul of a powerful wizard, who may be contacted for both advice and mystical assistance. The legend suggests doing this too often risks angering his demonic jailors. That makes contacting the wizard an invoked ability, with the cost being that the demonic torturers must be placated, probably by providing them with sorcerous souls.*

*Above's story is a little light on detail, favoring its history over any legends of its abilities, but that can be telling unto itself. Since the sword doesn't seem to do anything overtly wondrous, it's safe to say that all of its abilities are ambient; Above empowers its wielder to fulfill its purpose. While there's a strong religious current running through it, there's also one of justice unconcerned with dogma. This makes Above's ambient power one that augments just and moral acts.*

*Hunger is pretty straightforward. Its ability is invoked, and it grants tremendous strength and savagery (effectively a boost to the wielder's combat abilities) when fighting living foes. This is an important distinction. Living foes. It's no help against golems or zombie hordes. As to the cost, this sounds like a pretty standard berserker rage, that is, you risk attacking your companions.*

*That sounds both cliché and bad for the game though, so let's instead say that it infects you with the need to take life after the fugue passes. Whoever you slay while in Hunger's grip doesn't count toward meeting the cost, and while you don't have to do it right away, you will have to kill someone to satiate the sword once bitten.*

## Choose Your Saga

Sagas are secondary tales, other stories tied to but not necessarily part of your sword's myth. The difference between a saga and the story you wrote above is that a saga is focused on a single theme instead of encompassing the overall history of the blade. A sword can develop many sagas over the ages. Yours already has at least one.

*During the time of the Arcanum Occupation, Soulsear's name became infamous among the occupying forces, claiming the lives of no fewer than four regional governors, and one master legate sent to take control of the situation. Its apparent hunger for powerful spellweavers, along with the charred and tortured skeletons it left behind, broke the Arcanum's will to remain, and they ultimately withdrew their forces.*

*This saga establishes Soulsear as a weapon with a penchant for killing wizards in addition to the abilities we outlined above. Thematically it ties in with the larger history already created, but this particular tale is more focused on one particular type of activity.*

## Select Your Method of Passing

Swords are ageless. They drift through the generations of those who would wield them, ever returning to story in a new hand. Your method of passing defines how it is that your sword makes its way from person to person down through the ages. You have three choices:

- *Dynasty* – the sword is part of a generational lineage, an object of inheritance, likely of great importance. The family's identity might very well be wrapped around the blade, and the sword's legacy can influence the way the family develops through the generations.  
Dynasties use an attribute called Births. This represents how many potential hands are available to wield the sword in any given generation, and the score adds to your available points when generating a hand for a quest (see The Hand that Wields It on page 9).
- *Prize* – the sword remains unavailable most of the time. However, in times of need, would-be wielders gather in order to prove themselves worthy of the privilege of bearing the blade into danger. While the sword winds up in the hands of a very different person each time, the contest of worthiness ensures that only the finest candidates carry the blade.  
Prizes use an attribute called Worth. This represents the excellence required by a hand that he must demonstrate before the sword gives itself over to his use, and the score gives the sword's hand special abilities (see The Hand that Wields It on page 9).
- *Wanderer* – the sword seems to get lost shortly after the time of need passes. A storm washes it overboard. It disappears in a fire. The wielder falls into a chasm with the blade on his back. Yet somehow it is always discovered when the need for it arises. These blades are especially well storied, since their re-emergence signals turbulent times. When they appear again, people pay

attention.

Wanderers have a special attribute called Record. Unlike the other two special attributes, this doesn't convey any bonuses to your hand. Instead, it modifies the use of your Bard score (see below).

## One Last Attribute

There's one more aspect of your sword that you need to know about: Bard. A sword's bard score is a measure of the power of its story and the interest storytellers and historians have in it. While a mighty sword can cleave a dragon in half with a single swing, it is the well storied sword that gets recorded into legend. Bard is used both in play and is an important part of character advancement.

## Bard and Record

If your sword is a wanderer, it has a Record score. Whenever you roll your Bard, if the die comes up less than your Record score, you may roll it again. If it again comes up less than your Record, treat the die as if it rolled a number equal to Record instead.

## Spend Points

Okay, you've got a historical overview, a list of qualities, a saga, and you've selected your method of passing. It's time to bring in some math.

You've got 10 points to spend across your sword's various aspects. The costs are shown below.

Aspect	Cost per point
Additional Saga	3 (all sagas start with a rating of 1; this cost buys you an extra saga)
Ambient Quality	2
Invoked Quality	1
Passing Attribute	2
Bard	1



## The Hand That Wields It

Your sword is your character. It has a name. It even has a personality of sorts. However, it still needs someone to pick it up and swing it, bring it places, and occasionally do some talking. In *Keen Edge of History* this is known as the hand. The hand is the sword's wielder. He's got a name and a history and a personality all his own too, but that's not nearly as important. Really, he's kind of like a big piece of equipment for the sword. Still, he's a vital piece of equipment, so he's got rules.

## Hand Attributes

Hands have attributes too. However, these attributes are less about what the hand is like and more about how effective he is in taking particular kinds of actions. They are broken down into two categories:

- **Knight** – actions controlled by these attributes involve sheer force, be it of will or muscle. This is the attribute category of power and might. It has two attributes.
  - *Arms* – This is the attribute of direct confrontation. Charging an opponent, kicking in a door, leaping a gorge, chasing down a fleeing opponent, intimidating someone, you roll arms to accomplish all of these.
  - *Armor* – This is the attribute of forceful resistance. Toughing out hunger, enduring exposure, taking damage, resisting demonic possession, you roll armor to accomplish all of these.
- **Rake** – actions controlled by these attributes involve skirting the issue through stealth or deception. This is the attribute category of grace and guile.
  - *Feint* – This is the attribute of lying. Mind you, it casts a very wide net as to what constitutes lying. Pretending to be someone else, is easy to see. But the attribute's namesake, the feint, also applies, thus it is useful in combat. Picking a lock also falls under this attribute's aegis, since you're effectively lying to the lock about having the key.
  - *Sidestep* – This is the attribute of avoiding the problem. Anything that places you beyond harm's reach uses this attribute. Sneaking past a sentry, for example, rolls sidestep (while explaining what you're doing if you get caught falls under feint). In combat, dodging a blow also uses sidestep.

## What's in a Name?

Just like I advised you not to let the implied fantasy setting constrain you, I'll say here that the names for the attributes may suggest a fighting man kind of character, but it's absolutely not necessary to think in those terms. These attributes only define the hand's effectiveness in certain courses of action, nothing more. Thus, if you want your hand to be a wizard, have at it. When your wizard shoots a bolt of fire from his hand (or better yet, through the sword), he rolls Arms. When he wraps the shadows around himself to fade from sight, he rolls Sidestep.

Play what you like. These attributes are for action, not definition. Feel free to define them however works for you.

## Creating a Hand

Because each adventure is assumed to be the quest of a generation, swords in *Keen Edge of History* are assumed to change hands with every single quest. Thus, you'll create a new hand every time you play a new adventure. Here's how.

### Select the Emphasis

Choose Knight or Rake. Your selection is the one this hand favors. All hands have some measure of both in them, but they clearly have a favorite.

### Distribute Points

You get 10 points to divide between the attributes in your chosen category, and 5 points to split between the one you didn't choose.

### Births and Hands

If a sword belongs to a dynasty, it has a Births rating. Births is an additional pool of points you can allocate to any attribute, regardless of which category you chose.

### Worth and Hands

If a sword is a prize, it has a Worth rating. For each point you have in Worth, assign a specific talent to your hand. Unlike sword qualities, these are tightly focused and applicable to only a single situation. Because they are so specific, a hand with multiple worths will not find they overlap.

Whenever your hand performs an action defined by a worth, he converts one of his dice to a d10 (see Basic Resolution on page 11 for more information on how dice work).

*Above is a Prize sword with a Worth score of 2. Its latest hand has the worths "raise a mob with stirring oratory," and "lead militia forces against professional military." It seems another peasant revolt against the Church is forming, with Above on the outside again.*

## Basic Resolution

As this is a game about accumulating story elements, the dice don't arbitrarily decide the outcome of any situation or conflict. Rather, they determine the amount of narrative control someone has to decide the outcome of a situation or conflict.

## The Dice

When you perform an action, the way in which you perform it determines what attribute you roll. For example, intimidating someone by grabbing them and screaming in their face calls for an Arms roll. Telling that same person by convincing them that they've just ingested poison and you have the antidote is also intimidation, but called for a Feint roll instead.

Roll a number of d6s equal to your attribute. Remember, if your hand has a worth and he's performing an appropriate action, one of those d6s becomes a d10.

## The Basics

Roll your dice and look for anything 5 or higher. Count them up. That's the number of narration points you have for this conflict. Narration points are the number of details you can add to describing your action and its results.

*Hunger's hand hoists up a villager and demands to know to where the rest of the population has fled. He generates 3 narration points on the test. The player says the villager tells him where they went, that it's a fort, and that the commander has requested additional troops. If he scored one more narration point, the player could stipulate whether those troops have arrived yet.*

One important note: earning narration points from a die roll is not the same as success. You can choose to narrate failure if you like, but you are free to establish the way in which you fail.

## Opposed Rolls

Somewhere along the way, you're going to want to do something, and something else is going to try to stop you. When this happens, both parties roll their respective actions and generate their narration points. At this point you can handle it in two ways. Mechanically, the net effect is the same, but in terms of narration they play out differently:

1. *Hot Potato* – With this method, the party with the greatest number of narration points describes one detail. This can be declaring ultimate victory, if he likes. After this, the person with the next highest total describes one detail, and so on down the chain until all involved have declared one narration point worth of material. It then returns to the top to start again. When a player runs out of narration points, he is done and the rest continue until everyone has used their accumulated amounts.

These subsequent details cannot negate what's already been established, but they can modify it. In other words, subsequent details cannot say "no," though they can say "but."

2. *Net Narration* – Instead of passing around the pen round robin style, opposed narration points cancel each other out, with no one getting to use them. The person with remaining narration points can use whatever he has left.

*Above and Hunger come face to face in a ruined castle. Their hands both seek the crown within as a symbol that will unite their forces into a stronger army, and they've both arrived at the chamber where it lies. Dice roll, and Above's hand comes up with 2 narration points, while Hunger's only winds up with 1.*

*Hot Potato Method* – Above generated more narration points, so he goes first and declares that he grabs the crown. It's now Hunger's turn; he knocks Above to the ground. Back to Above, who rises.

*Net Narration Method* – Above and Hunger both generated narration points, so they cancel each other out. After that, Above is still left with a single narration point, which he uses to declare he grabs the crown.

## Threats

Not all situations are created equal, and sometimes you'll need more effort in order to emerge victorious than others. When a situation has a threat rating, it means that it requires more narration to resolve than normal. Typically, a single narration point is sufficient to narrate success or failure. With a threat, however, you cannot use a narration point to resolve the situation until you've accumulated a total equal to the threat rating. You can use narration points to describe details regarding your efforts as you work toward that total, but you cannot end the situation before then.

*Soulsear's hand is crossing the Obsidian Wastes in search of an ancient treatise that he hopes will grant him greater access to the wizard trapped within (he's not a bright one). The Obsidian Wastes are a punishing place, with near-volcanic heat, wind blasts laden with razor sharp sand, and no wildlife or sources of water. Since the man is plunging headlong into the wastes, he is confronting them. In short, his search calls for an Arms roll.*

*But the GM decides that this isn't just any roll. This is an extreme situation; the tower he's searching for exploded ages ago and drifting black dunes routinely cover it almost completely. Thus the GM decides this has a threat rating, and sets it at 7. Until the player generates 7 narration points, he can describe all sorts of details in his search and his trials to survive, but he cannot end the search.*

## Threats and Opposed Rolls

When you face direct opposition in a situation that has a threat rating, you divide your narration points between addressing the thing challenging you and overcoming the threatening situation.

*Back to Above and Hunger in the ruins of the castle. The structure's now collapsing, with massive stones breaking from the ceiling and fissures opening in the floor. Getting out before it all comes*

*down is a task with a threat of 5. In the upheaval, Above drops the crown, and there's a scramble to see who recovers it. Above generates 2 narration points, while Hunger gets 4.*

*Hot Potato Method – Hunger goes first and snaps up the crown. Above runs past hunger, making for the exit. He needs to spend 4 more narration points to exit the castle. Hunger begins to run after him, also spending a point toward getting out. Above uses his last point to slam a door in Hunger's face. Hunger needs to burn a point to get the door open again, and can then spend his last point racing past Above toward daylight.*

*Net Narration Method – Before cancelling each others' narration points, each decides how many they are going to spend opposing one another. Above spends one hindering Hunger, and uses the other toward escaping. Hunger doesn't bother with stopping Above, leaving him his single narration point, while his own total drops to 3. He uses one to grab the crown and the other 2 to run.*

## Influence of the Sword

The influence a sword has on its hand is mighty indeed. While a blade's method of selecting a hand ensures that only exemplary people draw it, the sword does most of its work bolstering its hand after selection.

### Ambient Abilities

Anytime your hand takes an action that falls under the influence of one of your sword's abilities, you convert a number of dice equal to the sword's rating to d10s. This is true of both ambient and invoked qualities.

*Soulsear's ability to burst into flame certainly adds punch to a straight up offense. The sword's hand has an Arms of 4, so when performing a straightforward strike, he rolls 4d6. Soulsear's flame quality is 3, however, so when the sword is alight it turns 3 of those 4 dice to d10s.*

### Invoked Cost as a Threat

As noted in the sword generation section, invoked powers come with a cost. That cost does not need to be met right away, but carrying around a hungry sword makes things difficult for the hand. Until the cost is met, treat all rolls as having a threat equal to the rating of the invoked power.

*Soulsear's hand contacted the wizard trapped within it recently, angering the demon jailors. This aspect has a score of 2. Until the hand appeases the demons, all rolls he makes have a threat of 2.*

If a situation already has a threat, this effect is cumulative. Best not keep the sword wanting.

### Invoked Abilities

Invoked abilities function identically to ambient abilities: they turn a number of d6s into d10s up to their rating. However, they only function for a single scene, and may only be invoked once per quest.

## Sagas

When a sword is in a situation suited to one of its sagas, it gains a pool of points equal to the rating of the saga. You can spend these points in the following ways.

- *Use an invoked ability* – spending a saga point grants you use of one of the sword's invoked abilities. As long as you pay a saga point, it does not count against your normal quest limit.
- *Reduce the cost of an invoked ability* – by the number of saga points spent. This can reduce the cost to 0.
- *Increase the bonus of an ambient ability* – by the number of saga points spent.
- *Gain additional dice from an ambient power* – if a sword's ambient ability exceeds a hand's attribute, the additional rating in the ability is normally wasted. However, you can gain an additional 1d10 to your roll equal to the sword's ability rating at a cost of 2 saga points per die.

*Above has a saga rating of 3 when it comes to leading popular uprisings against tyrannical rulers, which is what it is doing right now. This evening the militia forces are staging an ambush on a slave convoy in an attempt to free those being sent to the mines. That's sneaky, and thus to command this attack, Above will roll Feint. Because this action is a just and moral one according to About's standards, it can convert 3d6 to 3d10. Unfortunately, About's current hand isn't terribly crafty, with a Feint of 2, meaning that extra point of ambient ability is wasted.*

*However, by spending 2 saga points, About can gift its hand with an additional 1d10 for all rolls that fall under the aegis of its ambient ability, as long as the attribute affected is 2 or less.*

## Combat

The rules for combat are no different from those used to resolve opposed conflicts. The purpose of this chapter isn't to introduce additional rules, but to specify how the existing mechanics are used specifically in violent conflict.

### Two Rolls per Round

Every round, a combatant rolls an attack and a defense. What pool he rolls depends on how he describes the actions he's making. The narration points he generates must be kept separate, no using points generated from an attack roll to defend yourself. Once all the participants have their totals, you resolve the conflict just as you would any other opposed roll, using either the hot potato or net narration method.

### Threat as Damage Capacity

Because a narration point lets you resolve a situation, there's nothing stopping you from spending your first narration point to say that you kill your opponent. He can narrate some circumstances regarding his death, but he's still dead. Sometimes, that's perfectly fine. Not every opponent's tough stuff. But sometimes you're looking for a foe who can stand up to the heroes for a while.

For this, use threat. Threat puts a threshold on the narration point total that needs to be crossed before anyone can overcome the situation. In combat, a threat rating effectively serves as hit points. Until the player generates narration points in excess of the opponent's threat, he can describe all the actions and wounds and maneuvers he likes. He can disarm his foe, trip him, throw him down a flight of stairs, but he can't kill him.

GMs can feel free to set NPC threat ratings at whatever they feel is appropriate. PCs have a threat of 5. Because this is a threat rating and not actual damage, there are no healing rules. Remember, each participant accumulates narration points toward the threat rating; the threat rating doesn't erode.

### A Note on Damage

Because narration points are used to describe some detail or consequence of action, a player's net successes over his opponent's defense only counts toward exceeding the threat rating (i.e. does damage) if he narrates the detail. That goes for every point he wants applied. Remember, individually narration points only grant a small bit of say so; players shouldn't need to narrate whole novels, but a hit with 5 net narration points should have 5 details in it.



## Questing

Adventures in *Keen Edge of History* are called quests, and it is assumed that a quest is the major event of a generation. Each quest consists of a single large goal and a number of smaller steps necessary to reach that ultimate conflict.

Designing a quest is both a collaborative and competitive process. Players are just as involved in saying what happens as the GM.

## Creating Quests

As noted above, quests begin with a grand idea, some large, ultimate goal. A volcano erupted a horde of dragons, there's an orkish army on the march, etc. The GM can assign the overall quest, or the group can decide on it collectively.

Each player then rolls 1d10 + Bard. The player with the highest roll gets to define the first arc of the quest, with ties going to the one with the higher Bard score, and tied Bard scores going to a reroll.

This first arc doesn't need to have a direct, obvious tie to the ultimate goal, though subsequent arcs should ultimately point in the direction of quest resolution.

When designing an arc, there's nothing wrong with doing it collaboratively with the other players. In fact, it's probably best you do, as it gets everyone involved and avoids a table of people surfing the Internet on their smart phones while waiting for one person to come up with something. However, the player who won the roll has the ultimate editorial authority over his arc; he says what goes in and what does not.

After the first arc is designed, the player with the next highest roll gets authorial control over the second arc, and so on down the line until the party has mapped out its quest to the finish. Note that if you like, you can design an arc and play it right away, leaving the design of subsequent legs until just before you're ready for them. If you do this, make sure to record the order established by the Bard roll.

## Saga Modifiers

While a player does not need to define the arc before his roll, he does need to make a saga declaration. If he declares that his arc will have something to do with any of his sword's sagas, he takes a penalty to the roll equal to the total saga ratings of his blade. If, however, he declares that his arc will have something to do with someone else's saga, he gets a +5 bonus. One last kicker, a quest can only contain a number of saga arcs equal to the number of players present -1, so someone will have to go without each quest.

Also note, however, that there's no requirement to spread saga arcs around. You could, for example, have three saga arcs all about the same sword.

## Recording Quests

The general events of any quest will become part of a sword's legend; feel free to add a summary of a quest or arc to your original story. However, the truly memorable parts are what give a sword its power and generate new sagas.

At the end of a quest arc, all players roll 1d10 + Bard. If the arc contained your sword's saga, you get a +5 to the roll. Then, in descending order, each player gets to choose a specific detail that he applies to his sword's legend. It must be something that actually happened. After choosing this detail, it is no longer available to the rest of the players. They must choose something else.

*At the end of a quest arc, Above and Soulsear stand victorious over a cabal of necromancers. The two roll Bard, and Soulsear comes up high. He chooses the slaughter of the wizards as his detail, aiming to increase the power of his mage-slaying legacy. Above cannot choose that detail for his own legend now. This battle will become part of Above's story, but Soulsear's involvement will overshadow Above's. Instead, Above asks if he can call attention to the way his blade sliced through the magical bone armor of the dead wizards. The GM accedes. Credit to mage slaying goes to Soulsear; a tale of penetrating the impenetrable goes to Above.*

## Banking and Spending Details

What do you do with these details? You can use them to create new sagas or expand additional ones. As long as the details you choose fall within the theme of the saga, or are related thematically in the case of creating a new one, you can apply them toward growing your sword's sagas.

But not every detail you choose to take away from a scene need concern the keenness of your blade. You can also apply details toward the sword's influence over its lineage, increasing the quality of hands that wield it in generations to come. When you apply details to your lineage or the power of your story (through increasing your Bard), the specifics of the detail aren't as important. All the scores tied to a sword's hand benefit from the fame of the blade; the exact flavor of fame isn't as important.

Aspect	Detail Cost to Increase Rating by 1
New Saga	3 details of the same theme; saga begins at rating 1
Existing Saga	Current rating +3; details must all relate to the saga
Births/Worth	Current rating
Record	Current rating x3
Bard	Current rating x2

It is important to note, however, that while you can bank details forever, meaning that they remain unspent, as soon as they are applied to something they become unavailable for other increases. For example, if you accumulate three details over several quest arcs that all have a similar theme, you cannot use them to form a saga if you've already spent them increasing your Bard score. Once spent, they are unavailable and only a matter of historical record.