

= Balthier =

Balthier (????? , Barufurea) is a 22 @-@ year @-@ old fictional character in the Final Fantasy series , and a protagonist in Final Fantasy XII . He was designed by Akihiko Yoshida , was voiced by Gideon Emery and Hiroaki Hirata in the English and Japanese versions respectively , and is one of the most positively received characters of the game , compared by some to the likes of James Bond and Han Solo .

In Final Fantasy XII , he is a sky pirate who is accompanied by a member of the fictional Viera species , Fran . While attempting to steal the " Goddess 's Magicite " , they encounter protagonist Vaan , who had already stolen it . This coincidence entangles them into the main plot of Final Fantasy XII . His birth name is Ffamran mied Bunansa , and he is the estranged son of Doctor Cid , one of the game 's primary antagonists . Balthier later appears in Final Fantasy XII : Revenant Wings and in a cameo appearance in Final Fantasy Tactics : War of the Lions .

= = Character design = =

Balthier was designed by Akihiko Yoshida , who has stated that the character is his favorite from Final Fantasy XII since the character is based on " someone I admire . " Balthier has been called a " completely original character " by Yoshida , having not used any previous Final Fantasy character as a reference . In an interview , Yoshida stated that all the characters of Final Fantasy XII were designed with a focus on creating an aesthetic found nowhere in the real world . The armor of the Judges , which Balthier had been , were designed as a combination of historical armor , mountain bike gear , and futuristic ideas .

= = = Attributes = = =

For Final Fantasy XII , Balthier was voiced by Gideon Emery in English and Hiroaki Hirata in Japanese . Emery commented that while voicing the character of Balthier , he developed a " small crush " on Fran , Balthier 's partner . He also commented that the biggest challenge of voicing Balthier was having to stay consistent , adding that he spent more than four hours in a small booth while doing the voice , which could cause him to " drift away from the character " if he goes on for too long . He also described him as being similar to the character . Emery auditioned for Balthier , seeing him after he did this and " instantly fell in love with the character " . He described him as a cross between Han Solo , James Bond , and Jack Sparrow , citing suave yet cocky attitude . He was thankful that he was not aware of Balthier 's popularity since his reveal , stating that he would have been " crippled by the fear of not delivering on what the fans expected " . He stated that he took no inspiration from anyone else for the role , wanting to ensure that he was unique . Instead , he cited the pictures and animation of the character as his inspiration . Emery cited Jack Fletcher , the voice director , as a great help in voicing the character and setting up the scene for him . To give Final Fantasy XII a Western feel , Balthier 's movements were recorded by a Western motion capture actor .

Balthier is a Hume sky pirate who pilots the Strahl , a small airship , around the skies of Ivalice . VideoGamer.com editor Greg Vallentin made a similar comparison , calling him a " Han Solo @-@ like sky pirate " . 1UP.com editor Jeremy Parish compared Balthier to Albus , one of the characters from Castlevania : Order of Ecclesia , stating that they share a physical resemblance .

= = Appearances = =

= = = Final Fantasy XII = = =

Balthier and his companion , Fran , prefer to remain outside the war between the kingdoms of Ivalice . However , their attempt to steal the Goddess 's Magicite ? later revealed to be the Dusk

Shard ? from the Dalmascan Royal Palace goes bad ; Vaan steals it first , and , caught in the fray of a rebel assault against the Imperial Palace , Balthier and Fran find themselves embroiled in the conflict against Archadia . Born as Ffamran mied Bunansa (????? ? ? ? ? ???? , Famuran Mido Bunanza) , he is the son of Dr. Cid (Cidolfus Demen Bunansa) , though he grew weary of his father 's madness and obsession with nethicite . Although Cid had made him an Imperial Judge , Ffamran eventually decided to cut his ties with his father and his role as a judge , becoming a sky pirate under a new name . With this new career change , Balthier amounted a sizable bounty on his head , attracting the attention of bounty hunters such as Ba 'Gamnan . Unfortunately for Balthier , it took him a while to realize he 'd been following his father in pursuing nethicite while he served in the resistance . Though he makes peace with his father prior to his death , Balthier goes with the group to destroy the Sky Fortress Bahamut as penance for his father 's deeds . Balthier claims to be the " leading man " of the story many times throughout the game , and insists that this status makes him invincible . After the Sky Fortress Bahamut crashes with him and Fran still in it , they remain out of contact until they retrieve the Strahl back from Vaan and Penelo a year later , leaving a note for the new Queen Ashe which held her wedding ring that she used to purchase his services .

= = = Other games = = =

Both he and Fran intend on finding the Cache of Glabados , which is resolved in Final Fantasy XII : Revenant Wings when it turns out to be tied to Eternal . Balthier was at first intent to take Lemures ' treasure , the Auracite , but knew the truth behind it and attempted to destroy the Auralith , eventually rejoining Vaan 's group to fight the Judge of Wings , letting Vaan be the " leading man " while he himself leaves the limelight . He makes a crossover appearance in Final Fantasy Tactics : The War of the Lions . He was the first cameo character they added to War of the Lions , with co @-@ producer Shingo Kosuge stating that it was not a conscious decision to add continuity to the Ivalice story . He also appears in Itadaki Street Portable . Balthier also reprises his role from Final Fantasy XII in the manga adaptation by Gin Amou .

= = = Merchandise = = =

A Balthier figurine was sold randomly in Japanese sets of Final Fantasy XII characters . Square Enix released a Sculpture Arts set of Balthier and Fran escaping the palace of Rabanastre in 2008 . A full @-@ colored action figure of Balthier has also been displayed in the Square Enix Japan merchandise page .

= = Reception = =

Since his appearance in Final Fantasy XII , Balthier has received mostly positive reception . When he was first revealed , the fan response was very positive . GameSpy 's Justin Speer described him as a " clever @-@ bastard type " , praising his wry delivery . GameSpot 's Greg Kasavin called Balthier the best character in the game , describing him as the " Auron of the cast " . 1UP.com editor Jeremy Parish called Final Fantasy XII protagonist Vaan annoying , placing the duo of Balthier and Fran above him . 1UP.com 's Andrew Pfister stated Balthiers presence in Final Fantasy XII helped ease some fans dislike of the " angsty teen " behavior of the main character Vaan . PSX Extreme editor Cavin Smith commented that while Vaan is the main character , he usually takes a back seat , adding that Balthier is the closest thing to a male lead . For similar reasons , GameZone listed Balthier as the tenth best Final Fantasy character , emphasizing how Balthier becomes " as much the leading man as Vaan . " PALGN 's Phil Larsen commented that though a lofty prediction , he expected that the duo of Balthier and Fran would " go down in history as one of the greatest duos of modern narrative storytelling " . Balthier ranked ninth on IGN 's top 25 best Final Fantasy characters , ranking higher than any other character from Final Fantasy XII . Editor Dave Smith commented that he makes a " convincing case " that he is the main hero , upstaging fellow playable characters due to his " sharp looks and even sharper wit . " GamesRadar 'sAJ Glasser listed Balthier and Fran as

one of her favourite Final Fantasy couples , describing theirs as being a well @-@ balanced relationship . Destructoid 's Aaron Linde noted that few video game characters had both his intelligence and his common sense , and wished more male characters in gaming could be like him .

Balthier has been compared to other characters in fiction . Simon Wigham of Console Obsession called Balthier his " favourite by quite a wide margin " , comparing him to James Bond due to his " humorous lines " . RPGFan editor Stephen Harris compared his voice to that of Ian Fleming 's depiction of Bond . 1UP.com editor Andrew Pfister compared the duo of Balthier and Fran to that of Han Solo and Chewbacca , two characters from the Star Wars franchise , adding that they are far more interesting than any other character in the " modern FF era " .