

# Fate-Stealers, Incorporated

On first glance, it might seem counterintuitive for Hell to permit an organization whose primary, publicly-stated goal is to deliberately make it harder for Servitors of Fate to do their jobs (which is, after all, to drag people down to Hell). It also seems that way on second, third, and subsequent glances, too; which is why both Kronos (Prince of Fate) and Asmodeus (Prince of the Game) keep petitioning Lucifer to let them shut down Fate-Stealers. And then plow the ground with the Infernal equivalent of salt, most likely.

Lucifer, perhaps surprisingly, has refused to let them. Fate-Stealers is ruled over by Valefor, Prince of Theft; and that Prince insists that any Princely attack on this organization will be seen as both a personal attack on him and his Word. If Servitors of Fate and/or the Game wish to contest the stealing of Kronos' preferred prey away from him, so be it; Valefor will cheerfully match his own demons' wits against Kronos's and Asmodeus's. And if those two Princes want to go to war with him over it, Valefor will cheerfully match **that**, too.

This response has been rather precisely calculated to be not *quite* insulting enough to justify a civil war, but that's Valefor for you; the Demon Prince does enjoys skating on the edge of the abyss. It also helps that Fate-Stealers' purpose is not to *stop* Servitors of Kronos from arranging horrible Fates for humans; it's to stop those Servitors from earning credit for it. A human being's fate or destiny is a tricky thing; the slightest amount of celestial interference can disrupt it easily. Certainly splashy use of Songs or Attunements can easily disrupt the entire process. So if the goal is to encourage a human to damn himself by murdering a gas station attendant during a robbery gone wrong, the goal of Fate-Stealers is to *still have the murder happen*. They're just going to make sure that it doesn't 'count,' in terms of damnation.

Why? Because people in ***In Nomine*** who meet their Fate go to Hell, while people who neither meet their Fate nor achieve their Destiny usually simply reincarnate. A soul that meets its Fate ends up in Hell, where its ability to damage corporeal society abruptly becomes curtailed. A horrible person who escapes Hell on a technicality will just recycle, and end up making a whole new generation of people miserable. From an utilitarian perspective, it just makes more sense to not let Kronos have the soul.

At least, that's the argument of those Servitors of Theft who are willing to admit that they work for Fate-Stealers. In practice, what they do is harass, preferably in a humiliating fashion, low-level Servitors of Fate out there who are going about doing their (evil jobs); and then they rush off to the next project. Fate-Stealers disrupt enough operations to make Valefor happy, and by merely existing they infuriate Kronos without immediately being Force-ripped, so what's not to like? Especially since all the evil's being done anyway.

If this activity seems counterproductive, it would be... for humans. Demons, being much more self-consciously defined by their Band and Word, do find the idea of selfishly promoting either's immediate, short-term obligations over the vague and nebulous 'larger goal' of, say, *winning the War* fairly comprehensible. It may not be necessarily *wise*, and it's definitely infuriating when it happens to them, but comprehensible. *Angels*, who are likewise defined by Choir and Words, have the advantage of still being subordinate to the Almighty, which cuts down on the worst of the inter-Word conflict; but Lucifer can only have whatever rulership that he can take and hold.

But why he has not duly chosen to take Fate-Stealers, and hold it until it bursts, remains unknown. The Lightbringer

certainly has the *power* to do exactly that; but Lucifer apparently has a *reason* not to. Possibly Lucifer wishes for even his most powerful Princes to not *entirely* have their own way in things; at least it's as good an answer as any other that's been proposed, and it fits in with the logic of the feudal dictatorship that is Hell.

But it's probably the wrong answer. A prudent demon will simply accept that it is an answer, and try to ignore the problem whenever possible. And this, too, fits in with the fundamental logic of Hell.

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