

# Caine

## Player's View

He deals in lead and steel.

He's the bad-ass inside each of us, the hero that, in our secret hearts, we long to be. He's quiet. Powerful. Accomplished. He bears hardships that would break other men, he champions the cause of the downtrodden, he will risk life and limb to set a situation right. He knows fear, but he never shows it. He knows pain, but he doesn't acknowledge it. He is a natural genius with a sword who can do things most of us only dream of. When we become him, we can realize those dreams.

## Concept

The Nameless Hero. The Swordsman. The Noble Warrior. He has a past... but we will learn little of it. He has a heart of gold... but we will rarely see it. He is a defender – a warrior who carries a sword in one hand and a pistol in the other. A man of few words - he has come to do a job, and he means to do it.

## Backstory

The swordsman's story centers around a deception that was made to preserve the clan's greatest artifact.

The clan elders discovered that Shinjiro has learned of the meteorite and then disappeared, it's surmised that a massive raid is planned, they decide to send Solomon Caine into hiding with the Chikara - to keep it safe. Caine is chosen because, unlike any of the rest of the clan, he has a strong streak of independence and rebelliousness that it is felt will serve him well in his time of isolation.

The true nature of the beautiful, ancient weapon he is given as he is sent away is not revealed to him (the elders agree it is better if even the keeper of the sword doesn't know its true provenance). He is simply told it is a family heirloom, and that he is to preserve it at all costs.

It is also revealed to him that his father was killed during an earlier Kurohiei raid to try and force the secrets of the Chikara from the Kusagari. The raid failed, but Shinjiro's father, in an act of treachery, killed Caine's father.

Caine is not allowed to speak to, or say goodbye to, anyone before his "banishment" (as he believes it to be) - including his beloved mother, and his fiancé, Tamiko. Caine is of mixed descent: half western (his mother) and half Asian (his father), thus it is easier for him to mix into the larger society with greater ease - as he can appear as Caucasian or eastern, depending on his carriage, manners and dress. And so Cain wanders in the greater world, for many years.

When the people of Caldera are attacked by Payne and Shinjiro, those who weren't killed were driven out of the town's central district where many of them took up temporary residence in the city's outlying buildings. This is the case with Jian, Tamiko, Songan and Steve Judd.

As the game begins these four have yet to really communicate with one another and the resistance is just beginning to get organized. As Caine reconnects and enables Caldera's communication infrastructure, the resistance, and it's unlikely leaders will begin to disrupt Shinjiro's activities more and more.

Caine, knowing nothing of any of this, is returning to Caldera after his years of wandering when he is caught in the desert by a Jackal patrol. He makes quick work of the outliers, but not before they radio to Payne who arrives with the men and arms necessary to subdue our hero. Of course the Jackals told Payne that another protector had arrived, so he was eager to grab the prize to impress Shinjiro. Payne, as is typical of his type, had no idea who he was messing with and soon discovers what happens when you underestimate a Kusagari. Though Payne at least made off with our hero's katana. At this point neither one of them has any idea what the sword actually is.

## **Arc**

Caine's arc is based on the information that he discovers (the true nature of Shinjiro's plans, for instance) and the expansion of his skills and abilities. Emotionally he is driven by his desire for revenge and the demands of the Kusagari code of honor.

# **Steve Joad**

## **Player's View**

It would be easy to mistake Steve Joad, Caldera's sheriff, for a homeless guy with guns. Fortunately the big brass badge that he wears makes it a little easier to tell the difference. But beneath his ridiculous cowboy hat, Hawaiian shirts and week-old stubble beats the heart of uniquely American kind of tough guy. He's a crack-shot, a weapons expert, an ex-marine, and one of the player's biggest assets in the fight to restore order to Caldera and bring justice to the clan's killers.

## **Concept – The Law**

Steve Joad is the hardiest of western spirits. He represents a very unique aspect of life in the American west: tough, resourceful, law-abiding and yet wild and individualistic. He lives for the law, but will bend it when needed. He'll throw a drunk in jail, then pour 'em a shot.

But he knows the difference between right and wrong, and he itches to make wrong things right by any means he can.

## **Backstory**

Joad was born and raised in the Republic of Texas. He only left when it became too liberal for his tastes. Law Enforcement didn't come early, or naturally, to him. Actually, he came to it late in life, but once he found it, he never did anything else. He had worked as a stevedore, boat captain, ranch hand, CSA Marine and school teacher, before taking a job in Florida as a prison guard. He didn't like Spanish taxes or cuba libres (though it was in Miami that he developed his taste for Hawaiian shirts) so after a year he answered a want-ad from the Caldera Township for a Federally Certified law enforcement officer. Not only was he not "Federally Certified" he wasn't even a citizen of the UFSA (Caldera has thrown its allegiance to the Feds, hoping that they will offer Caldera funds and resources in exchange for a monopoly on the gold and opals that lay

buried in Caldera's deserts). But he didn't mention any of this to the town fathers when he cabled accepting the job. Luckily for him he arrived in the middle of a large bank robbery and after quickly dealing with the perpetrators, the town fathers never even thought to ask for his credentials. He was sworn in as the sheriff of Caldera that same night.

## Arc

Steve Joad, the sheriff, doesn't so much change his opinions about us, as he changes his attitude about life in response to our success against Shinjiro. When we first meet him he is dejected, despondent and pessimistic. He failed to take the clan's concerns about Shinjiro seriously until it was too late. Now he blames himself for the state of the town and, in particular, the deaths of his deputies (the sheriff is an office that sees to the enforcement of the local laws, while the clan is a hereditary structure that protects the town from larger, external threats). As we gain the upper hand, his enthusiasm slowly returns until he prosecutes the fight with a vigor second only to ours.

# Tamiko

## Player's View

She's hot. She's smart. She whispers in your ear.

She's the girl we have a history with. She can dance all-night at a rave, beat you at Team Fortress, and then calculate the specific gravity of a newly discovered isotope. But sadly things in Caldera are so bad, there's no time for any of that. The order of business is killing the bad guys and she's right by your side every step of the way. She guides you through the city, hacks the enemy communication feeds and helps smooth the way for the hero's work: justice and vengeance.

## Concept – The Guide

Beautiful, feminine, caring, intelligent, modern. Tamiko is the embodiment of her name – *Beautiful Child*. She represents reason in the face of chaos, feeling in the face of brutality and the universal desire for peace and normalcy. She reminds us of our past – before our “banishment” and before the dark storm of Shinjiro descended on Caldera.

## Backstory

Tamiko was born in Tokyo and immigrated to San Francisco with her parents when her father took a job as a geologist and assayer. But the hostilities between Japan and Mexico in the 1980's forced her family to flee. They lived for a while in a desert “soup camp” with thousands of other refugees before they found their way to Caldera. Her father met Jian and they realized they shared a great passion for the crafting of metals and the sciences of the Earth, so they began *The Caldera Institute for Geologic and Metallurgic Sciences*, under the patronage of the Kusagari shogunate.

She grew up a playmate of both Caine and Shinjiro. She was in love with Caine from an early age and it seemed a given to her that they should become engaged. In the traditional world of the Clan, marriage was restricted, but these conventions were slowly dying out in the face of modernity. Despite their closeness, evident to all, Caine never formalized the obvious affection they shared. Before she could even grow impatient, he was gone. One morning he simply disappeared. Not long after, Shinjiro too was gone. This she could barely ponder, mourning as she was for the one whom, in her heart and

mind, was destined for her. Where did he go? And why?

Of course life has its' own demands and she shortly went East for her education. Her parents never believed in the schism between North and South, so she went to Georgia Tech for her undergraduate work in Geology, M.I.T. for a master's in Computer Science, and Yale for a P.h.D in the newly created field of Atomic Science. Before she could even apply for a job, her father died, the victim of a fall in one of Caldera's old mines, and she returned home to continue his work and care for her mother. The following winter her mother died of pneumonia, but Tamiko stayed and took up the mantle of research into the mysterious and powerful meteoric iron unique to Caldera.

## **Arc**

When Caine first meets Tamiko she doesn't recognize him. How could she? How could she imagine that her great love would choose this moment to return? Over the course of the game her feelings toward the hero shift from anger and coldness (remember, he left without saying a word to her) to a growing fondness, and finally, a full blown return of her affection. While her communication with Caine is almost exclusively focused on the task at hand - defeating Shinjiro and the Jackals - the tone with which she communicates will evolve over time as her feelings change. Once we have enabled the entire communication network, she will communicate with us, the resistance, the townspeople and she will route communication to us from Jian, Joad and Songan.

## **Jian**

### **Player's View**

Like Joad, Jian's appearance and behavior are deceptive. Jian seems like a crazy old goat, who's in a bad mood half the time and who likes to quote lines from old sci-fi movies. But in truth he's not only a formidable warrior himself, he's also the repository for all the "secrets of the Kusagari" – the knowledge and skill behind the creation of the clan's Katanas.

Like Tamiko, Jian will help guide us through the game. Like Joad. Jian will be our ally against Shinjiro. But Jian will also be the teacher who reveals to us the secrets of how to use our Katana's powers: The Bear, The Eagle, The Dragon.

His dojo will become not only our second home, it is there that we will learn to reclaim the legacy of our clan.

### **Concept – The Clan**

Duty, Continuity. Craft. The obligations of a code and an extended brotherhood. These are the things that Jian represents. The ways of an older world that is passing out of memory.

### **Backstory**

In order to escape poverty in his native China, Jian's great-great-grandfather migrated to America during the time of the railroad expansion. He was a highly skilled blacksmith who could only find work forging spikes for the building of the railways. He settled in Caldera, eventually finding his way to the last living Kusagari sword master. Normally considered a hereditary vocation, the clan's smith was childless, so he passed on his title, and his knowledge of the craft, to Jian's ancestor, who, like Jian, was a natural

genius for the work.

Jian was born and raised in Caldera and initiated into the deepest secrets of the Kusagari from an early age. He became close friends with Tamiko's father and was with him on the day he died. Himself childless, Jian struggles with how to ensure the legacy of the Kusagari

## **Arc**

Jian's feelings for the player will shift over time. At first he is furious and disgusted with Caine. Jian never agreed with the taishōgun's decision to send the sword away with Caine for safekeeping. Our stumbling back into Caldera and all but handing the sword to Payne is proof that he was right. In Jian's eyes we are foolish, willful, impetuous and undisciplined. Over time though, our success against the Jackals and Shinjiro's army will illustrate our mettle, and as he gains confidence he will reveal more and more of the truth about the Chikara, how they are made, and the power they possess. In particular our reclaiming of the katana from Payne will begin a shift in Jian's feelings toward us.

# **William Henry**

## **Player's View**

You'll never see William Henry, but you'll come to know him – very well. He's the kind of guy you could *actually* know; your dad, an uncle or an older brother. As he helps us to fight, first Payne and then Okaji and Shinjiro, he finds skill and power and courage he never knew existed. Keying off the player's accomplishments he organizes The Resistance, serves as look-out and scout, and helps orchestrate a coordinated counteroffensive against the trash that attacked Caldera.

## **Concept – The People**

Greatness comes from unexpected places.

## **Backstory**

He was born and raised in Caldera and when the game begins he's working at a local gas station as a grease monkey (the small number of vehicles in Caldera means he spend a lot of time playing chess with Joad, the town's sheriff).

## **Arc**

William Henry is an unlikely hero who, seemingly by accident, goes from being a totally ordinary guy to being a great leader and military strategist. When the Jackals take Joad prisoner, William Henry is drawn to act, sending out a call for help and taking the first step in his effort to, ultimately, free Caldera. While we only ever hear his voice, we are aware of how he grows in confidence and ability throughout the game, becoming a leader of the resistance; inspired by Caine's actions to ever greater achievement himself.

# **Songan**

## **Player's View**

It's hard at first not to like Songan. He's smooth, smart, cultured and charming. But like most everything else in Caldera, appearances are deceiving.

Beneath the fine clothes and fancy words flows the cold-blood of a deadly snake. And like a venomous reptile, he has no loyalty, will strike without warning and isn't afraid to

sink his fangs in deep.

Songan never met a vice he didn't like, so long as he can turn a profit on it. He controls Caldera's backrooms, barrooms and underground grey and black markets. Murder, intimidation and extortion are tools he finds as useful as a suave demeanor or a free glass of whiskey. Most everyone thinks they're his friend, but only Songen knows otherwise: he has no friends.

## Concept – The Underbelly

Anything is available for a price, and there's price for everything.

## Backstory

Little is reliably known about Songan's background. It's believed he was orphaned in New Jersey shortly after he was born. He was raised in the brutal, and sociopathic environment of St. Ignatius's Orphanage until he was "adopted" (purchased would be a better word for it) by a wealthy European merchant. After living in Europe for several years his guardian was found murdered and robbed and Songan had disappeared. After his return to America he worked his way across the continent, piling up offenses, warrants and identities, but always playing on the weaknesses of the system and rarely facing the consequences of his crimes.

Eventually, like much of the garbage that blows across the desert, he ended up in Caldera, where he knew he had found a home. Songan turned his, by now, considerable skills to exploiting Caldera's lack of modernity, building a sprawling gray-market criminal enterprise and gaining a reputation for brains, ruthlessness and the best dice tables in town.

## Arc

Songan, being the utterly self-centered creation that he is, doesn't change significantly over the course of the game. He adapts to circumstances by pretending to have joined the resistance, but this of course a total sham, used to mask his actual intentions.

# Shinjiro

## Player's View

This is the guy you love to hate. The litany of bad things he's done is incredible, and the things he's done to you, are *even worse*.

Known simply as *The Warlord*, Shinjiro is the kind of malignancy for which there is only a single treatment: cut it out. But his army has spread itself through every corner of Caldera and removing him will be no simple task.

As if his complete disregard for every civil value, common decency and virtue of society wasn't already enough to condemn him, his ultimate goals and plans, once revealed, leave you with but a single strategy: crush him completely.

Death on the point of your sword is too good for the likes of him, but in this case, you'll make an exception.

## Concept – The Villain

Severe, stern, and intimidating. A true Warlord.

He believes himself to be one of only a few Great Men capable of saving the world. And he will save it through *martial rule*.

## Backstory

Under the negative influence of their Katana Chikara, Shinjiro's clan - the Kurohieie - became violently warlike, oppressing the people of their region and constantly battling amongst themselves for possession of the sword.

This sword (the Kanagara) so charged their armies with fury that they became almost invincible in the field of combat. But, these same energies threatened to tear the clan apart.

When Shinjiro was a boy, his father assassinated the Kurohieie clan's leader. While this coup was a success, the clan's sword was broken during the battle. No attempts to repair it were successful. The loss of the weapon proved a terrible blow to the clan, creating even greater strife and enmity between the members.

Shinjiro's father decided to send him to infiltrate the Kusagari clan, to learn everything that he could about the fabled meteorite, the swords, and the secret of their making – to see if there was a way to restore the Kanagara.

Shinjiro was sent to the Kusagari under the guise of an "orphan" where he was taken in and raised as a member of the clan. Over the years he gained the trust of the Kusagari, but he is never able to find the secret of the making of the swords (Jian is the only member of the clan who has this information and his family has scrupulously kept it secret for many generations) or to even confirm the existence of the Kusagari's "Katana Chikara". It is rumored to have been destroyed when the swords were dispersed by Akira and the confederacy was first formed.

But, Shinjiro is nothing if not persistent. Finally, he succeeded in discovering the location of the hidden meteorite, deep in the mines of the caldera. Even after so many years away, he escapes, and returns to his clan with the information. Such was the power of his training, and his devotion to his father's rule.

However, upon his return to the Kurohieie clan, Shinjiro and his father argue bitterly over Shinjiro's "failure" at his mission. This argument escalates into a murderous fight where Shinjiro kills his father. Knowing that he can never hold the leadership of the clan for long, Shinjiro takes the two halves of the broken Kurohieie Chikara and flees, determined to raise his own army, conquer the Kusagari and take for himself the secrets of the making of the Chikara.

Shinjiro leaves with the two broken halves of his clan's Chikara and raises an army, drawn first from other renegade protectors, then from those who aspired to membership in a clan somewhere, but for whatever reason, were turned away. This became his inner circle of "domo" his trusted bodyguards and shock troops. From this nucleus, shaped by both Shinjiro's hateful ambition and the twisted energy of the broken Kurohieie Chikara, an army was created.

Their first target was the city of Silverlode. Shinjiro's army was merciless and the town's tiny clan of protectors, too new to possess a Chikara, was easily beaten and the city sacked. But Shinjiro spared the clan's leader, Okaji, who murdered his one surviving clan-brother in order to assure his own survival. Recognizing a fellow malignancy, Shinjiro made Okaji his seneschal.

Shinjiro next grows his army by forging an alliance with a violent desert biker gang who calls themselves "The Jackals." Shinjiro recruits them, outfits them, and begins to train them in bushido, but few of them are particularly well suited to the martial discipline of the East. No matter, they still suit Shinjiro's plans perfectly, acting as shock troops and cannon fodder.

Soon this mongrel army is rolling toward Caldera. The Kusagari do what they can to protect the people, but their numbers are not what they once were, and the Jackal's motorcycles place the protectors at an unexpected disadvantage, much like ancient encounters between infantry and cavalry.

But even the unexpected technology of the motorcycle would not have told the tale against the powerful and disciplined Kusagari. It was finally Shinjiro's craven use of the protector's own code of honor that would be their downfall. Shinjiro tortured and humiliated the people of Caldera on the streets and public squares. As the remaining protectors came to the people's aid they were picked off one-by-one. To be sure they inflicted terrible losses on the Jackals and the thugs of Shinjiro's army, but the outcome was assured. Only the last surviving protector, Toshiro, was kept alive, so that Shinjiro could torture him for the information he was seeking: the secret of the Katana Chikara. To accomplish his goals of complete world domination, Shinjiro needs an army.

He has three.

Over the past decade, he has gathered two unique, powerful warriors to his cause, each with their own force. Their loyalty has not been cheap – they do not serve him out of kindness. In fact, each of these men hates the others.

However, their desire for *power* exceeds their loathing, and Shinjiro's plan is quite compelling. So, they are all bound together by their craving.

## Arc

Shinjiro is driven to accomplish three things:

- 1) Repair his broken Katana Chikara
- 2) Find the meteorite and the other ores and restart the mining operation
- 3) Learn the secrets of how the Chikara are made and use them to equip his army.

To accomplish this he doesn't hesitate to use any means at his disposal including inflicting terror and torture on innocents. He tortures Toshiro, the only surviving protector, in order to find what he is after. Toshiro will be able to communicate with Caine from time-to-time, providing him with valuable information about Shinjiro. Shinjiro will kill Toshiro before we can rescue him. Shinjiro will believe that his katana has been repaired, but he will have been misled by Toshiro just before his death and Shinjiro's blade will break in a melee with the Caine. In our first encounter with Shinjiro he will tell us that he was the one who killed our mother when the town was invaded. In the final



levels of the game Shinjiro will kidnap Tamiko and drag her along with him as he flees from us. He will taunt us using her radio and will finally kill her before our eyes. In his final moments he will beg us for his life - offering us his army, his wealth, the secrets of the Chikara, anything if we will spare him. Needless to say Caine is only interested in revenge. Just before he dies Shinjiro tells us that his entire clan is coming for us, so we should enjoy our last few lonely days on Earth, as they are all we will have left.