

Character Profiles: A Look at Strong Female Characters

Aly from Trickster's Choice

Tamora Pierce



Alianne Crow is a unique girl that grew up with magic and mystery all around her. Her mother was a warrior and was sent away most of the time while Aly was growing up and thus, so Aly grew closer with her father. Her father encouraged her to follow in his footsteps as a spymaster. Aly quickly picked up on all the skills her father taught her. One fateful day, Aly left home after a fight with her mother and set sail in her small personal raft. While at sea, she was kidnapped and sold as a slave. This is where Aly has a chance to prove how strong she is. She uses all her wits and tricks to make a deal with the trickster god, Kyprioth. She uses her knowledge of spying to help keep her master's and their children alive during a difficult political time, and she manages to earn the trust of those around her. Aly was smart enough to know that there were certain things she could not do alone, such as lead a rebellion. So, she gathered trusted friends and cultivated a spy ring in order to help save the Balitang family. I consider Aly to be a strong female character because while she is still portrayed as having feminine characteristics and emotions, but these characteristics and emotions are not considered weaknesses. Her compassion and empathy earn her the trust of some of her most powerful allies. Aly uses her position as a woman and a slave to stay invisible in the court setting, giving her a great advantage in her spying. She is also incredibly smart, and her ability to problem solve makes her a worthy opponent. Her relationship with her father is portrayed as a healthy and thriving relationship. All in all, Aly is a strong, well-balanced, female character.

(<https://bit.ly/2HINMdz>)

Pierce, Tamora. (2003). *Trickster's choice*. New York: Random House.

Danica Shardae from Hawksong

Amelia Atwater-Rhodes



Danica Shardae was born into a war-torn land. She was second in line to the throne until her older sister was killed. She was only 10 years old at the time and in the years that followed, Danica learned just how cruel the world could be. She lost her best friend and protector, as well as her brother. Despite all of the tragedy in her life, she would still take time to walk among her people to comfort them and interact with them on a personal level. Unlike her mother, the current queen, Danica showed love to her people. One of the clearest moments that displayed her strength of character is when she was walking the battlefield and came across a member of the opposing royal family, laying near death and needing comfort. Danica stayed with the young boy and sang to him so that he would not be alone. This act of kindness and compassion is what enabled the two factions to start peace talks. Danica shows just how far she is willing to go for her people when she agrees to marry Zane Cobriana, the heir to the opposing throne. Danica once again displays a level of maturity and strength that is unexpected and refreshing. She fights for peace, both for her people and her new people through marriage. In the end, Danica's strength and determination earned her the trust of the Serpiente people.

(<https://bit.ly/2UWx0ut>)

Atwater-Rhodes, Amelia. (2003). *Hawksong*. New York: Random House.

Sabrina Spellman from Chilling Adventures of Sabrina

Aquirre-Sacasa, Robert



Born as half-mortal and half-witch, Sabrina from the moment of birth struggle with the dilemma of staying mortal or witch forever decision that need to be made at her sixteenth birthday. Choose the witch side, meaning alienating her mortal friends forever. Choose the mortal side meaning she will have less power. The reason for lesser power is if you choose to be a witch, you are required to sign your name in blood to the Dark Lord which give you more power in return. Sabrina argues that this seem like slavery to her and that she felt that she should be able to

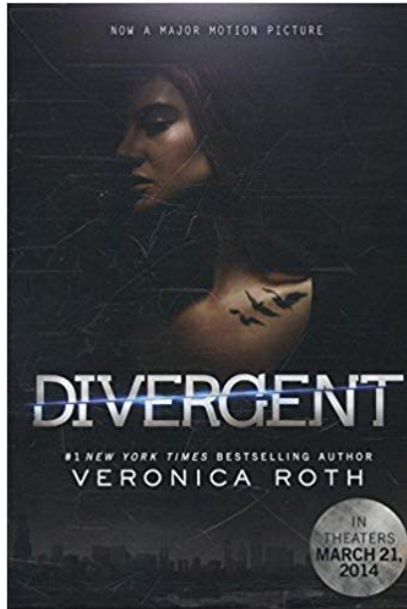
coexist in both world without much difficulties. The problem is her mortal friends have no idea Sabrina is a witch. During the season, Sabrina go on different adventures that challenge her views, decisions, and morals while hiding from her friends. I strongly recommend this TV show because Sabrina is a very strong female character who is going through her coming of age phase and learning what is right and wrong in her world view with relationships, magic, contracts, and power.

<http://bit.ly/sabrinaspellmanwinking>

Aquirre-Sacasa, Roberto (2018) Chilling Adventure of Sabrina. Season One. *Netflix*

Beatrice Prior from Divergent

Veronica Roth



Beatrice 'Tris' Prior is the main protagonist in the Divergent trilogy, born into the Abnegation faction. She is characterized as a strong-willed 16-year old who is given a test to determine which of the five factions - Abnegation, Dauntless, Erudite, Candor, or Amenity - she is best suited to. Upon taking the test Beatrice discovers that she is Divergent, meaning she does not conform to any one of the factions, rather she shows traits for three of them, thus endangering her life. The Choosing Ceremony then forces her to choose a faction to spend the rest of her life in, but with the unclear test results, Beatrice must face this difficult decision on her own. Will she stay in Abnegation where it is safe, or will she take a chance and

choose the wild and reckless Dauntless?

Going against her family, Beatrice chooses to join the Dauntless faction. Upon arriving in her new faction, she decides to change her name to Tris in an effort to reinvent herself. Despite her choice, Tris' divergence threatens to destroy her new life, especially when she learns of a sinister plot that would change her whole world. Some of Tris' most prominent character traits are bravery, selflessness, and intelligence. Demonstrations of her bravery are seen early on; first, when she chooses the Dauntless faction, then volunteering first during initiation, and again during her training. Tris' intelligence is also shown as she is observant, creative during initiation exercises, and logical. Throughout the series, she is constantly portrayed as strong physically, mentally, and emotionally. However, she is not perfect; sometimes she makes mistakes, or needs support from other characters. Tris is a good example of a powerful female character in recent young adult fiction.

(<https://bit.ly/2uRofWY>)

Roth, V. (2012). *Divergent*. New York: Katherine Tegen Books

Alex Fierro from Magnus Chase Series

Rick Riordan



In the world of Riordan's Magnus Chase Series, Norse Gods and Giants are real and many of them have children with humans. Alex, as the child of the Norse God of Mischief Loki, is a demigod that is introduced in the second book, *The Hammer of Thor*. Alex inherited the gift of shapeshifting from Loki, who happened to meet Alex's father while in the form of a woman. Alex identifies as genderfluid, and throughout the series sometimes identifies as male and other times as female; another trait Alex inherited from their mother Loki. Alex is often found wearing pink and green clothing and resembles Loki closely. Along with the ability to shapeshift to anything from other people to cheetahs, Alex has magical powers, enhanced physical abilities, and a knack for pottery. Alex is the first gender fluid character in Rick Riordan's popular series based upon mythology. This also makes Alex the third LGBT demigod and Alex's second kiss with Magnus is the first same-sex kiss in any of Riordan's works. Alex is important in YA fantasy as they provide very important diversity to the author's works and introduces children and young adults to gender fluidity.

(<https://bit.ly/2Un5REv>)

Riordan, R. (2016). *The Hammer of Thor*. Los Angeles: Disney-Hyperion.

Sam al-Abbas from Magnus Chase Series

Rick Riordan



Samirah “Sam” al-Abbas, like Alex, is a child of Loki (but in his male form) which makes her a demigod as well. She is an Arab-American high school student and part time Valkyrie. Valkyries are tasked with choosing and bringing slain heroes to Valhalla to become einherjar. Sam manages to balance the Norse World with her own Muslim faith, never losing sight of who she is as a Muslim woman as she prays regularly and follows her religion’s laws and practices. She keeps her hair tucked in her green hijab, a magical headscarf that can expand and camouflage others. Sam is skilled at wielding an axe in

battle; knows Alf Sign Language, Old Norse, and Arabic; can sense powerful monsters; and as a Valkyrie, she has the ability to fly.

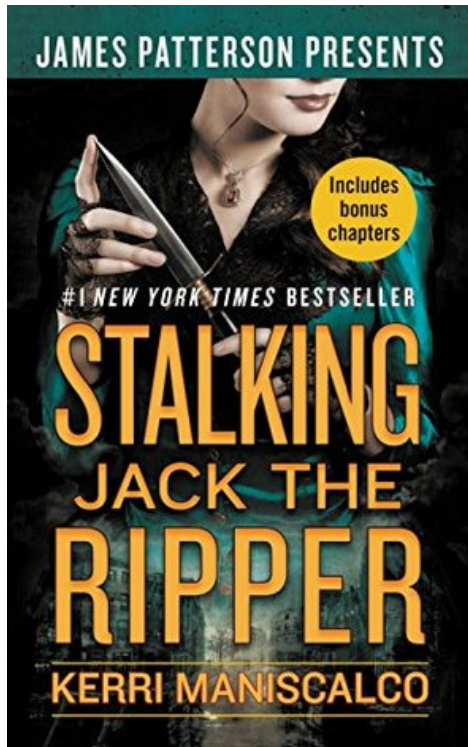
Sam’s culture and faith as a Muslim woman plays a huge part in who she is a character. She follows the religious rituals even when they are off on an adventure saving the world. However, her faith does not define her entire character; Sam is a great female protagonist with a lot of depth. She constantly battles her fears of Loki controlling her actions; particularly while learning how to use her shapeshifting abilities despite her hatred of them as it connects her to the man she sees as a villain. However, Sam is fierce and determined and throughout the series works hard to overcome her fears and uses her abilities to her advantage.

(<https://bit.ly/2O3Qn0D>)

Riordan, R. (2016). *The Hammer of Thor*. Los Angeles: Disney-Hyperion

Audrey Rose Wadsworth from *Stalking Jack the Ripper*

Kerri Maniscalco



Growing up the daughter of an Indian woman and a wealthy English lord, Audrey Rose has always felt like an outcast in 19th century English society. But nothing sets her apart more than her love for forensic medicine. Audrey Rose has always felt more comfortable in a lab coat than a frilly dress, more at home examining a cadaver in her uncle's laboratory than at a high tea.

When bodies start popping up in Whitechapel, Audrey Rose realises they have a serial murderer on their hands. Despite her father's strict orders, she teams up with another one of her uncle's forensic medicine students, the mysterious Thomas Cresswell, to stop the murderer before someone else turns up dead.

Audrey Rose's strength comes from her intelligence, her bravery, and her determination. No, she is not physically strong, but her well rounded character development makes her a perfect example of a strong female character. This is also helped by the fact that she doesn't stand by gender stereotypes; she knows she can do anything a man can do, but better. "Pretend I am as capable as a man? Please, sir, do not value me so little!"

(Maniscalco, 2016, p. 88). However, she also doesn't need to sacrifice her femininity to go after her dream of forensic medicine, a role typically reserved for men in the 1800s. "I was determined to be both pretty and fierce, as Mother had said I could be. Just because I was interested in a man's job didn't mean I had to give up being girly. Who defined those roles anyhow?"

(Maniscalco, 2016, p. 135).

(<https://bit.ly/2Que5UW>)

Maniscalco, K. (2016). *Stalking Jack the Ripper*. *Jimmy Patterson*.

Celaena Sardothien from Throne of Glass

Sarah J. Maas



Celaena Sardothien is many things; a reader, a chocolate lover... an assassin. In fact, she is Adarlan's Assassin, the best killer no one has ever seen. That is, until she is thrown in Endovier, the most highly guarded prison in Adarlan. Her chance at escape arrives, in the form of a bargain with the Crown Prince to fight for him in a tournament. The prize: becoming the King's Champion. If she loses, either death or a prison cell wait for her. Is Celaena's freedom worth working for her sworn enemy? Now in the palace, Celaena must regain her strength while uncovering the dark secrets behind the royal family. Will she be able to find the truth in time, or will the other competitors kill her first?

Celaena is a unique female protagonist. She was created in direct response to those that came before her. Unlike the "Bella Swans", she has a confidence not typically seen in the YA genre. She is able to discover who she is without having the secondary characters, in particular, a love interest, define her worth. Furthermore, she is not perfect; she makes mistakes just like real people do. Unlike the characters who needed to reject anything overtly feminine in order to prove their strength, Celaena is multifaceted; she takes pride in being both physically strong and "girly". She is also an avid reader and would do anything for a slice of chocolate cake. These facets, on top of her realistic emotions and reactions, are what make Celaena relatable.

(<https://bit.ly/2cSvBDJ>)

Maas, S.J. (2012). *Throne of Glass*. New York: Bloomsbury Children's Books.