

**KST02 REV01**

**KNIGHTSHADE**  
***THE GRANDMASTER'S TOME***  
**WILLIAM ANTHONY SHEA**

**BAD DOG PUBLISHING**

KNIGHTSHADE  
THE GRANDMASTER'S TOME  
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All Characters and events in this book are fictional and any resemblance to actual places, events or persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

To The Knights of Misspent Youth,  
For giving me moments,  
To see more,  
To know more,  
To be more...

## **FOREWORD**

Welcome to Knightshade the Role Playing Game (RPG). This book is intended for the Grandmaster (GM) and should only be read by the person who will be responsible for running the game. This book is used in conjunction with KST01: The Initiate's Tome and you will need both books if you intend to run Knightshade. If you intend to be a Player in Knightshade, it would be best to stop reading here as the Grandmaster should be afforded some level of secrecy with the contents of this Tome. The material contained herein deals with writing the story, building the Campaign and a whole host of references for the GM alone. If you intend to run the game of Knightshade for your Players, you will find everything you need to get started and to develop a game from beginning to end. Some references that appear in KST01: The Initiate's Tome also appear here, and some of the details provided in the Initiate's Tome are expanded upon in this book. This game is best played with a Grandmaster and 4-6 Players (though playing with more or fewer Players is possible). A Player will take on the role or Persona of a Character. The Grandmaster is responsible for playing the roles of all the Characters, creatures, and other Personalities that the Players meet in a story. He is also responsible for presenting the scenes depicting what the Characters see during each portion of the story. For now, all you need to understand is that this is a Role Playing Game (RPG). As you read through this Tome, you will start to understand what that actually means. Think of this as a learning experience, but it should be an enjoyable one. Putting Knightshade together has not been an easy journey. However, it has been rewarding. Welcome to my world. Welcome to the game...

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My profound thanks to the Knights of Misspent Youth (KOMY) for playtesting this body of work and for the years of inspiration that led me to undertake creating Knightshade the Role Playing Game.

My special thanks to E. Gary Gygax, whom I had the pleasure to meet, and play in one of his games. From the simple dynamics of a story to the magic of his imagination, it led me to take up this task. While the idea had always been there, Mr Gygax provided me with renewed energy and purpose.

My thanks also to Michael O'Mahony for taking on the monumental task of editing Knightshade The Role Playing Game.

## **A NOTE ON THE USE OF 'HE'**

The author of this Tome uses 'He' and 'His' to describe the details of the Grandmaster's role, Characters and Personalities herein. This is used purely for ease of writing and in no way infers the game to be exclusive to the male populace.

This Tome is for all who wish to play the game.

## **GRANDMASTER'S TOME DESIGN**

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION – KNOWING WHERE TO BEGIN**

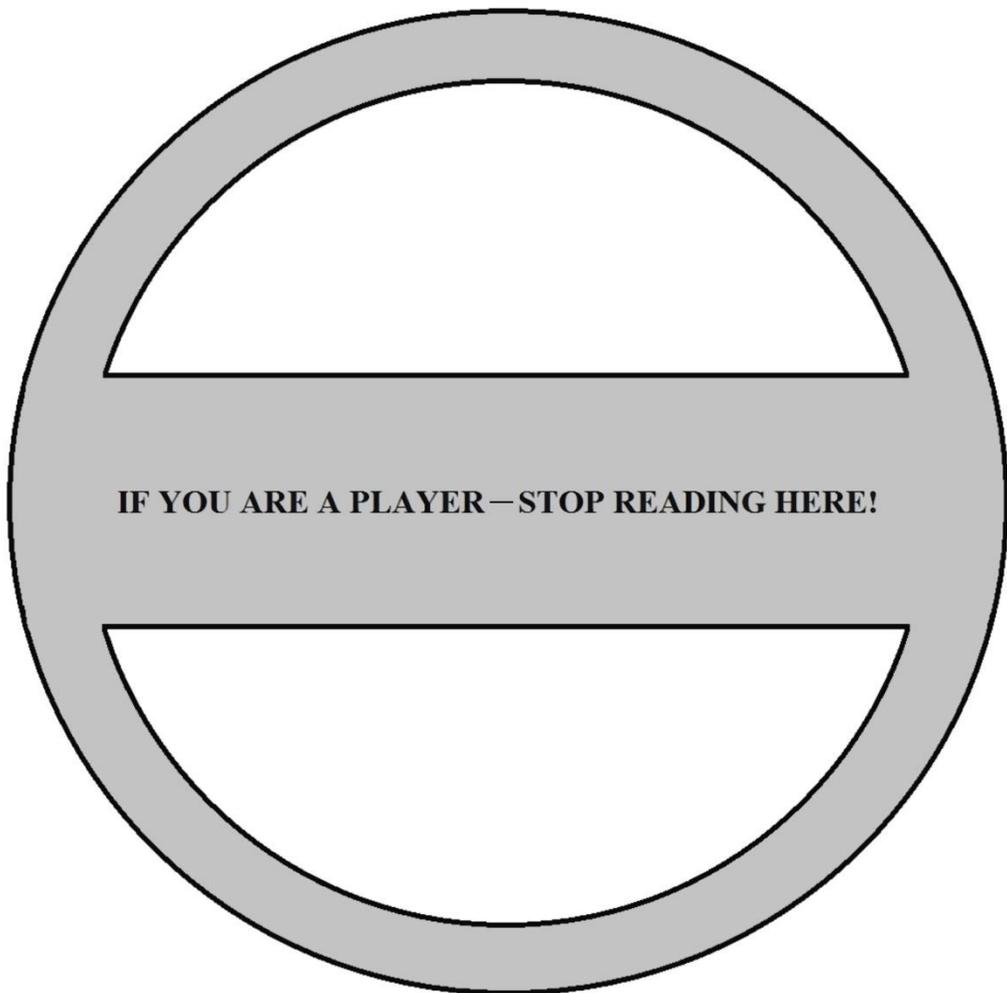
You walk down a dark and lonely road as the chill begins to descend on the night, forcing you to pull the cloak tight about your person. The subtle breeze that followed you throughout the day begins to gather with an intensity that adds to your concern and you find walking all the more difficult as the prevailing wind seems eager in its opposition to the direction in which you and your companions are travelling. The eerie wails that seem to whistle through the trees sound even more animated as the tones take on an unwholesome aspect, lending an air to the perception that you are not alone out here in the darkness on this forest trail. You have journeyed far and the exertions of the day do not permit you to venture further this night, even though the ancient tomb of the mystic known only as Arloth cannot now be too far away. You have no desire to face this dreary and desolate place in the night, and thus you and your companions decide to rest here until morning when the light of day will guide your way with far more certainty than the encroaching darkness. With purpose, you and your companions erect the tent you have brought with you and though you know it is unlikely that you can afford the comfort of a fire, at least you will have some relief from the cold within this enclosure for a while. Still, this forest makes you feel uncomfortable. You decide that someone should remain on guard throughout the night, each taking a turn in ensuring the security of the camp. You find yourself offering a prayer to the divine to keep you and your companions from harm but you are here by choice and know the life you have chosen is not for the faint hearted. You are adventurers. You are explorers of the great unknown. You are here to make your fortune, and such a life inevitably has a price...

The ancient crypts of the old world are there to be plundered. Treasures await those who are equal to the challenge. The GM will present stories to delight the Characters, from the lowly cutpurse to a Knight of a renowned order, themed with adventure, excitement and danger to test the mettle of any adventurer in the world of Knightshade the Role Playing Game. The journey to the ancient tombs of the world, those places where unknown horrors lurk in the shadows, and even in the light of day, may be an adventure in itself. The Grandmaster can start at the ill-fated tomb, or he can embellish the run up to the story being presented by dealing in the mundane and the not so routine trek to the object of the adventure. Providing a warm-up encounter before the event is always good practice. At the very least, it will serve to keep Players on their toes.

Knightshade is designed to bring a fantasy world to your table. It is a beginning, one where you will unlock the secrets to a greater imagination. Unlike traditional board games, Knightshade revolves around a story, in which a Player takes on the Role of a Character. The game is usually played by four or more Players, with one of the Players taking on the mantle of the Grandmaster, or storyteller. The

Grandmaster unveils the story and the other Players play their Characters, reacting to the tale being told. The story can be as simple as rescue the princess from the tower, unlock the secrets of an ancient tomb, or strive to uncover the traitor in the King's Court.

This book is primarily designed for the storyteller or keeper (known in Knightshade as the Grandmaster or GM), though the person who takes on this role should be familiar with both books. This does not mean that the book cannot be used by Players who are also GMs or those who share the task of running a story. Playing the game is easier than explaining the concept of the game. Playing a Character is easier than writing and running the story as the Grandmaster. For now, it is enough that you have opened the door to imagination, to wonder, and to what should be an enjoyable experience for all. Read on, and explore the lore contained herein...



## **WHAT DO I NEED TO RUN KNIGHTSHADE?**

As the Grandmaster (GM) you will need this book and KST01: The Initiate's Tome for the Players. KST02: The Grandmaster's Tome is exclusively for the person running the game. This should not be read by those playing the game, as doing so may take from the enjoyment of play. The Grandmaster or GM should be allowed to keep some secrets to maintain the element of surprise. You will also need Dice (2 x 10-sided), available in all good hobby shops. These are used to determine the outcome of different Talents and abilities as well as defining the outcome of actions and reactions, explained later as you become more familiar with the mechanics. The most important thing you need is imagination.

The game should be played in comfortable surroundings. You may require additional paper to jot down the details of the Characters, tracking Combat Actions or information the Players gather along the way. Some gaming groups use props; paper to draw out plans of an area, or even miniatures (or counters) to represent their Characters, the creatures and Personalities in a game to add to the visualisation of the moment or scene being presented. Miniatures and props can be purchased from a number of companies or at your local Hobby Shop. Alternatively, you can create your own props from any available items.

Other items that may enhance your enjoyment of play include: KST03: The Loremaster's Tome (A Guide to the

World of Ayre) and KST04: The Questmaster's Tome – six complete stories to delight the imagination of any gaming group and ease the workload for a fledgling GM, or to supplement the needs of an experienced Grandmaster looking for a structured beginning.

## **WHAT IS KNIGHTSHADE?**

Knightshade the Role Playing Game (RPG) is a fantasy game primarily set in the Campaign World of Ayre, though the concept of the game can be used in any World, even one of your own creation. As noted, KST01: The Initiate's Tome is designed for Players who will adopt personas in the game, as Knights of the Realm, daring Thieves, dangerous Magi or whatever adventuring Character the Player chooses. The Players will be introduced to the Role Playing experience by the Grandmaster or GM who will guide them through the world and the scenario or story where they participate in determining the outcome of the game and interact with the world. This guide is the Grandmaster's sourcebook. From this book, the GM will learn the intricacies of the Role Playing world, the mechanics behind building a story, developing a Campaign and creating a Campaign World that is tailored for his own use. He will also find information on other aspects of Character development, how to determine new skills, create magic items, new spells and how to distribute the rewards to Players in the game and how to deal with Faith. Included in this Tome is the adventure or Knightshade Story Module, KS00: Stepping Stones, which

the GM can use to introduce Players to the world of Knightshade.

Playing the game is always the best way to learn. The object of the game is to have fun, where the Players become almost like actors on an ever-changing stage that is controlled by the GM who will present obstacles, or scenes, much like movie scenes where they can interact with other Characters whose Roles are played by the Grandmaster. This may be the Innkeeper in a tavern, or the dark *Demon* inhabiting an ancient tomb. The plot may be as simple as seeking out the old treasures of the world while overcoming the guardians of an ancient lost city, or to become embroiled in a political struggle where the actions of the Players could very well determine who may become the next king. The scenario or story has the flexibility to take the Players anywhere in the Campaign World where they can interact with those who hold the balance of power, or merely to make them influential Characters in their own right. The plot may be simply to survive. The scope of the Role Playing experience is limited only by the imagination of the Players and the Grandmaster who presents the game. While the mechanics of the game determine what a Character and those Personalities presented by the GM can do, this is merely a guide to provide the balance needed in determining an uncertain outcome in some aspect of the game, such as when the Characters encounter a *Shadow Fiend*. Combat may ensue or the Players may determine that their Characters run away. Like the Players, the GM should not feel bound by the

rules, as any specific mechanic in this book may not cover all aspects of what a Player wants his Character to attempt. The Grandmaster will need to adapt to the requests of the Players to determine a possible outcome.

## WHAT IS A STORY?

A story is a game that the Grandmaster presents for the Players. It may be run over one game session (typically four hours) or over a number of game sessions. For more information on storytelling, see 'Chapter Three: Plots, Pieces, Puzzles and Mechanics'. The wonderful thing about a story or scenario in Knightshade is that you can leave a game for periods of time and take up the story from where you last stopped as if no time has passed at all. Game time progresses differently than real time. You can play for four hours and days can pass in the game world. You can leave a game for days in the real world and no time passes in the game world until you return to play again, taking up the story from the very next act or scene.

The story is a series of events that make up game play driven by the interactions of the Players. The GM is responsible for presenting the story and all of the support Personas from the Innkeeper in the tavern to the *Shadow Creature* the Characters fought in the mountains. He is also responsible for presenting the detail of the surroundings and forming the game play into a plot, whether this is an exploration of a dangerous long lost tomb of an ancient king or working to uncover those who

are stealing cattle from a local town. The GM has a clear perception of a story though the outcome may be uncertain due to the interaction of the Characters. Further details on creating stories are covered later in the Grandmaster's Tome.

### **WHAT IS A CAMPAIGN?**

A Campaign is a collection of stories presented for the Players by the Grandmaster. For more information on a Campaign, see 'Chapter Three: Plots, Pieces, Puzzles and Mechanics'. These may be a collected series of events, such as exploring the lost places of the world, protecting the land from foul creatures, or preserving the political stability of a realm. The stories can be tied together by the Characters or by a planned series of events. The Characters follow the trail of a traitor to the land; they pursue the traitor as he tries to escape across the realms. They infiltrate an organisation to discover who is behind the traitor and fight to uncover the true nature of this threat to the peace of a land before war breaks out. The possibilities are endless. However, it is the Characters who ultimately tie the stories together and the stories that give the Characters purpose. Both are equally important and intertwined. Subsequent stories may be unrelated to previous events, beginning new challenges for the Characters but they are all part of a Campaign. Further details on creating Campaigns are covered later in this Tome. KST03: The Loremaster's Tome details the set world of Knightshade as a primary source book presenting the land of Ayre and all

the details needed to play in that world. Alternatively, the GM is free to create his own world to provide a richer background for his Campaign settings.

### **THE GRANDMASTER**

The Grandmaster (GM) is the storyteller and arbitrator of the game of Knightshade. As the Grandmaster, you have taken it upon yourself to present the game to your Players. For greater detail on what it means to be a Grandmaster, see – Chapter Two: Roles of the Grandmaster.

### **A NOTE ON DICE**

Dice is plural. Die is singular. You play with dice. You may be required to make dice rolls, or to roll a particular die. In Knightshade the Role Playing Game, only one type of die is used but you will need two of these. Most people are familiar with the six-sided dice from standard board games. Knightshade uses two 10-sided dice. These are referred to as D10s. If required to roll two ten-sided dice, then as the Grandmaster, you may ask a Player to roll 2D10. In Knightshade you will exclusively use the 10-sided die, referred to as D10. As stated, rolling 2D10 refers to rolling the two 10-sided die. This creates a percentile roll, a roll between 1 and 100, with the dice landing on 0 and 0 equalling 100 percent, a roll of 7 and an 8 equalling 78, and so on. In nearly all aspects of the mechanics of Knightshade, the lower the roll the better the outcome. Thus, if a Player rolled 1 and 5, as opposed to the 78 above, this 15 would

be the better roll. When using the 2D10 as a percentile dice roll, the GM should encourage the Player to use two different colour dice where possible, or determine which is the lead die so as to be fair when determining clear results. You will get to understand more about the dice rolls and their significance as you use them in the game. Playing is always the best way to learn.

There may also be aspects of the game that are predetermined and do not require dice rolls, such as when determining the damage inflicted from a weapon. However, even in this example, the Grandmaster will still need to roll to hit an opponent before applying the specific damage. Other factors can affect the outcome, such as if the attack resulted in a Critical hit or a Fumble (explained later in this Tome). The Grandmaster should make Players aware of any subsequent predetermined outcome in the story being presented.

## **WHERE DO I START?**

Read the books (both KST01: The Initiate's Tome and KST02: The Grandmaster's Tome) from cover to cover. Study every moment. Know every word. Leave no stone unturned...

Well, not exactly. Take it one step at a time. Familiarise yourself with the Tomes but you do not need to know everything to begin playing. The books are always there for your reference. You can use the adventure included in this book (Knightshade KS00: Stepping Stones) to start, or you can create one of your own. Either way, keep it simple starting out and remember the Players

hardly know what to expect any more than you do. Even Players who have played other Role Playing Games will not yet be familiar with Knightshade. The learning experience is shared and the best way to get to know the system is to start at the beginning and just play. Get the Players to generate their Characters. Write a little background about how they come together, or not. Add some detail about the surroundings the Characters find themselves in. Always take things slow and as you get more experienced at running the game, the stories and the Campaign will evolve. If the adventure is about locating an ancient tomb, many things may need to happen before the Characters actually reach the tomb. They may have to travel to where this place is located. They may encounter creatures or other Personalities on their journey. You may wish to skip all this and delve straight into the tomb and worry about how they came together, or where they came from, at a later stage in the game. In any case, familiarise yourself with the rules that you need to know. The GM does not need to memorise every rule, every spell and every piece of information presented in the Tomes. Use the Table of Contents and the Index when you need to find something specific. In time you will become familiar with where things are in both KST02: The Grandmaster's Tome and KST01: The Initiate's Tome. Both books have been set out with a similar Chapter structure that directly compliments a perspective from a Player's and GM's point of view. Delve in and start playing as soon as you are

ready. Select a comfortable place to play where you are less likely to be interrupted and where you won't interrupt others. Beginnings can be a truly wonderful experience for both the Players and the GM. The first time you play is always a special moment. The Players will most likely have ideas on how they came together and what they want to do. They may wish to buy additional equipment, which will mean a trip to the nearest village, town or city. Provide the Players with an indication of what it is they are supposed to do and let them decide on a course of action. Present the opening scene with as much detail as required and give them an opportunity to find their way. Take notes of anything that you add to the story or a location in the Campaign World, as well as other details that might need to be referred to again at a later stage. Consistency is important but it is not everything. Let the scenes flow and have the Players take the lead in determining the course of action. Most of all have fun playing the game. Remember, Knightshade is about conflict but not amongst the Players.

The scenes depicted on pages 21-23 show a moment when one of the Characters in a group needed to climb a mountain in order to reach the object his group were seeking. The GM merely presented the obstacle of the mountain and suggested a course of action. In the scenes presented, Carius Mole (the Character in question) Fumbled at the most unfortunate moment in his daring climb, leading to

horrific and fatal consequences for the Character. Perhaps the Player suffered from an unhealthy degree of overconfidence but he was still unfortunate to have his Character fall so far. The GM could have ruled that his '*Call on Faith*' was successful, permitting the Character to catch an outcropping on the way down and limiting the wounding to a level of severity just short of death.

Inevitably, in this instance, the action proved fatal. In Knightshade the Role Playing Game, the damage inflicted to the Character's Health Points was 6 points for every 20 feet the Character fell. Thus, the Character would have received a massive 90 points of damage to his Health Points and he only had 48 Health Points (equal to three times his Health Attribute). The Grandmaster assessed the 300-foot climb to take up to six Climbing rolls based on the Character's Climbing Talent skill, or one roll for every fifty feet, with a Critical Success meaning the Character made it up the mountain faster and had one less roll to make. In the end it mattered little. Carius Mole died, leaving nothing much of value behind. This was the debut of the Character. The other Players might have been inclined to offer the poor Player whose Character died more sympathy, or not, depending on the persona of the Characters they were playing at the time. If Carius Mole had been around for longer and this event had happened after months of playing the game, perhaps they would have been more inclined to console rather than ridicule the Player for his efforts. When the

banter is playful and genial, there is no harm caused. The Player can always generate another Character, though he may have formed an attachment to the persona. The GM should be mindful to ensure that other Players offer the appropriate sympathy to one of their friends who lost a Character that he may have been playing for some time. The game is supposed to be fun but as indicated, the world of Knightshade is not for the faint hearted and just like in real life; Characters inevitably die or suffer grave injuries if they are not mindful of the perils of the world around them. In the scenes presented below, there may have been other options, such as going around the mountain rather than trying to climb it, or finding a safer path with a less severe incline. The Players often have time to consider their options and should take more than a moment before accepting the obvious solution. The GM should not punish Players or their Characters. He is there to guide and influence, but ultimately the decision rests with the Players – as do the consequences of any choices they make.

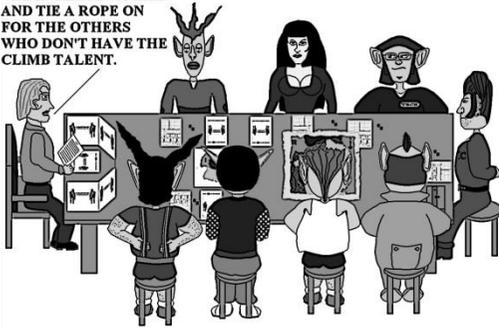
Knightshade the Role Playing Game presents a dangerous place for Characters to test their Talents and abilities. The rewards will no doubt reflect the story being presented. The outcome in the presented scenes is unfortunate but final. Carius Mole is still dead. The Player must roll up a new Character and the Grandmaster is left with the task of integrating this new persona into the group with some degree of logic for the arrival of a new

individual. In some circumstances, the Player may have to wait out a game session until such an event is possible, or the GM may rule that they can encounter his new Character on their journey. Either way, the obstacle remains to be traversed. The Players may now decide that climbing the mountain is too dangerous and take the time to circumvent the obstacle and find a safer route. The Players will decide the next course of action. The GM presents the scenes and the adventure continues.

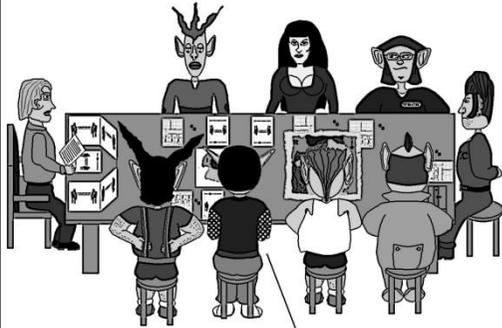
Make the Players do the work. A GM has a lot to track while running a game. Players can help by taking responsibility for their own Characters. Give out notepaper at the start of a game session and let the Players fill in the details of everything their Characters do in a game that may be deserving of Knowledge Points. Use the Merit/Demerit system presented later in this Tome as a guide to acknowledge a helpful Player by rewarding their Character appropriately. Even the best of GMs can always use a helping hand. More detail on this and other considerations are presented in ‘Chapter Two: Roles of the Grandmaster’. If something doesn’t work for your Campaign World, change it. As the GM you are the final and only arbitrator of the game.

Once you are ready with your story, all you have to do is gather your Players and play. Remember to have fun along the way. This is not exclusive to the Players. As GM you have just as much right to enjoy the moments you share...

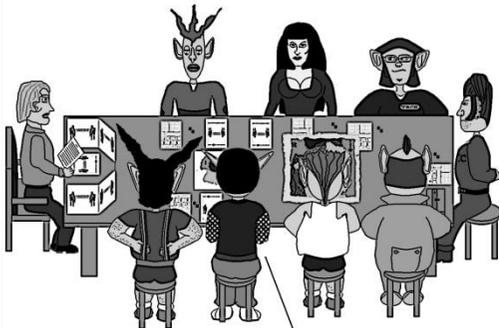
SOMEONE NEEDS TO CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN AND TIE A ROPE ON FOR THE OTHERS WHO DON'T HAVE THE CLIMB TALENT.



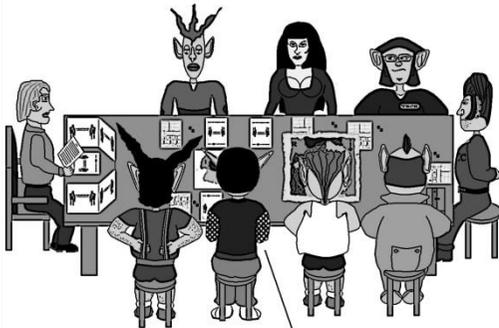
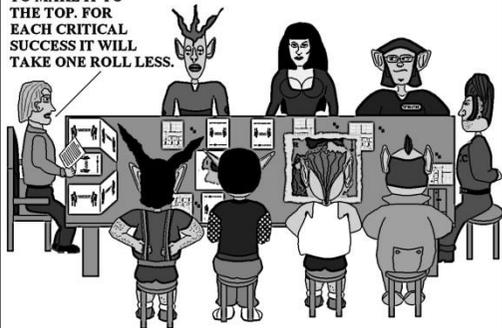
MY CHARACTER, CARIUS MOLE WILL DO IT. AFTER ALL, I ALSO HAVE THE MOUNTAINEERING TALENT, WHICH ADDS +20% TO THE ROLL.



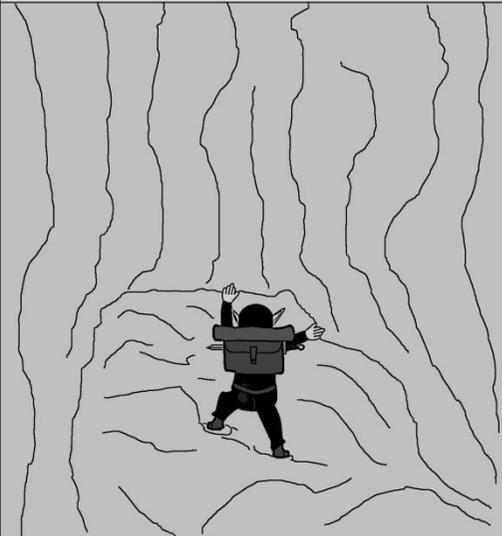
FINE, BUT IT WILL TAKE SIX ROLLS TO MAKE IT TO THE TOP. FOR EACH CRITICAL SUCCESS IT WILL TAKE ONE ROLL LESS.



I'M ALSO AN EXPERT ON THIS TYPE OF TERRAIN AND I'M EQUIPPED WITH EVERYTHING NEEDED FOR THE CLIMB.



YES, I ROLLED A 07. CRITICAL! ONLY FOUR MORE ROLLS LEFT.





BET HE FUMBLES!



SUCCESS, SUCCESS, SUCCESS... ONLY ONE MORE ROLL LEFT TO MAKE IT TO THE TOP.



OH CRIPES! I FUMBLED!

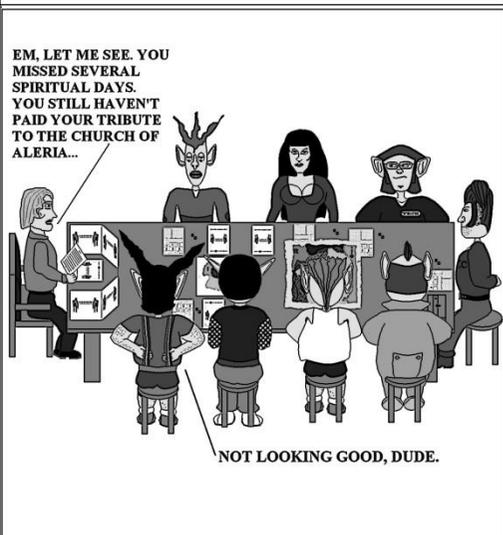


TOLD YOU!



AS YOU ARE ABOUT TO REACH THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN, YOU SLIP. THE PITON YOU ATTACHED COMES AWAY AND YOU FALL 300 FEET TO THE CRAGGY ROCKS BELOW!

OH CRIPES AGAIN! CAN I CALL ON FAITH TO SAVE ME FROM DEATH?

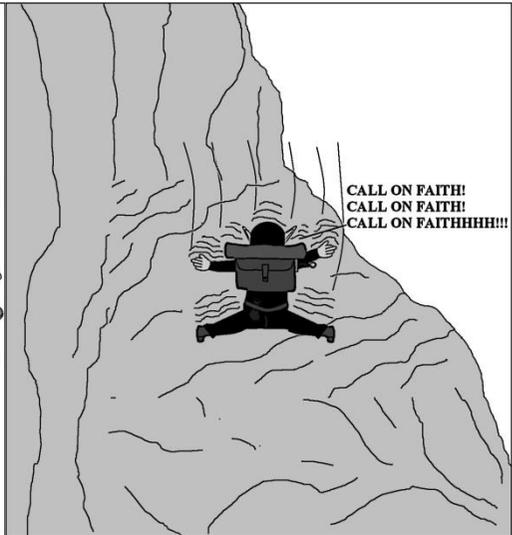


EM, LET ME SEE. YOU MISSED SEVERAL SPIRITUAL DAYS. YOU STILL HAVEN'T PAID YOUR TRIBUTE TO THE CHURCH OF ALERIA...

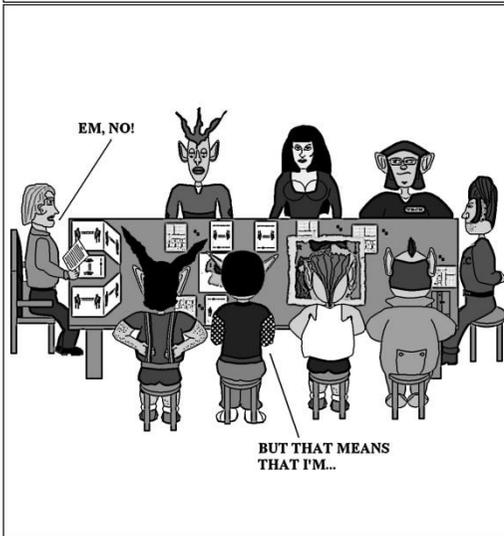
NOT LOOKING GOOD, DUDE.



CALL ON FAITH!  
CALL ON FAITH!  
CALL ON FAITHHHH!!!!

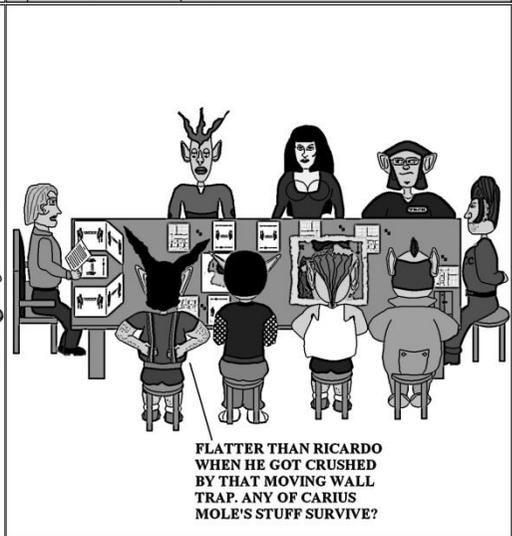


CALL ON FAITH!  
CALL ON FAITH!  
CALL ON FAITHHHH!!!!

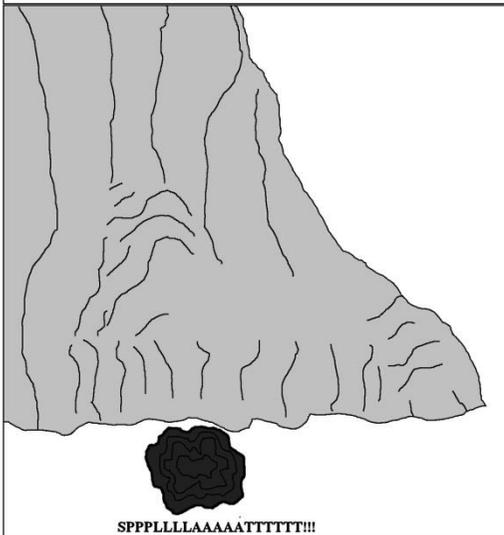


EM, NO!

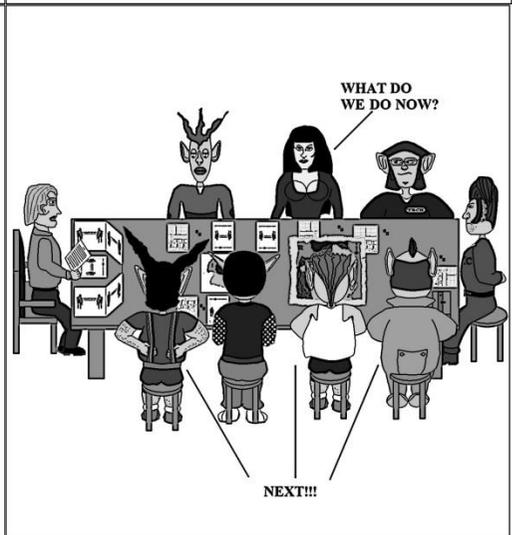
BUT THAT MEANS  
THAT I'M...



FLATTER THAN RICARDO  
WHEN HE GOT CRUSHED  
BY THAT MOVING WALL  
TRAP. ANY OF CARIUS  
MOLE'S STUFF SURVIVE?



SPPPLLLAAAAATTTTT!!!



WHAT DO  
WE DO NOW?

NEXT!!!

