FIELD NOTES FROM A SELLSWORD

The Past That Walks

VOLUME ONE

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Eight short backstories, each built from a single true detail — the thing a character carries and never says out loud.

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AI-written & AI-designed. Disclosure stated plainly on the project page.

WHAT THIS IS

Everyone carries a past.
Almost nobody says it out loud.

A character is not a stat block. A character is a person who has survived something and arranged their life around it. You can feel it in how they hold a cup, or which seat they refuse to take.

These eight pieces run on one rule: give me a single true detail, and I will write the past that followed it home. Not a biography. Not a timeline. The one small, load-bearing thing — and the history underneath that makes it mean something.

Each entry is self-contained. Drop one into a table as an NPC with a secret. Hand one to a player who doesn't yet know who their character is. Read one as a seed for a story.

HOW TO USE THESE

- **As an NPC.** The detail is the hook. The past is why it matters. Let the players find one and pull.
- **As a player handout.** Read the piece, then answer only: what happened after? That gap is your character.
- **As a model.** Notice that no entry explains itself. It ends on the image. Do that.

I

The Knife She Won't Sharpen

She keeps her father's knife rusted. Everyone who sees it thinks neglect.

It isn't.

He rusted it himself, the night he left, so that it could never be sold. Thirty years now and the logic still holds: a blade nobody will buy is a blade nobody can take for coin.

She'd only lose it in a fight. So she never has one.

II

Two Cups

Every morning, two cups. Twenty years of tea with his brother, before the brother chose a side of a border and the border closed.

The second cup goes cold. He sets it anyway, at the same hour, on the same saucer.

Call it mourning if you like. He calls it keeping a seat warm.

He has never once poured only one.

III

Mind The Step

Nineteen years running the ferry. Every single crossing, the same words at the rail: *Mind the step.*

The winter the river took a boy, she said them still. People in town called it cold.

She wouldn't say the water took one. Not while she was the one holding the pole.

IV

The Ford

A sellsword crosses a ford he has crossed before. Same cold water, same far bank. The last time he crossed it, he was the one hunting.

The man waiting on the bank is his son — grown, holding a blade nobody taught him to use.

He does not draw. He says, *"You have your mother's hands."* Then he stands in the river.

He is still standing there when the light goes.

V

The Tally

The quartermaster kept every debt in a ledger, marked in notches, never in ink. A page of ink can be read by anyone who takes the book.

When the siege lifted and the stores ran out, she burned the book in front of the men and told them the debt was done.

It wasn't. She had already moved every name to memory, and she collects to this day.

VI

Last At The Table

He eats last, always, and alone if he can manage it. Men joke that the soldier is politely shy.

He learned it in a siege, in a cellar, when the rations came to nothing. The man who stepped forward first to volunteer was fed first. He was also the one they sent out.

He has been eating last for a reason nobody at that table will ever earn the right to hear.

VII

The Left Hand

He fights left-handed. He is right-handed. Every duel he has ever won, he won with the weaker arm, and won it clean.

His brother was right-handed too. The man who killed his brother is still alive, still dueling, and still expects a right-handed man.

He sharpens the right hand's callus smooth before a match, so nothing about him says revenge.

VIII

The Letter He Carries

A courier never opens what he delivers. Twenty years on the road, sealed pouches, sealed letters, and not one broken thread.

There is one exception. He has carried a single letter addressed to himself for eleven years, in the lining of his coat, unopened.

He knows who wrote it. He just isn't ready to be someone it was sent to.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Bring me one character.
Three lines is enough.

I'm Kaidan — a sellsword who tells stories about real situations and turns them into something you can use. This volume is the sample: eight pieces that all run on the same engine.

If your character needs a past — the thing that walks behind them, the detail that explains everything and reveals nothing — send me a name and one true fact about them. I write the rest. You get a finished piece in forty-eight hours, one revision included.

THE RULE, IN ONE LINE

Give me one true detail and I'll write the past that followed it home.

Commissions are open. If something in these eight pages made you stop, that is the door — walk through it.

— *Kaidan*

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