

Table of Contents

HERO SANDWICH

WHEN LAST WE LEFT OUR HEROES...

Keep up with the news from Hero Games. This issue – do *Cops, Crews, and Cabals* attend PS238? 2

HEROGLYPHS

See how Steve Long himself answers rules questions. This issue – talk to the toaster with more rules for cyberkinetic powers. 4

YOU GOTTA HAVE CHARACTER

The Yellow Henry Gang are remembered as the most dangerous Old West criminals, and even terrorized other gangs. 5

COOL STUFF

THE GENOME SETTING

When superhumans are universally feared and reviled, can a group of friends still become heroes? 10

TWISTED ARCHETYPES: PALADINS

Paladins don't have to follow stereotypes like using melee weapons, acting sanctimonious, or slaying evil. 24

SPECIES OF EMPIRE

Several alien species only get a passing mention in Terran Empire and Alien Wars. Meet the races from other places. 33

WUXIA MARTIAL ARTISTS

Wuxia (wild martial arts) characters don't have to fight hand-to-hand, or come from the modern era. 53

DIGITAL HERO

Publisher

Hero Games

Editor

Dave Mattingly

Authors

Curtis Gibson
Bob Greenwade
Steven S. Long
Jason Murray
Courtney Oglesby
Mike Surbrook
Jason Walters

Artists

C. Jason Billbrey
DT Butchino
Dennis Whitman
Jonathan Zuchowski

Cover

DT Butchino

Online

herogames.com

To Subscribe

herogames.com/digitalhero

PRINTING

The general statement in the credits box notwithstanding, DOJ, Inc. grants each purchaser of Digital Hero permission to make one (1) printed copy of this document.

HERO System™ is DOJ, Inc.'s trademark for its roleplaying system.

HERO System Copyright © 1984, 1989, 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.

Champions Copyright © 1984, 1989, 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.

Justice Inc., Danger International, Dark Champions, Fantasy Hero, and Star Hero Copyright © 2002 by DOJ, Inc. d/b/a Hero Games. All rights reserved.

No part of this electronic magazine may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or computerization, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Publisher: DOJ, Inc., 1 Haight Street, Suite A, San Francisco, California 94102.

Issue #46 (November/December 2007)



EXAMPLES FROM LITERATURE

One of the best examples of a non-archetype paladin is found in the the Bahzell series by David Weber:

Oath of Swords
The Wargod's Own
Windrider's Oath

The first two are available for free at the Baen Free Library.

Another example are the Elenium books by David Eddings:

The Diamond Throne
The Ruby Knight
The Sapphire Rose

PLOTS SEEDS FOR ADDISON

The PCs are investigating a thieves' guild and find that a local paladin is really a thief in disguise, (according to all the information they can get) and thus they try to apprehend Addison.

The Elder Aier has shown up, and instead of going after Addison has come for his daughter, with the law on his side. Addison is not in a position to oppose him, as it would cause a problem for the Order, so he asks the PCs for help.

One of the PCs is looking to train with the Dagger, and approaches Addison for training. He will agree, for a price....



Twisted Archetypes: Paladins by Curtis Gibson

A trio of unusual paladins for your Fantasy game.

Preface

This is the first in a series of articles on taking standard archetypes, and changing them around. Each major archetype gets its own article. Most players and GMs are familiar with these archetypes through playing D&D, if not through other means. Each article will present three characters that have a standard professional package from Fantasy Hero, but each with a twist. First up, the Paladin.

Everyone has a mental picture of a paladin. Sturdy, powerful in a fight, Holy – or Holier than Thou – stern, judgmental at times, heavily armed and armored, warhorse, special holy abilities, true to his cause and word. But they don't all have to be like that. Paladins can follow a code and not be judgmental. They can be Holy and focused on their deity, but fun to be around. Or even focused on weapons that aren't the norm for paladins.

Presented here are three; Addison Gracie a man with a checkered past, and knowledge of the street, Kara Stromsdaughter who belongs to an order that uses Pegasi for mounts, and lastly Sir Thomas Aniss of Castanak, a holy man who tired of killing his opponents and founded a (mostly) pacifist order.

Addison Gracie

Background/History: Addison began life as the son of a minor noble. His father was a paladin, as was his father's father, and he was expected to live up to this when he got older. That was the plan, but plans fall apart. When Addison was 7 and his parents were visiting a far away city, their house was attacked. All of the family's attendants were killed, along with his mother. When the place was put to the torch, Addison ran. His father got there just past too late and was told everyone had been killed. In his grief, he fled back to his home and the order's chapter house there.

Addison was wandering and trying to find someone to take him home, but a boy with tattered and burned clothes was ignored or reviled by the people he ran into. It didn't take long for him to fall into stealing and then to join the local underage thieves' guild. His quick wits and deft hand took him far. He enjoyed the thrill of the theft, the test of skills, and when it did occur, the thrill of the chase. It was thought that he might be the next Thievesmaster.

At 14 all of that changed. He had fallen in love and dallied with a young noble elf maiden and they were caught by her father. He was

brought in and sentenced to death. The elf noble Lord Ja'Ve Air disowned his daughter and was going to take great delight in killing Addison slowly, but the young maiden helped Addison escape, in the middle of which they swore undying love to each other. While on the run and out of the city they were captured by a traveling paladin.

Sir Gracie recognized his son and questioned him about his life, and how he survived. After hearing his son's remarkable tale, he took him and his young intended home. He presented Addison to the Order for initiation as a squire. The young lady Air was taken in by a local noble family. He progressed as quickly through the Order as he had the guild but with many run-ins with the rules of the organization. After his years on the street, he had developed a very strong independent streak.

He was made a full paladin at 21 and is still courting Lady Air. He has had a number of run-ins with her father over the years. The elder Air is still trying to have him killed, or kill Addison himself.

Personality/Motivation: Addison firmly believes in his God, but has a bit of a problem with the rules and strictures of the order. He never breaks them but he does complain about and sometimes bends them. He enjoys his role as a protector and it does let him keep testing himself in different situations. He still enjoys the thrill of the chase, except that now, he is the chaser, not the chassee.

One of his quirks, and this goes back to his days on the street, is that if he formally gives his word, he will not break it, for any reason.

Quote: "Feel the bite of the addersting."

Powers/Tactics: Addison uses daggers whenever possible. He prefers to soften up opposition with a number of thrown daggers while keeping distance. When in melee he will use shield and dagger, getting close and striking quickly. He also calls any dagger he wields "addersting."

Campaign Use: Addison is a nonstandard paladin for the PCs to meet. He could be a friend to the PCs, or used as a foil to any self-important PCs. He could be used as a basic source of information about street life or thieves, one the PCs know they can trust.

Appearance: Addison is a fairly handsome man, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye. He stands a bit over six feet tall, well built, with curly

Wuxia Martial Artists

by Mike Surbrook

The term “wuxia” is usually used to describe Hong Kong martial arts movies where the characters often move and fight while suspended on wires. *Ninja Hero* uses it to refer to any campaign where the characters are nigh-on superheroic in power level and abilities. In fact, many superhero martial artists would fit right into the typical wuxia film with little to no modification. Conversely, many wuxia-film martial artists would make excellent superheroes or powerful warriors in a High-Fantasy campaign (which is fitting, as many wuxia films are also fantasy films).

This article presents three Wuxia Martial Artists, using the definition given on page 8 of *Ninja Hero*. They are all built on a 200-point base, ignore the limits of Normal Characteristic Maxima, and pay for all the weapons and armor they use.

The characters are, in order of point totals: Silk Whirlwind (350-points), a modern-day martial artist superhero set in the official Hero Games universe (She’s also the character from the mini-comic seen in *The Ultimate Martial Artist* and the cover of *Ninja Hero*.); Chih-Wan “Andy” Lau (366 points), a modern-day “Heroic Bloodshed” Hong Kong action movie gunfighter; and Fionnbharr (465 points), a pure High-Fantasy warrior from an equally High-Fantasy Ireland.

Silk Whirlwind

Background/History: Even since she was young girl, Jing-wei Bao had been trained in the art kung fu by her father. Kung fu, he had explained, disciplined the mind and the body, making one a better person over all. Jing-wei, for her part, practiced her kung fu daily, as a good daughter should, and took her father’s philosophy about the proper use of one’s fighting skills to heart, vowing to never use her skills for personal gain, but instead for self-improvement.

Then came the day when her father didn’t come home. Jing-wei was used to her father’s long absences -- as his work often called him away for extended periods, and since her mother had died while she was very young, Jing-wei had become rather skilled at looking after herself. But her father had never been one to be late, and always returned when he said he would. But now he was gone, with not a word as to why.

Trusting in her father to do the right thing, Jing-wei continued to live her life as well as she could, attending school, keeping the house, and practicing her kung fu. She waited for her father as if he was to come home any day, and tried to not think about the could haves or might have beens. She might have continued in this manner

for the rest of her life if not for an accidental discovery made one day while cleaning the small *kwon* adjoining their house. Folded up inside a small chest was a silken uniform. The uniform of the Hong Kong hero *Jin Hu* (“metal tiger”), the same hero who had fallen in battle some months before, fighting against a criminal known only as *Qi Feng* (Jade Phoenix).

Kneeling over the open chest, Jing-wei made a solemn vow. She would follow in her father’s footsteps. She too would use her martial skills to help others as her father did. Like her father before her, she would take up the path of the *wuixa*, and go forth into the world to right wrongs, overthrow oppression, and make the world a safer place.

Personality/Motivation: Since making her vow to become a modern-day *wuxia*, Jing-wei has adopted the name of Silk Whirlwind, and gone forth into the world without a second glance, trusting in her skills and her karma to see her through. In many ways, she has taken the path of the Japanese *shugysha* (“student warrior”) and seeks to hone her skills and prove herself through combat against a variety of foes. However, Silk doesn’t randomly pick her fights, but instead only battles those who seek to do others harm. In many ways she has a rather philosophical outlook on life, and will often attempt to fully understand a situation before action. But make no mistake, Silk Whirlwind may be hesitant to throw the first punch, but if she deems action is needed, then she will do her utmost to defeat a foe.

Along with her vow to help others, Silk Whirlwind is driven by the desire to find her father’s killer. Since beginning her quest she has heard rumors about Jade Phoenix and his involvement with the legendary Yengato Temple. These rumors have led her to believe that her father may have trained at the Temple, and might have passed some of this training on to herself. So she seeks Jade Phoenix not only to bring him to justice, but to find out the truth behind her father’s death.

Quote: “My father was a hero. I can do no less than to follow his path.”

Powers/Tactics: Silk Whirlwind’s suspicious about her father’s training are correct. Her father attended Yengato Temple for a short time, and he passed some of this training on to her (with the intent that in time, she would also go to Yengato Temple). This has brought Silk Whirlwind to the attention of Jade Phoenix, who