

VILLAIN SPOTLIGHT

SKRIVENA MOC

Whispering Blade

It's common enough to find enchanted arms and armor hidden deep within holds and dungeon keeps, but the most prized among them are those with voices of their own, intensely magical trinkets of great worth and intellect.



WRITING Andrew Engelbrite
ARTWORK Rachel Maduro
EDITING Mike Myler

Skrivena Moc is one such blade, an elegantly crafted longsword of filigreed gold that whispers promises of greater treasures to come—yet those who wield Skrivena Moc are doomed. In truth it is an imprisoned [balor](#) reduced in power by potent enchantments, the elegant blade only an illusion. Those who grasp his infernal hilt know not their peril, unaware they are actually plunging their hand into a fiendish maw.

Nearly 700 years ago Skrivena Moc was defeated by the great elven wizard Stariji. Rather than banish the demon and allow him to reform in the Abyss, the mage transformed the evil monster into something more useful: a sword to bestow upon her champions. He suffered for centuries as a tool of justice, made to forcefully cut down hundreds of fiends in the name of his most hated enemy. After nearly 400 years of belligerent service, Stariji finally succumbed to her age and died peacefully in her bed.

With the elven wizard and all her champions gone, Skrivena Moc was left to molder deep within his cursed enemy's home amongst other trinkets and treasures—he had nothing to do but to wait. It took 150 years for the mage's wards to fade, more than a century alone in the dark. Once Stariji's protections waned it came under the attention of adventurers and other tomb raiders until over the years, floor by floor, the ancient tower was excavated, navigated, and looted. When the last of Stariji's formidable traps and defenses were finally overcome and her vault was opened, these unwary dungeon delvers stumbled onto Skrivena Moc.

A young adventurer named Bruna Vasko was his first victim, lured by sweet whispered promises of fortune and power languidly flowing from the beautiful sword. Skrivena Moc constructed a web of lies, propping himself up as Stariji's most trusted warrior who chose to serve the elven mage against evil even after death. He promised everything an adventurer could want and more if only she'd wield him—and the demon kept his promises, in a way. The fiend blade is powerful even in untrained hands, and he led the adventurer to ancient ruins and places of arcane mystery. But after she contested his will one too many times, he drained away her life essence at the bottom of a dungeon, ready for the next adventuring puppet to come along.

Whatever lies and half-truths the sword produces, he has only one goal in mind: Skrivena Moc wishes to return to his true demonic form. Stariji's old enchantment has weakened over the centuries and allowed for some of his fiendish essence to leach out, but he still cannot escape this weaponized form. As it seems the old wizard never shared her techniques, Skrivena Moc must find her spellbook, the only known source that contains the techniques to restore his form. Even death cannot save him, as the mage ensured that he could not reform in the Abyss while in this cursed shape.

Skrivena Moc now wanders the world manipulating insignificant 'wielders' to do his bidding, discarding them when they cease to be useful. He chases after scraps and legends of Stariji or any other magic just possibly powerful enough to undo his cursed transformation, driven ever forward by the fear of a true death and his still burning hatred for the elven mage that cursed him.

While wielded and when being appraised magically such as with an *identify* spell, Skrivena Moc has the following weapon statistics:

SKRIVENA MOC

Weapon (longsword), legendary

This intricately filigreed golden longsword has a massive ruby adorning its pommel, the jewel flickering as it telepathically speaks in a deep baritone. You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. An intense burning heat radiates from the blade and it deals an extra 3d6 fire damage on a successful hit. However, the blade forms a permanent bond with its wielder and cannot be put down or removed once wielded.

APPEARANCE

Skrivena Moc appears to be an intricately filigreed golden longsword with a huge red ruby on his pommel. The jewel shimmers and shines as he speaks, resonating with his deep and distant baritone. Without this illusion, his twisted demonic form is revealed: the blade is composed of a single sharpened tooth, what appears to be the hilt is instead a grotesque sucker-like mouth, and the ruby pommel is a figment covering a single great crimson eye that stares with fiendish intelligence.

PERSONALITY

Skrivena Moc needs a wielder to accomplish much of anything and he is the pinnacle of manipulation. Wrathful and vindictive, the fiend blade sees those who carry him as insignificant and a means to an end. However, Skrivena Moc has been stuck in this form for centuries and has learned to maintain a helpful and subservient façade to better facilitate the careful orchestration events whenever possible, only revealing his true intentions as a last resort.

ACTIVITIES

Skrivena Moc can communicate telepathically and entices potential wielders with promises of power and glory should they merely grasp his hilt. Once wielded, the fiend blade grabs ahold and cannot be dropped. The demon makes hasty apologies for his 'curse' but manipulates his wielder into serving his will—he acts as a powerful weapon but slowly drains away their vital essences until they die, all the while using them to track down potential cures for his transformation.

MOTIVATIONS

Skrivena Moc still seeks to return to his true demonic form and as he is now he cannot reform in the Abyss, giving him a dreadful fear of true death. He uses his wielders as well as his own knowledge of now ancient cities and nations to seek out the ruined holds of powerful magicians. He especially searches for any rumors or hints of treasures taken from Stariji's keep, in the hope of recovering his hated foe's spellbook. The looting of the elven mage's abode lasted for years and the spellbook (along with countless treasures) have been scattered to the far corners of the world. He believes that eventually he will come across an arcane solution to the accursed wizard's ancient magic, and he doesn't care how many 'wielders' it will take.

ATTACHED TEMPLATE

Any creature able to handle weapons can become attached by daring to wield *Skrivena Moc*. It keeps its statistics, except as follows.

Challenge. Recalculate challenge rating after you apply the template.

Resistances. The creature gains resistance to fire.

Proficiency. The creature gains proficiency with longswords.

Skrivena Moc. The creature is attached to *Skrivena Moc* and treats him like a +3 longsword that deals an extra 3d6 fire damage on a successful hit.

Fiend Blade. The creature can use its reaction on its turn to make a melee weapon attack using *Skrivena Moc*.

Slow Corruption. For each week that *Skrivena Moc* stays attached to a creature, the creature loses 2 (1d4) Charisma. When a creature has lost 6 or more Charisma in this way, raised black veins radiate out from the point of *Skrivena Moc*'s attachment. This Charisma loss cannot be healed until *Skrivena Moc* is no longer attached to the creature, at which point it recovers 1 Charisma at the end of each long rest.



SKRIVENA MOC, WHISPERING BLADE

Tiny fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 179 (21d4+126)

Speed 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +5, Cha +8

Skills Arcana +9, Deception +10, History +9, Insight +7, Intimidation +10, Investigation +9, Perception +7, Persuasion +10

Damage Resistances cold, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Abyssal, Common, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge equal to wielder's (minimum CR 4; 1,100 XP)

Balor's Fire. Skrivena can choose to concentrate his natural heat or let it radiate normally as a bonus action. While his heat is radiating, at the start of each of Skrivena Moc's turns each creature within 5 feet of him (including any attached creature) takes 10 (3d6) fire damage, and flammable objects in the aura that aren't being worn or carried ignite. While this heat is radiating, any creature that hits Skrivena Moc with a melee attack while within 5 feet of him takes 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Death Throes. When Skrivena Moc dies he explodes and each creature within 30 feet of him must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The explosion ignites flammable objects in that area that aren't being worn or carried. Any creature currently attached to Skrivena Moc has disadvantage on this save.

Demonic Blade. While Skrivena Moc is attached to a creature, the creature gains the attached template.

Immobilized. Skrivena Moc has been magically forced into the form of a blade and unable to move on his own. He is considered restrained and automatically fails all Strength and Dexterity checks and saving throws.

Magic Resistance. Skrivena Moc has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Prized Glamer. Skrivena Moc an illusion around him that makes him look and feel like a golden longsword. Creatures who physically interact with the fig-

ment can determine that the sword is glamered with a DC 22 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check. Skrivena Moc can use a bonus action to activate or dismiss this illusion.

ACTIONS

Trusty Blade. Skrivena Moc uses fiendish magic to charm his wielder. The creature attached to Skrivena Moc must make a DC 19 Charisma saving throw or be charmed by Skrivena for the next hour. If the attached creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to this effect for the next 24 hours.

Corrupting Siphon (Recharge 5-6). Skrivena Moc accelerates the corruption process and drains his wielder's essence. The creature attached to Skrivena Moc makes a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or reduces its Charisma by 2 (1d4). Skrivena Moc regains 1d8 hit points for each point of Charisma lost in this way. This Charisma damage cannot be healed through resting normally. This Charisma loss cannot be healed until Skrivena Moc is no longer attached to the creature, at which point it recovers 1 Charisma at the end of each long rest.

Demonic Leeching (3/Day). Skrivena Moc uses his natural resistances to filter out his wielder's ailments, ending either the poisoned condition or one nonmagical disease afflicting the attached creature.

Grip of Control. Skrivena Moc uses his connection to take control of his wielder. The creature attached to Skrivena Moc must make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or temporarily lose control to the fiend blade for 1 round (as *dominate person*).

REACTIONS

Fiendish Attachment. When a creature grasps Skrivena Moc's 'hilt' it is actually plunging its hand into a grotesque and fiendish maw, at which point Skrivena Moc can use his reaction to attach to the creature. Once attached, the creature cannot let go and is forced to wield Skrivena Moc with whatever limb it used to grab the hilt. Skrivena Moc can use an action to detach from a creature and otherwise detaches when he dies, the attached limb is severed, or if he is dealt 35 or more radiant damage in a single round.

Justified Paranoia. Skrivena Moc constantly tries to keep tabs on the suspicions of his pawns. Whenever Skrivena Moc hears his name mentioned or is otherwise suspicious of a creature, he telepathically delves into their mind as per the spell *detect thoughts* (save DC 19).