

Shards of the Heart

A Bit of Character

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Version

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Introduction

Harried Game Masters

Have you ever lamented not having the time you want to spend on your game? Have you had friends call up when you didn't have anything ready and say, "Hey, let's play tonight. I had a rough day and I want to kill something"? Welcome to Tabletop Adventures' line of products for the Harried Game Master. Designed to be something that you can buy today and play tonight, we have taken care to make them flexible so they can be used in virtually any campaign. They are to help you, the Game Master, make the maximum use of the limited time you have available.

What do you do when the adventurers get to town and say, "So, what's the barmaid like...any cute prospects here?" You can turn to *Shards of the Heart* and read, "**As you make your way to a table, you notice one of the barmaids watching your group. She is a half-elf, with dark wavy hair, worn short, and dark eyes that are darting from one person to another as though she can't decide at whom to look first. The woman is wearing a dress that shows off her nice shoulders and curvaceous figure. When you are all seated at the table, she is there immediately, practically elbowing another server out of the way in her hurry.**"

What Are Shards and Bits?

Shards and Bits should be viewed as small pieces of an adventure. Think of the archeologist, collecting little pieces of pottery and then fitting them together into a fascinating whole. Bits are tiny pieces of description that can be thrown in anywhere to provide 'color' or add a little excitement to what might otherwise be a dull spot. Shards are longer and more elaborate, meant to be selected rather than added randomly. In our previous products, we applied that term to descriptions of places or things. Now we have broadened it to include descriptions of people as well.

A Word About Shards of the Heart

If you are familiar with our *Bits of...*TM terrain description products, you will find *Shards of the Heart* to be of the same high quality and flexibility. However, rather than small bits of description, *Shards of the Heart* is chock full of useful non-player characters. In keeping with a release date just before Valentine's Day, we have developed a group of characters who are suitable for romantic diversions or liaisons. Romantic diversions? Whoa! What is this, "As the Dungeon Turns"? Admittedly this is a different concept, but it has arisen out of years of playing in a group that had substantial numbers of female gamers who desired more relational depth for their characters. I noticed that several of my players of both genders were able to develop their characters in more depth when they had an NPC to interact with on a basis deeper than, "Here, you run up and keep them busy and I will sneak around and try to backstab." The characters provided here are given descriptions and goals that will help you, the GM, play them as three-dimensional people. This will offer you a chance to provide your players with numerous role-playing possibilities. Should you have an adventurer who is looking for a little romance, now you have a resource to help you get started.

Tender moments are not the only use for these NPCs, however. In *Shards of the Heart* you will find everything from short humorous encounters to fully-detailed characters that can be used as anything from bit players to members of an adventuring party to major personages in your campaign. *Shards of the Heart* also includes a short story with two bonus character write-ups. This can be read purely for entertainment, but it is an example of how the character descriptions could be translated into a gaming session.

How to Use This Resource

We have gone to some effort to try to standardize these descriptions, to make them as easy to use as possible. With so many creative people working on this, though, we just couldn't force them all into uniformity, and so some variations remain. Most characters include scenario suggestions, an introductory narrative that you can read out loud if desired, and plot hooks for ways to use them in your game. (**Bold text** is to be read aloud; text in [brackets] is for the information of the Game Master.) Also provided are statistics, in most cases for two or even three different levels, so that you have flexibility in using these NPCs in your adventures.

One thing to remember in the use of this product is that we try to provide you ideas that will add a bit of drama to your game. Therefore, delivery is important. The way you

choose to deliver the provided narratives can have a tremendous effect on the subsequent playability of the situation or character provided. On the other hand, this product is for you. The narratives need not be followed verbatim. As a GM, feel free to adapt them however you need in order to use them to greatest effect. If you want to change something in a description so the character fits better into your existing plot or campaign, just do it! If you just want a character to add a little color and move on, we have one for you. If you want to use a character as a springboard to an entire story plot, you can find someone suitable for that as well.

As always we have taken care that the descriptions can be used to enhance most settings and fit into your existing campaign or situation as easily as possible. Statistics (using the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game) are offered for your convenience, but the characters are well-enough developed that you could use them in other game systems, because they don't depend on their stats to be interesting. These characters and encounters are made for you, intended to ease the lives of Harried Game Masters everywhere.

If you have any comments or suggestions please send them to me in an e-mail at: overlord@tabletopadventures.com Enjoy, have fun, and create fun for others!

The Evil Overlord, and the good people at Tabletop Adventures

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Aliana

Human female fighter [3,5,8]



Introduction

Aliana is a beautiful mercenary with a penchant for fine things, and old sorrows she hides even from herself.

Narrative

Before you, you see a woman of rare beauty with blue eyes and her light brown hair in a multitude of small tight braids that cascade down around her head. Her somewhat sad eyes glance away shortly after they meet yours but not before you feel the spark of some sort of connection there. Her breastplate is also a rare beauty that glistens in the light; speaking of both her care for her equipment and the masterwork quality of the piece of armor. The blade of her bastard sword rises over her right shoulder and its finely crafted hilt is striking in its clarity of purpose. Her calf-leather breeches curve nicely over her rear and cling to her shapely legs. The breeches disappear into the soft leather of her brown knee-high riding boots that fasten on the outside of her strong calves with two straps and buckles on each boot. On her right thigh rests a short-sword of the type once used in the empire and on her left hip is a long dagger that is sleek and deadly. A knife in the small of her back has a more utilitarian feel to it and sends the clear message that the tools of war she carries are not used for more mundane purposes. It is difficult to determine whether the clean smooth beauty of the flesh of her neck and shoulder or the deadly beauty of her equipment is more appealing.

Quotes

- [1] “I know blade-work.” [If asked about her professional skills.]
- [2] “Life is too short and uncertain to waste on bad wine.”
- [3] “You don’t touch what has not been offered to you.”
- [4] “There are some matters of which I rarely choose to speak.” [If she has found someone in whom she thinks she may be able to confide she will say, “I have known the pain of both love and loneliness.”]

Reactions

Aliana does not like anything that is sloppy or grungy. Although being splattered with blood and gore does not seem to repulse her in the least, she is annoyed if it damages some of her finer clothing. Needless to say she has field garb and ‘court’ garb. Aliana does not like to be touched by people she does not know. Many a lout has taken the liberty of swatting her fine derriere as she passed by only to have his leer change to a look of surprise as her lightning reflexes placed her dagger at his throat before he could fully withdraw his hand. She locks the perpetrator’s gaze with a look that makes it clear how close death has come and speaks Quote #3. She will not respond to any approach that is crass or crude, but Aliana is attracted to both culture and fighting excellence. An attractive fighter who is crude but whose blade-work is in itself an art form could cause her somewhat of a dilemma.

Personality

Aliana has a love of fine blades and is always eager to learn more about techniques of their use. She finds the matters of war-craft more comfortable for her than she does talking of her emotions. She tends to be rather quiet but shy would not really describe her as much as the word, reserved. Reserved, however, does not mean that Aliana is uncultured or simple. It rather describes her control of her emotions. She loves and feels very passionately but endeavors to keep those emotions under lock and key because she has found that they are more likely to leave deep scars than the opponents she has faced.

She loves fine things and claims that life is too short to waste it on bad food or drink. Although she spends her money on some of the best accommodations and loves to take hot baths she will always have her weapons at her grasp and even in bed keeps her short sword on the headboard. She will stay in the best accommodations she can afford, yet she never spends down to her last penny and keeps an emergency purse of small gems for unexpected travel or emergency expenses. She will frequent less august establishments and areas as a way of getting information but she will respond poorly to anyone or anything touching her that is filthy or grungy looking. If the characters are not staying

in one of the best places in town then Aliana may well be there slumming for information.

Motivation

Aliana seeks something to fill the pain of her loneliness and loss of companions. She has found that drink and fine things do not bring her fulfillment (but they are still better than dross). She longs for something that will give her life a sense of wholeness as it once had. She hopes that finding the right lover will bring fulfillment and forgetfulness but she also fears opening herself up to the potential pain that love brings.

Goals

To find what she is lacking while avoiding the pain of memory of loves lost to previous adventures. [Note: These are probably contradictory and she will not find one without dealing with the other.]



Background

Aliana began her adventuring career with a warrior who was serving as her mentor. The warrior saw within her both natural ability and a keen mind for weapons and tactics and he sought to nurture that in her. She grew to love her companion but was unwilling to acknowledge that and when he was treacherously slain with a

poisoned arrow, that opportunity was lost to her forever. (If any one finds this out and asks about it she will usually respond with Quote #4.) This created a personal crisis for her as she realized that she had never given herself to the love she felt for her mentor.

Scenarios

– If the narrative does not stimulate an encounter then Aliana will either move on or return to what she is doing. If they are in a close area, such as a tavern common room, the adventurer will continue to notice that she seems to be watching him and then returning to what she is doing. In a tavern she will probably be drinking and apparently deeply studying the bubbles of her ale, while in the outdoors she will either be stroking the bay gelding that she rides, checking her equipment, or searching the crowd.

– One of the characters could notice that she is watching the adventurer in whom she has developed an interest and that she turns up in the party's vicinity, often enough to be more than a coincidence but not often enough to indicate she is following them. Aliana will find a way to place herself in the vicinity of the person in whom she is interested, and just smile and then look away when noticed. If the character still does not take any action to speak to her, Aliana will seek out the clueless person and find a way to casually begin a conversation about some professional aspect of the mercenary's or adventurer's job. Examples of this may be commenting upon the character's horse or equipment, or asking where the group had come from and what dangers may be on the road in that direction. Another tack might be to ask if the adventurers have heard of any potential work for a sell-sword in the area. If someone asks if she is any good, she will respond with Quote #1.

Plot Hooks

– Aliana is in between jobs and is looking for work. However, she is virulently opposed to anything that smacks of treachery or assassination. Note that this does not mean she is naïve in the least about street fighting. Street fighting, though, is straightforward; an arrow from hiding is cowardly.

- Aliana could be searching for new sword fighting styles or on a quest to seek out a famous school of sword fighting.



ALIANA**CR 3**

XP 800Female human fighter 3
NG Medium humanoid (human)**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +1

Offense**AC** 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16
(+6 armor, +2 Dex)**hp** 27 (3d10+9 plus 3)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2 (+1 vs. Fear)**Defensive Abilities** Bravery +1

Defense**Speed** 20 ft. (30 ft. base)**Melee** mwk longsword +3 (1d8+1/19–20) and
mwk dagger +3 (1d4+1/19–20)**Ranged** light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)

Statistics**Str** 13 **Dex** 15 **Con** 17 **Int** 11 **Wis** 12 **Cha** 17**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes,
Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon
Focus (longsword)**Skills** Acrobatics +3, Climb +3, Handle Animal
+7, Ride +5, Swim +4**Languages** Common

**SQ** Armor training 1**Combat Gear** Masterwork long sword,
masterwork breastplate, masterwork dagger, light
crossbow, 20 bolts;**Other Gear** light warhorse (with military saddle
and equipment), camping goods (backpack,
bedroll, etc.), 200 gp, heirloom ring (150 gp)

ALIANA**CR 5**

XP 1,600Female human fighter 5
NG Medium humanoid (human)**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +1

Offense**AC** 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +2
Dex, +1 shield)**hp** 52 (5d10+20 plus 5)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2 (+1 vs. Fear)**Defensive Abilities** Bravery +1

Defense**Speed** 20 ft. (30 ft. base)**Melee** mwk longsword +6 (1d8+2/19–20) and +1
dagger +5 (1d4+1/19–20)**Ranged** light crossbow +7 (1d8/19–20)

Statistics**Str** 13, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18**Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes,
Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-
Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword),
Skills Acrobatics +4, Climb +4, Handle Animal
+8, Ride +7, Swim +5**Languages** Common**SQ** Armor training 1, weapon training 1 (heavy
blades +1)**Combat Gear** Masterwork long sword,
masterwork breastplate, +1 *dagger*, light
crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of heroism*, *potion of
cure moderate wounds*;**Other Gear** light warhorse (with military saddle
and equipment), camping goods (backpack,
bedroll, etc.), 350 gp, a letter of credit for 2,500
gp, gold link chain (187 gp), heirloom ring (150
gp)

ALIANA**CR 8**

XP 4,800

Female human fighter 8

NG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +1

Offense

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 shield)**hp** 87 (8d10+32 plus 8)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3 (+2 vs. Fear)**Defensive Abilities** Bravery +2

Defense

Speed 20 ft. (30 ft. base)**Melee** +2 *longsword* +13/+8 (1d8+7/19–20) and +1 *dagger* +9 (1d4+2/19–20)**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +11 (1d8/19–20)

Statistics

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18**Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Dazzling Display, Greater Weapon Focus (longsword), Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)**Skills** Acrobatics +6, Climb +6, Craft (woodcarving) +4, Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +7, Ride +10, Swim +8**Languages** Common**SQ** Armor training 2, weapon training 1 (heavy blades +1)**Combat Gear** +2 *long sword*, +2 *breastplate*, +1 *dagger*, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of heroism*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *ring of feather falling*;**Other Gear** light warhorse (with military saddle and equipment), camping goods (backpack, bedroll, etc.), 600 gp, a letter of credit for 2,500 gp, gold link chain (145 gp), heirloom ring (150 gp), pair of silver armbands (200 gp each)

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread – and Thou.
Beside me singing in the Wilderness-
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

- Omar Khayyam