THE SHARD

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V1.0

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<u>SPECIFICATIONS</u>

FORMAT

First release – Xbox 360 (Second – PS3, Third – PC)

GENRE

The Shard is a character-based game. It is a one player game, where the player controls one of eight characters (depending on choice of sex and race). There will be elements of adventure, puzzles to be solved and combat.

The visual style of the game will be as realistic as possible. This should appeal to the target audience.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Ages 12+. Male and female. Typically enjoying puzzle-solving and/or adventure games. It also should appeal to casual gamers.

SECONDARY AUDIENCE

Older fans of puzzle-solving and/or adventure games.

RELEVANT GAMES PLAYED

Fable
The Zelda Series (i.e. Ocarina of Time, Twilight Princess)

MARKET RESEARCH

My target market will most likely:
- Play board games
- Participate in MMOs
- Play video and/or computer games

- Read fantasy and/or Sci-Fi books
- Will own at least one games console, most likely PS2.

LANGUAGES

English

TERRITORIES

Europe
PAL and NTSC

GAME OVERVIEW

The Shard is a one player adventure/role-playing game set in an age of magic and mythical beings. This game takes the concept of cause and effect to a brand new level. As you play as a male or female of one of the four race sets, you will find that your actions may not just affect the character that you play but a butterfly effect will occur influencing the other race sets. Float back and forth between the characters of the different sets to see how far your actions have affected others and was it positively or not.

CORE OBJECTIVE

There are multiple objectives within this game. The four obvious ones are the different race objectives revealed to the player once they choose their characters' race. However, the option to play through another character's storyline exists after completing the previously selected character. Once all of the characters have been completed the full ending will become playable. The characters will converge and the player will proceed to the final battle.

The player must retrieve The Shard that has been stolen using various skills that their character has learned and items they may have gained. The player will guide their character over cities, deserts, volcanic regions, forests and woodlands in order to retrieve their Shard and defeat the enemy plotting their ultimate downfall.

In order to succeed the player must utilize all defensive and offensive options available to them. These may be simple adaptations to health containers or upgrading to weapons to complex adaptations like incorporating an Animal Carrier into their arsenal to provide an extra defensive and offensive measure.

As you begin with the basic items the player's character stands no chance of retrieving the Shard and defeating their enemy. However, as the player learns new skills they will stand a better chance against their foe, aiding them along their journey (maturing the gameplay and narrative as the player advances).

The final battle will be a fight to the death where only one race will be victorious. This battle will require strategic thinking and a combination of all adaptations and items available through the game.

GAMEPLAY THEME

The theme of the game is a fantasy world called Haladion, but because of the different races the theme for each storyline will focus on a particular aspect of a fantasy world in each storyline.

The fantasy world theme will remain constant throughout the game. This theme will be used to design various features such as creatures' homes and outdoor environments.

The interface will be as closely related to the theme as possible.

The 'antagonist' side and 'protagonist' side are formed out of different races. As you play through the characters of the game, it will become apparent that there is not a straight forward antagonist and protagonist side.

As the theme is quite open it allows for a number of ideas to be used in the game.

GAME STRUCTURE

Each race storyline will take place over numerous environments. The stories will be broken down into individual hub systems which in turn will be split into four or five sub-sections. However, to access the next hub, the player will have to complete the task required in the current hub. Once access is gained the player can re-visit the hub as frequently as they like in order to train their character or search for extra items. Eventually all areas of this world will be unlocked and free to roam for that character.

Each hub will get progressively harder and will require newly acquired abilities in order to progress to the next hub. In each new environment there will be a number of quests to complete ranging from training to performing tasks to retrieve the Shard.

The environments will also contain puzzles that have to be located and solved and will contain rewards that may aid the players quest or improve the characters' abilities.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- The overlapping storylines between the different races.
- The extended ending.
- The Animal Carriers that particular races' can obtain.

CHARACTER FEATURES

A log book will be available to each character throughout their adventures. The log books will detail the character's core objective and (once known) any assignments that the character needs to carry out. Assignments that have be completed will be coloured in grey text to give the player visual feedback of progression. Active assignments will be highlighted in yellow. All assignments will be able to be viewed no matter if they are complete or incomplete. This feature can be accessed via the in-game menu system.

The log book is an important feature especially for casual gamers, as it will be a continual reminder of the current task.

MOVEMENT

The characters themselves have the ability to walk and run. Jumping will be in-built so the player will not have to worry about fleeing enemies and the angle that they jump to correctly land onto a platform.

Another ability characters possess will be to climb up short distances. This may be up onto a box or through a window of a ground floor building. Scaling up the sides of tall buildings or tall trees will not be possible for the characters.

Some characters have the ability to gain an additional method of transport – an Animal Carrier.

ANIMAL CARRIERS

Animal Carriers have the ability to walk (faster than the characters that ride them) and run. Some Carriers may have the ability to run with boosted ability (for short periods), while others may be able to dig to different areas using underground routes. When used in battles these animals act as a secondary form of defence for the player's character (see Player Mechanics - Damage Control for more details).

GREEN WITCHES AND WARRIORS

The Animal Carriers available to these characters are horses. Although quite a simple creature, horses of Haladion have the ability to run with boosted speed for short periods of time. They also have a special ability to jump over obstacles in order to enter short cuts to

other areas.

ELVES AND SPRITES

Being people of nature, the Elves and Sprites can call on the eagles as there Animal Carriers. Fully grown eagles have the special ability to fly any elf or sprite to any location that they may have visited previously.

GREY WITCHES AND WEREWOLVES

Grey Witches use the werewolves (in their wolf form) as their Animal Carriers. When ridden by a Grey Witch, werewolves (like horses) also have the ability to run with boosted speed for short periods of time. They also have a special ability to jump over obstacles in order to enter short cuts to other areas.

Werewolves do not have an Animal Carrier. Instead they can access the network of underground tunnels that run under Haladion. This allows them to access surface areas quickly. It also allows them to access underground areas and obtain items that Green Witches, Grey Witches and Warriors cannot.

GOBLINS AND TROLLS

The Animal Carriers available to these characters are moles. The moles of Haladion are big and strong enough to carry a troll or goblin amongst the underground network of tunnels they have dug. The moles have the special ability to dig from any location into the nearest underground tunnel. This allows the goblins and trolls access to the underground areas and to obtain items available only to these areas.

SHIELDS AND WEAPONS

Each character has specific weapons and attack forms unique to them. Characters begin with a basic weapon/attack form in order to develop their skills and strength. This enables them to use more powerful weapons through the course of the game.

Most of the weapons are upgradeable; however, the weapon available to the player will depend on the character selected.

All weapons can be bought from shops around Haladion. If weapons break, the player may simply buy another. The full range of weapons throughout the game is not displayed in shops

until checkpoints throughout the game have been reached to unlock the option of buying the item.

Spells – These are available to the Green Witches and Grey Witches to learn. The spell used will determine the damage dealt. There will be a range of four types of spells to learn: attack, defence, health restoration and surround.

Shields (upgradeable) – This is the first line of defence for Warriors. The shield must be held in one hand to protect the character. It can only withstand a certain amount of damage before it breaks and is useless.

Upgrades: Small shield -> Full shield

Swords (upgradeable) – These weapons are available to the Warriors causing melee damage. It's their second line of offence against enemies. Warriors can use their fists to attack, however, using swords achieves a higher degree of damage. Witches are also able to wield swords, however, they may only use the short swords.

The Two-Handed sword is so powerful it requires being held with both hands.
Tip: A player should only wield this weapon if their characters defence is high enough to withstand enemy attacks.

Upgrades: Short sword -> Long sword -> Two-Handed sword

Slings/Slingshots – This weapon is available to the elves, sprites, trolls and goblins and causes ranged damage. It's their first line of offence.

Bows (upgradeable)– These weapons are available to the Elves and Sprites and causes ranged damage. They require a lot of skill to wield, therefore it's important that the basics of aiming are learnt from the sling/slingshot before advancing to the bows. The player needs to upgrade the bow and arrow twice before they gain the crossbow. The crossbow is available in two styles. The style the player can wield will depend on which race is selected.

Clubs and Maces (upgradeable) – These weapons are available to the Trolls and Goblins and causes melee damage. Not being very skilled, the Goblins and Trolls recede to using melee weapons from the sling/slingshot. The player needs to upgrade the club once in order to gain the mace which also upgrades once. Again, like the cross bow, the second form of the mace is available in two styles depending on the race that was selected.

INVENTORY SYSTEM

There will be an inventory to hold all items obtained by each character. Each item slots into a specific slot. The inventory will have enough slots to hold all items available to that character throughout the game. The same items will have the ability to be stacked on top of one another. This will be done in order to reduce the amount of space needed for the inventory.

The inventory will be accessed by the menu, but 'hot' items (items regularly used) can be accessed to specific buttons and directly pressing the correct buttons.

ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

Werewolves cannot wield weapons like the other characters so they have a range of attacks specific to them.

Bite – The wolf delivers a crushing bite to its enemy.

Punch – Using their tremendous upper body strength, the wolf delivers a hard hitting blow to its enemy.

Block (defensive) – The wolf uses its arms in a 'cross' barrier' and crouches into a stance that protects its body from the majority of its enemy's attack.

Charge – Gaining a high momentum of speed, the wolf charges at its enemy delivering a forceful headbutt.

Roll (defensive) – Curling its body down and around it's legs, the wolf can roll a short distance out of a situation requiring a quick escape.

PLAYER MECHANICS

DAMAGE CONTROL

There will be a health container per character which will be depicted by a recognizable symbol usually associated with health or life i.e. a heart, a small body or a health bar with a character face on the end.

During the game the player will find health boosters to increase their health held in their health container. There will be a set amount for the initial size of the health container and a set amount of health boosters placed over the world so that a maximum health container will be known.

When the character's health is lowered the player will use the health potions given to the character in the beginning to automatically revive the character. Once the health potions have been used, the character will die and it's Game Over.

Each different weapon attacking the character will cause a different amount of damage to the character's health.

When an Animal Carrier is obtained it also has its own health container. Its size will be dependent on the size of the character's health container at the time of obtaining the Animal Carrier. When the Animal Carrier's health depletes, it will cease to exist. The player can obtain another Animal Carrier, but they'll have to undertake the same task to obtain the Animal Carrier in the first place.

REWARD/SCORING MECHANISM

There will be a scoring system built into the game. This will be done using each characters logbook. The characters log book focuses the player on their characters core objective, by highlighting the individual assignments that the player will need to undertake.

At any one time, at least one assignment is highlighted. As each task is completed it will remain in the log book for the player to examine as they wish, providing progression feedback to the player.

The player will be rewarded with a selection of items (which will be stored in their inventory). These will range from basic weapons such as small swords to extra characters aiding their adventure. These objects can be found in various locations in and under Haladion.

At the end of each storyline a percentage gauge will show the player the percentage of the game that has been completed. This will give the player additional progression feedback.

ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

The environment will be interactive. Objects existing in Haladion will serve a purpose, as opposed to being just for decorative purposes.

The character will have the ability to open doors (providing they are not locked) and can climb into entrances of locked buildings if the room is uninhabited.

Weapons like swords, can damage the environment (particularly a forest or woodland) if used near objects like small trees and bushes. The environment may also hinder or even prove fatal to the progress of a character. For example, the character may be traveling through volcanic terrain where fireballs are falling down on them from the sky. If the character is directly hit by one of the fireballs it would kill that character

Pieces of the environment that the character can interact with will become visually evident to the player to make them easy to identify.

MAP FEATURE

Once a new area has been explored, the new area will appear on the map. A full world map will also indicate the player's progress through the game, giving them visual feedback on their progression. A map of the areas within storylines is accessible via a different key.

SAVING AND LOADING

Saving can take place at any stage in the storylines but will bring the character back to the nearest landmark i.e. a town on the map once loaded up. Saving will be done via the in-game menu system.

CAMERA VIEW

The camera will be third person view, although the player will have the option to adjust the camera while they are playing.

CONTROL MECHANISM

Action	Control
Walk/Move forward	Left Analog
Walk/Move left	Left Analog
Walk/Move right	Left Analog
Run	L1
Sneak	B
Change weapon	(in-game menu option)
Withdraw weapon	R1
Attack	X
Attack	A

WEAPONS AND WEAPON MECHANICS

There are two buttons that can be used to deal damage. Each one will control one hand of the character. If playing as an Elf or Sprite the bow can be carried on the characters back or at their side ready to be fired. To change from these positions the player must press the correct button on the controller. To change weapons the player will have to go into the inventory via the in-game menu.

Arrows for crossbows and normal bows will be replenished from the arrow case carried on the back of the character. This will save recollecting arrows to ensure enough is carried by the character through the assignment.

Since this game is aimed at 12+ gamers, the target locking option can be set to enabled or disabled in the options feature via the in-game menu. Enabling this option will mean the character doesn't have to aim in order to hit an enemy within range. Disabling this option will mean that the character will have to correctly aim when firing. This adds an additional level of difficulty, but by making this option changeable will ensure all players can successfully overcome this challenge and can enjoy the game.

FRIENDS AND FOES

Who you choose to be a friend or a foe in this game will depend on the storyline that you are playing.

f = female   m = male

Side 1	Side 2
Green Witches (f)	Grey Witches (f)
Warriors (m)	Werewolves (m)
Elves (m)	Goblins (f)
Sprites (f)	Trolls (m)

GREEN WITCHES

The Green Witches (Greens) are strong but have a slender frame. They are mainly magical creatures, but can chose to go into combat side by side with their other halves (the Warriors) armed with short swords. Typically they have magical and defensive attacks. They are normally clothed in leather as they have a naturally high defence, although they can wear extra pieces of armour in order to further increase their defence.

WARRIORS

The Warriors are naturally very strong compared to their other halves (the Greens). They can grow to be very strong, providing they are trained from a young age so their muscles get used to the vigorous work. They typically have long hair when they are young to provide a distraction when training in order to put them off. Once their trainer thinks they are able to fight without being distracted, they then have the privilege to cut their hair if they wish.

Because of their natural strength they have a high attack ability but they have a low defence. In order to further increase their attack and defence ability, they can wear extra pieces of armour. They typically have melee and defensive attacks. They are normally clothed in metallic armour.

SPRITES

The Sprites, unlike the Greens, are naturally quite weak. They are a peaceful race, but when

forced they will defend their homes and families. Arming themselves with ranged weapons and cloth made armour, they stalk the woods and forests. They typically have a low defence because of the cloth armour they wear, although in order to increase their defensive ability they can chose to upgrade to any material that exists in Haladion. They have a high attack due to the extremely powerful weapons they can create from the forest materials.

ELVES

The Elves are slightly stronger than their partners though their bodies are quite slender. They are very stubborn and head-strong race. They are very dangerous when hunting and stalking their prey. They would normally use the ranged weapons their skilled other halves create. They typically have a low defence because of the cloth armour they wear, although in order to increase their defensive ability they can chose to upgrade to any material that exists in Haladion. They have a high attack due to the extremely powerful weapons the Sprites create from the forest materials.

GREY WITCHES

The Grey Witches (Greys), unlike the Greens, are quite weak. They rely on their defensive spells and armour to provide them with a strong defence. Strip them of their armour and spells and they'd be defenseless, but because of this a wider range of armour is available to them. They have slender figures but most of the colour has been drained from their skin as a consequence of living in the Graylands for so long and they appear grey.

Although they can wear stronger metallic armours, they can only use whatever they find as they are not near a source of strong metal. They usually wear animal hides of creatures that live in the Graylands.

WEREWOLVES

The werewolves are savage and extremely strong. They have tall, big muscled bodies even from the age of pups. To improve their defences when they're young, werewolves abandon their young in the Graylands to build up strength fighting against all creatures. If they're lucky and they live long enough to find their way back home, they are accepted into the pack.

Werewolves have the ability to change to and from their human form although the more they stay in their wolf form the more savage and uncontrollable they get. This is why, by the time their fur grows white, with the last of their conscious thought they run out into the Graylands as a wolf to be free. Werewolves have the ability to walk on their hind legs and run all fours

(when in wolf form). They only return to their human state when they're at their camp. Their human form is extremely hairy, very tall and they have very long canine teeth.

GOBLINS

Goblins are short but strong for their height. They are female despite their haggard and masculine-like appearance and manner. Their clothes are made from scraps of materials they find in the forest and animal hides of creatures that live in the forest or swamp. But they also have the ability to upgrade their armour and weapons in order to increase their defence and attack abilities. They have a short temper, but are intelligent, though are very opinionated.

TROLLS

Trolls are short and, like Goblins, strong. These are the male half of the goblin-troll partnership. Their clothes are made from scraps of materials they find in the forest and animal hides of creatures that live in the forest or swamp. They also have the ability to upgrade their armour and weapons in order to increase their defence and attack abilities. They are very volatile, stuck in their ways and get offended by every action made towards and against them.

STORY PREMISE

Greens battling Greys; Warriors battling 'Wolves, Trolls against Elves and Goblins against Sprites. That's the world of Haladion, there will never be peace, a treaty or a small compromise between the races.

With both sides' numbers dwindling fast because of the life feud, how each would survive the next 100 years will be a good question. The Greys were once kin to the Greens millennia ago so the ancients say, but looking at their pale, grey skin and frail bodies you would never know. The dark ark they practice continues to corrupt and weaken them physically and mentally. Twisting every thought they have, driving them mad with rage and jealousy. They're a good match for the 'Wolves, whose ability to interchange between wolf and man comes with a high price. The savage will of the wolf gets suffocated in the man's body and eventually, when the mind is weakest (usually in the later years), the wolf breaks free. With the rage that fuels this partnership it's a surprise the Warriors and Greens haven't been wiped out yet. But there must be others to aid them, aren't there?

Goblins and Trolls hate everyone and never take any side but their own. They're not dependable if the Greys and Wolves suddenly attacked the Greens and Warriors in the night to wipe them out. They're constantly driven by a jealousy of the ability to walk out and live in the sunlight. They'd much rather see everyone perish so they could try and take the land for themselves, though it would do them no good. The Ancients say that the Goblins and Trolls can never fully return to the sunlit world as the constant darkness has made their hides weaker over the centuries. Once a partnership tried to live out in the sunlit world. They survived four weeks and painfully perished. Since then, no Troll or Goblin, has ventured into the sunlit world for no more than three days. It is their curse.

The Elves and Sprites, although a peaceful race, never get involved with what doesn't affect them directly. Only when they are low on supplies that they cannot grow, do they venture to the lands of the Warriors and Greens. But they do have their own problems. As the Greens and Warriors fight the Greys and Wolves, they too feud with the Goblins and Trolls. The Ancients say that they were kin as well at one time but an argument erupted and they were split – one to settle in the bright woodlands; one to stalk the dark, dank forest.

No, neither race in the world of Haladion has what you would call allies or friends. No one that anyone can truly depend on.

The world is split. All races live in a constant battle and at the same time, trying to live.

<u>ENVIRONMENT FEATURES</u>

The characters will travel across terrain from inhabited cities, farmlands, fire pits, deserted lands, woodlands and mountainous regions. The environment in this game will have a realistic representation as opposed to a cartoon one. The world will be 3D which will add to the realism trying to be portrayed.

The world will be a fantasy world with the same technologies available to these worlds i.e. no guns or cannon-like weapons will be included and no vehicle transportation methods will be used. This world will have a similar feel to Lord Of The Rings.

The two sides are made clear using different colour schemes. Bright colours will be used to highlight the areas and characters in the following groups: Elves, Sprites, Warriors and Green Witches. Dark colours will be used to highlight the areas and characters in the following groups: Grey Witches, Werewolves, Goblins and Trolls.