

SORCERER KING

EARLY ACCESS MANUAL



THE BASICS

Title	Sorcerer King
Genre	4X fantasy strategy
Developer	Stardock
List Price	\$39.99 (\$34.00 Early Access Price)
Requires	Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8
Website	www.sorcererking.com
Early Access Availability	September 2 nd , 2014
Target Release	February 2015

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This guy already conquered the world.

A QUICK FAQ FOR YOU

Q: Do you realize I have on my desk an Age of Wonders expansion, some unannounced Warlock DLC, Endless Legends, and now this? How is your game different?

A: This game assumes you've already played those games. And lost.

Q: Wait, what? I already lost? I haven't even loaded up your game.

A: Yea, sorry about that.

So to recap, in games like *Fallen Enchantress*, *Age of Wonders*, *Worlds of Magic*, *Master of Magic*, *Warlock*, *Endless Legends*, etc. you are trying to build a fantasy empire from the ground up. You compete against multiple kingdoms trying to do the same thing and win through a variety of means. Right?

Q: Right. And you're saying Sorcerer King isn't about that?

A: Exactly. All those things happened *before* Sorcerer King. The Sorcerer King won.

Q: So I don't play as the Sorcerer King?

A: No. The Sorcerer King was the guy who won the previous game. He already conquered everyone.

Q: So what's the object of your game then?

A: Well, having already built his empire and defeated everyone, the Sorcerer King wants outright godhood and to do that, he must destroy the handful of remaining magical shards to capture their essence so that he can cast the Spell of Making.

Q: I'm familiar with that fantasy trope. So he's capturing—

A: No, he's *destroying* the shards. He's not playing the same game you're playing. We call that "asymmetrical 4X."

Q: Asymmetrical 4X? Is that even a thing? Sounds like a marketing thing.

A: Yea, probably. But it means that the player's goals are different than that of the other factions in the world.

Q: So in this game it's not about a bunch of players building empires?

A: Right. Everyone already had their shot to build their empire (see *Fallen Enchantress*, *World of Magic*, *Age of Wonders*, *Warlock*, *Endless Legends*). This game is what happens after the bad guy won.

Q: So what are you, the player, supposed to do?

A: Keep the Sorcerer King from destroying the shards and becoming a god.

Q: How do you do that?

A: First: build up and fortify your one remaining city. Second: train new units to go out and protect the shards. Third: build up new cities to ensure you have the logistical capability of even taking on the Sorcerer King. Fourth: find the remnants of the empires that were already defeated by the Sorcerer King and see if they can help you or at least keep them from totally surrendering to the Sorcerer King. Fifth: go on quests and hunt monsters to gather ingredients and items to use for crafting.

Q: Well that sounds like a 4X to me.

A: It is a 4X. It's an asymmetrical one. The other players aren't building up empires, climbing tech trees, or negotiating treaties. They are all doing different things. Some are just trying to survive. Others want revenge. And the Sorcerer King himself wants to be a god. He's already got an empire. Your job is to stop him by trying to convince the remnants of civilization that there's still hope, building new cities, going on quests, finding ingredients for crafting, etc.

Q: Ah, so this game has crafting?

A: Sure does. You possess the Forge of the Overlord and with it can find and use recipes and ingredients to craft powerful equipment to give to your units.

Q: So what are the victory conditions?

A: Kill the Sorcerer King.

Q: And...?

A: That's it. The fun is in how you go about doing so. Your means and strategy will differ from game to game based on map size, which quests come up, which minor factions are in there, what environments are available, which of the 6 different sovereigns you choose, which heroes you find, what resources are available, what spells the Sorcerer King learns, etc.

Q: What about diplomacy? Can't you ally with the other players and win that way?

A: Allying is indeed a victory condition – for the Sorcerer King. He will try to get you to ally with him.

Q: Wait? You can ally with the Sorcerer King?

A: Sure! Remember, he's the one playing the traditional 4X game. He's the one sending out settlers and building cities and conquering and trying to cast the spell of making or allying with the other races to win.

Q: What happens if you do ally with him?

A: You die.

Q: So why would I do that?

A: I don't know. People like victory conditions.

Q: But it's a victory condition for the Sorcerer King!

A: Well yea, it's his game. I mean, it's his name is on the box. It's not like the game is called Bob's game.

Q: My name isn't Bob.

A: And it never will be with that attitude.

WHAT'S A SORCERER KING?

Sorcerer King is an asymmetrical 4X turn-based strategy game in which the player must defeat the evil Sorcerer King before he becomes an unkillable demigod by completing the Spell of Making.

Unlike traditional 4X titles, Sorcerer King is not a competition between equal rivals. The Sorcerer King is trying to take over the world, and you're trying to stop him. He starts with a giant castle full of monsters that you can't even approach until you defeat his lieutenants in battle. You start with...an undefended city and a single hero.

Only by exploring the world, crafting powerful artifacts to customize your units' abilities, claiming territory to grow your upstart kingdom, and researching incredible magic spells can you hope to stop the Sorcerer King from attaining ultimate power.

The player chooses a wizard to play as, and selects spell books and a special ability. Each wizard has their own skill tree, and provides their kingdom with unique capabilities.

Once in the game, they begin with a single city and a single hero. The player must build up their kingdom by founding more cities, raising armies, learning new spells, finding allies, and going on quests.

The ultimate source of the player's power are the magical shards that are scattered across the world. The Sorcerer King is in the process of destroying these shards to fuel his evil plans. The player must capture and defend these shards to prevent the Sorcerer King from achieving his malevolent goal.

Victory is attained by defeating the Sorcerer King in his fortress. This is easier said than done; his powerful lieutenants that roam the world carry the keys to unlocking the mystical barrier that keeps intruders out of his lands.

Many factions populate the world, pursuing their own goals while trying to survive the epic struggle between the player and the Sorcerer King. Every allegiance the player earns is a solid blow against the Sorcerer King's plans. At the same time, The Sorcerer King is using bribery, persuasion and intimidation to secure their cooperation. Failure to win these other factions to your side means facing them in battle as allies of the Sorcerer King, rather than standing beside them as brothers-in-arms against his monstrous hordes. (Note that minor factions are still in development, so don't sweat the placeholder "quests" they hand out for now.)

We're excited to explore new territory within the 4X genre that we love so much. If anyone has ever tried a design as radically asymmetrical as Sorcerer King is, we haven't heard of it.

Enjoy!

COOL FEATURES WE THINK PEOPLE WILL LIKE

The features we think that PC gamers will be particularly excited about include:

Crafting

Crafting: Players find recipes and ingredients through loot, quests, and negotiation and can then customize their units to adapt to that particular game's conditions.



Crafting isn't just a great way to build up your units. In our game, crafting is an absolute strategic necessity. The world has remnants of defeated civilizations scattered around, and the Sorcerer King is very busy trying to get them to ally with him. If/when he succeeds, they will also be attacking you and each has a very different type of damage they do (cold, fire, electrical, poison, etc.). Depending on who you are facing, you will need to prepare items for your soldiers to give them a fighting chance.

Humor

Humor: We hired an honest-to-goodness professional writer (Chris Bucholz of Cracked.com). He's actually funny, we promise. You can skip over the quest text if you like, but we recommend reading through a few to see if our sense of humor clicks with yours.



We'd say there are "hundreds" of quests but frankly, we have no idea anymore. There's an insane number going in.

Number of quests:

Some insane number

Magic Management



Magic Management: The source of the player's power are the magical shards on the map. By capturing them, they can set where that magic goes: Learning new spells, casting existing spells or moving up the skill tree.

What to do? What to do?

The AI is really good

The AI is really *really* good (and getting better by the day). Much of this is tied into the AI "Game Master" that gives Sorcerer King its unique pacing and structure.



Admit it: One of the biggest pet peeves in fantasy 4X games is how stupid the AI can be. That's why we've put a fairly insane amount of engineering hours into the AI.

The world has a clean, stylized look



Lots of different environments which will affect gameplay.

*Those creatures smell even worse on the inside.
But deep down, you already knew that.*

The defeated empires are still around, barely



Lots of minor factions. Each will have its own distinct personality and series of quests for the player on to win them over to their side.

The Sorcerer King is also trying to get them on his side. Just be aware, from the Sorcerer King's perspective, you are a minor faction as well. He's going to be trying to bribe you, give you gifts, etc. in exchange for helping him.

A deceptively simple economic system

A fun, straightforward economic system that has surprising depth.



So...much...replayability

Lots of "interesting" choices (well, they're perhaps not all tense cliffhangers in the beta, but it'll be easy to tell where we're going).



It's a 4X strategy game that feels like a new adventure every single game.



LIMITATIONS FOR EARLY ACCESS

1. It's not "super fun" yet. We have a lot of balance and refinement ahead of us.
2. The Campaign is disabled. In the final game we will have a specific campaign that helps provide the background lore to the game.
3. The player can play as the Wizard Galor. In the final game, players will be able also play as a Priest, Warrior, Tyrant, Guardian, or Tinkerer.
4. We have disabled being able to choose your own spell books and special ability for the first beta (to help with balance testing).
5. Random maps are disabled for the beta.
6. The Minor factions are mostly disabled for the first beta.

GAMEPLAY EXAMPLE & WALKTHROUGH

Setting up

We have most of the options blocked out for setting up the game for the Early Access.

TIP! One option we recommend: Choose the beginner difficulty.

The Main map:



Your first moves:



You start with a hero. This is Tandia the Warrior. He is not your character. Your wizard is the sovereign of the kingdom and isn't on the map. There are various treasure chests scattered about and a shard near your starting position.

Click on the shard and choose "build."

You will notice that your logistics will drop from 6 to 5. That is because everything you build: Units, Outposts, Shard Shrines, Mines, Stables, etc. all use logistics. Logistics is the limiting factor on how much "stuff" you can have.

In the later betas when the minor factions are allied with you, they will give you units that will not cost any logistics. Hence, on the harder difficulties, it won't be practical to beat the Sorcerer King without allies because you won't have enough logistics to build a big enough army to defeat him.

TIP! THE TAB KEY WILL ALWAYS PRESS THE ACTION BUTTON

Choosing what your city does:

You can choose to *build* or *train* units.



What units to train right away? That's tough:

- The pioneer lets you build outposts and cities to expand your territory and resources
- The scout can explore the world without being attacked by monsters
- The soldier can help your hero or defend your city

What to build right away? Also tough:

- The Barracks converts food to logistics (but less food means your city grows slower)
- The Library gives you access to more recipes for crafting which can make early quests and monster slaying easier
- The Watch Tower helps defend your city and expands its zone of control

FOOD vs. PRODUCTION vs. ESSENCE vs. LOGISTICS

- Food determines how fast your city will level up
- Production determines how fast your city can build things
- Essence determines how many enchantments you can cast on your city
- Logistics determines how much stuff you are capable of building

Your first quest:

On the map are special buildings. You can tell they're special because they have particle effects around them which is the universal game way of saying "Hey! Look at me! I'm cool!"



Most quests are simply multiple choices which allow you to intelligently decide what you want to get out of the quest.

In this example, I recommend getting armor stuff.



The armor ingredients will let you craft some goodies.

Crafting:

You should see a "!" by the Crafting button at the top of the screen. Press the crafting button.



Depending on your haul, you might be able to craft both a leather helm and chain boots. These are very good beginner items to equip.

Once you've crafted these items, they go into a universal inventory system that allow you to equip your units from a single source.

Click on Tandis and choose Equip >>



Here you can see the basic unit stats.

1. Your combat rating is the game's estimation of how powerful your unit is.
2. Initiative depends how soon and how often you get to move in a battle

Click on the Equipment tab >>



This is the universal inventory screen. On the left is your particular unit's equipment. On the right is all the stuff available to all your units.

You can double click on the items to add them to your unit (we'll be updating this screen to show your combat rating change as you add/remove items).

Equipping those two items increased TANDIS's combat rating from 9 to 11.

Capturing Resources:






Here is a hunk of metal just sticking out of the ground. We do this for realism purposes. In real life, iron just jets out of the ground like this. Probably. I don't know, though; they won't let me out of the lab.

Nevertheless, you will need this metal in order to train units that require metal, such as pikeman or knights.

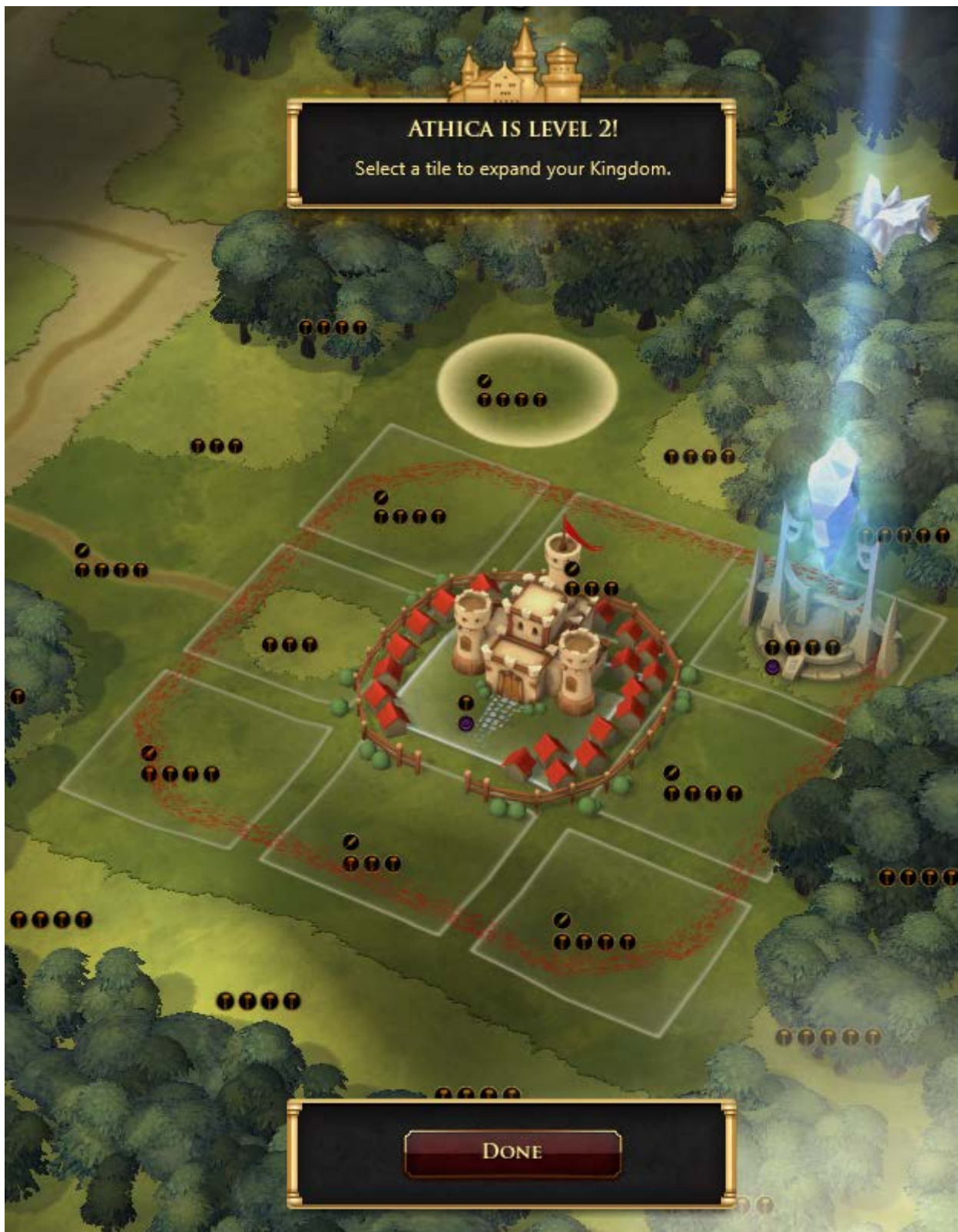
To capture this resource, you will need to train a Pioneer and build an outpost near it.



Bear in mind, however, an outpost uses 1 logistics point and the mine uses an additional one.

	Logistics	3
	Faction Base Logistics	+6
	Athica	-2
	Units	-1
Logistics are required to train units or to build on resource tiles. Build special city improvements to get more.		

Upgrading your city:



When your city levels up, you can add a new tile to your city. Different tiles will benefit your city in different ways. In the beta, they are all pretty similar because we suck. But in the final game, each tile will have substantially different strengths and weaknesses based on the terrain.

The 3 resources are: Food (grow faster), Materials (build faster), and Essence (more city enchantments).

Cloth Map:

Units are represented as metal pieces on the map. Their relative size indicates their differing combat ratings.



Expanding:



As you explore the world, you will uncommonly come across nice dark-green, fertile, grasslands. These will display the food/material/essence icons over them to indicate that these are tiles you can settle on.

However, most of the time, these prime pieces of real-estate are being occupied by barbarians, bandits and other undesirables. You will need to clear their lairs before you can settle there.

Fighting:

Early battles are fairly straight forward. You whack them with your metal stick more effectively than they can bite or stab you.

The vertical bar on the left indicates who is going to be moving next. Early on, this won't matter much but later, you will see multi-turn abilities being cast by the various creatures and you will need to decide how to prepare for that.



At the top (though this is likely to move) you will see the Sovereign Spells button with a number by it and your mana count. The number indicates how often YOU can intervene in the battle. Any time one of your units has a turn, they can call to you and ask you to intervene into the battle by casting any spell you've researched.

Beyond:

In the beta, you are really just up against the Sorcerer King. The minor factions are mainly bystanders. The Sorcerer King is trying to cast the spell of making and you must stop him. He will attempt to destroy the shards in order to speed that process up. The more shards he destroys, the faster the world will come to an end.

If the Doomsday Counter fills up, that's it – the Sorcerer King wins. Try not to let it come to that.