



Beyond the Shroud

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Story Synopsis

Written by award-winning author, V. M. Jones, *Beyond the Shroud* is the second book in a new series of four – *The Karazan Quartet*. Karazan is an imaginative world created by computer genius Quentin Quested – **Q**. He has been able to develop his computer games to the stage where the world of Karazan is no longer fictitious, but exists in parallel to our own world, but in another dimension.

Adam Equinox, aged 12, is the main character of the story. In the first of the series (*The Serpents of Arakesh*), Adam and four other children enter the world of Karazan and return with a phial of the balm of healing, which saves the life of Hannah – **Q**'s daughter, who was dying of cancer.

When Adam returns to spend the holidays with **Q** he finds that Hannah has disappeared into the world of Karazan to try and recover her pet cat, left behind on the previous visit. Adam and his friends realise Hannah could be in terrible danger and upon re-entering Karazan – find she has been captured by the evil King Karazeel.

In the action-packed adventure, two new elements are added. Weevil, a sinister new boy (and computer hacker) who arrives at the orphanage, 'hacks' his way into Karazan. Adam can see nothing but trouble from this development. **Q**, as an adult, is still unable to enter Karazan, but warns the five friends that the parallel world he has created may have evolved, and they should expect the unexpected.

Beyond the Shroud continues the character development of Adam, his leadership qualities and growing self esteem. As the adventure unfolds, the five friends find the trust and admiration each has for the other, steadily grows. This is skillfully woven into the story.

Motivating Students

- Tell students that:
 - *Beyond the Shroud* is an exciting adventure story set in the computer generated world of Karazan.
 - It is the second book in a series of four and follows on from *The Serpents of Arakesh*.
- Have students who have read *The Serpents of Arakesh* share their knowledge of the story with the class.
- To introduce the characters and the setting of *Beyond the Shroud*, read *The Serpents of Arakesh Chapter Summary* to the class over a period of a week.

Chapter Summary is included 1 per bag as an insert in this issue of starters & strategies. Chapter Summary can also be downloaded at: www.teachingonline.org/arakesh.html

- Have students speculate on possible reasons Adam and his friends would have for going back to Karazan.

Beyond the Shroud Activities

- Introduce the idea of sequels. Have students list books and films they know that have sequels. Do students think it is necessary to have read the first book in this series before starting the sequel?
- Have students re-read pages 12-17. What examples can they find of how the author has overcome the problems for a first-time reader of the series? What have they found out about the characters and the setting?
- Discuss the changes that have taken place in Adam since the first adventure. Have students make a comparison chart of how he saw himself before and how he sees himself now.
- Locate incidents in the story that allow each of the five friends to demonstrate special skills or attributes. How do these contribute to their friendship?
- Speculate on the fate of Weevil, who is left in Karazan. What part could he play in the next book?
- Introduce the concept of natural evolution. Why did **Q** warn Adam and the friends about this possibility?
- What reasons can students give for Adam being filled with dread about **Q**'s forthcoming release of his next computer game? What features would they include to help change the way Karazan has evolved?