



## ADVENTURES

# Cave Horror

By: [Teos Abadia](#)  
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So, I am showering this morning before going to work, and I find myself (despite being about ten minutes late already) wondering how I could give an example of what an interesting super-being would be to me. See, I don't often go for the super-being at the bottom of the dungeon. There's only so much "incomprehensible horror" you can pack into a creature before players mental circuits are overloaded and it becomes "just another big creature the DM threw at me."

So here is an example of what I would think would be an awesome challenge of a creature:

The party is on a trek through the desert, and they are having an uneventful trek. At some point, you inform one of the players that she "smells something like almonds." (Or an Athasian herb or spice or nut). If the player asks anything, say "you no longer smell the smell anymore, and you don't recall." (questions might be where the smell came from, etc.).

Periodically, about once a day, have another character have this happen to them. Leave only one character (chosen wisely; I recommend a fighter) NOT smell the "almonds" over the trip. Shrug any questions off, and add the usual excitement over the trip (interesting rock formation, empty cave, dead body, minor wandering monster, etc. You

don't want the trip to be three game minutes long with all three minutes being about the smells they experience over six days of travel!).

No matter what, have the trip last an extra day past the day where everyone in the party (except one) has experienced the brief smell of almonds.

The PCs then reach their destination, which hopefully was for another reason. (Such as a supply run for a merchant house). I would suggest having a future adventure already planned (like the merchant warned the party that a competitor might try and steal the item, and the competitor steals the item the first night they get into town, giving the party something to do.. make sure this plot hook can allow for the two day adventure I am about to suggest. In the merchant story, have the competitor leave behind a clue that the party can follow after they finish dealing with the source of the smell.) (if you use the merchant story, have the merchant give them a map, telling them of a shortcut he discovered that no one seems to use). The purpose of this other plot is to add to the drama, to make the coming events seem less planned, and to make the later adventure more urgent. Never confine yourself to just one plot line (You don't see Seinfeld do that, do you?).

It is likely that the party will mention the smell they experienced to the villagers. If they don't, have the village leader give them a tour of the village. The party won't help but notice the huge graveyard, and the oldest tombstones are marked with pictures of almonds and a warding symbols (non-magical).

When they ask, the villagers recoil in horror. They will ask questions (when did this happen, where, when was the last time someone smelled, who was the person who did not smell the smell, etc.). They will then share what they know. Here is the whole truth, and you can decide what to reveal:

The party has been infected by a parasite. This parasite has not struck in a long time, over two generations. Some in the village even thought the thing did not exist. The thing lives in an area that no villager enters (which is where the party came from). It attacks one person, called the host, then spreads to everyone nearby. This is when the thing tries to spread far and wide. If it meets no new creatures for one day, it then enters the next stage, and will no longer be "communicable." The

villagers know that once a day passes, everyone is safe from being infected.

Infections and hosts have interesting things happen to them. the creature lives in the host, but does not affect it until the end. What it does is use the other infected bodies (everyone that smelled the almonds) to increase its strength. This eventually kills the infected creatures. The host grows stronger, and the host undergoes a transformation. The transformed creature then sets about hunting other creatures, usually of the kind of creature it used to be, and from a nearby locale. It feeds in a way that gathers the energy of the dead and stores it. It will usually kill hundreds of beings before leaving the area to disappear. Generations later, the infection might happen again.

Details: The infected players (smelled almonds) will grow weak, losing consciousness often and wanting to rest. in game terms, they can not fight except once every ten rounds! They can move only at 1/3 rate and are similarly slow and lethargic in anything they attempt. This occurs one day after the last feeding day. Feeding is through constitution points, lost each night as a ratio of the total each creature has. So, if you want the adventure to last two more days, have each player lose half of its constitution points each night.

The host player gains a certain number of points each day, and I'll leave it up to you how the player is enhanced. You might raise constitution, or several abilities, or assign minor powers, perhaps psionic, that the host gets.

Now, the host (that didn't smell anything), get this, is still under the control of the player. What's even more interesting is that the other players (the infected that smelled the almonds) are in constant mental communication (no PSP drain) with the host. distance is not a factor.

The only detrimental effects are that every five hours, the host will have to eat some raw meat, preferably but not absolutely necessarily of its own kind. The infected will know what happened, but will be afraid to tell anyone due to their being a part of the crime.

In the village, this is what happened two centuries ago: A hunting party ignored the warnings and went into that area. There were three of them. Two became infected, and they were far enough away from the village that two days passed before they reached town. Upon arrival, the

infected were very lethargic, and the village elder tried to heal them. meanwhile, the host hid, and every five hours emerged to kill a villager and eat it. The infected were mortified, but only on the third day did they reveal that they had seen (through the host's own eyes) the host kill the missing villagers. They were ashamed, but said they two had helped catch and eat the villagers, lending their strength to the efforts of the host. In fact, they said the efforts of the town elder to heal them had helped them provide the host with their own power more often. The infected died shortly after revealing this. The villagers then gathered to find and kill the host, but it was too late. they found that the host had become a horrible creature, and it ate a hundred of the villagers before it dissapeared. The bodies it left behind were dry husks, and the village was held to be cursed by any that heard its story. The village shrank in size and lost almost all trade to it. The villagers did their best to forget the tale, and in just two generations, most have forgotten, but not all.

So, now, the village elder (a new one, grandson of the last one) will share this lore in an attempt to solve this problem once and for all. See, the willage elder knows something the first elder did not. The village elder is a dwarf, and it has been the dwarf's focus to study the phenomena and prevent the village from being destroyed again. The elder has discovered the source of the parasite.

Back to the details: The host, in however many days you decide, will reach the birth stage and transform into a hideous monster. I'll leave it up to you to decide the monster's appearance and powers. Don't make it invulnerable, but make it so it could kill a hundred willagers (many non-fighters and children, but still it would have to have powers of stealth and attack to take out at least 30 strong women and men).

Once it has eaten the hundred, it will retire to a great big cave located within the area where the villagers never go. In this cave lies the actual creature. The actual creature is non-motile, or at least should be unable to leave the area (perhaps it is too big, perhaps attuned to the area in a way that prevents it from leaving. maybe it has a weakness that prevents it from travelling (exposure to moisture, exposure to sunlight, whatever). The creature lies dormant most of the time. Then, every 150-250 years, it sends out its "eggs" which are minute spores invisible to the naked eye, and attracted to living creatures. Each spore is in fact linked, and they are aware of each other in a way. Only humanoid creatures are possible candidates. Any other creature is not affected. The minute creature enters through the nose, slowly entering the brain.

Once one creature has been affected, all other spores die, lending their power to the one successful spore.

The spore slowly takes over the host, without alerting the host of anything. It then infects other nearby beings, up to two per day. The infection of these other beings is less subtle than the first invasion, as the spore has begun evolving and focusing its talents on other needs (like growth and learning about the host's body). To infect another body, the spore will send a part of itself out through the host's nose and into the nose and then brain of the creature to be infected. Because the spore has already evolved, its attack is not so subtle, and would cause a great deal of pain when it enters the brain. To cover up this pain, the spore-part focuses a powerful psionic illusion on the creature to be infected. This effect causes the creature to feel an intense smell rather than notice the invasion. In effect, all the creature experiences is the smell of almonds.

The host feeds off of the infected bodies as described before, but may also call on the infected bodies for help. It may call on each infected person once. Effectively, the host can use any of the powers that infected person has, for a duration of four rounds.

Once the host has killed the infected, it transforms. Then it kills 100, then goes back to the cave, where the real creature eats the transformed host and consumes all the energy it needs to go back to sleep for 200 years. It eats only life energy, which it is highly efficient at gathering and consuming.

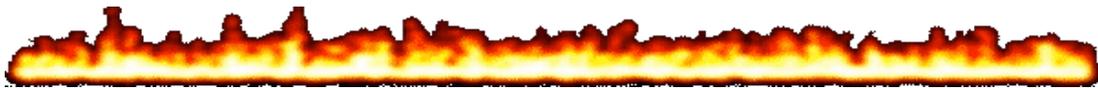
Okay here is the adventure: The elder explains that he has discovered, by looking at ancient lore found in nearby ruins, that the parasite has appeared before, and that in one case a few of the people from the town where it struck managed to follow the creature (transformed host) to a cave. The people entered only to find a "great horror" and two of their warriors were killed before they retreated. The host never attacked again, so they never went back to the cave.

The elder thinks that some answer may lie in the cave. It proposes to send the host to the cave, as it may be the best to confront the danger. It will go alone, since the host would want to feed on anyone that went with the host on this adventure. The villagers will give the host lots of animal meat to make it through the next two days. Also, the host will be

able to call on the powers of the party, calling on each once for four rounds.

What I would do as a DM is design the adventure so that it tested the entire party's working together under intense pressure. They would have to carefully consider each challenge, and decide when to gain the powers of another party member (knowing the powers could only be tapped once). Allow players to plan and discuss options, as they essentially can share minds due to the link between the host and the infected. The host gains any power and can temporarily use the infected creature's HP and PSPs or spells, but no items. You might allow dexterity bonuses to carry over, but no protective devices. I would plan the challenges carefully to fit what the party could overcome, giving challenges that matched the different powers the host could call on. In a happy ending, the host would reach the cave, breach any defenses, and defeat the actual creature.

So, there is my idea for a super creature. Obviously, it needs a lot of fleshing out and some of this I would really change. If anyone does flesh this out, please send me whatever your final version looks like, as I may want to use this some day. After all, I got to work rather late today, and I would like this to be of use to someone!



## Convention Adventure

By: [Teos Abadia](#)  
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I ran a Dark Sun adventure at a small convention in Philly last weekend, and I had no idea what my players would be like. I ended up using a similar technique to what Brax advocates. I'll share the adventure and the logic behind it.

I expected gamers with very different backgrounds and level of familiarity with Dark Sun. I pre-made characters, but chose two gladiators (easy and powerful) and a wide variety of other character classes to meet anyone's needs. Almost all (psionicists excluded) were

very easy to learn. I don't normally use pregens, unless it is as an intro adventure, which this was.

Here's the plot: I told them they were from a small village in the mountains near Nibenay. They had lived in the village all their lives, and they all knew each other. As a result, they were different than most parties (and I explained this to them). They cared about each other, respected one another, and cared about the well-being of their village. Now, about three weeks ago, two templars and their guards had come into the village. They had demanded money, food, their strong young males for soldiers, and the young females as concubines. The party had managed to defend the village, and the templars had left to lick their wounds. However, they returned with many troops, and told the villagers they would raze their homes unless the troublemakers (the party) surrendered to the troops. The party had done so. They now dreamed of returning to their village, to rejoin their loved ones and be able to protect their village. They feared for one another.

The game began in the dungeons of the gladiatorial arena, after they had spent five harrowing days being beaten and sleeping in small rat-infested wooden cages. The incentive to return to the village and to stick together was clear.

The first interaction is the coming of the jailer, who explains that they will be the comedy for today's gladiatorial display. They are the first act, meant to entertain the crowd with their deaths.

(My players actually tried to escape. I gave them a way out, by making the jailer a wimp, who preferred to give them a chance to surrender, rather than having to report the mess to his superior).

The players then briefly met a trainer, who told them he had heard about their battle with the templars, and that he thought their village still stood. He said he knew they were better warriors than the jailer expected, and he hoped they would win. He hoped to train them, and wished them the best. (The jailer is an NPC that would become influential in the future. At this point he plays a nice guy, which fits the needs for the players to trust somebody at this point, and to get friendly advice).

The players then entered the arena, and fought some psionic creatures and human warriors. The human warriors were for anyone intimidated

by psionics. The psionic creatures were so I could have mindscape battles, which I describe vividly (like in the Pentad books). This allowed me to introduce the cool/unique aspects of Athas, while describing arena/gladiator culture and social context (blood lust, brutality, etc.). I played up the effect of the crowd (I could actually feel the adrenalin of my players as I described how their characters made the slow walk up from the dark tunnel towards the arena floor, hearing the rhythmic chanting of the fans outside, crying for their deaths).

The players win, and the trainer congratulates them. Again, the arena scene was vivid and exciting. The players were encouraged to play up to the arena style, and the fans responded to their every move, helping me to get the slower players get into the action and the culture. A lot of roleplaying took place because of the crowd, which beginner players would not have done in a different setting.

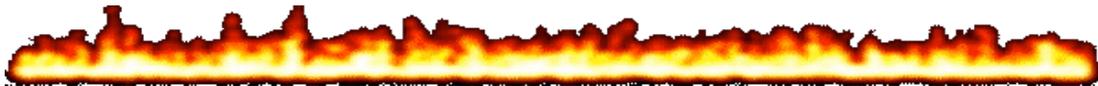
At this point we had reached our time limit, but the players wanted more. So, I kept going, and used the rest of what I had planned. The trainer tells them that they fought well, but that he is saddened that he will not get to train them. He has heard that the PCs have been hired, and that they will get their freedom. The jailer then enters, with a man called Azar. Azar is a merchant, who is actually quite evil. Azar tells them that his house created a secret trade route, but that lately it has been raided. They are to find the raiders and kill them. They are to bring anything they find to his home in the noble district. He will pay them handsomely for their return of his property, and will grant them their freedom. If they fail to return, the templars will destroy the PC's village. He gives them a map to the only structure near the secret route. The route is near the shore of the silt sea, and an old tower juts out of the silt. He believes it is the base of operation for the raiders.

The truth: Azar is indeed a high ranking agent for the merchant house. He designed the secret route, and designed it knowing that the route would be raided. He knows that powerful undead live in the silt tower, and has heard tales that there is an artifact of power in the tower. He designs the route so he can fool his superiors and get the artifact without him dirtying his hands. He expects the party to either weaken the undead so a second team can get the artifact, or to survive and bring him the artifact. He picks the PCs because he knows they will return rather than have their village razed to the ground. He sees them as the perfect peons.

The party heads towards the tower, receiving their old equipment. They meet lots of the desert fauna and flora, and a few monsters. (I describe the night fauna and the coming alive of the night insects to the thri-kreen player, further showing the players how different thri-kreens are. The player felt a real kinship towards the insects of the desert, which was cool.) The tower holds varied undead, plus silt spawn and one silt horror. (The best scene was their wading through deep silt, then the silt begins to stir, and the silt spawn attack. The scene was more scary than lethal. They defeated the spawn, even at minuses for fighting in the silt. They were just really nervous). The artifact is a glowing beating heart. I'll leave the rest to you, because I never got that far enough to enter the tower.

One thing worth mentioning: If this were a campaign with players I knew, I would have started with the players in the village, and played the coming of the templars. With beginners, this was too much, so I used their past to help shape what they would roleplay. The history kept them from fighting each other, bullying others, or trying to escape on their own (like with psionics) because they would not want to leave the others behind.

Hopefully I have made clear how different adventure elements were custom-fittend to "manipulate" the players and make it easy for them to role-play, cooperate with my intentions, and learn a lot about Athas, all in about 5 hours. let me know if you have questions, comments, or improvements. I think sharing tactics like this can help all of us DM better.



## Desert Mutiny

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**What is happening:**

After the Messenger-Comet's failure to arrive, Urikite and Drajan astronomers scoured the nightly skies for signs of what might have happened to the missing comet. Hence, astronomers in both Draj and Urik recently observed the great shooting star, and traced a rough map to where they believe it might have fallen.

Because Meteorites frequently contain metals, including iron and even steel (some claim that steel was manufactured by the ancients, but everyone with any sense knows that this incredible metal only comes from the stars), locating and salvaging a shooting star would be a feat worthy of a merchant House's attention. House Stel of course has the resources for such an enterprise, and puts together an impressive flotilla of armored caravans, kank-mounted cavalry, defilers. Hamanu has even lent a few templars for the task-in exchange for a cut of the gains, of course. The total number on the expedition: 60, including 20 slaves and 10 seasoned mercenaries. Only four officers in the caravan know what the purpose of the mission is, although rumors are flying.

But as the caravan passes by Tyr, the twenty slaves mysteriously escape, and a fleeting elf attack takes out most of the cavalry guard. The caravan is forced to stop in Tyr and recruit, and to make matters worse, while they are in Tyr, some of the guards take sick and others go AWOL. But the captain and templars are determined to succeed, and so they recruit Tyrians to fill the ranks.

### **Hook:**

1. The PCs are recruited in Tyr. (only if they have a good vouch for their honesty and capacity).
2. The players are asked to pursue a merchant caravan to "rescue" a young noble who has run away from home by joining the caravan as a mercenary. The PCs are given a purse of 50 silver to help pay off the caravan. As they are about to leave the city, they are told not to come back to the city unsuccessfully. When they reach the caravan, they find that it has been attacked, and the youth that they came to seek is dead. The Captain offers the PCs good money to accompany the caravan.

### **The Plot Thickens:**

After spending a few days defending the caravan, the PCs become aware of the many tensions among the crew. The four top officers are

distant, arrogant, tight-fisted, and closed-mouthed, and generally alienate the rest of the crew.

Because of the missing slaves, the top officers frequently demand backbreaking and demeaning work from free men that are not used to such treatment. But if the PCs show their worth to the expedition, the officers will treat them well and may even take them into their confidence.

As time goes on, each of the PCs is shadowed by a "buddy", a personal wannabe friend whose personality seems well matched to the PC's. Each "buddy" shows reasonable kindness to the PC, and demonstrates considerable "race-savvy". For example, the "buddy" to a half-giant will be gentle and charismatic, the buddy to an elf will perceptively pass all "tests" of friendship, etc. Any dwarf PC will be befriended by the Dwarven cook named Gretchen. Gretchen is calm, steady, and sympathetic to all, and she cooks damn good food; she ends up being the only pillar of stability that the expedition rests on. Gretchen is one of the few surviving Stel non-officers; the officers trust her even when it comes to hiring new crew members.

After the caravan reaches the shooting star, and loots it, a great monster seems to attack every day. Due to this unbelievable bad luck, and the fact that some of the new recruits seem hesitant to put themselves in harm's way, most of the Stel-faithful warriors are eventually killed.

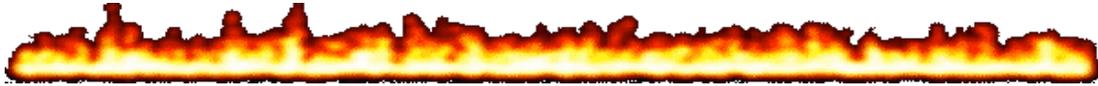
Time for mutiny.

What is really going on:

Gretchen is a House Tlalaxa spy that has bided her time for decades. She has used her leverage to hire several other Tlalaxa agents after freeing the Stel slaves near Tyr, and poisoning the strongest of the Stel Faithful. The Tlalaxa agents are very savvy and will try to obtain the PC's friendship in order to involve them into the mutiny. These NPCs are very bright and well trained and DMs should use their full Role-playing and manipulative abilities to sway the PC to become friends with their "buddy". The NPCs will also try to separate the PCs if possible (divide and conquer).

Gretchen possesses a Jewel of Attacks, which she normally keeps in a thick lead container that blocks its effects. She uses this to lure the terrible monsters, to facilitate the attrition of the Stel faithful.

No one trusts a traitor, so the agents will probably dispose of any mutineers once their usefulness is expired, according to the Tlalaxcan philosophy. They will first try to get as close to Draj as possible, saying that they have a good chance of selling it in Draj.



## In Kalak's Shadow

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It is free year 12. In the city-state of Tyr, an evil has been growing in the shadows and is ready to emerge and threaten the freedom of the city. A ravenous murderer stalks the warrens. Many templars and citizens claim Kalak has returned and call for his open worship by all. The free wizards of Tyr work to convert Kalak's ziggurat into a positive source of light to remove the shadows of evil that linger in the city. A band of heroes must unravel the message from a mysterious woman who pleads for help. If they are too late, a dark shadow will fall across the city and a sorcerer-king will again sit on the throne of Tyr.

### **In Kalak's Shadow**

This adventure takes place in the city-state of Tyr. It is for 3-5 characters of 6th to 8th level. The adventure uses many NPCs and locations described in the accessories City-State of Tyr and Dune Trader. Though possession of these accessories is not necessary for this adventure, it will help to add background and description to the adventure. There are maps of the city in: the first box set, the second box set, and the City-State of Tyr. The adventure begins assuming the characters are residents of Tyr, and that the party has a contact in authority. If they are acquainted with Sadira, Rikus, and the City council so much the better, though this is not necessary.

### **Adventure Synopsis**

The party is asked to investigate a series of disappearances that have occurred in the merchant district. Most of the disappearances occurred near the warrens, and the investigation leads into this lawless section of the city. The characters learn of more disappearances in the warrens. It looks as if someone or thing is hunting in the warrens and surrounding area, and possible Thri-Kreen are to blame. The party uncovers an attempt to sabotage the pyramid project and can stop the attack. After investigating, the party discovers a tigrone is responsible for the attacks.

One of the characters purchases a ceramic vase with a cryptic message and a plea for help. The vase contains a diagram that leads the party to an entrance into under-tyr, and into the lair of a group of fanatical templars, who worship "Kalak's ghost." Some of the followers flee and the party must track them down. Over the next week the party help the guards to track down the suspects. One of the followers' leaders has fled the city and the party is asked to track him down. He flees to Altaruk.

When the party returns to Tyr, they find the city in turmoil. Vordon has made his bid to seize the throne. Vordon soldiers spread throughout the city, capturing nobles, the city council, and high ranking templars. However, "Kalak" reappears over the city, and seizes control of the city after killing Vordon and taking control of his soldiers. The Veiled Alliance is held in temporal status, and the free wizards are charmed by "Kalak." The party and members of the School of Thought must work to free Tyr from "Kalak's second reign."

## **Background**

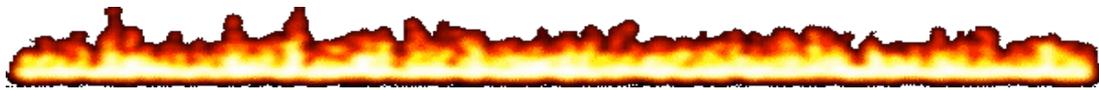
When Sadira visited the Pristine Tower, she received great power from the shadow people so that she could kill Borys and thus free Rajaat. When Rajaat was freed, Sadira used her magic to help trap him again. There are consequences to this action that Sadira has not realized. The shadow people plan to take their revenge by turning Sadira mad. Their leader, Djorn, has slowly taken possession of her body, while forcing her mind out. Once she is in this imbalanced state she will be very unpredictable, and Djorn hope to manipulate her into weakening the bonds on Rajaat's prison.

As Sadira began to have memory lapses and acts of madness, she realized what was happening to her. As the mental battle between Sadira and Djorn intensified, she realized that she could not win this battle. She decided to take steps to ensure that her spirit would not be

sent to the gray when forced from her body. Using her arcane powers she prepared a vase to hold her soul.

As her madness became more pronounced, she began to wander around the city. She discovered Yalther and his fellow Loyalists. She secretly attended one of their ceremonies, and witnessed Kalak's "appearance." Her deluded mind became convinced that she was Kalak, and began to make preparations to make her triumphant return. Two days later, she appeared to the Loyalists and announced her return as Kalak, taking the dragon form she had last seen him in. The Loyalists were easily convinced and became her first worshippers. She would visit the Loyalists on a regular basis and show off her power. In response, the Loyalists began making sacrifices to her by throwing captives into a pit of tiones. Sadira in one of her last lucid moments carved a message into the vase containing her soul, and left it to be found near the tunnel's entrance. An ex-slave found it and sold the vase to the merchant the characters later purchase it from.

Before the adventure begins, one of the tiones escapes from the pit into the warrens, where over the course of a month it kills many people.



## Opportunities in Chaos

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There have been a few requests by new Dark-Sun DMs for adventures and DMing ideas. My own two bits:

Buy both Dark-Sun boxes, because you might want to have the PCs encounter portions of the Wanderer's journal (a super treasure!!!), while the WC really gives too much away. DS-1 has a great full-color map of Tyr, while DS-2 has great maps of the whole world, and descriptions to help you begin fleshing out the lands beyond the Tablelands. There is much duplicated material, of course. DS-1 is still not out of stock AFAIK.

Start before Kalak's death if possible, but if the players know about Dark-Sun, start after. There's nothing like foreknowledge to turn a dynamic campaign into a splitting bore.

If you do start before Kalak's death, use Dave Gross' excellent starter adventure Freedom. Understand the characters, and be ready for it to blow into many different adventures.

Consider economics and ecology as driving game forces. Merchant adventures foster intrigue and player's really come to understand and become a part of your world. Cross reference \_Dune Trader\_ and \_The Complete Book of Villains\_-combined, the info in these books helps you set up a campaign where adventures almost write themselves.

Give every city, no every neighborhood, household, and secret society its own flavor whenever possible. Give the impression at all times that they are not catching everything that is going on, or have a semi-secret joke going on with the player that first figures things out, so that the others are on the edge of their seat and trying to figure things out.

Here is an adventure that I ran 2 years ago, and proposed to TSR a year ago. You are all probably past this point in your campaigns, but the ideas can be adapted to any Tablelands city in chaos-not uncommon lately, especially in Raam. I didn't provide many specs (anyone can fill these in). Questions/comments welcomed-particularly if someone runs this! -Braxacide, whose players say that this adventure was a favorite.

### Opportunities in Chaos

This adventure is set in the Warrens of the 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 psionicists. "Chaos Opportunities" can be (but need not be) used as a sequel to David Cook's excellent Freedom flip-book module. 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. They have 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 demands food from.

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 Alliance's foolish and fatal aerial assault on Xantippe's tower three days ago, 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 (e.g. in the Freedom module, or in the chaos in Tyr) 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. 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.

The 20'-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. She uses her wand of flame extinguishing to protect herself, her library and her home. A psionic iron 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 living rooster, the Alliance gives the party 100 sp (total, not per PC) 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. A "discrete" party 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.