

# Sword of the Defeated

Description: a double-edged broadsword with a sharpened tip and basket hilt. The 'steel' is actually meteoric iron, infused with enough carbon to make the metal pitch black; in contrast, the hilt is of distinctly modern make, and in a perpetual state of disrepair. Arcane scans of the Sword of the Defeated without first taking precautions against psychic shock has resulted in nosebleeds. Psychometry gives a vision of bright light, and a high-pitched keening sound.

Carry the Sword of the Defeated for long enough, and you will see your favored cause get ground into the dirt. Thoroughly. Mercilessly. With no hope of salvation, revival, or reprieve. But nothing bad will happen to *you*. *You* will die in your bed, peacefully, comfortably, even as your nation or world burns around you. That's the bargain this artifact offers; you can have anything you want personally, just as long as you offer up everything else. Turns out that sacrificing an entire people or planet can fuel a *lot* of magical workings. It's the blackest of black magics, obviously -- but anybody who holds onto the Sword for longer than it takes to throw it into the nearest volcano or dimensional rift ends up not caring. As long as they're alive, things are fine for *them*.

*Everybody* on the morality spectrum hates the Sword of the Defeated. That very much includes the Forces of Evil, who are decidedly not immune to its effects. They certainly didn't forge it! And if they knew who did, they'd happily join with the Forces of Good to punish the creator. The Sword of the Defeated is just too dangerous for *everybody*, and its long-term effects are terrifyingly random. Best to get it off the board entirely.

Unfortunately, the only way to shut the Sword off is to convince the person carrying it to put the cursed thing *down* before it does too much damage. Or wait until the wielder dies of old age, which is honestly only a viable strategy if you happen to be enemies with the cause being destroyed anyway. A sufficiently powerful entity (demi-god or higher) could conceivably burn through the Sword's protections, and supposedly a few have, but by all accounts any attempt would be a truly epic fight.

Even for them, getting rid of the Sword of the Defeated permanently would be complicated. It's easy to send it away, and impossible to wreck it. For example, throwing the Sword into a volcano absolutely works... *locally*. Unfortunately, it seems to be connected to reality in a complex way, so the blade itself has yet to be destroyed. It'll just pop out again, somewhere *else* in time and interdimensional space, ready to be picked up by

somebody willing to put on a new hilt, and start sacrificing everything they hold dear.

Then again, if you can manage to send it off far, far away, it'll be somebody *e/se*'s problem. Which is admittedly a pretty cold attitude to take, but it can be a pretty cold multiverse out there.

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