

Epic Relics

“All you need to know about this sword is what it will do to you if you betray me.

- Ava Sonos, on the powers of her sword, *Endeavor*

By the reasoning of any rational mind, Epic Relics (or Relics) should not exist. Well beyond the power of Artifacts, Relics represent the greatest powers in the universe at work. Their creators are either unknown to lower forms of life, or so powerful even speaking of them invites destruction. A Relic in possession of one capable of unlocking its power is a crisis on a planar scale. Often, those that gain such items ascend to the ranks of the most powerful beings across the worlds.

Relics are never just found. Even such long-lived beings like Dragons may spend their entire lives hunting for these treasures and fall short. The obstacles between a Relic and its potential wielder are always immense: resting in the molten core of the world, cast into space to be lost amongst the stars, or guarded by the gods themselves.

For the purposes of running a game, a Relic should always be a part of your game's plot and story. A character wielding a Relic, particularly if attuned, is a figure of terror, reverence, and action. What exactly the presence of a Relic means for your world is ultimately up to you, and depends greatly upon the item in question. Because of the difficulty in acquiring them, coupled with the general necessity of attuning them, a Relic's presence could easily be felt over the course of an entire Epic campaign from levels twenty-one to thirty.

Relic Properties

Like their non-Epic counterparts (Artifacts), Relics possess properties and powers which they often convey to their wielders.

All Relics have two sets of properties: those it possesses when its wielder is unattuned to the artifact, and those it possesses when its wielder is attuned.

Additionally, Relics cannot be destroyed or even damaged by any known means, even by the power of another Relic. In addition, their power cannot be suppressed or removed. They will continue to function perfectly in areas of antimagic, or in the hands of beings that can drain the power from a magical item.

Unattuned Features

Until a wielder gains attunement with the Relic, its power is significant, but muted. Wielding the Relic does not count against the number of magical items a character is able to be attuned to, but they still suffer from the effects of the Relic's Bane (if applicable). The Relic has all the features detailed in its unattuned properties section until its wielder attunes it to them.

Attunement

One does not simply sit down and unlock the power of Relic. Each Relic has a unique attunement process detailed in its properties section that must be completed to become attuned to the item.

When a wielder achieves attunement to a Relic, they become permanently bonded to the item, and it counts toward the number of simultaneous magical items to which the character can attune. Most Relics do not permit their wielders to become unattuned, persisting even through death, though some Relic's Banes may cause the item to become unattuned under specific conditions. An attuned Relic loses all of its previous properties, gaining the properties detailed by the attuned features section.

Bane

Relics cannot be used without great cost, which is represented by the items Bane feature. A Bane is unique to each Relic, and is often the cost for irresponsible or reckless use of the artifact. The effects of Banes cannot be prevented by any known means.

Brand, the Burning Cataclysm

Longsword, Relic

Forged in the core of the material plane by a mysterious and ancient race, this weapon's intent is impossible to mistake. A destroyer of worlds, the sword gleefully grants its power to any and all who wield it. Brand itself is an item of two parts: the sword and its sheath. The latter is crafted from wood of the ancient tree, Yggdrasil, with a starmetal pattern ornately woven into the scabbard. The blade itself is like a katana in design, curving gently while continuously glowing white-hot as if fresh from the forge. At its hilt rests a single phoenix feather at the end of a adamantium chain, its grip bound in a hide of iridescent scales.

Properties

While unattuned, Brand possesses the following properties:

- While you wield Brand, damage you deal bypasses resistance and immunity to fire damage and enemies cannot regain hit points in response to fire damage dealt by you.
- Wounds Brand inflicts leave permanent scars that glow softly with a red light.
- While Brand is drawn, all other creatures within 30 ft. of the wielder become Ignited¹.
- As an action, you slice the air, superheating it in a burst of flame against a single target within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 26 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 20d6 fire damage, or half as much on a success.
- Non-magical structures damaged by Brand catch fire, burning at a rate of 100 cubic feet of material per turn, regardless of its construction. This effect continues until the entire structure is destroyed.

Attunement

Becoming attuned to the blade is an extraordinarily dangerous process. The wielder must take Brand to a plane of existence and end all life upon it. Brand is not picky as to how this is done, but it demands a commitment to destruction that entails the death of at least one million inhabitants by the wielder's hand. Using minions, armies, or other indirect methods are not acceptable. Destroying the plane with sword however, is.

¹ Ignited is an Epic condition, which deals fire damage to creatures so affected equal to the creature's hit dice at the start of each of the creature's turns.

In the hands of a wielder attuned to Brand, the weapon possesses the following properties instead of those listed when the wielder is unattuned:

- When Brand is drawn, creatures of your choice you can see within 1000 ft. become Ignited for one minute.
- You become immune to fire damage.
- When you deal damage with Brand with a weapon attack, you deal a bonus 8d6 fire damage.
- Damage you deal with Brand bypasses resistance and immunity to fire damage, and enemies cannot regain hit points in response to fire damage dealt by you.
- You may slice the air as an action, superheating it in a burst of flame against a single target within 60 ft. that deals 20d6 fire damage.
- Non-magical structures damaged by Brand catch fire, burning at a rate of 1,000 cubic feet of material per turn, regardless of its composition. This effect continues until the entire structure is destroyed.

Additionally, while attuned, Brand grants its wielder the ability to harness the blade's power to destroy the current plane of existence. Should the wielder thrust Brand into the ground, while maintaining a hold on the weapon, Brand pours energy into the current plane. While so thrust, creatures and objects in an expanding area around Brand suffer 20d10 fire damage on initiative count 20 of every round. This area expands exponentially every round: covering a 10-ft. radius on the first round, 100-ft. radius on round two, 1,000-ft. radius on round three, and so-forth. Once this process is started, no force save those Deific, can stop Brand's destruction of the plane – the wielder cannot remove the blade and stop its destruction. When no living creatures or objects exist on the plane excepting the user, the plane ceases to exist, plane shifting the wielder (or just the blade, if Brand has no wielder) to a random location in the Astral Plane.

Bane

If Brand is unsheathed for cumulative total time of more than one minute per day, it begins to destroy the current plane of existence, as the attuned property above, escaping from the wielder's hand, and landing, point-down, at his feet. Holding Brand gives innate and perfect insight into both the total time the blade has been unsheathed in the current day and the dire consequences should the limit be exceeded.