

CAMPAIGN JOURNAL

Scimitars against the Dark by Wolfgang Baur

Artwork by Karl Waller

*Listen and grow wise, my children, that
you may avoid the darkness that has
claimed my sight. Though the sun shines
bright on the sands of Zakhara, the earth
beneath hungers for blood, and the night
hides mad genies, howling for vengeance.*

*We have no Fate but the Fate we are
given; may your Fate not be a dark one.*

Ali ben Ali, blind prophet

There are many flavors of Arabian adventures, and the AD&D® AL-QADIM™ *Land of Fate* boxed set presents one of the best: the swashbuckling world of Hollywood B-movies and Ray Harryhausen special effects, of *The Thief of Baghdad* and *Sindbad the Sailor*. These adventures under the Zakharan sun are dashing quests against cutthroat sea raiders, slapstick comedies of errors, foolhardy missions undertaken for the sake of romance, and bold attacks on assassins' strongholds.

But there is a darker side to the dunes and oceans of Arabian lore. In fantasy literature, this dark side is described in the *Tales from the Flat Earth* by Tanith Lee, in Clark Ashton Smith's land of lurking nightmares, and in the world of H.P. Lovecraft's mad Arab Abd al-Azrad, the author of the *Kitab Al Azif* (the *Necronomicon*). This alternative Arabian setting is called Dark Arabia. Dark Arabia is derived from the *Land of Fate* setting, distilled to its nightmare core.

This article provides an overview of Dark Arabia, with suggestions for plots and story lines, monsters, settings, PC types, special powers and disabilities, and DM hints.

A shadow over Zakhara

Dark Arabia is a setting of tyrannical caliphs, man-eating ghouls, and mad genies. There are whispering terrors in the dark, and treks deep into the bowels of the earth. It allows the DM to maximize the effect of all the techniques of terror provided by the RAVENLOFT® setting in the more open and cosmopolitan Middle East.

Why use such a setting at all? Simply put, dark cults and heartless tyrants are

fun opponents, and the struggle against encroaching shadow gives the campaign a clear focus. The villains are ruthless, lurking just out of sight, stronger or smarter than the PCs, but the glory to be had is that much greater because of it. Dark Arabia offers the PCs a chance to make a difference in the world, to foil the plots of forces far more sinister than merely human opponents.

This doesn't mean that the PCs' every waking moment is filled with fear and terror. The techniques and ideas presented here are most effective if used sparingly. The contrast between the players' safe beginning expectations and the truth they discover through play can be used to great dramatic effect, as can the contrast between the safety of the cities and the lurking nightmares that wait just outside civilization. Once the PCs have become comfortable with their home grounds, these areas can (many adventures later) be attacked or threatened by the consequences of the PCs' actions, which again emphasizes the contrast between their secure homelands and the dangerous fringes. But first they must figure out just what a mess they are in.

Lost knowledge

When beginning a Dark Arabian campaign, you could let the PCs know the grim nature of the setting right away. The immediate payoff is that it inspires fear and loathing among the players. Unfortunately, it also spoils some of the surprise, so I recommend setting things up for an ordinary AL-QADIM campaign and going from there. Let them read the descriptions of Zakhara from the *Land of Fate* boxed set, and assume their characters view the

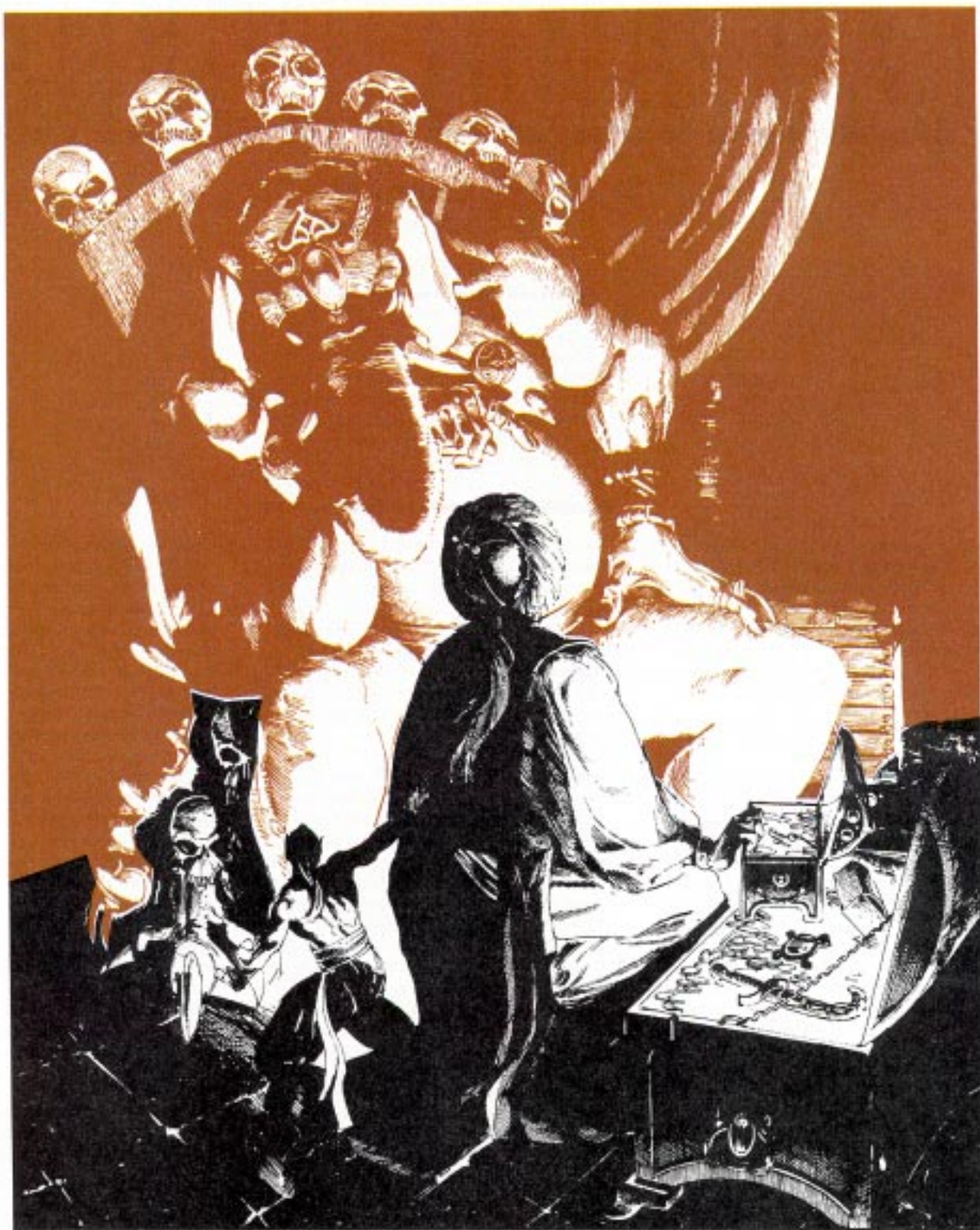
world as presented in that set.

If the heroes are ignorant of the dark nature of the outside world in the course of their adventures, you can build a campaign to a climax of discovery, placing clues here and there, setting up encounters with minions of the greater evil forces, until finally the PCs confront the dark sect of your choice directly.

The heroes can stumble across volumes of foul knowledge—*forbidden by the Law of the Loregiver*. The results can be the same as described for a *book of vile darkness* or a *libram of ineffable damnation* (DMG, pages 161 and 173), or they can be histories of the geomancers and evil sha'irs of the past, or lorebooks describing how the decadent empires of Nog and Kadar fell when they tampered with forces from deep within the earth. The adventurers may learn about the forbidden gods and black clouds of vengeance that destroyed the ancient civilization of the giants.

Knowledge is power, but this knowledge has its price. Corrupting knowledge includes both spells like the *lifestealing* spell and powers better left alone, like the All-Knowing Eye of Yasmin Sira (see the *Book of Artifacts* for details). Moral dilemmas, such as whether to use evil knowledge and items to fight evil, can make heroic PCs squirm, and they provide tough decisions and consequences for even well-armed and determined adventurers.

If the PCs take to forbidden lore too readily, they may pay a price for their tampering. A sha'ir's gen might become intractable and stop bringing spells if he knows his master serves a madman who seeks to release more evils on the world. A priest's god might stop granting high-level spells. A rogue might find himself losing Wisdom and slowly going as



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mad as a sungazer. A dark powers check could also chill the PC's desire for the powers of darkness if the PCs call on dark forces too often (see the RAVENLOFT boxed set, page 17).

When the heroes discover the corruption that lies at the edges of the world, they will meet creatures who serve that corruption and tempt the PCs with evil. Creatures of evil will offer great riches, power, knowledge, and magic in exchange for the PCs' allegiance.

Obviously, those heroes who fall from the path of the Loregiver will soon be destroyed by their own foul schemes and practices. If they are ensnared by evil, they could show the corruption within themselves physically, slowly changing form until they are gibbering mousers or Eastern vampires.

To become a gibbering mouser, a PC mage's Wisdom must first drop below three as he learns more and more corrupting knowledge (see the sungazer mage kit below). Then, if the PC fails a saving throw against death magic, the irreversible transformation to gibbering mouser is completed within 3-30 days.

For priests or faris, falling from the path of Enlightenment turns them slowly into Eastern vampires. To become a vampire NPC, the PC must first learn forbidden lore. With each new bit of unholy writing that passes beneath his eyes, the PC must make a dark powers check. If he fails, a living idol, forgotten god, or elemental lord becomes the PC's patron. This patron oversees the transformation of his servant to a vampire form, granting first gifts and then curses that match vampiric powers. The complete transformation takes 1-6 months of game time. Once a PC becomes a monster, he is removed from play and becomes an NPC.

Eventually other adventurers will seek out and destroy the abominations that such PCs become, whether their forms are still human or not. Other curses that forbidden knowledge might bring on the scholar are described in the RAVENLOFT *Forbidden Lore* boxed set and the article "Curses are Divine" from DRAGON® issue #167.

Holding back the dark

Of course, PC roles should match the new Dark Arabian tone. A warrior may become an unwitting servant of darkness because he is infected with lycanthropy, for example. A werehyena, werelion, or lesser seawolf might not even know of his condition, and the DM would only need to occasionally tell the player that his PC had a disturbing dream about cracking bones, hunting game, or swimming in the depths of a moonlit sea. The curse itself might not be revealed until some dramatically appropriate moment, such as at the climax of a story line when the PC lycanthrope is under the pressure of a vital battle and shifts into his animal form.

Sha'irs and, to a lesser extent, other mages will command genies and are more

likely to be genies' antagonists than their allies. Their gen and jann serve reluctantly and sometimes with open hostility. The wizards may go in search of the Seal of Al-Jafar, the Genie-Binder and the first sha'ir (see the *Book of Artifacts*).

Priests are more important than ever in Dark Arabia, since they can turn back some of the horrors. Though the Arabian priest kits will work, the priest-defender kit described next is specifically designed to search for and smite the foulest possible opponents.

New kits

Priest-defender

This non-hierarchical priest knows something about the dark forces of the ancient past and means to destroy them. He may have learned about them as part of a hierarchical order, then left on his own to combat these great evils, or he may have been a mystic of some kind who stumbled upon the knowledge by accident. Though he begins with little knowledge, he is always certain of his faith and his god's help. Unlike a paladin, a priest-defender depends on spells to win the day, not sheer strength of arms.

Weapon proficiencies: Bonus: none
Recommended: mace, staff.

Nonweapon proficiencies: Bonus: Ancient History, Reading/Writing; Recommended: Ancient Languages, Dark Lore (new proficiency, see later), Debate, Genie Lore, Religion, Spellcraft.

Equipment: Priest-defenders are usually equipped as warriors. Their armor and clothing is commonly embroidered, painted or inlaid with sacred verses, holy writings, and religious symbols.

Distinctive appearance: Priest-defenders care little for their appearance but maintain their tools devotedly.

Special benefits: This kit is aligned with the mamluks of the Vigilant (described later). After reaching 9th level, a priest-defender gains two 3rd-level mamluks and 10 1st-level faris as guards and helpers. If these followers die, the Vigilant may send others if the priest-defender seems to have done all he could to prevent the mamluks' deaths.

Like rangers, priest-defenders gain bonuses against a single type of foe, generally the campaign's chief villain. Against this opponent, the priest-defender's spells all operate at maximum effectiveness. The foe could be anything from sahuagin to yak-men to efreet to the Brotherhood of True Flame.

Magical abilities: Priest-defenders gain spells from the following spheres as priests:

Major access: All, Charm, Combat, Guardian, Healing, Protection, Wards (from the *Tome of Magic*); **Minor access:** Divination, Elemental, Necromantic, Sun.

Forbidden: All others, except spells that overlap one or more spheres.

Turning Undead: A priest-defender can turn undead as a standard cleric of the

same level, and also can turn genies. A priest-defender turns genies as undead of equivalent hit dice. To keep this ability, the priest must not associate with genies and must uphold two or more vows determined by the DM (perhaps fasting twice each week, chastity, silence, poverty, celibacy, preaching to the un-Enlightened and the impious each day, or wandering Zskhara, never settling down). If there is a sha'ir in the PC party, the resulting tension can make for some very interesting role-playing—or it can lead to trouble all around. The priest and the sha'ir may engage in a party power struggle, resulting in bad feelings among the players. To avoid this, before these two characters meet, any party with both a priest-defender and a sha'ir PC should be required to explain why these two will tolerate each other and go adventuring together.

Special hindrances: The priest-defender is driven to exterminate evil, and cannot rest from his labors and vigilance.

The priest-defender may never build a temple or stronghold, though the most charismatic may attract an entourage of hundreds of followers. After 9th level, the henchmen and followers of a priest-defender require no pay, as they serve out of faith and love.

Wealth options: Priest-defenders must spend all available funds on seeking out and destroying agents of darkness.

Races: Members of any race may be priest-defenders, though dwarves and humans seem especially drawn to this profession.

Dark Lore

1 slot, Intelligence -3

The Dark Lore proficiency gives the PC a wide-ranging knowledge of the nature of the dark powers of the deserts, peaks, and oceans, and the charms and rituals that can hold them at bay. A priest with this proficiency gains minor access to the Protection sphere of spells, even if he is otherwise not entitled to it, and gains major access to it if he already has minor access. Other characters gain knowledge of which spells and magical items can fend off which monsters.

With a successful proficiency check, the character knows how to bribe, avert, or ward off a particular type of supernatural creature. He knows the weaknesses and abilities of most supernatural, evil monsters (not including the genies). He also knows their customs, their likes and dislikes, and their enemies, improving the PC's bribery, haggling, and reaction rolls by +2.

With powerful creatures of darkness (more HD than the PC has levels), the DM should roll the skill check. The skill still provides the nature of their weakness, if any—but on a failed check the supposed knowledge is completely false, and perhaps even makes the creature stronger.

This proficiency does not provide any

detailed knowledge of genies; the Genie Lore proficiency provides that.

Sungazer

This mage derives his power from the dark forces of the ancient past, which gives him the means to destroy them. Unfortunately, the price for this specialization in long-forgotten summoning, protection, and warding spells is that the sungazer slowly goes insane.

Weapon proficiencies: Bonus: none; Recommended: jambiya, staff.

Nonweapon proficiencies: Bonus: Ancient History, Dark Lore; Recommended: Reading/Writing, Genie Lore, Spellcraft.

Equipment: The sungazer needs spell books like most other wizards.

Distinctive appearance: Sungazers wear the dark robes of a qadi, and their beards run long like an imam's. As they grow progressively wilder and closer to insanity, their eyes become tinged with red or yellow.

Special benefits: The sungazer can communicate with all supernatural creatures as if by a *comprehend languages* spell. Once per day, he can sense the presence of evil. This functions much like a paladin's ability to *detect evil* but does not require concentration. The first time the sungazer comes in contact with sufficiently powerful evil (with more HD than the sungazer has levels), a cold chill runs up his spine. If he encounters such creatures more than once a day, there is no warning the second time.

Magical abilities: All sungazer protection spells (such as *armor*, *protection from evil*, *abjure*) reduce damage suffered from attacks by creatures of darkness by -1 per six levels of ability.

Special hindrances: The sungazer mage is both drawn to dark knowledge and repelled by it; part of him is tainted with corruption though he still resists it. A sungazer suffers a -2 penalty to saving throws against all magical effects cast by evil supernatural creatures.

For each warding a sungazer learns, he must make a saving throw versus death magic (Wisdom adjustments apply). If he fails, he loses a point of Wisdom, and when his wisdom falls below 3, he loses his sanity and falls under DM control.

Wealth options: Sungazers are rarely interested in wealth except as a means to an end, namely more knowledge.

Races: Only goblins and humans can be sungazers (see the *City of Delights* boxed set for details on goblin mages).

Other kits

Other possible Dark Arabian kits include paladins who take the faris kit (normally not allowed in Zakhara) and rogues who become tomb robbers. The tomb robber kit allows the same abilities as the burglar kit, applied to trapped mausoleums and underground tombs.

Though paladins are normally not native

to Zakhara, in Dark Arabia they are allowed as members of the faris kit because the Dark Arabian faris act as defenders of mankind as well as defenders of the faith. Existing faris may gain paladin powers if they are pure-hearted, lawful good, and willing to undertake a difficult quest to gain this status (perhaps to recover the bones of a saint or a scrap of the robe of the Loregiver).

Paladins and other faris are allied with a new order of mamluks dedicated to the extermination of evil creatures beyond the Enlightened lands. Called "abd-Haris," or the Vigilant, this mamluk society is based in the frontier regions of Zakhara, including the Free Cities, the Ruined Kingdoms, and the Crowded Sea. The Vigilant cover up the existence of the forces of darkness, to protect the innocent from things that would only terrify them. They also hide the darkness to keep evil knowledge away from those who might seek to learn more.

A new tomb-robber kit for rogues gives them an edge with the ancient traps, wardings, and writings of pre-human history. These tomb-robbers have a working knowledge of the mechanics and society of the ancients, as opposed to the arcane knowledge of the mad mage kit or the protective bonuses of the priest-defender and faris.

Swords forged of light

The heroes may find ancient talismans, holy writings, or shrines that grant them knowledge and power over the servants of evil. These items may be standard ones, like an *amulet of proof against detection and location* or a *gem of true seeing*, semistandard ones like a *fez of nondetection* or completely new warding talismans. New items could include items from the *Tome of Magic*, items from one of the AL-QADIM sourceboxes, items grounded in Arabian folklore, or items of the DM's creation. A few suggestions include a scimitar that warns the owner of danger, a flying mechanomagical mount called the Flying Horse of King Sabur, or a helm that allows the wearer to speak the languages of animals.

Many of these items were made before the time of man, by giants, genies, or other elder powers. As a result, the lore that bards and mystics know can be invaluable in determining the powers, curses, and command words of such items.

Giving each PC a minor magical item to start will give them an extra edge and can give you hooks for future plot threads. For instance, a *dagger +1* can begin showing signs of empathy, then telepathy, and finally a full-blown knowledge of a special foe such as sea monsters, efreets, ghuls, or sha'irs.

United against the unknown

The PCs will need more than just powerful magical items to win out over cannibal lamia, deranged marid, and corrupted mages. Allies like asuras, lammasu, ser-

pent lords, or wise nagas may be critical sources of information in the hostile Dark Arabian setting. The PCs should have to work to gain an ally, and work to protect him, otherwise they may not appreciate an ally's help. They even may be required to undertake missions and chores for the ally in exchange for his knowledge and protection. If the NPC is obviously more powerful than the PCs and willing to share his learning, he can become an oasis of calm and sanity the PCs can return to again and again. To help preserve that sense of safety, it is best if the NPC lives either far from civilization or in a forgotten or magically hidden corner within it. For instance, an alcove in a shrine to Hajama may have a secret warding that keeps out everyone except the god's faithful followers—including the lammasu who watches over the mosque and guides his priests.

Spirit powers

Given the dire threats they will face, consider giving player characters a few entirely new talents and abilities. If you have access to the *Complete Psionics Handbook*, allowing mid- or high-level PCs to gain "wild talents" is an excellent way to reward good play. If their ally is a shedu or lammasu, these new powers can be explained as rare mental disciplines known only to a few special mages. If some less magical creature is their mentor, the powers could be the benefits that Fate bestows on those who live a pure, brave, and generous life. For characters who have already dabbled in forbidden knowledge, some of these skills may be granted to them from their increased learning. However, PC psionics should not be allowed and these power's should not be referred to as psionic powers, because psionics do not have any place within the Arabian milieu. Call them spirit powers, and roll once on the following table or assign one appropriate power to each player character.

Spirit powers table

1d100 Power

Clairsentience

| | |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| 01-03 | Danger Sense |
| 04-06 | 'Spirit Sense (including genies) |
| 07 | Aura Sight |
| 08 | Object Reading |
| 09 | Sensitivity to Psychic Impressions |

Psychokinetic

| | |
|-------|----------------|
| 10-12 | Animate Shadow |
| 13-15 | Control Flames |
| 16-18 | Control Light |
| 19-21 | Control Sound |
| 22-24 | Control Wind |
| 25-27 | Levitation |
| 28 | Project Force |

Psychometabolic

| | |
|-------|--------------|
| 29-31 | Aging |
| 32-34 | Body Control |
| 35-37 | Catfall |

| | |
|-------|--------------------|
| 38-40 | Enhanced Strength |
| 41-43 | Immovability |
| 44-46 | Lend Health |
| 47-49 | Mind Over Body |
| 50 | Animal Affinity |
| 51 | Energy Containment |
| 52 | Shadow-form |

Telepathic

| | |
|-------|---------------|
| 53-55 | Attraction |
| 56-58 | Aversion |
| 59-61 | Awe |
| 62-64 | Send Thoughts |
| 65-67 | Truthhear |
| 68 | Fate Link |

Psychoportive

| | |
|-------|-----------------------------|
| 69-71 | Dimensional Door |
| 72-74 | Dream Travel |
| 75 | Banishment |
| 76 | Summon Planar Creature |
| 77-78 | Choose any Clairsentience |
| 79-80 | Choose any Psychokinetic |
| 81-82 | Choose any Psychometabolic |
| 83-84 | Choose any Telepathic |
| 85-86 | Choose any Psychoportive |
| 87-90 | Roll twice |
| 91-92 | Roll three times |
| 93-97 | Choose any one spirit power |
| 98-99 | Choose any two powers |
| 00 | Choose any three powers |

Things that lurk and slink

Many monsters fit the flavor of the Dark Arabian setting, including many from the *Monstrous Compendium* appendixes. A selection of the most appropriate creatures are listed in the sidebar. As the list shows, the creatures for this campaign are more powerful than usual.

Many friendly or at least harmless monsters can be modified to match a dark tone. For instance, in Dark Arabia, genies are rarely benign. As masters of the elements, all Dark Arabian genies except the jann worship the Elemental Princes of Evil and act accordingly. Djinn and jann are neutral or hostile rather than potential allies, and marid are terrifying horrors of the ocean, exacting tribute and delighting in destroying fleets. The efreet empire extends into human lands, where it gathers servants and tribute; to further increase their reach, they could be allied with the Brotherhood of True Flame, who are also secretly worshipers of Kossuth, the god of elemental fire.

Not only the genies are changed in Dark Arabia, human societies are also different. They are less tolerant and less open, though many races still mingle and all realize that they must race threats to their homeland together. But each seeks its own primacy over others, and none of them pay more than lip service to the Grand Caliph.

The mamluk societies have their own agenda, including taking power from the caliphs and substituting their own bureaucratic rule. Their lust for power is much larger and more overt than the timid plot-

ting of the Qudrans. As a result, open war exists between the cities, and the Grand Caliph is not only sterile, but an ineffectual ruler as well. The Pantheon is one of the few areas presenting a united front against the forces that threaten mankind. The other is the Northern Cities, half of which are in the hands of the mamluks.

The holy slayers are deeply affected by the changes of Dark Arabia. Though they may pretend adherence to the Law of the Loregiver, in fact most assassin societies serve darker forces like the Forgotten Gods (especially Raggara, Lotha, and Migal), the Gods of the Crowded Sea, the Wild Gods, or the Cold Gods of the Elements. The true powers behind the holy slayers could be quite a surprise—for example, the burnt drow elves behind Lotha, the crocodile-headed servants of Raggara, or the maelephants who make up the inner circle of the Lost One.

The holy slayers are especially dangerous because they always present themselves as something else, denying their true beliefs under their doctrine of *taqiy-ya*, which allows them to lie in the service of the faith. If their lies fail to deceive, those who learn the truth about the holy slayers' worship of forbidden gods are ruthlessly hunted down and exterminated.

Going underground

At first glance, underground adventures don't seem to fit the sunny worldview of the Zakharan campaign. Seafaring, desert treks as caravan guards, city mysteries, and intrigue in the court of the sultan are more likely alternatives for swashbuckling.

Although Zakhara may not have any lost dwarven kingdoms for underground explorations, there are many other options. The ruined kingdoms of Nog and Kadar are ripe territories for ancient tombs and still more ancient curses, where geomancers once ruled and some live on in dark tombs, hoping to rule again. "The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb" by Michael Shel in DUNGEON® Adventures issue #37 is easily adapted to this setting, simply by substituting geomancers for mud sorcerers and adding Arabian trappings, such as skeletons wearing turbans, fluid writing and images of camels engraved on the walls instead of glyphs and runes, and a silat replacing the annis.

Combining seagoing with the oppressive atmosphere of underground, seafarers could find the Underdark city of the aboleth or the lair of the Great Kraken, a lord of the sahuagin. Taking even a short trip by sea might require a sacrifice of gold or animals thrown overboard at certain points of the voyage.

Underground adventures need not all be combat-oriented, either. The rom could have an entire undiscovered civilization based in Qom, their home city deep underground. The secrets they hold from ancient times and their tomes of forgotten knowledge could be invaluable to adventurers closely pursued by forces of the

outer darkness. Getting permission to look at them or stealing them from the rom could be very difficult: What motivates an undead giant to be helpful?

The Underdark kingdoms of the yak-men beneath the World Pillar mountains are a rich site for high-level adventures. The connections to the Underdark, cities of enslaved humans and demihumans, and the enormous, oddly barren temples to the Forgotten Gods make the area deadly and give it a cold, bizarre atmosphere. The subtle skin-shifting powers of the yak-men make PCs nervous, since they will never know if one of the slaves they have rescued isn't really a yikaria under the skin. To increase the threat, yak-men should all be granted psionic abilities as wild talents, and their leaders should have 150 PSPs, two sciences, and five devotions. Yikarian priests should have access to the spheres of Thought and Warding from the *Tome of Magic*.

The Pit of the Ghuls is another good place for mid- to high-level adventures. The salt lakes, the mines, and the boneyards of the ghul cities are all eerie adventuring grounds. The City of the Ghul Lord could be a continual source of new opponents—reaching and exploring it can be the goal of an entire campaign.

And, of course, the mazes of the dao and the entire length of the Great Dismal Delve are ripe territory for powerful adventurers to explore, though the dangers are equally great. The dao are renowned for their riches, though their wealth is well-guarded. The Great Dismal Delve is home to dozens of creatures rarely seen elsewhere and the dao use of mercenaries, psionic allies, and secret police makes them ideal opponents. The Delve and the efreet's City of Brass are both excellent sites for high-level adventuring; both are further detailed in the *Secrets of the Lamp* sourcebox.

Sample plots & perils

Let's use some of the ideas presented above to construct a sample campaign, the "Venture Against the Great Kraken." The PCs choose to play a party of seafarers from the Free Cities: two corsairs, a sea mage, a faris of Hakiya, and a hakima.

In the beginning, their adventures are dangerous, but only mildly ominous. They fight off sahuagin attacks by night, slaving mamluks by day, and learn that a sha'ir's tower in the sea of Chaos has recently disappeared. Every time they pass through the Strait of Dawal, the captain throws a calf overboard. On special trips, he also lets a chest of coins splash into the sea.

In time, they begin to see clues come together: the eight-fingered hand "tattoo" that mars the scales of the sahuagin they slay—and, later, a rogue sea mage. By defeating a particularly large band of sahuagin, the PCs win the trust of a reef giant who becomes their mentor. The giant asks the PCs to investigate the slav-ers, who have been more active than usual

Creatures of Dark Arabia

The following list of typical monsters is not complete, but it is representative of the type of creatures appropriate in an AL-QADIM horror campaign. The abbreviations demote the creature's original source: AM = Assassin Mountain, AQ= MC13 ALQADIM™ appendix, CoD = *City of Delights*, DL = MC4 DRAGONLANCE® appendix, DS = DARK SUN* appendix, FF = MC14 FIEND FOLIO® appendix, FR1 = MC3 FORGOTTEN REALMS® appendix #1, FR2 = MC11 FORGOTTEN REALMS appendix #2, GH = MC5 GREYHAWK® appendix, GV = *Golden Voyages*, LoF = *Land of Fate* box, MM = *Monstrous Manual*, OP = MC8 Outer Planes appendix, Psi = *Complete Psionics Handbook*, RL = MC10 RAVENLOFT appendix, RK = *Ruined Kingdoms*, SJ1 = SPELLJAMMER® appendix #1, SJ2 = SPELLJAMMER appendix #2, SotL = *Secrets of the Lamp*.

Aboleth MM
Al-mi'raj FF
Ammut AQ
Ascallion FR1
Azer SotL

Baatezu (any) OP
Baku Psi
Bebilith OP
Bird maiden (swanmay) MM
Bullywug MM

Cloaker MM
Clockwork horror SJ1
Copper automaton AQ
Crabman MM
Crimson death mist MM
Crocodile, giant MM
Crypt servant CoD

Dao, Zakhara LoF
Dragonfly, giant (insect) MM
Dragonne MM
Dune stalker FF
Dwarf, zakhar DL

Elementals, lesser/greater DS
Eyewing MM

Fire falcon FF
Firenewt FR1
Fireshadow DL
Fractice SJ1

Gawwar samakat CoD
Gelatinous cube MM
Genie, tasked, deceiver AM
Ghost mount AQ
Ghoul lord RL
Ghul, great AQ
Giant, mountain MM
Gibbering moulder AM
Golem, bone MM
Golem, ash/sand DS
Golem, lightning FR2
Grippli MM
Grue (any) SotL

Hook horror MM
Hound, yeth GH

Iguana, giant GH
Invisible stalker MM
Intellect devourer MM
Iron cobra FF

Kenku MM
Kraken, Zakhara (New)
Kuo-toa MM

Living idol AQ
Lamia MM
Loxo FR2
Lycanthrope, werelion AQ
Lycanthrope, weretiger MM

Maelephant OP
Manscorpion MM
Manticore MM
Mara FR2
Mummy, greater MM

Necrophidius MM
Nightmare MM
Ogre, giant LoF
Pasari-niml CoD
Phoenix MM

Rakshasa MM
Rhaumbusun FR1
Rom AQ

Sahuagin MM
Salamander MM
Sandman AM
Sartani GV
Segarran RK
Shadow fiend RL
Shadow, slow GH
Singing tree CoD
Skeleton, giant MM
Skulk GH
Slaad (any) OP
Slithering tracker MM
Slug, giant MM
Son of Kyuss FF
Su-monster MM

Tabaxi MM
Take MM
Tanar'ri (any) OP
Tasloi MM
Tatalla CoD
Thought eater MM
Troll, desert MM

Wemic MM
Whale (Leviathan) MM
Wind walker AM
Wraith, sword GH

Xixchil SJ2

Yak-man LoF
Yuan-ti MM
Yuan-ti, histachii MM
Yugoloth MM

Zaratan MM
Zombie, sea MM

lately. The campaign against the slavers could go on for some time, and the heroes could be chartered by the pirates of Hama, finding the slavers' hidden anchorages and, at last, their base.

The slavers, in fact, are operating under the flag of a new pirate captain, a captain who has a hidden base of operations near Hama. The captain, oddly enough, also bears a black tattoo of the eight-fingered hand.

The slavers are sullyng the pirates' name by no longer selling just to Qudra; their largest slaves (ogres, humans, and perhaps even giants) go elsewhere. The slavers themselves do not know where their cargoes go, for evil jinn carry off the slaves they leave for their new customer on a desert island. If the PCs go, they will be carried off as well. If they stay around too long, prying into Things Better Left Alone, they are attacked by a holy slayer of Hakiya.

Someone beyond the pirates is organizing to destroy the corsairs of Hama, City of Chaos, someone who has power over the slavers, the sahuagin, and even the assassins. But who?

The PCs would be wise to investigate further before stepping onto the deserted island; chances are, they'll forge ahead. At the other end of a wild jinn ride is the deep-water atoll of a Zakhara kraken (described later), served by sahuagin priests and other slimy underlings. It plots and schemes far beneath the waves, hoping to rule the entire coast and stop all trade between Zakhara and the ajami. Though it rarely comes to the surface, the kraken can be summoned by three notes from an ancient gong. If the PCs fight the kraken's servants, either they or the servants may ring the gong, at which point wise PCs will run to fight another day.

Now the PCs must find out what weapons can destroy their unmasked enemy, from a tribe of primitive jungle elves or from the ruins of a lost city in Kadar destroyed by the kraken centuries ago. They may also find that they have other problems. Their old corsair friends may abandon them as unlucky, a newly-formed fellowship of sea mages may try to forcibly induct the PC mage into their ranks, and an attempt may be made on the life of their reef giant ally, requiring a rescue.

Once they know what they will need, the PCs must gather those tools. A harpoon tempered by efreit fire in the City of Brass and quenched in the sea water of the Citadel of Ten Thousand Pearls is prophesied to kill the kraken, a wand that protects the wielder from harm must be stolen from the kuo-toan monitors and assassins who guard it as a sacred treasure, and the wisdom of a distant marid who knows the secrets of the ocean depths and can summon another, even more horrible creature to devour the kraken and then return to the outer edges of the ocean. What price would a marid demand of mortals? That is a question left for you to answer.

Zakharan kraken

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| CLIMATE/TERRAIN: | Any marine |
| FREQUENCY: | Very rare |
| ORGANIZATION: | Solitary |
| ACTIVITY CYCLE: | Any |
| DIET: | Carnivore |
| INTELLIGENCE: | Genius (18) |
| TREASURE: | G, R, S (see text) |
| ALIGNMENT: | Any evil |
| NO. APPEARING: | |
| ARMOR CLASS: | -4/0/5 |
| MOVEMENT: | Sw 3, Jet 21 |
| HIT DICE: | 25 |
| THACO: | 5 |
| NO. OF ATTACKS: | 9 |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK: | 2-16 (x2), 2-12 (x6) and 5-30 |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS: | Spells, constrict, ink |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES: | Spells, jet |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE: | Standard |
| SIZE: | G (60' long, 100' tentacles) |
| MORALE: | Fearless (19-20) |
| XP VALUE: | 25,000 |

Zakharan Kraken are an albino race of air- and water-breathing squid-like creatures that dwell in the dark depths of the ocean. Once, they were smaller and lived in shallow coastal waters, where human worshippers served them and brought them sacrifices. Some upheaval in nature or possibly a battle with forces of good made the surviving monsters retreat to the depths. Although their number dwindled to a mere handful, the survivors grew huge and powerful. Kraken now seek to kill good creatures and to devour all life smaller than they. Kraken are aggressive hunters, able to battle even large sperm whales and win.

Combat: A kraken's tentacles are Armor Class 5. The body is protected by a thick and durable shell and has an armor class of 0. The head is AC -4, and attackers attempting to strike it suffer a +2 initiative penalty that round (to get past the tentacles). Tentacle damage is painful to a kraken but not fatal, as it can regenerate lost tentacles in a matter of weeks. Swimming forward it moves at a slow rate of 3, but jetting backward it travels at a rate of 21.

A kraken attacks with two barb-covered tentacles, six other tentacles, and a huge beak. A kraken uses at least two of its 10 tentacles to anchor and stabilize itself in combat. The barbed tentacles rake and draw prey to the beaked mouth. If the others hit, they wrap and constrict the prey, causing 2-12 points of damage on the second and each subsequent round. To escape, the tentacle must be severed (16 points of damage from a sharp weapon in a single blow). Each tentacle hit impairs the victim: roll 1d4. A character who is constricted may have one arm (1 = left or 2 = right), no arms (3), or both arms (4) pinned.

If three or more of its tentacles are severed, the creature will immediately retreat. Its 80' x 80' x 120' ink cloud is poisonous for 2-5 rounds, until diluted by the sea water. Creatures exposed to the sepia ink suffer 1-6 points of damage per round (no saving throw). Meanwhile, the kraken jets backward to its lair.

Kraken can create *airy water* in a sphere 130' across or a hemisphere 260' across for one day. They can use the following powers at will: *faerie fire* for 8 hours, *control temperature* in a 400' radius for one day, *control winds* once per day, *weather summoning* once per day, and *animal (fish) summoning* III three times per day.

Kraken often attack ships to drag them down. Larger than the largest squid, a kraken can drag vessels up to 60' long under the waves. Larger ships are dragged to a halt in five rounds. If a kraken can grasp the ship with six or more tentacles for three



consecutive rounds during an attack, the vessel suffers damage as if it had been rammed. It then takes on water, and within 2-8 rounds the ship will have lost enough buoyancy so that the kraken can easily drag it under.

Habitat/Society: Kraken are solitary creatures except during mating season, which coincides with the monsoons. At this time the kraken gather in the deepest trenches of the ocean, where they leave their eggs to hatch.

Some kraken maintain air-filled cavern complexes where they keep and breed human slaves to serve and feed them. The kraken stock these undersea dungeons by using wind and weather to bring vessels to the area. Such lairs have treasure type A in addition to the treasure indicated above.

Ambitious kraken make pacts with sahuagin or ixitxachitl, agreeing not to destroy them in exchange for their servitude and tribute. These kraken use their servants to strike against shipping and coastal cities.

Ecology: Zakharan kraken prey on whales, giant squid and octopi, and occasionally young zaratan. They especially hate the aboleth, whom they consider unnatural upstarts. They have no natural enemies, though some legends say that rocs will eat young kraken basking near the surface of the ocean, and the marid hunt them for sport. ☐