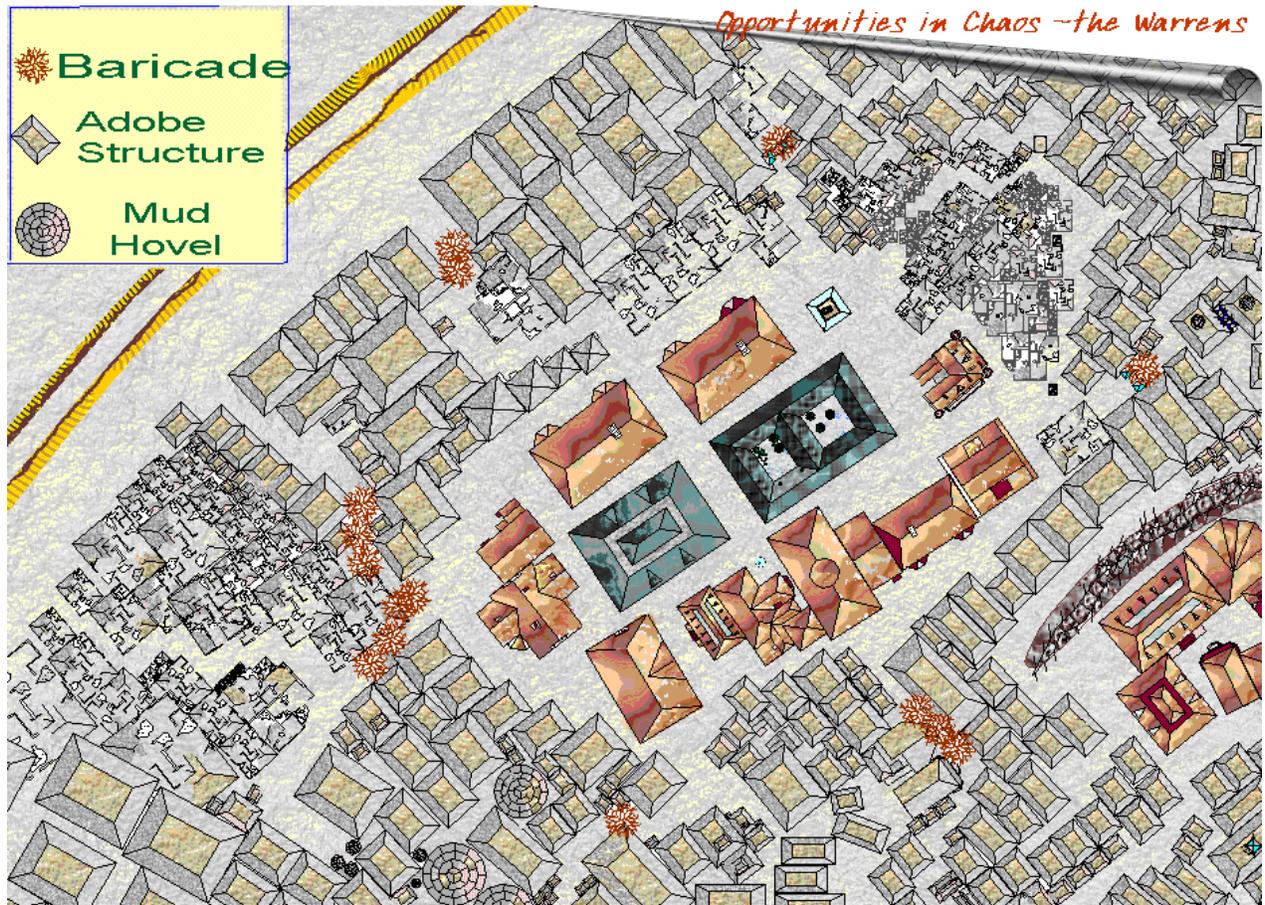


OPPORTUNITIES IN CHAOS – BY BRAX



This adventure is set in the Warrens of the Athasian City-State of Tyr, amid the chaos immediately following Kalak's overthrow and demise. It is designed for three to five PCs of third to fifth level, at least two of whom should be rogues, preservers, priests, or psionists. "Opportunities" works best if used as a sequel to David Cook's excellent *Freedom* flip-book module. Note that this is an adventure outline, designed to give DMs ideas. DMs should develop appropriate stats, opponents, NPCs, and encounters.

Background:

During the construction of Kalak's infamous ziggurat, hundreds of slaves worked and lived under inhuman treatment and conditions. The strongest and cleverest slaves banded together in gangs for survival, usually robbing slaves weaker, slower, or with less allies than themselves. An earth cleric named Granj (an NPC

from Freedom that I am taking the liberty of developing), headed a less notorious but eventually more powerful sort of band, where members pooled resources, skills, and influence for survival.

Templars and guards who mistreated members of Granj's band found their projects sabotaged and behind schedule, no matter how much they whipped their slaves. On the other hand, overseers that saw that band members got more and better rations, found that projects under their supervision were quickly and well-completed . . . and a templar's sure ticket to promotion has always been the good work of his/her underlings. Granj's band quickly became one of most powerful and exclusive of the slave gangs. Granj's tactics reflect his philosophy of patience and order. In a conference (which the PCs may have participated in, in the Freedom module) with other leaders of slave bands, Granj advocated "continued patience," while others urged for violent escape or revolution.

Immediately after the fateful day of Kalak's demise, Tithian's ascension, and the emancipation of all Tyrian slaves, many slave bands stayed together for protection, tied together by loyalty, greed, or common purpose. These bands follow tendencies of many slave tribes (see Dark Sun supplement): a powerful leader, a militaristic organization, a strong distrust of templars, wizards, and anyone who has never been a slave, etc. Compared to their wilderness counterparts, "Urban slave tribes" tend to be more suspicious and less helpful of other freed slaves.

While chaos reigns in most of Tyr, Granj is determined to create a peaceful enclave.

In the first evening of freedom, Granj led his band to seize a small, defensible neighborhood (and its precious well) in the Warrens. The band is quickly renovating "Granj's Ward," and making it defensible.

Granj's band has barricaded most streets into the area, and they diligently patrol the rooftops, fully expecting an attack from templars, other slave gangs, or the allies of the two local noble families whose townhouse granaries that the band regularly pillages.



A mid-level defiler named Xantippe, fearing the backlash against the late Kalak's lackeys, has retreated to her tower in the main square of what has become Granj's Ward. When Granj's band came to her door to demand food, a well-placed lightning bolt made clear Xantippe's desire to be left alone; Granj has since ordered that no one is to approach within 50' of Xantippe's tower or hinder her two apprentices who come to fetch water from the well.

For days, Granj and Xantippe's policy of ignoring each other has worked out well for both sides.

Like many shadier interest groups, Tyr's Veiled Alliance is taking advantage of the chaos to strike at known enemies. As a known defiler in the service of the Tyrian Bureau of Security, Xantippe was naturally high on the Alliance "hit list." Hence the foolish and fatal aerial assault on Xantippe's tower, which to Granj's Ward looked like a short but terrifying lightning storm (all the more reason to keep Granj's orders and leave the witch to her devices.)

The Instructions:

Alliance mindbenders mindlink with a surviving Alliance mage, who Xantippe apparently has polymorphed into a white rooster—fortunately he has kept his own mind. The Veiled Alliance recruits or hires the PCs to infiltrate Granj's Ward, break into the Tower, and rescue the rooster/mage. If they must battle the defilers, PCs should try to capture the apprentices alive: they are young and may be convinced by the Alliance to change their ways. Xantippe herself is considered beyond redemption and must be killed if she has any chance of identifying the PCs. Xantippe has powerful templar allies in the Bureau of Security; if PCs kill her, they must burn the tower to the ground and eliminate all clues. Secrecy is the Alliance's prime directive: no one must know what the PCs have done.

The Mission:

Even reaching Granj's ward will be difficult. Each district has fallen either to chaos or to paranoia. The latter districts are the luckiest: mercenaries or armed vigilantes prowl behind barricades and from the tops of houses. Districts unable to band together (such as most areas in the Warrens) suffer burglary, arson, looting, and worse. On the way to Granj's ward, PCs will have the opportunity to help several NPCs in need, who may later in turn help the PCs.

Once PCs reach one of Granj's Ward they must either sneak in (possible but very difficult), or convince Granj's band to accept them as members of their community. The latter will be easier if the PCs are freed slaves. NPC ex-slaves that PCs have helped in the past may show up here to vouch for them. Each PC must prove his/her value to the community, and are expected to immediately take on heavy work responsibilities:

Granj Band Duties:

Firefighting.

Two fires in the city endanger Granj's Ward (see map at right). Granj orders buildings knocked down beyond the South-East barricades, which successfully prevents the fire from spreading to the Ward. In the North-East portion of the ward, fires run rampant, burning down an entire block.

Cleanup.

Abandoned houses (a legacy of Kalak's slave-acquiring days) and grim slave-quarters need to be prepared for the newly freed members of Granj's Band.

Guard Duty.

Granj's guards watch for intruders from the rooftops, and selectively allow "petitioners" from the outside in. If things get boring, perhaps allies of the beleaguered Noble House entrapped within the Ward will attempt an attack across the rooftops to the East. (20-30 mercenaries gather in the dry riverbed before rushing the adobe walls.

Once every two hours, Granj and his lieutenant look over the petitioners for membership in the band. There is a 50% chance that any given petitioners (including PCs) will be examined magically (Granj is an Earth Cleric) or psionicist.

PCs are assigned different duties and shifts, and have to use imagination to even communicate their plans without attracting Granj's suspicion. Innocuously sneaking away together to raid Xantippe's tower, while avoiding the attention of Granj's roof-guard, may take more player ingenuity than the raid itself.

Fulfilling the Mission:



The 30'-square, four-story tower has illusionary walls, magical locks, and one deadly but obvious trap. PCs may be able to fulfill the mission without doing combat, but most likely eventually rouse the eighth-level defiler and her two first-level apprentices.

If PCs are clever, the battle will be on their own terms. Xantippe stocks deadly spells, but initially pulls punches to avoid damaging her modest library. If pressed, she will let loose lightning bolts, planning to use her *wand of flame extinguishing* to protect herself, her library and her home. An evil sentient psionic bracelet

empowered by the late Kalak himself shields Xantippe's mind from and also retaliates against psionic attack.

Rewards and Consequences:

In exchange for the rooster, the Alliance gives the party 100 sp and one potion per PC. The grateful rooster/mage may return the favor at an opportune future time e.g., when the PCs need rescuing. The Alliance also pays 50 sp for each captured defiler apprentice turned over to them alive. If PCs defeat Xantippe, they may keep her wand but are encouraged to give the psionic bracelet and defiling spellbooks to the Alliance—good-aligned PCs may find these more of a liability than an asset, anyway. If PCs have been "discrete" (a quality well-regarded by the Alliance), they receive level training and identify spell castings free of charge. Discrete PCs may also be recruited for future alliance missions.

If PCs have left clues or witnesses, they earn powerful enemies and should probably leave Tyr until they themselves are much more powerful. Even then, they should watch their backs.