

## **Sword #89-5050**

Description: a serviceable Chinese straight sword (jian), made of decent-quality steel from the the Seventh Century AD. The hilt is made out of wire-wrapped wood, with steel forward pointing wings in the shape of batlike wings, and sports a jade pommel (different in style than the rest of the sword). The scabbard is lacquered wood over, of all things, asbestos fibers. The overall color scheme is of gold and black.

Sword #89-5050 is remarkable mostly in that it remains a functional weapon after nearly thirteen hundred years. The sword does not rust, corrode, dessicate, peel, or otherwise decay: even the paint and enamel is still intact. The artifact glows gently when esoterically examined, but its actual magical purpose remains undetermined.

The item was in a Gaochang museum annex up until two days ago, when an unknown young woman of Chinese origin casually walked into the storage facility where Sword #89-5050 was being kept, deliberately opened up the box while deliberately tripping the esoteric security alarms, and calmly walked out before the admittedly underpowered countermeasures could be fully deployed

remotely. In other words, whoever did this *wanted* us to know that the Sword had been removed. The thief also took considerable time and trouble to avoid confronting the guards before the theft, and was remarkably solicitous of innocent life while escaping.

The recovery operation has thus been deemed a proportionate-response scenario. Locate Sword #89-5050, and the person who stole it. Determine the use for which the artifact is to be used. Use your best judgement as to the desirability of the thief's proposed plans. And, of course; keep an eye out for any possible advantage to us. But be warned and wary: the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is a complicated and sometimes dangerous place. Do not become complaisant.

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