

Blade of the Stymied Consequence

Description: An Eighteenth Century AD folding penny knife, seven inches long (including the three inch blade). The metal is polished steel that does not rust or dull. The haft is made out of an unknown wood, and has been repeatedly stained to a brown-black color. It is sticky to the touch, and smells unpleasantly like dried blood; no amount of cleaning will remove the stains, texture, or smell.

The Blade of Stymied Consequence *should* have been destroyed, the first time it was acquired by the forces of Good. It radiates evil and general unpleasantness to anyone with the ability to detect such things; and while non-sapient items by definition can't experience volition or desire, the way that the Blade seemingly enjoys killing people is disturbing to *everybody*.

Which is the central problem, because the Blade is designed to kill *evil* people. Or more accurately *harvest* them; even having the weapon touch the naked flesh of its victims will drain all evil-powered magic or abilities from them. Actually stabbing somebody with dark powers will do horrible things to their insides as the corruption is forcibly ripped from their bodies and sucked up by the Blade. Note that this is not true for Good-based powers, or even morally neutral ones. It's big-E Evil, or it's just

another (very sharp) knife. Good luck healing the wounds, too. The harvesting is designed to be as catastrophic as possible.

The Blade of the Stymied Consequence is thus a tool for control and establishing authority. Are you a human who has made a dark pact with otherworldly entities for destructive power? And did you turn out to be incompetent at wielding it? Well, if you screw up for too long then those entities will send an assassin with the Blade. Or maybe they'll send it to one of your local *Good*-aligned opponents. Either you'll be killed and they get your borrowed power back, or you'll kill your opponent, which will demonstrate that you're not so incompetent after all. Either way, getting one of these is official notice that your superiors' tolerance for your antics is at an *end*.

There must be more than one Blade out there, because many Good-aligned forces *will* destroy one on sight, or at least right after it's been used on its intended target. And some of those forces will not. It can be argued that having a reliable Evil-targeting killing (*just don't call it 'murder,'* some will murmur) weapon handy makes Smiting the wicked just a little bit easier. The temporary evil-magic drain feature is likewise helpful for determining somebody's wickedness. Surely it's safe to keep around!

Surely.

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