FANTASY HERO

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FANTASY HERO™

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Editor's Dedication: *Fantasy Hero* is dedicated to the fans who have waited so long, and to everyone whose work made this book possible. I hope it was worth the wait.

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For our convenience, we have employed the male gender throughout this product. This does not imply any chauvanism on our part (quite the contrary), but it is hard to say him/her/it, or he/she (or "s/he") every time the situation crops up. So, please accept our apologies for this shortcut.

CAMPAIGN BOOK

CHARACTER CREATION

MAGIC

COMBAT AND ADVENTURING

GAME MASTERING *FANTASY HERO*

SOURCEBOOK

SAMPLE CHARACTERS

SAMPLE CAMPAIGN: THE WESTERN SHORES

SCENARIOS

THE BESTIARY

MAGIC ITEMS

SPELLBOOK

APPENDIX

AUTHOR CREDITS

INTRODUCTION

Arawyn looked up at the Necromancer's craggy, mile-high tower. She had led the company to Never-Closing gate, but hadn't reckoned that it would be guarded by a legion of undead. Overhead, inky black clouds blotted out the sun.

Arawyn turned to her comrades, who were huddled in the lee of the cliff. "Well, we've come this far, and the only way to destroy the circlet is to place it on the Necromancer's head. Looks like we'll have to find a way past that gate..."

Pulling his bloody sword from the basilisk's still-twitching body, Garak turned toward his other opponent. The Warlock was in the middle of a fearsome spell, and the air in the room was beginning to glow. With a grunt, Garak leapt across the chamber. The warlock's eyes grew wide, but it was too late to stop the brawny barbarian. With a single sweeping motion, Garak brought his sword up and sliced through the Warlock's neck. The Warlock's body and head fell in opposite directions. Wiping his brow, Garak looked to see what had happened to the princess ...

Sir Samson looks back to his Squire. "Don't fret lad. The King has told me to defend this bridge — so defend it I shall. To battle!"

Sir Samson pulls down his helmet visor and sets his lance. He then rears his horse and charges across the bridge. On the other side, the red-clad knight spurs his horse forward. The horses gallop across the bridge, bringing the two knights closer and closer...

Welcome to the fantastic world of *Fantasy Hero*! This book contains everything you need to roleplay fantasy using the Hero System rules. Swords and sorcery, quests and dragons, exciting adventures and brave deeds — they're all here.

Fantasy Hero will tell you how to create a fantasy setting, how to handle fantasy sword and sorcery, and how to build fantasy characters. To make all this easier, Fantasy Hero also contains a wealth of ready-to-use material, including hundreds of spells, magic items, weapons, fantastic monsters, scenarios, characters, and much, much more — everything needed for instant adventures. With this book and the HERO *System Rulesbook*, you can recreate any fantasy adventure from fiction or your own imagination. Aragorn, Conan, and King Arthur all reside within these pages. So read on, and

BE A HERO!

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Fantasy Hero is a HERO System Campaign Book. That means that it provides all the information needed to play fantasy adventures using the HERO System rules. Within these pages you will find setting information, fantasy specifics, and a wealth of ready-to-use material. However, Fantasy Hero is not a stand-alone product; to use it the player must also have the HERO System Rulesbook, which contains all the rules for the HERO System. The HERO System Rulesbook can be purchased separately; it is also contained in Champions, the Super Roleplaying Game.

Fantasy Hero can be used in numerous ways. It is intended of course, to enable GMs to run fantasy adventures replete with mythical creatures, flashing blades, and powerful magics. However, *Fantasy Hero* also contains extensive guidelines for all fantasy-era roleplaying; the rules presented here can be used to recreate a historically accurate medieval adventure, for instance. And since all parts of the HERO System are compatible, Fantasy Hero can function as a sourcebook for other HERO System games, like *Champions*.

The following sections explain how different players can best use *Fantasy Hero*.

IF YOU HAVE NEVER PLAYED A HERO SYSTEM GAME BEFORE

If you've never played any games using the HERO System (like Champions), then this book (*Fantasy Hero*) is not the place to start. As explained above, *Fantasy Hero* explains how to use the HERO System rules, but doesn't actually contain those rules. (If it did, this book would be 470 pages long!) Therefore, before going any further, you should get a hold of a copy of the *HERO System Rulesbook*. The hardcover *Champions* also contains the same rules; if you prefer, you can use it instead.

Once you have a copy of the *HERO System Rulesbook,* you should familiarize yourself with the rules contained there. If you have never roleplayed before, read the appropriate sections. Then, once you have at least a basic understanding of the rules, you can proceed to *Fantasy Hero*, which will show you how you can use them. For more guidelines, see the following section.

IF YOU HAVE PLAYED HERO SYSTEM GAMES BEFORE

If you've already played HERO System games (like Champions), then you already know how the HERO System works. What *Fantasy Hero* will do is show you how you can use those rules to play a fantasy game.

To use *Fantasy Hero*, you should read all the way through the *Campaign Book* section. Players should concentrate on the *Character Creation* and *Magic* chapters, although there is plenty of useful information in the *Combat* and *Game Mastering Fantasy Hero* chapters. GMs should read all four chapters carefully.

Players may or may not want to read the entire *Sourcebook*. If the GM intends to use the scenarios or sample campaign, then the players shouldn't read those chapters — since knowing too much can spoil the fun. GMs, obviously, should read the entire *Sourcebook*.

Whether or not you're familiar with the HERO System, *Fantasy Hero* has been set up to make it easy to start a fantasy campaign. There are extensive guidelines for constructing characters and a campaign — but we've also included a ready-to-use campaign world, along with characters and scenarios. If you want to get started right away, just use the provided characters and scenarios. You can pick up the rest of the material later.

IF YOU'VE PLAYED 1ST EDITION FANTASY HERO

You've played *Fantasy Hero* before. You might even have a *Fantasy Hero* campaign going. How should you use this revised *Fantasy Hero?*

The most important thing to recognize is that this edition of Fantasy Hero is entirely new — almost nothing has been reprinted from the older version. Moreover, this book uses the revised HERO System rules, as presented in the HERO System Rulesbook. This means that the rules it covers are not the same as those in the old *Fantasy Hero.* Moreover, it means that there is much more room for campaigning information. This version of *Fantasy Hero* contains all sorts of wonderful things, including a lot of material that wouldn't fit in the old *Fantasy Hero.* So what should you do with it?

In general, GMs and players should follow the guidelines presented in the *HERO System Rulesbook*, pg 7. Thus, the first way to use this book is to convert your existing characters and campaign to the new *Fantasy Hero* rules. The *Appendix* chapter has guidelines for converting old *Fantasy Hero* abilities into the new rules; any experienced HERO player should be able to handle it. The GM should also consider allowing players to radically redesign characters to take advantage of all the new abilities in the *HERO System Rulesbook.*

The second way to use this book is as a massive supplement to the old *Fantasy Hero.* Even if you ignore all the material based on the new rules, there are still lots of character creation guidelines, GMing advice, combat options, and the like? And, of course, the Sourcebook can be used almost entirely — what GM wouldn't want hundreds of spells, more monsters, original scenarios, and the like. Even if you want to use the original rules, there should be plenty of useful material here.

In general, we recommend that most GMs convert their campaigns over to the new rules. As explained in the *HERO System Rulesbook*, the rules revision was the result of extensive playtesting and tinkering with the rules. Similarly, this version of *Fantasy Hero* contains all sorts of ways to help the HERO System simulate the world of fantastic adventures. We think that most players will find switching to the new rules to be worthwhile.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Here's a brief summary of what's inside this book and how it is organized.

CAMPAIGN BOOK

This section explains how the GM and players should use the HERO System for fantasy roleplaying. There are extensive guidelines for all aspects of fantasy gaming. The first chapter, Character Creation, explains how to build and play fantasy characters. The second chapter, *Magic, explains how magic works in Fantasy Hero, and how the GM can design his own magical systems. The third chapter, Combat and Adventuring*, tells the GM how he can simulate the glittering swords and sorcery of fantasy combat. The fourth chapter, Game Mastering Fantasy Hero, explains how the GM can create and run fantasy scenarios. There are also guidelines for setting up a complete fantasy campaign for Fantasy Hero.

SOURCEBOOK

This section contains a tremendous amount of ready-to-use material that will help a Fantasy Hero Game Master run his campaign. The *Sample Characters* chapter has 8 complete character write-ups and 20 shorter character write-ups. These characters can be used by the players as PCs or by the GM as NPCs. The *Sample Campaign* chapter contains a complete fantasy campaign setting — the Western Shores. The *Scenarios* chapter presents several ready-to-use scenarios. The *Bestiary* chapter has guidelines for designing fantasy monsters, along with short write-ups for more than 75 creatures. The *Magic Items* chapter explains how to design magical items, and includes examples. The *Spellbook* chapter has hundreds of spells that can be used by PCs and NPCs. Finally, the *Appendix* has guidelines for converting *Fantasy Hero* to other game systems.

Several chapters of the Sourcebook, especially the *Bestiary*, *Spellbook*, and *Magic Items*, have short write-ups in *Fantasy Hero*. This was done obviously for space considerations. Players who want the full write-ups, along with hundreds of additional spells and magic items, should look at the *Fantasy Hero Companion.*

EDITOR'S NOTES

Well here it is — at long last. I know some of you have been waiting for a revised *Fantasy Hero* for a long time... years in fact. I can only hope that it was worth the wait.

So what took so long? Essentially, we really wanted to get it right, and to give HERO fans a fantasy game they could play and enjoy. Since the publication of the original *Fantasy Hero* in 1985, we have had numerous chances to rerelease some form of *Fantasy Hero*. But there has never been an opportunity to publish something grand — something that all of us can be proud of.

Until now.

We feel that this second edition of *Fantasy Hero* is something that can do justice to fantasy gaming and the HERO System. It follows the high quality standards set by *Champions* and *Ninja Hero.* The book you are holding is absolutely packed with useful information, including all the things that didn't go in the first edition. In fact, there was so much good fantasy material that we couldn't fit it all in one book — even a 256 page book with small type! Thus we'll be publishing the *Fantasy Hero Companion* almost immediately. You certainly don't need it to play *Fantasy Hero*, but with hundreds more spells, magic items, mass combat rules and the like, it'll be a perfect "companion" to this Campaign Book. How's that for a shameless plug?

In any case, we hope that you enjoy *Fantasy Hero*. A lot of work and enthusiasm went into this project, and we think it shows. So have fun with it — that's what makes it all worthwhile!

Rob Bell