

Excerpt from *King Abdullah's Tomb*

From behind the big urn with the Medusa head, someone peeked out. His cloak left only a black and seemingly empty space where the face should be. A cold hand clutched my stomach and closed in a tight fist. Was that Mohamed? Was that Osama? It had to be one or the other.

Lawrence appeared at the entrance to the magnificent building. "What are you up to, Lieutenant?"

He started down the pathway with the grace and swiftness of a mountain lion. From behind the Medusa something flashed in the sun and edged outward. It glinted and glowed, pointed downward at an angle. Its barrel was aimed toward Lawrence. It kept moving ever so slightly as he strode toward me all unawares.

"Lawrence, watch out!" I jabbed my finger in the air in the direction of the Medusa. "Get down!"

Lawrence fell and rolled almost at the same moment that the shot went off. I fired back while dashing toward him, forgetting my own safety on the rocks. I hunkered down as close to the ground as possible. At the same time several Bedouins converged on *ElOrens*. They tackled him in their anxiousness to be the first to aid him.

"Don't worry about me," Lawrence held his arm and winced, "somebody misfired, that's all." He took a cloth and bandaged his own arm. One of the Bedouins helped the *shereef*.

"Lawrence!" I crouched next to him and whispered into his ear. "What did I tell you? They're after you. I heard them say that they wanted to kill both you and me. They've been hired as assassins by some