

Personality

The 77th Director of the Wangsheng Funeral Parlor. She took over the business at a rather young age.

—In-game character attributes and profile page text

At first glance, Hu Tao appears to be a quirky and cheerful girl. She enjoys pranking people and despises sitting around and doing nothing. She wishes to live her life to the fullest. Her eccentric and off-the-wall personality often leaves people with a negative impression of her, especially Qiqi, who states that she has a "punchable face" and should be stored in the fridge. In contrast, Xiaos enjoys her sense of humor, finding it irritating but interesting.

On the other hand, when handling funerals and last rites, she becomes more solemn and constantly reminds her employees to never deviate from the client's requests. Due to the importance and traditions of the parlor's duties, she expresses a distaste towards people treating her or her employees with suspicion whenever they go to work at night.

Despite her negative impressions, Hu Tao is knowledgeable about the adepti and Liyue's past, having suspected Zhongli to be an adeptus. However, she usually keeps this a secret from those who are unaware for their own safety. Hu Tao accepts death as a natural part of life and tells others to enjoy their short lives. However, she tends to be too excited about death for the means of increasing business. She also loathes those who try to prolong their natural lifespan, such as Baizhu, though she does not appear to be aware of his intentions for doing so. She also appears to show a lack of interest in her Pyro Vision.

Official Introduction

Look out, Hu Tao's coming through!

It would be best not underestimate someone as whimsical as her. However, should you enjoy surprises, then I believe a visit is in order.

—Zhongli

At first glance, she appears to be a quirky and cheerful girl. No one would think that she is actually the renowned and illustrious Hu Tao.

Whether she is acting as the Director of the Wangsheng Funeral Parlor or as Liyue Harbor's "famous" poet, Hu Tao's nature is exceedingly eccentric. Like lightning or sparks of flame, she always comes and goes in the blink of an eye, igniting everything around her.

She pens poems by the oil of midnight and flits across mountains and seas by daylight. She appears at any time and at any place. From bustling streets to barren alleys, to derelict mountains and desolate peaks, in radiant and refulgent skies, or shadowed and starless night... Anything is possible — anything can become full of wonder.

Hu Tao is an undecipherable riddle, but people don't lament their lack of an answer. If asked, they would say, "This is the natural order of things, right? After all, no one can outrun the wind or take hold of a flame!"

She walks the line between life and death, shouldering responsibilities unknown to most mortals.

Be careful around Hu Tao, lest she leads you by the nose!

Character Stories

Character Details

The 77th Director of the Wangsheng Funeral Parlor, a young lady managing the parlor's operations. Despite her position, she's an amiable person who puts on no airs.

Her antics are as plentiful as the sand on Yaoguang Shoal. She never ceases to shock people with her countless bizarre ideas.

Hu Tao may seem like all play and no work, spending every free moment on leisure and being widely considered a laissez-faire business owner.

It is only during funeral ceremonies, when she personally leads her undertakers through lamp-lit alleys, that she shows her dignified and solemn side.

Character Story 1

 Friendship Lv. 2

Funeral ceremonies allow mortals to leave this world with dignity.

And Liyue's Wangsheng Funeral Parlor is said to be painting the last strokes on the scrolls of people's lives in the most respectful way.

Traditional funerals include multiple steps such as holding a wake, burial, putting up a memorial plaque... All of which are subject to strict rules.

Regardless of their social standing and level of wealth, all who depart deserve a ceremony that would do them honor. This is the Wangsheng Funeral Parlor's client service philosophy.

One would think that such a reputable organization ought to be led only by an individual of utmost learning and sagacity.

Yet the heavy mantle of the 77th Director has fallen on the shoulders of a young lady like Hu Tao.

She has got quite a reputation in Liyue. Whenever someone mentions Hu Tao, their neighbors find it extremely hard to navigate the conversation.

Although she is widely praised for her wit and shrewdness, her eccentric notions are not as welcome, as she often lets her imagination run wild.

As a three-year-old, she would read through volumes of classic texts while doing handstands. At six, she would cut classes and fall asleep in coffins. When she was eight, she started living in the parlor and learning the etiquette of funeral ceremonies...

One would never use the word "measured" to describe her behavior.

During her teenage years, Hu Tao was tasked with conducting a funeral ceremony for the first time.

The parlor's undertakers and consultants were anticipating her debut with their stomachs in knots as if they were suspended over the peaks of Jueyun Karst.

Character Story 2

 Friendship Lv. 3

Fortunately, Hu Tao treats the parlor's operations with the utmost importance and is always looking to grow her business.

"At the Wangsheng Funeral Parlor, the living give us Mora to see the dead on their way. We have a responsibility to both parties, so we gotta make sure both sides are happy."

When it comes to the parlor's rules, Hu Tao knows them all like the back of her hand.

Each day when the parlor closes its doors, Hu Tao invites consultants from different walks of life to pass their teachings on to the undertakers.

"The funeral tradition is like science. It cannot be performed based on impressions and personal habits."

Of all the lecturers, Zhongli is the most revered one. As such, his lessons have proven to be the most effective in cultivating the competence of Wangsheng Funeral Parlor's undertakers.

Despite often being teased by Hu Tao due to his old-fashioned style, he is also the person that she trusts the most.

Apart from that, Hu Tao always instructs her undertakers to respect their clients' wishes and not insist on any particular form of funeral.

"Some clients want nothing more than a peaceful ceremony, some opt for a more lively style of event. There are also wealthier clients who would request a funeral arrangement of the most pompous kind. The services we provide have to be tailor-made according to the clients' needs."

Ever since Hu Tao took over, the parlor's operations have been solid and reliable, with ceremonies conducted so tactfully that quite a few superstitious people in Liyue have changed their attitudes towards funerals.

Even so, Hu Tao still has a tendency to wander off, disappearing as soon as her undertakers are busy listening to lectures.

The hobbies and interests of this young director are just as eccentric as her personality, and yet it is difficult to say with certainty if those activities are of a purely leisurely nature.

Hu Tao's shadow can be seen in the moonlit docks or at the highest, most precarious viewpoints in the mountains, where she's likely to take in the scenery and shape her thoughts into beautiful poetry.

She loves to roam freely at night, looking for inspiration. When it strikes her, no matter where she is, she cannot help but compose a poem on the spot.

If they are particularly lucky, the traveling merchants taking respite around the Huaguang Stone Forest can spot a mysterious girl keeping herself amused in solitude.

Hu Tao can play a four-player card game accompanied by no one for hours on end.

That said, the joys of engaging in such activities remain a mystery to all but Hu Tao herself.

Character Story 3

 Friendship Lv. 4

The Ministry of Civil Affairs is guarded by two life-like stone lions, a symbol of power and authority.

However, Hu Tao, who happened to be passing by the ministry building one day, saw them in a different light. At first, she examined the lions with a thoughtful look, but soon enough, her pensive face gave way to a wide smile, as she slapped them on the fore-paws.

From that moment on, Hu Tao often visited and petted the stone statues. Not only would she talk to them, but also give them pet names — Whiskers for the one on the left and Mittens for the one on the right.

On occasion, she would even bring a bucket of water and a big brush to bathe them, each move so careful and deliberate that one might think that they were her actual pets.

As it happened, another feline, a living and breathing calico cat, could be found enjoying the local delicacies in front of Xinyue Kiosk, not too far from the ministry building. One day, some city folk came to play with the restaurant's favorite, providing an interesting foil for Hu Tao's peculiarities. Met with befuddled gazes of the bystanders, Hu Tao showed unwavering confidence.

"Sure, your kitty's cute, but the same can be said about my Whiskers and Mittens. Their fur might be harder, but they're still just as fluffy! Any

animal that brings people joy may become a pet. And when it comes to majestic looks, your little fur-ball simply can't measure up to my lions!"

Suffice to say that this explanation was met with even greater consternation from the onlookers.

Yet the group of people shocked the most and most often by Hu Tao's antics were the ministry guards. Soft footsteps could often be heard in front of the building at around midnight. Initially, the guards suspected that it had been a thief preparing to rob officials. To their unceasing surprise, it would turn out to just be a young lady playing with the stone lions.

The guards were faced with an even bigger conundrum when, once everyone had reluctantly got used to her presence, Hu Tao discontinued her visits.

That meant that the responsibility for cleaning the statues fell on the guards' shoulders once again.

Subsequently, they decided to keep guard by the lions for many days, anticipating Hu Tao's return. Once they finally had the opportunity to ask her why she would not visit anymore, they received the most absurd of answers.

"Whiskers and Mittens are adults now and can take care of themselves! Excuse me, I'm running late for my heart-to-heart with a Statue of the Seven regarding the meaning of life!"

Character Story 4

 Friendship Lv. 5

Not long after her initial meeting with the little zombie, Hu Tao decided that, as her self-proclaimed true friend, she should grant Qiqi eternal peace.

Hu Tao would go on to kidnap Qiqi several times following much deliberation in every instance, including calculating the most auspicious time for the ceremony, aiming to follow the standard procedure of cremation, after which she would place Qiqi in a tomb on the outskirts of the city.

In fact, she would have succeeded already if not for Baizhu's timely interventions.

Each time the Bubu Pharmacy's owner managed to catch up with them, Hu Tao had already had Qiqi packed in a bag, with only her head sticking out, staring in utter confusion as Hu Tao was vigorously digging a hole for the pyre.

Afterwards, Hu Tao sent Qiqi an apology letter, in which she expressed deep regret that she had not been able to lay Qiqi to rest fast enough.

In Hu Tao's eyes, Qiqi passed away a long time ago, but has been trapped in this world and cannot free herself of her eternal suffering.

Baizhu, for his part, had grown ever more relentless in his pursuit of eternal life after meeting Qiqi. This act of defiance against the cycle of life and death was unacceptable to Hu Tao.

She wanted to bury Qiqi not only out of consideration for her friend but also to restore the natural order.

But Qiqi could not disagree more, as she was afraid of death and disliked Hu Tao for her attempts.

Because the struggle between Hu Tao and her had been going on for so long, Qiqi has experienced a breakthrough. She has started to remember places where she might hide to avoid being captured by Hu Tao.

Perhaps it was due to those desperate survival efforts that Hu Tao decided to do something unusual and dig deeper into Qiqi's past.

The story of her accident and the mystery of the adepti... That series of coincidences filled Hu Tao's heart with hesitation.

Since Qiqi's will to live is so strong, she should not be forced to move on. Given the circumstances, she could only be treated as a rare exception that eludes the natural laws.

Ever since, Hu Tao's attitude towards Qiqi has changed drastically, to the point that she would pamper her.

Unfortunately, the damage has been done and Hu Tao has become Qiqi's bugbear. The little zombie may need several years more to let go of her grievances.

Character Story 5

Hu Tao is not, in fact, best known for her role as Director, but for her other great accomplishment: the creation of poetry.

She dubs herself the "versemonger of the darkest alleys," and free verse flows forth untamed from her mouth whenever she has free time to be out on the streets.

The "Hilitune" is Hu Tao's most famous work, well-loved not only by the people of the harbor, but ever on the lips of children as far as Qingce Village as well.

Hobbyists and critics alike were greatly surprised by the simple but profound originality of the "Hilitune" and its creation, and went to Wanwen Bookhouse in droves to search for the works of this great poet. Unfortunately, Hu Tao's anthologies, named "Fiddlesticks" and "Of Common Lives" respectively, have yet to be published.

Xingqiu, ever immersed in books, also wanted to meet this strange person, and so chose an auspicious date to visit, bringing a gift with him.

The two hit it off immediately, and they exchanged pointers and impromptu poetry in Wangsheng's main hall — and when faced with the poetry of Xingqiu's traditional, artistic bent, Hu Tao could always return in kind with some strange and marvelous verse.

And there was meaning in the chaos, indeed, a rhythm to the bizarre that anyone could perceive, and it was catchy, too.

Thus did she "beat the old master with untrained fists," leaving Xingqiu at a loss for words.

At length, the poetic spar ended amiably, and they have been friends ever since, reading and composing poetry with one another when they have the time to meet.

Over time, Chongyun, too, was pulled in to serve as an umpire, their laughter filling the streets.

The poems born from these sessions would also be recorded by bystanders.

If ever you should hear a pair of matched verses, one strict and the other playful, you are most likely to have heard one created jointly by Hu Tao and Xingqiu.

Harmony Hexagram Hat

 Friendship Lv. 4

This hat is somewhat on the hard side, and the insignia of the Wangsheng Funeral Parlor adorns its front.

It is said that this hat was passed from the 75th Director to Hu Tao. However, that director was large, musclebound, and had a head at least two sizes larger than hers.

Ultimately, Hu Tao had to spend an entire day and night to modify the hat with her own hands such that its dimensions would fit hers. When she meets others, she tells them: this hat is magical, upholding good and repelling evil, and is a bringer of peace!

The undertakers laugh and leave it at that, but the 77th Director clearly does treasure that hat.

No matter the rain or storm, or if Hu Tao returns late covered in muck, that hat will remain spotless and clean.

The plum blossom that adorns the side of the hat is plucked from a plum tree that Hu Tao planted and grew herself.

Its creation process is as follows: pluck and air-dry, then paint, lacquer, and outline carefully before sun-drying for three days and voila — a beautiful accessory, soft to the touch and bearing a delicate fragrance.

Vision

 Friendship Lv. 6

This tale should begin with the funeral of Hu Tao's grandfather.

Ten days before the funeral itself, Old Hu had passed away following a bout of illness. For its 75th Director, Wangsheng Funeral Parlor held a grand funeral, in accordance with the last wishes of the old man himself, to be conducted by Hu Tao.

Only thirteen at the time, Hu Tao, who would later go on to become the Director in turn, made all the arrangements herself to the highest standard, greatly impressing the undertakers.

After the funeral, the thirteen-year-old Hu Tao grabbed her traveler's bag and crept out alone in the dead of night. In her bag were only a few rations, some water, and a means to create some light. She was headed to a mysterious and seldom-seen frontier.

Heading straight from Wuwang Hill, one may arrive at the "border." It is the line that separates life and death, the secrets of which have been managed by Wangsheng Funeral Parlor for generations. According to legend, it is a place where the souls of past relatives and the spirits of those with unfulfilled aspirations linger. For Hu Tao, this journey was a chance to see her grandfather once more before he departed forever.

For two days she journeyed unceasingly before finally arriving at her destination, yet was unable to locate her grandfather upon arrival. Between the innumerable spirits she walked, but not one of them resembled the old man.

She stayed there the whole day before falling asleep in exhaustion, awakening to a night sky and heavy dew. Around her were gathered a few lone spirits, clapping and laughing:

"Silly girl, why would Old Hu be here of all places? What were you thinking, looking for your relatives here?"

Not one to be swayed so easily, Hu Tao continued to wait, day after day. Her rations gradually disappeared and her water supplies drained away, but her grandfather did not appear. In the end, it was a little old woman who came to her.

She laid eyes on the exhausted Hu Tao and smiled as she spoke: "Look at your stubbornness, you're exactly like Old Hu. It's a shame, but none of the Wangsheng Funeral Parlor Directors would ever linger here. You come from a family of plain speakers, so let me return the favor... Go back. Go back to where you came from."

The old woman bid farewell to Hu Tao, before passing over the border and into the distance. Hu Tao watched as the figure of the mysterious woman grew smaller and disappeared, as a sense of doubt tinged with relief manifested itself.

At last she came to the conclusion: her grandfather's absence was due to him having passed over the border as soon as he'd arrived, to the place where he was bound. He had been open and honest in life, leaving behind no regrets, so was it right for his departure to be framed in regretful terms?

With a smile, she set forth on the return journey.

The faraway moon had been casting a thin light on the way over but had now been replaced by the bright light of dawn. As she walked, Hu Tao thought of a saying that her grandfather had often quoted: "Live in life, die in death. Follow your heart, do what you can."

It was noon when Hu Tao arrived home. She climbed over the wall into the rear courtyard, went straight to her room, and unpacked her travel bag.

With her food and water long gone, and the rest of her belongings unpacked, the bag she had taken for empty instead contained a colorful Vision. Just when had it arrived?

As one of the few living that had dared to visit the border, perhaps Hu Tao's actions had moved some unknown god.

Perhaps this then constituted a heavenly gift... the ultimate recognition of her strength.