

Rebels of the Sacred Heart

(With apologies to Flogging Molly)

What are they rebelling against? Well, what have you got?

You've got a bunch of fascist, obsessive-compulsive humorless toads so hopped up on their own opinion of themselves that they think they have a chance against the Thing that created the ENTIRE UNIVERSE?

OK. Them, then.

Purpose and Goals

Take over Hell. Sign a peace treaty with Heaven, or something. Do things that God likes, which (Habbalah aside) probably means not breaking any humans. Defend the good from the evil. Rescue cats from trees. Come on, angels do this stuff every day.

As the above suggests, there is no group-wide master plan to accomplish the Rebels' overall goals: indeed, as the *below* suggests, there is no group-wide agreement on what the Rebels' overall goals even **are**. Individual cells

mostly follow individual strategies and projects. Demons being demons, this mostly involves a lot of arguing and grudging cooperation, with significant variation in how grudging it is.

Organization and Membership

The Rebels are more of a state of mind than an actual group. This is partially because they do not want to be too organized (the Game is *good* at dealing with unauthorized organized conspiracies) and partially because the motivations for joining the Rebels of the Sacred Heart can vary wildly. These motivations include:

- *When Armageddon comes, Hell doesn't stand a chance.* This is a popular argument, based on God's apparent omnipotence and Lucifer's lack of same. This is also a rather cynical argument; those who favor it tend to have joined the society because they are physical cowards when it comes to the Almighty and moral cowards when it comes to assessing their chance to achieve Redemption.
- *An accommodation could - and should - be made.* Rebel Impudites, Djinn, and Lilim like this one. The philosophy behind this: Hell's existence is necessary

for a well-ordered universe. Without it, there would be nowhere to put bad people. As Heaven is where they put the **good** people, the two factions are not really natural rivals. So end the War, make an agreement to leave each other's humans alone, and enjoy the good life. This differs from the one below in that it's rather more self-centered, and thus more popular among Rebels.

- *Lucifer perverted God's original plan for Hell, and it's up to us to put things back on track.* An argument not surprisingly uncommon among Rebel Habbalah, although not exclusively. The argument here is that Hell was intended all along to be the dumping ground for humanity's dregs, but with an eye towards correction, not eternal punishment. Lucifer's Rebellion completely wrecked matters, and his ongoing interference is gumming up the works. Hell shouldn't care about Earth (although it's surely acceptable to import goods from there, right?) or its living inhabitants. Likewise, Heaven won't care what a properly functioning Hell does to rehabilitate the damned souls assigned to it.
- *I think God/the Seraphim Council/that really cute angelic chick/dude is basically right, but I **like** being a demon.* This is mostly common among Balseraphs and Calabim; other Bands have difficulty reconciling

this concept with their basic natures. Calabim Rebels restrict themselves to blowing up stuff that nobody needs; Balseraph ones simply resonate themselves into not seeing the contradiction.

- *If Lucifer, the Princes, the Dukes, the Barons, the Captains, the Knights, the Word-bound, and my miserable excuse for a supervisor all hate and fear Heaven so badly, there must be **something** to it.* More Rebels than will voluntarily admit it started out from this position: they generally come up with a more elaborate philosophy after a while, but some don't bother.

As may have been noticed, the Rebels of the Sacred Heart are almost exclusively demons. While Rebels generally have a higher opinion of humanity -- or at least *act* like they do -- than most of the rest of Hell, very few of them would disagree with Lucifer's original decision that mortals are simply inferior to celestials. The ones that *do* disagree are usually working their nerve up to try for Redemption; the rest are reluctant to trust such obviously weak reeds with their own precious hides. Besides, hanging out with mortals on any sort of regular basis is a good way to attract the attention of either the Game, or their own Prince's secret police.

Abilities and Resources

The Rebels of the Sacred Heart are not well-coordinated, given that they both run on the venerable cell system, and few are ready to readily trust other Rebels who are not personally known to them. This makes it hard for Rebels to share resources. However, individual cells are usually personally well-equipped, as Hell would judge things. The ability to even marginally trust other demons tends to improve the circumstances of a Rebel over the long run. Also, it is generally expected that useful knowledge or tricks are to be spread around a cell's members, where feasible. This mostly allows many Rebels to learn Songs that they would otherwise have no access to, but there is a surprising amount of hidden lore available to the group as a whole. The trick is finding the demon who can give one the information, preferably before the Game finds him first.

Celestial Relationships

Heaven

Heaven... does not get along with the Rebels of the Sacred Heart. Authorized members of the Host might work

with the Rebels, share information, solicit aid for particular operations, and even provide the odd bit of healing and/or hiding - but the Seraphim Council considers there to be only three acceptable final ends for a demon. They can Redeem; they can stay in Hell where they were properly put in the first place; or they can die. Temporary actions that reflect the practical realities of the current strategic situation do not, and should not, have a long-term effect. No Archangel really disputes this, although as usual Michael and Novalis are the two most likely to push the edges of what's acceptable. All of this frustrates the Rebels as a whole, but they generally aren't surprised by it.

Hell

The only reason that the Rebels of the Sacred Heart are not publicly-reviled boogiemens is because the Game does not want to give the rest of the Horde ideas. Many members of Asmodeus' organization quietly worry about what might happen if the concept "Why are we fighting this War?" got widely disseminated among the demonic population. While it is highly unlikely that Heaven would actually agree to a real truce, even a ratcheting back of active tensions would shake the established power structure. For better or worse, the Princes have committed

themselves to taking back Heaven, which means that the very act of thinking that other scenarios are even possible must be discouraged. This simultaneously limits and protects the Rebels. The level of harassment against the group is directly proportional to how openly they operate: the Game is confident in their ability to quietly excise this particular heresy from the ranks of Hell over the long term, but in the short and medium terms the Rebels can maintain and function.

Others

Ethereal spirits are generally either reluctantly working for Hell, or they are the sort who refuse to concede that there's any difference between Heaven and Hell. Rebels tend not to operate well, or often, in the Marches. Sorcerers have discovered fairly quickly that trying to break a Rebel's will results in a messily dead Sorcerer and a remarkably serene Rebel (everybody knows that killing evil magicians absolutely counts). The various groups and conspiracies of ***In Nomine*** that exist on the fringes of the War mostly all agree that at best the Rebels are generally dangerous to be around, if only because eventually somebody will use area-effect weapons on them.

One potential exception to this would be the Grigori, assuming that they even still exist. There's some

suggestion that angels from a Choir thrown out of Heaven for following their innate tendencies might feel sympathetic towards demons who don't want to be 'evil.' But it's only a suggestion. The Grigori are good at hiding.

History

The Rebels of the Sacred Heart claim a history that stretches back for at least three thousand years (obviously, the current name is much newer), but their oldest records are from the sixth or seventh century AD. Amusingly -- or worryingly -- the Rebels have actually somehow managed to maintain their historical records in an exceptionally obscure and unvisited nook of Kronos' own Archives. Rebel history is a somewhat grim litany of betrayals, glorious defeats, last stands, and disappointments, with just enough victories and Redemptions to keep it from being utterly depressing reading. There is also a good deal of extraneous information that has been collected, including quite a bit of hidden lore. An enterprising demon can find some definite nuggets of information among the dross.

The possibility that the Rebels of the Sacred Heart is actually a sham organization that was secretly set up by

Servitors of the Game, Fate, or both is a very real one, of course. This is Hell, and such tricks are all too common. Indeed, more than a few Rebels *themselves* are suspicious of the group that they belong to. But if it is a front, then the Rebels' true masters persist in being surprisingly negligent about culling the movement. In fact, there are Rebels who wonder whether the group **is** actually ultimately being run by a Prince - but not as a trap...

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