

Infernal Security and the Grand Luciferian Charter

The public face of Infernal Security (which is the semi-public face of the Game, which is the ever-shifting manifestation of Asmodeus, its Prince) recently decided on a new strategy that alternately terrifies and infuriates those demons that have gotten caught up by said strategy. To wit: InfSec currently now enforces, in an almost-not arbitrary fashion, a document called the 'Grand Luciferian Charter.' For those demons who weren't paying attention during the dumb parts of their training: the Charter is a set of regulations -- issued by the Lightbringer himself -- that prohibits egregious torture and unwarranted destruction of damned souls. While archaic, the Charter is, as the Gamesters themselves cheerfully note, an official part of the Rules, and ignorance of the Rules is no excuse.

You needn't sound so surprised that Hell would have something like the Charter. After all, Hell is a totalitarian society -- 'despotic feudalism' is the usual term of art, although 'oligarchical collectivism' has its admirers -- so of **course** it has official high-minded revolutionary ideals that are utterly ignored in practice. In this particular case, the Charter was put into place after the first damned souls started showing up in Hell, and was couched in terms that flattered the typical demon's self-perception as a noble

rebel against a Tyrant God. The 'rights' found in the Charter can largely be summed up as 'keep your head down and your mouth shut and you won't be idly flayed because a Habbalite got bored,' but that's still more consideration than the average human denizen of Hell can expect to get.

At least up to now, when suddenly many a self-respecting demon has to worry whether merely using a thorn-barbed whip on a recalcitrant slave might earn that demon a sudden visit to the Halls of Loyalty. It doesn't happen every time. Or even most times. But it happens enough times to make a demon thoughtful. Nobody dares ask the Gamesters why this is happening, of course -- Hell is very Darwinian when it comes to weeding out demons *that* foolish -- but they will, again, cheerfully volunteer the information that the Rules are the Rules, and these are the Rules, so please get permission before you casually field-strip the Forces off of that cowering damned soul.

Naturally, nobody really believes that it's that simple; but what the actual reason for all this is hotly contested. Many assume that violating the Charter is merely the latest excuse that InfSec uses to arrest a demon they were planning to arrest anyway. Others believe that this is actually a sneaky way to find the demons who *aren't*

inclined to torment the damned if they don't have to; such pathetic entities are probably even natural Redemption candidates. A few of the more enthusiastically paranoid demons wonder if the Game knows something about the collective mood of Hell's slave population that the rest of the Horde doesn't, and is heading things off at the pass by removing the most egregious types before they get more valuable demons killed by a rampaging mob.

And then there's the possibility that InfSec is simply doing what Asmodeus told them to do. Or possibly even doing what Lucifer told Asmodeus to do. After all, the Lightbringer *did* write the damned Charter in the first place. And since Lucifer did, the Charter is *obviously* the most wonderful thing in the world -- just like everything else that he's ever done, starting with rebelling against an omnipotent deity and getting thrown into Hell for it. Hell doesn't really have a good internal feedback mechanism in place, is what I'm saying.

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