

KST01 REV03

KNIGHTSHADE
THE INITIATE'S TOME
WILLIAM ANTHONY SHEA

BAD DOG PUBLISHING

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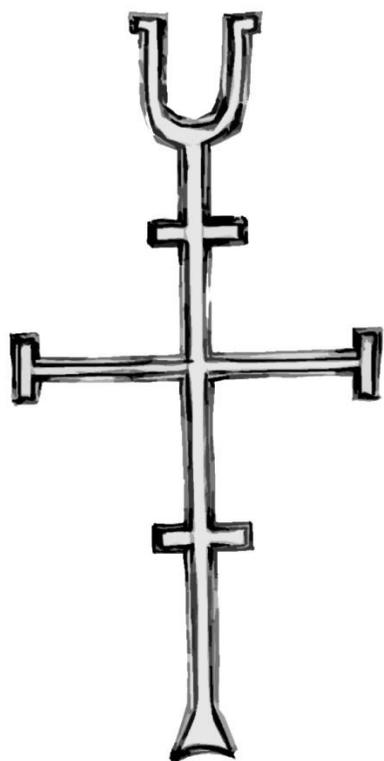
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All characters and events in this book are fictional and any resemblance to actual places, events or persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

For Michael, Bryan & Fergal,
Who stood the test of time,
By being there,
Looking beyond the obvious,
And sticking to the detail...



FOREWORD	11
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	12
A NOTE ON THE USE OF 'HE'	12
INITIATE'S TOME DESIGN	12
COPYRIGHT	12
BAD DOG PUBLISHING WEBSITE	12
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	13
WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY?	14
WHAT IS KNIGHTSHADE?	14
WHAT IS A STORY?	17
WHAT IS A CAMPAIGN?	18
PATIENCE	19
THE CAMPAIGN WORLD	19
CHAPTER TWO: CREATING THE CHARACTER	20
A NOTE ON DICE	20
ATTRIBUTES	21
TIER 1: PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES	21
TIER 2: MENTAL ATTRIBUTES	22
TIER 3: PERCEPTION ATTRIBUTES	22
GENERATING ATTRIBUTES	23
PROFESSION	25
CHARACTER RECORD SHEET KSCHS01	27
CHARACTER RECORD SHEET KSCHS02	28
HERMIT	29
USE OF HERBAL, PLANT & OTHER CONCOCTIONS TABLE	29
HERMIT EXTREMISTS	30
HERMITS AND RITUAL MAGIC	31
HERBAL, PLANT & OTHER CONCOCTIONS	32
KNIGHT	35
KNIGHT FACTIONS	36
STATUS OF A KNIGHT	38
THE KNIGHTS CODE OF HONOUR	39
MAGE	40
ROGUE	42
SCOUT	44
SWORDARM	46
PERSONA	48
THE PATH TO AUTONOMY	48
THE PATH TO CHAOS	48
THE PATH TO HARMONY	49
THE PATH TO LAW	49
THE PATH TO SPIRITUALITY	49

PERSONAL DETAILS	50
FILLING IN THE PERSONALITY	51
ADVANCEMENT	52
HEALTH POINTS	52
TALENTS	53
GENERAL TALENTS	54
HERMIT TALENTS	55
KNIGHT TALENTS	55
MAGE TALENTS	55
SWORDARM TALENTS	55
ROGUE TALENTS	56
SCOUT TALENTS	56
EXPLAINING TALENTS	56
UNTRAINED TALENTS	79
CHAPTER THREE: EQUIPPING THE CHARACTER	80
MONEY IN KNIGHTSHADE	80
STARTING MONEY	81
GENERAL EQUIPMENT	82
GENERAL COSTS OF LIVING	89
ARMOUR	89
WEAPONS	93
MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS	98
CHAPTER FOUR: UNDERSTANDING PLAY	103
MECHANICS OF ADVENTURING	105
HOW MUCH CAN MY CHARACTER CARRY?	105
HOW FAST CAN I MOVE?	105
HOW LONG CAN I FIGHT FOR?	106
WHAT IS FATIGUE?	106
WHAT IS AN ACTION ROUND AND WHAT CAN I DO?	106
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ACTION ROUND AND A COMBAT ACTION ROUND?	107
IF I HAVEN'T GOT A SKILL, CAN I STILL USE A TALENT?	107
WHAT HAPPENS IF I FAIL A ROLL?	107
WHAT HAPPENS IF I ACHIEVE A CRITICAL SUCCESS?	107
WHAT HAPPENS IF I FUMBLE A ROLL?	107
LEVEL OF SEVERITY	108
LANGUAGES: SPEAKING TO THE WORLD	108
AGING	110
SWIMMING AND DROWNING	111
FALLING DOWN	112
FORCE MARCHING	112
DO MY ATTRIBUTES ALWAYS STAY THE SAME?	112

FILLING IN THE CHARACTER RECORD SHEET	113
CHAPTER FIVE: COMBAT – LET THE BATTLE BEGIN	114
THE COMBAT ACTION ROUND	114
THE REACTION SCORE	118
MISSILE WEAPON & HURLED OBJECT RANGES	120
WEAPON ALLOCATION	121
THE RESISTANCE CHECK	122
PHYSICAL RESISTANCE	122
MENTAL RESISTANCE	122
PERCEPTION RESISTANCE	122
THE FUMBLE ROLL	123
CRITICAL SUCCESS	123
HEART SHOT (LOCATION 42)	124
CUMULATIVE DAMAGE	124
TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING	124
DEATH	125
RECOVERING HEALTH POINTS	125
THE HIT LOCATION CHART	125
FATIGUE	126
PARRYING	126
MULTIPLE ATTACKS	127
SUBDUAL	127
BRAWLING	127
UNARMED COMBAT	128
USING A NET IN COMBAT	128
ACID DAMAGE	129
FIRE DAMAGE	129
POISONS	130
FIGHTING THE OGRE	130
CHAPTER SIX: THE MAGIC	133
DEALING WITH THE SPECIFICS	138
CIRCLE 1 INITIATE SPHERE	138
CIRCLE 2 INITIATE SPHERE	140
CIRCLE 3 INITIATE SPHERE	141
CIRCLE 4 INITIATE SPHERE	143
CIRCLE 5 INITIATE SPHERE	144
CIRCLE 1 ILLUSION SPHERE	146
CIRCLE 2 ILLUSION SPHERE	148
CIRCLE 3 ILLUSION SPHERE	149
CIRCLE 4 ILLUSION SPHERE	151
CIRCLE 5 ILLUSION SPHERE	152
CIRCLE 1 INVOCATION SPHERE	154

CIRCLE 2 INVOCATION SPHERE	155
CIRCLE 3 INVOCATION SPHERE	157
CIRCLE 4 INVOCATION SPHERE	158
CIRCLE 5 INVOCATION SPHERE	160
CIRCLE 1 ELEM, AIR SPHERE	161
CIRCLE 2 ELEM, AIR SPHERE	163
CIRCLE 3 ELEM, AIR SPHERE	164
CIRCLE 4 ELEM, AIR SPHERE	165
CIRCLE 5 ELEM, AIR SPHERE	166
CIRCLE 1 ELEM, EARTH SPHERE	168
CIRCLE 2 ELEM, EARTH SPHERE	169
CIRCLE 3 ELEM, EARTH SPHERE	170
CIRCLE 4 ELEM, EARTH SPHERE	172
CIRCLE 5 ELEM, EARTH SPHERE	173
CIRCLE 1 ELEM, FIRE SPHERE	174
CIRCLE 2 ELEM, FIRE SPHERE	176
CIRCLE 3 ELEM, FIRE SPHERE	177
CIRCLE 4 ELEM, FIRE SPHERE	178
CIRCLE 5 ELEM, FIRE SPHERE	180
CIRCLE 1 ELE, WATER SPHERE	181
CIRCLE 2 ELE, WATER SPHERE	183
CIRCLE 3 ELE, WATER SPHERE	184
CIRCLE 4 ELE, WATER SPHERE	185
CIRCLE 5 ELE, WATER SPHERE	187
CIRCLE 1 NECRO... SPHERE	188
CIRCLE 2 NECRO... SPHERE	190
CIRCLE 3 NECRO... SPHERE	191
CIRCLE 4 NECRO... SPHERE	193
CIRCLE 5 NECRO... SPHERE	194
CIRCLE 1 SHADOW SPHERE	195
CIRCLE 2 SHADOW SPHERE	197
CIRCLE 3 SHADOW SPHERE	198
CIRCLE 4 SHADOW SPHERE	199
CIRCLE 5 SHADOW SPHERE	201
DISPELLING MAGIC	202
CHOOSING MAGIC	203
COMBINING MAGIC	205
DELAY/TRIGGERING MAGIC	205
A QUESTION OF ARMOUR	205
SPELL SHEET KSSSH01	207
SPELL SHEET KSSSH02	208
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE PANTHEON OF AYRE	209
THE PATH TO FAITH	209

BARRIC-LYRE (THE DARK ONE: GOD OF DECEIT, DARKNESS AND DEATH): CHAOS	210
ALERIA (GODDESS OF NATURE, FERTILITY AND LIFE: MOTHER EARTH): HARMONY	211
THYRR (GOD OF JUSTICE AND HONOUR): LAW	212
NOVUS (GOD OF LOVE, MYSTICISM, AND FREEDOM): SPIRITUALITY	213
MYRESS (GODDESS OF SELF-AWARENESS, INDEPENDENCE AND LONGEVITY): AUTONOMY	214
CHOOSING FAITH	215
SERVICE TO THE DIVINE	217
CHAPTER EIGHT: THE FACTIONS OF AYRE	219
ORDER OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE DOVE	219
ORDER OF THE MAGI	220
ORDER OF THE HERMIT	222
THE ELVEN DISSIDENTS	222
CALLIBANESE INQUISITORS	223
THE MIRAN SLAVERS	224
ORDER OF THE AHANT	225
THE BLACK ROSE	225
THE LENICIAN GUARD	226
CHAPTER NINE: PLAYING THE GAME	227
GOALS FOR THE GROUP	227
TRAPS, CREATURES, AND A DANGEROUS WORLD	228
THE BEGINNING, THE MIDDLE, AND THE END	229
RICARDO AND ALATOFF IN THE TOMB OF ARLOTH	230
RICARDO & ALATOFF	232
APPENDIX 1: ADVENTURING IN AYRE	234
TIME & SEASONS IN AYRE	234
THE COUNTRIES OF AYRE	234
THE LUNAR CYCLE	237
APPENDIX 2: SPELL VOCALISATIONS (OPTIONAL)	240
APPENDIX 3: GLOSSARY OF TERMS	241
APPENDIX 4: PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS	243
INDEX	249

FOREWORD

Need is a terrible thing. Knightshade the Role Playing Game (RPG) was brought to reality because of my need to create a system that I have not been able to find an affinity for since I was young when I got my first taste of Role Playing. I can only say that it involved playing in the arena of dungeons, fighting monsters, healing my compatriots and surviving long enough to reach the next game.

I have played many games in my time with rules too simple to lend to the level of detail in a story, and others so complicated that their similarity to textbooks cannot be denied. However, the original game I played still had so much more to offer to the story, even if it was short on any sense of logic, or needed some additional reworking to provide some necessary detail. That said; everything cannot take up the mantle of rationality when the game involves creatures that never really existed or the employment of magic in a world that was found only in the mind. The game was easy to play, easy to get into, and fun.

Knightshade is an exercise in taking the minimalist view of mechanics where possible but still providing the tools to play out the story. I came to realise in the latter years of playing the games I love that maybe less was more, and more was only required when needed to resolve an outcome. This game has less dice rolls and more predetermination allowing the story to flow unhindered, while still maintaining the involvement of the Players in the consequence of any course of action. The story being told is the main focus of the game, and whether this is as simple as delving into the ancient tombs of the world to acquire wealth, or following the most complex political drama as it unfolds, Knightshade can cater to the needs of the Grandmaster and Players alike. This book is primarily focused towards those who play the game. KST02: The Grandmaster's Tome is for the person who will take up the task of presenting the story and running the game. Again, the decision to separate the books was a simple one. The Grandmaster must have some secrets, even if they are only perceived secrets. The Character may take a little longer to generate but once this aspect of creation has been completed, the experience should be all the more enjoyable for the ease of referencing those details necessary to bring the moment to light, and to play out a scene. The game is about the story. It is about building the moment to make something truly memorable. Just like in any drama, the Players have their part to play in the story, and in this game, they truly affect the outcome.

Knightshade is best played with a Grandmaster and 4-6 Players (though it is possible to play with more), who will each take on the Role or Persona of a Character. For now, all you need to understand is that this is a Role Playing Game (RPG). As you read through this Tome you will begin to understand what that actually means. Think of this as a learning experience, but it should be a pleasant one.

Knightshade 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, he 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 Gregg Patrick, a friend always, and the one who started me on this road so long ago.

A NOTE ON THE USE OF ‘HE’

The author of this Tome uses ‘He’ and ‘His’ to describe the details of the Characters herein. This is used purely for ease of writing and in no way infers this game to be exclusive to the male populace. This Tome is for all who wish to play the game.

INITIATE’S TOME DESIGN

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I have walked where angels fear to tread, encountered creatures of darkness that are intent on my destruction, observed the marvels of lost civilizations swept away beneath a torrent of natural disasters and the depravity of demons. In all my awe, and splendour, and the recurring nightmares, I have survived the ordeal, but I will never truly be the same again for what I have witnessed...

The story can be anything that the imagination can unfold. The ancient crypts of the old world are there to be plundered. Treasures await to delight and marvel even the most inane soul. Whether you be a lowly cutpurse, a Knight of a renowned Order, or a Hermit who has had his fill of the advance of civilisation, you will find adventure, excitement and danger to test your mettle in the world of Knightshade the Role Playing Game. Listen to the whispers in the dark shadows, to the rumours that linger there to test the spirit of those who find no solace in living a mundane existence. Follow the path to glory, and adventure...

Knightshade is designed to bring a fantasy world to your table. This Tome is a beginning and will serve to unlock the secrets of imagination. Unlike traditional board games, Knightshade revolves around a story, in which each 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 role of the Grandmaster or Storyteller. The Grandmaster unveils the story piece by piece and the other Players play their Characters. They react to the story being told, affecting the outcome and flow as they interact with the world around them. 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. The story can also be complex and far reaching if the storyteller wishes, but the more complicated the story, the harder it will be to unveil the solution and engage the Players game after game, week after week, and into the foreseeable future.

This book is primarily designed for the Players who will take part in the game. KST02: The Grandmaster's Tome is designed for the Storyteller, though the person who takes on this role should be familiar with both books. 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 to know 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 PLAY?

You will need this book, KST01: The Initiate's Tome for the Players. You will also need KST02: The Grandmaster's Tome 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 playing. The Grandmaster or GM should be allowed to keep some secrets to maintain the element of surprise and to incorporate unexpected details into his stories. You will also need Dice (2 by 10-sided), available in all good hobby shops. Each die roll has a different significance to the various skills and abilities in determining the outcome of actions and reactions explained later as you become more familiar with the mechanics of Knightshade. The most important thing you need is imagination.

The game should be played in comfortable surroundings. You may require additional paper to jot down your Character details, any interesting items or information you gather along the way. Some gaming groups use props; paper to draw out plans of the area or even miniatures or counters to represent their Characters, and add to the visualisation of the moment. 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 the enjoyment of play include: KST03: The Loremaster's Tome (A Guide to the World of Ayre), and KST04: The Questmaster's Tome (six complete

scenarios to delight the imagination of any Gaming Group).

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 setting, even one of your own creation. KST01: The Initiate's Tome is designed for Players who will adopt personas in the game, as Knights of the Realm, daring Rogues, calculating Mages or whatever adventuring Characters the Players choose.

The Players will be introduced to their Characters and the Role Playing experience by the Grandmaster or GM who will guide them through the world and the scenario or story where the Players participate in determining the outcome of the game by interacting with the GM and to the details he provides. This guide is the Sourcebook for the Players and GM. From this book, the Players will learn the intricacies of the Role Playing world and the mechanics behind Character Creation, determining skills, Attributes (i.e. how strong is my Character?) and whether they have the ability to withstand the ordeals in the Campaign World.

As part of the introduction in understanding the elements of play, the Grandmaster may guide Players through KS00: Stepping Stones (located in Appendix 1 of KST02: The Grandmaster's Tome) or KS01: The Tomb of Arloth (found in KST04: The Questmaster's Tome) which will further explain the concept of Role Playing and

direct the Players until they can understand the facets of the game and their place in this realm of swords and sorcery.

Alternatively, the GM may decide to create his own scenario. Playing the game is the best way to learn. The primary object of the game is to have fun, where the Players become almost like actors on an ever-changing stage, but in a story that adapts to their presence and moves with their actions. They are presented with obstacles, or scenes, much like movie scenes where they can interact with other Characters controlled by the Grandmaster. This may be the Innkeeper of 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. Perhaps they will become embroiled in a political struggle where the actions of the Characters could well determine who may become the next King. The scenario or story should have the flexibility to take the Players anywhere in the Campaign World where they can interact with those who hold the balance of power, or it could serve 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. Scenes can move swiftly from one location to another or the whole scope of the journey (within reason) may be determined before the Players eyes as they undertake an expedition.

While the mechanics of the game

define what a Character can do, they are merely a guide to give the Players the balance they need in determining the outcome of their actions and reactions in any story. The Players should not feel bound by the rules, as any specific mechanic in this book may not cover all aspects of what they wish to do in actual play. The Grandmaster may need to adapt to the requests of the Players to determine any possible outcome. Look at the following scene. The Players have taken on the identities of the Characters, Ricardo and Alatoff. They are attempting to gain entry into an ancient tomb. These Characters and others will be used throughout this book to describe methods of play, to explain mechanics and their effect on the story:

Ricardo: Can I move the large stone block at the entrance to the Tomb of Arloth?

Grandmaster: Roll under your Strength Attribute on two 10-sided dice and if you are successful, the block can be moved. Your Strength is 19. Thus, you will need to roll 19 or lower. If you roll 1 and 4, that would be 14 and you would succeed. The large stone block is quite heavy and it looks to have been wedged in tight. This is considered a difficult task.

Ricardo: Can more than one Character attempt this task together?

Grandmaster: Yes. If two Characters assist each other in moving the block, then you can add the second Character's Strength to moving this obstacle. Alatoff's Strength is 16. $19 + 16 = 35$.

Ricardo: My roll is 39.

Grandmaster: The block almost moves, but you cannot quite get it out.

Ricardo: Is there anything else we can try?

Grandmaster: Yes, you can try to wedge something under the block to use as a lever; like the wooden staves you brought with you. If you use the poles you gain +20 to the roll. You can keep trying until you succeed. All you will lose is time. If you had more Characters with you, there is room for another to help, but there are only two of you here. The poles are your best bet. Just to note, if you Fumble the roll, the poles will break. There is only a small chance of that happening. You can look up the chance of Fumbling on page 107 of this book in the Critical & Fumble Chart, also included on page 28 – KSCHS02 Character

Record Sheet (which can be downloaded from the Bad Dog Publishing website or photocopied to use to fill in your Character details).

Ricardo: Is time important?

Grandmaster: In this instance, time is less important. There are moments in the game when you may need to complete a task quickly, such as when you are being pursued by a creature, or you are trapped and the air is running out, or some other such situation. For now, you have plenty of time.

Another way to get passed the block would be to dig around it. The ground is soft enough here for you to dig under it. However, you should try the poles first as digging will require a great deal of time, and that too may have consequences, especially if you Fumble. If the block falls the wrong way, you could be injured, or if it sinks in deeper, you may not be able to gain entry without additional help.

Ricardo: Yes! I rolled 4 and 1. That's 41! With the +20

for the poles; we manage to move the block.

Grandmaster: Ricardo and Alatoff use the wooden staves as levers, each ensuring a good handhold on the strong wooden poles. With muscles straining, they push the block away from the entrance to the Tomb of Arloth. A rush of air along with a stale smell testifies that this tomb has remained undisturbed for a long time, perhaps even centuries. You shudder at the thought of what might rest within after all this time. The darkness beckons as Ricardo and Alatoff carefully ease the block out of the way. For a moment they relax, regaining their strength before they must face the darkness and the dangers that will most certainly lurk within...

As you can see from the preceding description, the Characters had a better chance of accomplishing their goal by cooperation, along with a little smart thinking. The mechanics of the game had a part to play, but the Grandmaster described the scene without referring to the mechanics, adding to the element of the Players' perception once the roll of the dice had been dealt with. He could have added more detail such as indecipherable ancient writings on the

block, moss or lichen, or even a trap to catch out the unwary adventurers, but generally the Grandmaster should guide and not punish beginning Players. In time, he would not have referred to the fact that the Characters had brought the poles. As the Players learn the game, it is up to them to suggest the course of action. Maybe if the Grandmaster had used a trap and it had been triggered, the Characters could have managed to evade the deadly device this time, but such would serve as a reminder for them to be more careful in future. The Grandmaster is there to teach the Players the game at the beginning. As time goes on, they should be more than capable of suggesting their own ideas for dealing with any situation. Exploring the ancient tombs of the old world is not easy, and can have deadly consequences if the Players are not careful when using the skills and abilities of their Characters. The rewards are usually worth the effort. Even if a Character is killed in the game, this may not be the end of the story as the other Characters go on.

WHAT IS A STORY?

A story is a game that the Grandmaster presents to the Players. It may be run over one game session (typically four hours) or over a number of game sessions. 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 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. The story is a series of events that make up a game, like inter-connecting scenes in a movie or play. The Grandmaster is responsible for presenting the story, along with all of the supporting Characters, from the Innkeeper in the tavern to the Shadow Creature you fight in the mountains. He is also responsible for presenting the detail of your 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 the story though the outcome may be uncertain due to the interaction of the Characters. Further details on creating stories are found in KST02: The Grandmaster's Tome.

WHAT IS A CAMPAIGN?

A Campaign is a collection of stories presented to the Players by the Grandmaster. These may be a connected series of events, such as exploring the lost places of the world, protecting the land from foul creatures or preserving the political stability of the 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 the land before war breaks out. The possibilities are endless. However, it is the Characters who tie the stories together and the stories that give the Characters purpose. 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 can be found in KST02: The Grandmaster's Tome. KST03: The Loremaster's Tome details the set world of Knightshade as an optional additional Sourcebook, which presents the land of Ayre and all the details needed to play in that world. The Grandmaster is free to create his own world, or use KST03: The Loremaster's Tome to provide a rich background for his Campaign settings.

All details are subject to the Grandmaster's rule. If there are aspects of a game world or indeed rules within this Tome that the GM has decided not to use, his decision is final, and the Players must accept the word of the Grandmaster as the final arbitrator. There may be aspects of creating a background for your Character that you wish the GM to include but they must be in keeping with the game and the story being presented. The best way to be sure that your voice is heard is to discuss this with the Grandmaster. Only the GM will know the direction the story or the Campaign is to take, and this may not always be easy to explain as some details must be kept secret until they are needed in a story. Always remember that the Grandmaster has worked hard to present a story for your enjoyment.

PATIENCE

Remember to always offer patience when a Grandmaster makes a ruling that you are opposed to in a game. There may be a valid reason, or the GM may have gotten something wrong. You only need to worry about your Character. The GM needs to be mindful of the continuity of everything going on around him, including the story, the Campaign, the effects that your actions have on the area you are in, or indeed the entire Campaign world.

If you do have a grumble, this is best discussed outside the game, and perhaps only between you and the GM. There is nothing worse than when Players try to take sides in a disagreement. The game is about having fun after all, and you need to be aware that the GM has most likely put a tremendous amount of work into presenting a story for your enjoyment. This is not to say that the GM is always right. However, when he makes a decision, the matter is at an end. The Grandmaster's word is final. Good GMs will always listen to their Players grievances, but good Players need to be aware that they may not know all that is going on in a scene, story or Campaign.

Every Player needs to get time in a game and this should be measured fairly where practical. Some Players come naturally to the fore, while others are content to follow. Still, everyone should be given the chance to participate and you may need to be patient with your fellow Players if they have not quite figured out all of what is going on as quickly as you have, or if they are not using all of their abilities to their full

potential. The game takes time, and a Player can have as much to contribute as the Grandmaster presenting the story.

THE CAMPAIGN WORLD

A Campaign World such as Ayre is a fantasy world in which your Characters live. Knightshade is usually run in the Campaign World of Ayre, though your Grandmaster (GM) may decide to use his own Campaign World or to utilise another commercially available fantasy world. You will need to consult with your Grandmaster to be sure if the details on Ayre provided herein are applicable.

Some of the details of Ayre will be presented within this Tome, with more elements provided in KST02: The Grandmaster's Tome and the ultimate guide to Ayre presented within KST03: The Loremaster's Tome. The details presented to the Players will only utilise the core elements necessary for understanding the basic concepts of the world and those relevant to Character Creation, such as Time, Seasons, Countries, Faiths, Factions, and so on. The GM is free to use some elements without using others. Never assume anything. The best approach is to ask the GM if he is using all of the elements contained herein or if there are any exclusions or changes. If the GM is using Ayre as his Campaign World, this will allow you to add to the flavour of your Character with basic details such as where your Character is from, what Faith he follows, etc. You will see the details of the world grow around you as you play with more and more revealed by the GM in each story.

**KNIGHTSHADE
THE ROLE PLAYING GAME**

THE INITIATE'S TOME
THE GRANDMASTER'S TOME
THE LOREMASTER'S TOME – NYR*
THE QUESTMASTER'S TOME – NYR*

ALSO FROM BAD DOG PUBLISHING

By William Anthony Shea

TALES FROM A DARKLING POOL (Author's Preferred Text)
RETURN TO A DARKLING POOL
A DARKLING POOL AGAIN
BEYOND A DARKLING POOL
RIPPLES FROM A DARKLING POOL

SAGA OF THE SENTENIAL
BOOK ONE: CAULDRON OF TROUBLE
BOOK TWO: FOR THE LAND THAT FELL
BOOK THREE: THE HOUSE OF SILMARIN

NIGHTMARE
VAMPIRE
FALLEN
REMNANT – NYR*

FUMBLING VOLUME ONE
FUMBLING VOLUME TWO

By L Shea

IMMORAL DAWN
DE CORK BOIs
DEAD TO ME (The many deaths of Michaleen) – NYR*
DE CORK BOIs TOO – NYR*

*NYR = Not Yet Released.

The Initiate's Tome is a Handbook or Guide for Players in the Role Playing Game of Knightshade. This book includes all the necessary rules to create your Character and demonstrates how the mechanics of the game affect the world you play in. Enter the world of swords and sorcery and let the game begin...

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