

The white marsh

A hex-crawl adventure for Blood & Bronze and other games of High Adventure.

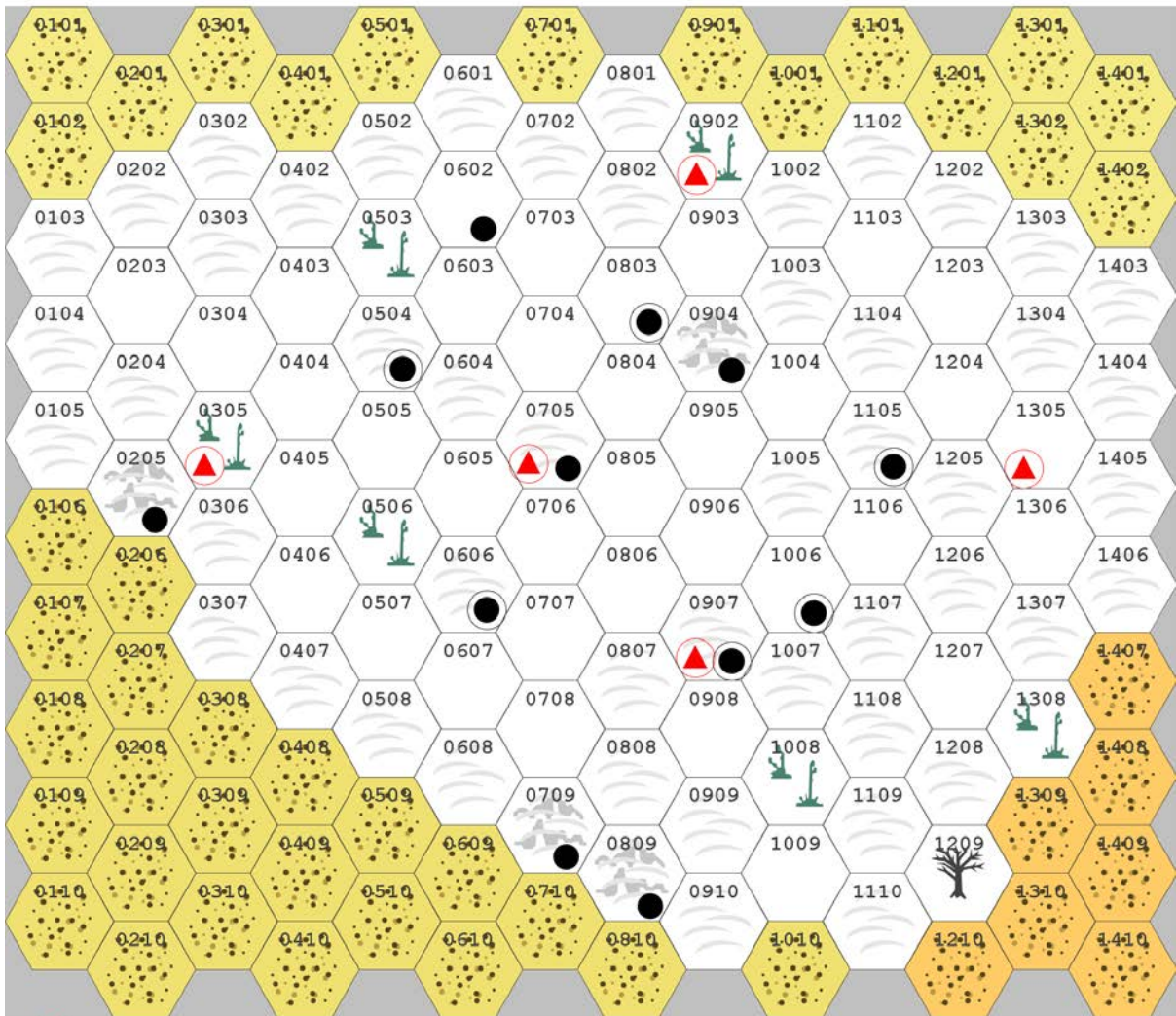
Words by Olav Nygård. Mapped using Hexographer.

Thanks to Luddwig, Rymdhamster & Jocke.

The white marsh is a great waste of caustic sludge. From a distance it looks like a wintery swamp, but it is arid and hot instead of wet and cold. In the summer months, the rapid evaporation causes the pale mire to coagulate into an ice-like crust of saline crystals, thick enough to carry the weight of an army. The marsh is corrosive and houses nothing but horrors, so travelers avoid it at all costs. Still, a caravan has gone missing, and its tracks disappear in the dreaded waste. No-one knows what desperate or foolish thoughts led them there, but it matters little—what matters is that its cargo was valuable beyond comparison.

And so it happened that the adventurers set out to retrieve the precious load, for their own enrichment or for a greater cause. The sun set, and it rose, and it was the first day of their journey.

The White Marsh



- ▲ Lair, settlement or similar
- Landmark, always visible
- sometimes visible

The mission

The adventurers are tasked with recovering the cargo of a small caravan that disappeared during a sandstorm. The caravan was carrying ransom to Ashur from Sippar, but for unknown reasons ventured out into the White Marsh where it disappeared. It is but a matter of time before someone else will venture out to salvage the wealth; the adventurers only advantages will be speed and the willingness to recklessly travel where others are reluctant to.

Traveling the marsh

When the adventurers are traversing the white marsh, divide their days into three watches: morning, midday, evening. Nights may be divided similarly, but the marsh is near impossible to navigate after sundown which severely limits the range of actions that can be attempted during the marsh nights.

DAY

Begin each day by rolling on the event chart to see if any special conditions apply.

Tell the players what hexagon they are in (unless lost), and what landmarks they see in adjacent hexagons.

Tell them what time it is—morning, midday or evening. Remind them that they must find solid ground before nightfall, and ask what they do during the coming watch.

Consult hexagon keys or charts as appropriate and play out what happens, adding or modifying as you see fit or based on previous events.

Once the encounters or events have played out, allow the players a moment to update their map and repeat the procedure until night falls.

DURING EACH WATCH OF DAY, THE PCs CAN EITHER:

1. travel one hexagon in any direction, encountering anything outlined in the *primary* entry.
2. search a hexagon. The adventurers may split their band in any number of smaller groups. Each unit then rolls on the search table to determine what they find. If the hexagon contains a secondary entry, anything in it will be found by one of the groups instead of whatever they rolled on the search table.
3. Rest/Bivouac. Sometimes, it might be wiser to halt and make camp early. The group stays put and can rest, repair broken equipment, set up ambushes, hide, make camp or any other such things. The adventurers are always assumed to make camp during nights unless the players explicitly state otherwise.

NIGHT

Regardless of what they do during the day, the adventurers must make sure to end the evening watch on **solid ground**. Some hexagons—marked (S)—contain obvious solid ground, others must be searched to reveal their small patches of bedrock while still others have none. For characters not on solid ground when night falls, the following rules apply

- a) they cannot rest,
- b) they must instead move one hexagon in a randomly determined direction,
- c) they must roll on the misfortune table,
- d) they lose 1d4 endurance (Vigor saves for half),
- e) they encounter any primary encounters in the new hexagon; and
- f) unless the new hexagon contains solid ground that is easily found, they must continue in similar fashion until arriving in a new hexagon with immediately found solid ground or until three rounds have passed and morning comes.

Events

- 1 Overcast day. The ground fails to coagulate fully. Travel becomes dangerous and taxing. Each hexagon, the party must test Vigor and score a total of at least one success per character or suffer misfortunes.
- 2 The thick layers of crystalline salt that covers the mire gradually turns to an alkaline ooze. Wading through the ooze causes 1d6 dmg each watch, half in hexagons marked as containing solid ground (S).
- 3 Cold day. The marsh fails to coagulate; travel is impossible unless in hexagons marked as containing solid ground (S) and even then the party suffers 1d4 dmg per watch.
- 4 Corrosion. Equipment gets damaged from the inhospitable environment. One randomly determined item per character is damaged. Check Craft, on a hit you are able to mend it; on a miss it is beyond repair.
- 5 Dust-storm. Everything tastes salt and bitter. Party must test Senses or get lost.
- 6 Intense heat. The swamp stays solid well into the night. If the players want, they can treat the first watch of night as if it was part of the day.
- 7 Nightly encounter. Roll on the chance encounter chart to determine who or what is encountered.
- 8 Daytime encounter. Roll on the chance encounter chart to determine who or what is encountered.
- 9-10 nothing.

Misfortunes

- 1 Quicksalt. The adventurer is caught in quicksand-like salty sludge and starts sinking.
- 2 Blisters. Skin is damaged, salt in wounds. Terrible pain. Gain 1d6 fatigue.
- 3 Blindness. The miles upon miles of contrastless white causes your eyesight to fail. Until your next extended rest, you are blind.
- 4 Damaged equipment. One of your pieces of equipment is severely damaged due to the wear and tear of the journey. Roll to determine which, and check craft: on a hit you might be able to mend it, on a miss it is lost forever.
- 5 Dropped thing. The smallest item you carry falls out of your pack at an inopportune moment. Check senses: on a hit you immediately notice, on a miss enough time has passed before you notice to cause you to spend an entire watch searching if you want to retrieve it.
6. Hole. The ground seemed solid, where it was in fact only an inch of crust over a deep hole or similar. Suffer 1d3 damage per round until you succeed a Vigor test or receive aid.
7. Lacerations. The salty crust breaks under your weight, forming crystalline shards that cuts deep into your legs or arms. Suffer 1d4 damage (no armor).
8. Followed. Someone or something has picked up the adventurer's tracks. Roll on the chance encounter chart to determine what it is, and how it reacts: evade, pursue, aid or ambush.

Search table

1-2 Chance encounter. Roll on the encounter chart.

3 A small treasure or token from the civilization that lived here in a more hospitable era, worth 1d20.

4-5 A wellspring or small pond of fresh water, enough for 1d6 rations.

6-7 An edible plant or similar foodstuff, enough for 1d4 rations.

8-12 Solid ground.

13-14 Difficult terrain, test Vigor or roll on misfortune chart.

15-17 Treacherous ground. Check Senses or plunge into the caustic sludge, suffering 1d4 corrosion dmg.

18 Trap. A faintly yellow stone marks a pit trap, otherwise cunningly concealed. 1d4 dmg (Senses saves). 1-in-4 chance of having soiled spikes at its bottom that tell both of expert craftsmanship and bottomless hatred, in which case it does 1d6 dmg instead and has a 1-in-4 chance of causing infection to anyone wounded by it. This infection causes 1d4 fatigue per day until dead or cured by a recovery roll of 7 or more.

Starting with the second time this result is rolled, there is a cumulative 1-in-6 chance that the trap is already sprung—roll on the encounter chart to see who sprung it and adjudicate the outcome. Once this happens, the counter is reset to a 1-in-6 chance.

19-20 Nothing.

Chance encounter chart

1 The Guide. A ragged man, severely wounded but too mad to die, staggers across the marsh as a revenant. Employed as guide for a caravan, he was left for dead as its leader betrayed them all and made off with the precious cargo. Consumed by desire for vengeance, the Guide employs his expert skills to navigate the wilderness to hunt down his nemesis. See also 1004.

Ešēru, the guide: pwr 4, save 14, end 20. His wounded body covered in blood and dirty bandages, wearing an amulet found in the salt and armed with a spear made of bones (dmg 1d10; wt 3).

Amulet of vengeance: A corroded amulet, bearing the sign of a dragon. Its bearer has a 50% chance of not dying when reduced to 0 endurance, recovering instead at a rate of 1d6 per day.

Starting with the second time this result is rolled, there is a cumulative 1-in-6 chance that the guide has caught up with one of the other NPCs—roll 1d6 on the encounter chart again to determine whom and adjudicate the outcome. Once this happens, this counter is reset to a 1-in-6 chance.

2 The captain. Four persons towing travois across the colorless dust. On the stretchers are food for several days, water, a tent and two spherical urns of fine pottery, sealed with lead and beeswax to prevent theft. A fifth man is leading the group, scouting ahead and helping the others to carry their precious cargo across rough areas or when the travois get stuck. This man is a soldier of some renown, a son of a lesser noble and a traitor. Tasked with leading a convoy carrying ransom to Ashur, he lured them into the marsh under false pretenses in hope they would meet their doom swiftly so that the treasures could easily be salvaged. However, the guide continued to find safe passage through the treacherous land and the captain grew increasingly desperate as he found himself farther from safety and less in control with each hour. When the guide's luck eventually ran out, the caravan was days' travel into the marsh and the captain was as lost as the people he had

duped. Currently, he is trying to save his life and some riches out from the wasteland's grip. See also 0806.

The four porters: pwr 2, save 6, end 12. Wearing corroded metal harnesses (armor 4), and armed with axes and spears (dmg 1d8). Part of the original conspiracy, but increasingly disgruntled and desperate that so few have survived.

Illim Awal, the captain: pwr 4, save 10, end 30. Wearing dull bronze (armor 8) and armed with a shield (def 3) and several spears (dmg 1d8).

Starting with the second time this result is rolled, there is a cumulative 1-in-6 chance that the captain has caught up with one of the other NPCs—roll 1d6 on the encounter chart again to determine whom and adjudicate the outcome. Once this happens, this counter is reset to a 1-in-6 chance.

3 The Conspiracy. A group of seasoned soldiers seeking their captain (0806) and the riches he was to deliver to them, they will not risk battle unless short of other options or at a great advantage.

Yaal-Hamba, the half-man: pwr 5, save 8, end 32. Said to be a giant's offspring. Fighting with a metal-capped club (dmg 1d8; bludgeon 1d12; wt 7) or an enormous bow made of bone (dmg 1d12; reach 3; wt 8; 10 arrows; 180 s).

Zambora: pwr 4, save 12, end 16. Wearing a thick bronze harness dyed gray to not reflect the sun (armor 6), armed with one axe in each hand (dmg 1d8; expert fighter: roll dmg twice and choose best).

Lianna: pwr 4, save 14, end 16. Clad in a layered leather harness (armor 2+2) and wielding a large mace (dmg 1d10; bludgeon 1d8; wt 5).

Gulum Bem: pwr 3, save 12, end 18. Wearing dark metal armor (armor 8) and fighting with a cruel pike (dmg 1d10; 2-handed; piercing +4; first strike: may always strike first when engaging an enemy).

Booka, his shield-bearer: pwr 3, save 16, end 16. Wearing dark leather armor (armor 2) and carrying an enormous shield of metal and stone (def 8; wt 8; 100 s) that he protects his master with.

Starting with the second time this result is rolled, there is a cumulative 1-in-6 chance that the conspiracy has caught up with one of the other NPCs—roll 1d6 on the encounter chart again to determine whom and adjudicate the outcome. Once this happens, this counter is reset to a 1-in-6 chance.

4. Raiders. A band of raiders, operating from village hidden in the barren waste (0305). The raiders have made the White marsh their home, to escape persecution from the deputies hunting them (0801, 0407) for the many wrongs they have done.

Raiders (1d4): pwr 3, save 8, end 12. Dressed in slender tunics in dirt-gray, white or pink, their arms and legs wound with thick layers of cloth, and fighting with spears of curved axes (dmg 1d8).

Starting with the second time this result is rolled, there is a cumulative 1-in-6 chance that the raiders have caught up with one of the other NPCs—roll 1d6 on the encounter chart again to determine whom and adjudicate the outcome. Once this happens, this counter is reset to a 1-in-6 chance.

5. Witchery. An old crone lives in outskirts of the swamp (1305), concocting elixirs and practicing her magic beyond the reach of the Crimson Mage in Dur Kurigalzu.

The strongest character must check Senses: on a miss a witch has climbed unnoticed onto her back and is now sitting there like an invisible backpack; on a hit the character she spots an old crone wandering through the marsh with great effort. A character carrying the witch suffers a negative reroll on all Vigor actions. When traveling with the witch, an additional ration is depleted each day but all recovery rolls receives a +2 bonus. Each dawn, the character may make a new Senses save to see if the witch continues to piggyback or not. The witch will immediately detach if the carrying character is mortally wounded.

6. **Salt hounds.** A small pack of mangy hounds. 50% chance of being spies for the Witch of the Waste (1305). Her scryer's mark is branded onto them, a small orange dot against their pale fur. Loyal to their master, they are still but dogs and react as such to both treats and aggression.

Salt hounds (1d4+1): pwr 1, save 4, end 6. Teeth and claws (dmg 1d6; 1-in-10 chance of causing infection or disease)

7. **Munúgal.** A salt golem, formed from the crystallized dead of an historic cataclysm. Inside each is a pinkish crystal of bone salt, keeping them alive. If the munúgal is killed by force there is a 5-in-6 chance that this crystal is shattered, releasing the spirits raving inside. If retrieved intact, a sorcerer can ingest this crystal to temporary boost her power, casting magic as twice her rank and rolling eight-sided dice instead of six-sided when testing one randomly determined skill. This effect wears off the next time the sorcerer sleeps. Non-sorcerers that ingest the crystal gain the latter benefit, but must roll for bone salt effects as usual.

Munúgal (1d3): pwr 3, save 16, end 20. Withering touch (dmg 1d6. For each success, target must check Lore: on a hit her character withstands the attack; if not, she loses 1 endurance permanently).

8. **Šurun-nin.** (Lord-roach) A beetle-like creature with wasp-wings, living like cockroaches in the lost city (0705). They crawl and climb at great speeds on all six legs or fly in the erratic patters of insects, but can also walk upright while using tools in the crooked ends of their upper legs with wings flapping furiously to balance their gait.

Šurun-nin (1d6): pwr 4, save 12, end 30. Wasp-wings and naked beetle-like bodies (armor 10), armed with adzes of otherworldly design (dmg 1d8; piercing +2). 2-in-6 chance of acid stingers or maws (dmg 1d6; +1d4 ongoing). When reduced to zero endurance, surun-nin explode in a spray of black or green fluids covering everyone in their zone (Vigor evades) that has a 10% chance of attracting 1d4 new surun-nin each hour unless thoroughly washed away. In addition, these fluids deal acid damage as above in specimens capable of such attacks.

Hex legend

Entries are encountered when the PCs enter a hexagon.

Secondary entries (marked II) are encountered if the hexagon is searched or revisited.

(s) denotes that the characters will encounter solid ground.

01

0103 (S) A dozen petrified birds sits perched on the roof and walls of a desolate mausoleum. No writing inside tells of its god, but a single statue of a robed reptile-headed woman stands abandoned inside.

0104 (S) A jawbone of tremendous size protrudes from the saline ground, each serrated tooth the size of a child.

0105 (S) A white rock formation, resembling molten faces screaming in terror. When the temperature drops, the continuing melting causes them to weep milky tears.

02

0202 (S) Perfectly flat and perfectly lifeless, the land here is cursed. It produces the headache and crawling skin of an approaching thunderstorm in all who traverse it. Resting characters recover nothing in this hexagon, unless they make a successful Might save.

II: A ruined structure.

0203 Quicksalt. Some unseen current causes the ground to behave like alkaline quicksand, where adventurers sink to their death while their skin burns away (Senses saves; characters in the quicksand suffers 1d4 dmg per round in addition to 1d6 fatigue).

0204 (S) The ossified remains of a wagon. Two draught-animals are ossified as well, grotesquely deformed in the process and gradually deteriorating from dust-storms and hail.

0205 (S) Landmark: Hill.

A steep hill of gravel and pumice. Climbing it takes a full watch. The party can discern all major features in adjacent hexagons and in an additional 1d6 of those in the second circle.

03

0302 (S) The remains of 800 smashed porcelain idols are strewn over the ground, their cracked eyes glaring forlorn at the skies.

0303 (S) The ground here whispers and hums with a thousand ancient voices that were frozen in it and are now thawing away. Sages and other characters versed in more than one language can spend a watch here to make a Lore test, the number of successes indicating the number of secrets learned from the evaporating voices.

0304 Treacherous ground. To traverse this hexagon, the adventurers must test senses or plunge into the caustic sludge, suffering 1d4 corrosion dmg per round. Additional successes can be traded between players to help failing characters' out.

In this area is also a band of salt raiders, moving with ease across paths known only to them. In combat, player characters are considered in difficult terrain—each movement requiring a successful Vigor test (if planned) or a Senses save (otherwise) to avoid falling into the sludge.

Raiders (2d4+1): pwr 3, save 8, end 12. Dressed in slender tunics in dirt-gray, white or pink, their arms and legs wound with thick layers of cloth, and fighting with spears (2 each) or curved axes (dmg 1d8).

Yawaan, their leader: pwr 4, save 10, end 15. Thin and measly but of tremendous intellect, wielding a pink copper blade made by masters in Bad Tibbara (dmg 1d12; wt 2; 150 s).

0305 (S) A large copse of thorny bushes with colorless leaves and delicate flowers cling to the flat face of a large rock, rising just inches above the corrosive marsh. In its midst lies a small village built from mud and twigs, home to a band of raiders. Safe in their knowledge that no deputy will pursue them here, the raiders have painted their houses in every color and hung gold and silver from the ridges of their twig-roofs to parade their illegitimate wealth.

In their back-yards, water is slowly boiling in large bronze shields heated by the sun.

There is a 50% chance that all raiders are out, leaving only the kidnapped women that are their wives and serfs.

Raiders (21): pwr 3, save 8, end 12. Clad in exuberant colors, gold and finery (1d100 s each), carrying spears and curved axes (dmg 1d8).

Yarosh, their chief: pwr 4, save 9, end 20. Tall and gangly and clad only in stolen wealth (1d1000 s), armed with a two-pronged spear (dmg 1d12; wt 5; +1d4 bleeding per turn, recovers on a 2+).

Yawaan, his second: pwr 4, save 10, end 15. Thin and measly but of tremendous intellect, wielding a pink copper blade made by masters in Bad Tibbara (dmg 1d12; wt 2; 150 s).

The stolen women: pwr 2, save 10, end 12. Dressed in finery and silk or going naked, depending on their status in the group. Either unarmed (dmg 1d4; no crit) or carrying hidden knives (dmg 1d4).

Bara: pwr 4, save 12, end 16. Dressed in layers of pearl and tassels, hanging in silken threads from thick bands of copper around her neck and waist. Despite her status, she hates her captors with passion but is prevented from action by her child with Yarosh who lives in his house together with Hamala. Has a small vial of poison and a dagger that she traded her soul for with an old crone promising her vengeance (dmg 1d8; deals an additional 1d20 against Yarosh and anyone standing between her and freedom; withers one week after its first use).

Hamala, first wife of the raider chieftain: pwr 4, save 12, end 16. Wearing a large amethyst on her bosom and one on her forehead (240 s each) and carrying a child in a turquoise shawl on her back, she alone among the women is permitted by the raiders to carry a gilded sword (dmg 1d8; versatile 1d10; wt 2; worth 70 s). Unable to bear children herself, she has forcibly adopted the child of Yarosh and Bara and uses him as leverage against Bara, thus subduing the mutiny growing among the women.

0306 (S) The ground never coagulates fully here, leaving lakes of pale slime surrounding occasional islands. If the adventurers choose to wade across, they suffer 1d4 dmg (no armor) and must test Vigor to avoid further misfortunes. If they return to the hexagon they came from, the entire watch is forfeit.

0307 (S) An enormous crab shell, covered in icicles of crystallized salt.

II: Raider outpost. A small group of raiders from 0305 are hiding here, carefully observing the movements of a band of soldiers dispatched to kill or capture them (0407).

Raiders (1d4+1): pwr 3, save 8, end 12. Dressed in slender tunics in dirt-gray, white or pink, their arms and legs wound with thick layers of cloth, and fighting with spears or curved axes (dmg 1d8).

04

0401 (S) Among a vast rubble of white and purple rocks lives a colony of large urchins. The tar-black creatures are extremely slow, but their spear-long stingers are poisonous (dmg 2d6, ongoing) and can be thrust three feet out through a rapid swelling of the body (Senses saves for half).

II: Half buried among the rubble, lies a golden shield shaped like a lion's head (def 1d6; armor 1; wt 3; 140 shekels).

0402 (S). Nothing but many-colored rocks.

0403 Here, the north wind has formed the salty dust into low dunes, making travelers seemingly grow and diminish as the blinding brightness distorts perspective.

0404 Salt and crystallized deposits lie like a crust of ice over a dried out lake. Falling through the brittle surface results in a 30 feet fall.

Beneath lies a great pyramid of black stone. Inside, a six-winged temple guardian wielding a cursed weapon relentlessly guards the ossified remains of elephant-headed giant and the sorcerous glyph it clasps.

Erit, the six-winged temple guardian: pwr 4/4/4 (+Senses –Lore), save 12, end 90, wielding a cursed blade of crooked orichalc (dmg 2d6; bleeding +1d4, wt 6; 400 s) and wearing a frayed skirt that falls apart in long hair-like tufts with each move (loses 10 endurance each round she moves for the first five rounds).

Blade of the guardian: Bearer doesn't age within the pyramid, cannot recover outside of it.

0405 Salt and crystallized deposits lie like a crust of ice over a dried out lake. Falling through the brittle surface results in a 30 feet fall. Once under the crust, all colors are lost but visibility is otherwise good: the pyramid in 0404 is clearly visible.

0406 A small band of desperados have fled here, hoping to join the raiders in 0305.

Desperados (2d4): pwr 3, save 6, end 8. Ill-equipped for their journey and slowly succumbing to the marsh, armed with spears (dmg 1d8).

0407 (S) A band of soldiers, led by a deputy from Sippar, patrolling the perimeter of the marsh on the lookout for Yawaan, one of several rogues operating out of the marsh (see 0305). They promise a hefty reward if he is brought before them, so they can chain him and bring him to trial in the golden city. Their leader has a strong rivalry towards the captain of the deputies in 0801, and is eager to outperform them. For days they have been tailing a pack of outcasts traveling to join the raiders (0406), but their scouts have also spotted the small outpost in 0307. Consequently, they are deliberating their next move, as an assault on either would likely forewarn the other.

05

0502 (S) The ground is perfectly flat for miles, save for a petrified bird sitting on a solitary branch.

0503 (S) Here, the marsh is covered in low shrubbery. No flowers can be seen, and all colors seem watered down. Still, it is life in an otherwise barren place and both mice and blue-hued crabs live under their roots.

0504 (S) Landmark (50%): stone pillars

A dozen pillars of flat stones stacked on top of each other form makeshift shrines to Ninlil. There is still some treasure under half of them, amounting to 1d100 shekels each. However, all are sacred and toppling any of them puts the character in cursed debt, requiring an additional 1d100 shekels per destroyed pillar the next time she makes an offering to gain a new rank—regardless of which patron she offers to.

II: A submerged temple, all but covered in salt and nigh indistinguishable from the surrounding landscape. A tablet cursing Enki, lord of the dark waters, can be retrieved (240 s; the reader names a character or creature who must immediately test Guile; on a miss she must admit one of her secrets; on a hit she can choose to do so to name another character or creature who is then affected in the same fashion).

0505 A vast lake of always-liquid slime. If the adventurers choose to swim across, they suffer 1d10 dmg (no armor) over the course of the watch. If they return to the hexagon they came from, the entire watch is forfeit.

0506 (S) As far as the eye can see, the ground is covered by the waxy leaves and gnarly stems of some strange creeper-plant. The plants contain pure water but in very small amounts, making it a cause rather than a cure for thirst to crush them by hand to drink their content. The arch of a giant vertebra halfway buried in the vines causes the wind to wail a melancholic hymn as it passes through the foramen.

0507 Quicksalt. Some underground current causes the dirt to behave like alkaline quicksand, where adventurers sink to their death while their skin burns away (Senses saves; characters in the quicksand suffers 1d4 dmg per round in addition to 1d6 fatigue).

0508 (S) A single red boulder, its color slowly spreading over the ground through the osmosis of aeons.

06

0601 (S) A terrible claw of some dead creature sticks out of the yellow mud like a black crescent moon.

0602 Landmark: Tower

Treacherous ground. To traverse this hexagon, the adventurers must test senses or plunge into the caustic sludge, suffering 1d4 corrosion dmg per round. Additional successes can be traded between players to help failing characters' out.

A ruined tower, colored red and green from the minerals that seep up from the depths of the marsh. A single survivor from the caravan has sought shelter inside, slowly dying from dehydration and hunger.

Matram, the survivor: pwr 2, save 8, end 6. Dressed in dirty desert clothes, almost senseless from his travails. Equipped with a wooden staff, (dmg 1d6; no crit).

0603 Here, the swamp bubbles constantly with a noxious gas that obscures sight. Recovery is not possible within the hexagon. Tracks in the mud reveal a group of people have passed here recently with some sort of barrows.

II: A band of marsh raiders, their noses and mouths covered by perfumed cloth to alleviate the stench, are towing a cart containing one large urn and a sack full of clay markers from the caravan to their home in 0305.

Raiders (2d6+1): pwr 3, save 8, end 12. Dressed in slender tunics in dirt-gray, white or pink, their arms and legs wound with thick layers of cloth, and fighting with spears or curved axes (dmg 1d8).

Yarosh, their chief: pwr 4, save 9, end 20. Tall and gangly and clad in white woolen garments, armed with a two-pronged spear (dmg 1d12; wt 5; +1d4 bleeding per turn, recovers on a 2+).

0604 (S) A band of brigands have met their doom here. Among their corroded remains is a small blue ring with fig tree embossed.

II: Some tracks of a caravan heading towards 0704 have escaped erasure, telling of heavily loaded camels and more than twenty men.

0605 Wind and sun have caused the salt flats to crack, forming an ever-repeating pattern of identical squares.

II: 1d10 broken clay tokens from the ransom.

0606 (S) Landmark (50%): Carrion birds

On a yellow stone slab, a fine camel has been sacrificed and its heart and liver burnt to call for an omen. A covey of black vultures feasts on the cadaver, but its pungent smell reveals that they likely arrived too late for the auspice. Below the makeshift altar, some trinkets are left for good luck and safe passage: a small vase of strong alcohol, some grain, a sandal and an arrow.

0607 In this area, poisonous fumes seep up from the ground. All characters suffer 1d4 damage when crossing this hexagon. Staying in it (for example to search or take an extended rest) causes an additional 1d4 damage. Recovery is not possible within the hexagon.

II: A slim hole in the ground widens into a tunnel, leading down to the sealed door of an underground structure.

0608 (S) Jagged stones of obsidian and basalt. Difficult terrain. To traverse this hexagon, all characters must test Vigor or suffer misfortunes.

07

0702 (S) Raiders. Three raiders approaching fast on camels, salvaged from the lost caravan (0803). The fur of their steeds are soaked in blood, from a skirmish with the soldiers in 0801)

Raiders (3): pwr 3, save 8, end 8. Dressed in slender tunics in blood-stained gray, and fighting with tall spears and bows (dmg 1d8).

0703 Treacherous ground. To traverse this hexagon, the adventurers must test senses or plunge into the caustic sludge, suffering 1d4 corrosion dmg per round. Additional successes can be traded between players to help failing characters' out.

0704 Quicksalt. Some unseen current causes the ground to behave like alkaline quicksand, where adventurers sink to their death while their skin burns away (Senses saves; characters in the quicksand suffers 1d4 dmg per round in addition to 1d6 fatigue).

II: A shallow grave has been destroyed by the melting and congealing to the swamp and a caravan member now lies exposed on ground, already desiccated and half mummified by the alkaline dust.

0705 (S) Landmark: lost city

A lost city of green stone and cyclopean proportions, inhabited by Num Saharra and a colony of wasp-winged demons. One of the brigands (see 0604) following the caravan is held prisoner here for unknown purposes.

Šurun-nin (1d6): pwr 4, save 12, end 30. Wasp-wings and naked beetle-like bodies (armor 10), armed with adzes of otherworldly design (dmg 1d8; piercing +2). 2-in-6 chance of acid stingers or maws (dmg 1d6; +1d4 ongoing). When reduced to zero endurance, surun-nin explode in a spray of black or green fluids covering everyone in their zone (Vigor evades) that has a 10% chance of attracting 1d4 new surun-nin each hour unless thoroughly washed away. In addition, these fluids deal acid damage as above in specimens capable of such attacks.

Num Saharra, their leader: pwr 6 (+Lore –Vigor), save 17, end 42. Draped in striped saffron garbs of demon silk (armor 8; wt 3; 50% retrievable) and wielding a brass crescent axe (dmg 2d8; 2 handed; wt 6; 150 s). Knows 1d6 lotus spells and an equal amount of sorcery. Has a fractured stone table containing a spell with the power to resurrect a god, and is furiously experimenting to repair it. Promises to reward the adventurers richly, if they bring him one of the lost glyphs from the Black Pyramid (0404).

A brigand: pwr 3, save 8, end 4. Dressed in loincloth and unarmed (dmg 1d4; no crit), eager to escape.

0706 Treacherous ground. To traverse this hexagon, the adventurers must test senses or plunge into the caustic sludge, suffering 1d4 corrosion dmg per round. Additional successes can be traded between players to help failing characters' out.

0707 A band of jackal-men. Unknowing that the brigands are dead, they have picked up the scent of their trail and are tracking them to slay them and claim whatever prize they were after for themselves to avenge some historical misdeed.

Jackal men (2d6+2): pwr 2, save 6, end 10. Wearing threadbare clothes and wielding toothed obsidian blades (dmg 1d8; bleeding +2; wt 4).

Scar-fur, their leader: pwr 4, save 6, end 16. Armed with a spear (dmg 1d8).

0708 A pack of mangy hounds, scouring the outskirts of the white marsh for cadavers.

Hounds (1d6+1): pwr 1, save 4, end 6. Teeth and claws (dmg 1d6; 1-in-10 chance of causing infection or disease). 50% chance of being spies for the witch of the Waste.

II: A dead salt golem stands petrified here, its pink crystal heart still glowing faintly.

0709 (S) Landmark: Hill

A wide hill. Climbing it takes a watch. The party can discern all major features in adjacent hexagons and in an additional 1d6 of those in the second circle.

08

0801 (S) Two deputies from a merchant house, patrolling the perimeter of the marsh with heavily armed cavalry. They are on the lookout for Yarosh, leader of a band of rogues operating out of the marsh (see 0305), and promise a hefty reward if he is brought to Sippar to hang until dead from its walls.

0802 (S) A cave where sulfur and mercury is mined by people from the settlement in 0902.

0803 Landmark (75%): Carrion birds.

The remains of the lost caravan. 1/3 of the ransom is still here, kept in two ruddy urns sealed with lead and beeswax. Carrion birds circle in great flocks over the cadavers, their activity slowly attracting attention from the marsh's inhabitants. Each watch spent here, there's a 50% chance of encounters.

II: There are tracks leading away from the site, both older leading southeast and fresher leading southwest.

0804 (S) The jagged stones of the land here are cursed; producing the headache and crawling skin of an approaching thunderstorm in all who traverse it. Resting characters recover nothing in this

hexagon, unless they make a successful Might save. To traverse this hexagon, all characters must test Vigor or suffer misfortunes.

0805 Salt golems.

Munúgal (1d4+1): pwr 3, save 16, end 20. Withering touch (dmg 1d6. For each success, target must check Lore: on a hit her character withstands the attack; if not, she loses 1 endurance permanently).

0806 (S) The camp of Illim Awal. In their tents are 1/3 of the ransom, kept in two massive jars of pottery.

The four porters: pwr 2, save 6, end 12. Wearing corroded metal harnesses (armor 4), and armed with axes and spears (dmg 1d8). Part of the original conspiracy, but increasingly disgruntled and desperate that so few have survived.

Illim Awal, the captain: pwr 4, save 10, end 30. Wearing dull bronze (armor 8) and armed with a shield (def 3) and several spears (dmg 1d8).

0807 (S) A flat rock, prehnite green and cadmium blue, rise from the marsh.

II: An urn lies shattered on the ground, its lead seal still intact. 1d20 shekels worth of clay tokens from the ransom are encapsulated in the salty crust.

0808 (S) Some pink boulders and thin stone formations break the horizon's monotony. At nights, a moving light can be seen at the horizon.

0809 (S) Landmark: Hill

A hill, white as the land surrounding it. Climbing its steep sides takes a watch. The party can discern all major features in adjacent hexagons and in an additional 1d6 of those in the second circle.

II: Hermit. A pious hermit lives on the white hill. She saw the caravan passing and shift course, and heard the guide and the leader arguing. She can also report a group of bandits, following in their tracks just half a day behind.

09

0902 (S). The barren marsh gives way to dark, volcanic soil that sprouts flowering plants. Dragonflies and metallic green beetles buzz through the air, close to the ground to not be swept away from this cornucopia by a sudden breeze. Among some palm trees lies a small village. The peace-loving inhabitants extract minerals and sell them to merchants that refine them into beauty products or alchemic components. As none of them are fighters, they offer a handsome reward to anyone ridding them of the monstrous salt crab in 0903 that terrorizes their mining excursions.

II: A wealth of edible plants grows in the rich soil.

0903 Salt crab. pwr 3, save 9, end 40. Salt-crust shell (armor 6; half damage from all non-critical strikes). Fights with severing claws (target must choose to lose a random limb—roll 1d4 to determine which 1 left arm, 2 right arm, 3 left leg, 4 right leg; roll again to determine percentage taken—or suffer 1d12 dmg).

0904 (S) Landmark: Hill

Hill. Climbing it takes a watch. The party can discern all major features in adjacent hexagons and in an additional 1d6 of those in the second circle.

II: A cave in its side, where a python-sized viper has its nest.

Red viper: pwr 3, save 12, end 14. Bite (dmg 1d6; poison +1 ongoing, recovers on 5+).

0905 Scarlet mist is pouring out of the ground here, blocking out light and sound. Characters must test Lore or become lost.

II: A geyser shoots forth a pulse of ruddy water as if fed by a boiling subterranean heart. Each new moon the raging water calm and become crystal clear, revealing a single white pearl in the depths.

0906 A lake of smooth glass. From below the hard surface the shadow of a whale-like creature follows the adventurers, occasionally trying to break the translucent crust to catch them.

Sag-Kušum, the beast of the deep: pwr 6/4 (+Vigor –Lore), save 14, end 70. Armed with spear-like teeth (dmg 2d8; piercing +3). Its head is filled with fragrant oil, worth 60 shekels per encumbrance (max 10 enc/600 s).

0907 (S). Landmark (25%): Large bird.

A large bird floats motionless in the sky. In its belly is a white stone (500 s), making anyone touching it with their bare skin weightless while causing 1d6 fatigue per round.

Additionally, a towering salt golem lives here in an igloo-like cave, the inside of which is painted cobalt blue.

Great Munúgal (1d3): pwr 4, save 16, end 25. Withering touch (dmg 1d6. For each success, target must check Lore: on a hit her character withstands the attack; if not, she loses 1 endurance permanently). In combat, it casts a spell at random in addition to any other combat actions.

II: A submerged temple, all but covered in salt and nigh indistinguishable from the surrounding landscape. The reliefs and inscriptions that once adorned it have withered away, leaving only two glyphs signifying the sound “T” to testify to its purpose. 1d100 shekels.

0908 A withered statue of a hideous woman faces north, crafted from a yellow stone of unknown origin. Its repulsive features are almost eaten away by the corrosive slime that surrounds it, but its enormous golden headdress (wt 22; 3000 shekels) is still intact.

0909 (S) A cube of rusting metal, its sides corresponding to those of the gur-cube found in Sippar.

II: A worn-out sandal and some discarded equipment from the caravan.

0910 (S). The air here is thick with swarming pests. For each watch spent here, there is a 1-in-6 chance of contracting disease.

II: A small pond of muddy water, ill-tasting but drinkable.

10

1002 (S). Shrubbery

II: Some birds' nest containing eggs, providing 1d6 rations in total.

1003 (S) A pit trap, cunningly concealed and with spikes smeared with feces at its bottom—telling both of expert craftsmanship and relentless hatred. 1d8 dmg (Senses saves). Each character falling into the pit has a 1-in-4 chance of suffering an infection from the dirty spikes, causing 1d4 fatigue per day until dead or cured by a recovery roll of 7 or more.

II: Another pit trap (as above), and gold worth 1d20 shekels

1004 Guide. Hunting for the Captain, setting up traps as he goes.

Ešēru, the guide: pwr 4, save 14, end 20. His wounded body covered in blood and dirty bandages, wearing an amulet found in the salt and armed with a spear made of bones (dmg 1d10; wt 3).

Amulet of vengeance: A corroded amulet, bearing the sign of a dragon. Its bearer has a 50% chance of not dying when reduced to 0 endurance, recovering instead at a rate of 1d6 per day.

For each time after the first that Ešēru is encountered, there is a cumulative 1-in-6 chance that he has caught up with one of the other NPCs—roll on the encounter chart again with 1d6 to determine whom and adjudicate the outcome. Once this happens, this counter is reset to a 1-in-6 chance.

1005 (s) An area of perfectly smooth volcanic glass. White crystals dance in the wind over the pitch black surface, radiating heat like a furnace.

II: An oval hole in the ground. A few feet below it, a lake of unbearably salty water extends beyond eyesight in all directions.

1006 Landmark (25%): Megalith

By a solitary megalith four naked men lie dead, one in each direction. Each new moon, a host of wasp-winged demons led by Num Saharra congregate here, resurrecting the slain men to have them relive the horrors of their last night as the ritual sacrifice is once more undertaken.

Šurun-nin (5): pwr 4, save 12, end 30. Wasp-wings and naked beetle-like bodies (armor 10), armed with adzes of otherworldly design (dmg 1d8; piercing +2). 2-in-6 chance of acid stingers or maws (dmg 1d6; +1d4 ongoing). When reduced to zero endurance, surun-nin explode in a spray of black or green fluids covering everyone in their zone (Vigor evades) that has a 10% chance of attracting 1d4 new Šurun-nin each hour unless thoroughly washed away. In addition, these fluids deal acid damage as above in specimens capable of such attacks.

Num Saharra, their leader: pwr 6 (+Lore –Vigor), save 17, end 42. Draped in striped saffron garbs of demon silk (armor 8; wt 3; 50% retrievable) and wielding a brass crescent axe (dmg 2d8; 2 handed; wt 6; 150 s). Knows 1d6 lotus spells and an equal amount of sorcery.

II: (S) 1d4 Šurun-nin in a small burrow (stats as above).

1007 (S) Jagged stones of obsidian and basalt. Difficult terrain. To traverse this hexagon, all characters must test Vigor or suffer misfortunes.

II: Silver worth 1d20 shekels.

1008 (S) A compact shrubbery, where the caravan has gathered firewood and fed their camels. Occasional footprints are still visible in the coagulated mud, leading west.

II

1102 (S) The flat landscape is broken by a crater, 200 paces in circumference. Here, the miners from 0902 come to sell their products at irregular intervals as the many-colored dust, litter and the small shrines can attest.

1103 Treacherous ground. To traverse this hexagon, the adventurers must test senses or plunge into the caustic sludge, suffering 1d4 corrosion dmg per round. Additional successes can be traded between players to help failing characters' out.

II: Three chimneys of stone and plaster; remnants perhaps of long-gone palaces.

1104 (S) Nauseating fumes leaking up from numerous pores in the ground. Recovery is not possible within the hexagon.

1105 (S) Landmark (50%): flagpole.

A wooden rod is raised here marking solid ground, a threadbare flag flying from its top. Gold and copper is strewn among the rocks at its foot as praise to Ninlil.

1106 Ruin (empty).

1107 (S) The air here is swarming with pests. For each watch spent here, there is a 1-in-6 chance of contracting disease.

II: A small pond of water, crawling with larvae but drinkable if boiled.

1108 (S) Two feet below the glass-like surface or a wide lake lies a corpse—its flesh eaten away by the corrosive sludge it bathes in but the golden scepter (425 s) in its hand gleams intact.

1109 (S) Vultures feasting on a dead camel, an elaborate cut in its ear indicating it belonged to the lost caravan.

1110 (S) A tunnel, leading straight down into the ground roughly five feet across and perfectly round. Its edges are dripping with pink slime.

12

1202 (S) A nameless outcast from Dur Kurigalzu, seeking the aid of the Witch of the Waste (1305) to win back his wealth and reputation.

The outcast: pwr 4, save 16, end 20. Carrying only a water-skin and an axe (dmg 1d8).

1203 Sulphur pool. A vast lake of sulphurous slime. If the adventurers choose to swim across, they suffer 1d8 dmg (no armor) over the course of the watch. If they return to the hexagon they came from, the entire watch is forfeit.

1204 Boiling mud. To traverse this hexagon, the party must test Vigor or fall in (1d6 dmg/round, no armor).

1205 (S) Jagged boulders of obsidian and basalt. Difficult terrain. To traverse this hexagon, all characters must test Vigor or suffer misfortunes.

1206 (S) Nothing but the blindingly bright flats of salt.

II: A huge viper lives here: pwr 3, save 12, end 14. Bite (dmg 1d6; poison +1 ongoing, recovers on 5+).

1207 Quicksalt. Some unseen current causes the ground to behave like alkaline quicksand, where adventurers sink to their death while their skin burns away (Senses saves; characters in the quicksand suffers 1d4 dmg per round in addition to 1d6 fatigue).

II: (S) Square rock formations. Traps and bivouacs mark the site of a recent ambush, but the lack of blood and debris reveal it never came to be.

1208 (S) A low mound of salty earth marks an offering to Ninlil. The thin flags on its top retain their vibrant purple and orange, indicating that its construction was a recent affair. The mound contains a

golden dagger worth 200 s, but stealing this treasure will cause bad luck to the perpetrator, forcing her to reroll all saves and choose to worst outcome until the debt has been repaid.

II: The footprints of camels and men reveal that the caravan has passed here.

1209 (S) An ossified tree from the time when cyclops ruled the earth; its enormous trunk the size of a house.

II: Gold worth 1d20 shekels.

13

1303 (S) Crystal boulders form a labyrinth at the bottom of a wide depression, seemingly unaffected by weather and wind.

1304 (S) A vast lake of semi-liquid mud. If the adventurers choose to wade across, they suffer 1d6 dmg (no armor) over the course of the watch and must test Vigor to avoid further misfortunes. If they return to the hexagon they came from, the entire watch is forfeit.

1305 In a hut on stilts, rising above the pale and twisted branches of long dead spear thistles lives the old crone Madra Ayem.

Madra Ayem: pwr 3/3 (+Lore –Senses), save 18, end 20. Thin as a wisp in her salt-white robe and stilted boots and armed with a spear (dmg 1d8; wt 2). Knowledgeable in all bone sorceries (six doses).

1306 Dozens of bodies, desiccated but otherwise eerily well-preserved glaring up from under an inch of ice-like crust.

II: A tomb (empty). If more than one group searches the hexagon, it is revisited thrice or similar, another tomb if found containing 1d1000 s.

1307 (S) Lumps of pumice and obsidian cover the basalt boulders in razor-like edges. Difficult terrain. To traverse this hexagon, all characters must test Vigor or suffer misfortunes.

1308 (S) Low bushes and stout trees brave the marsh here, their wrinkled roots managing by some miracle to filter out water from the dreadful wasteland.

II: There are signs of fighting here—dried blood on the snow-white ground, pale cloth caught at the thorns of broken branches—but no corpse. A discarded knife lies partly hidden in the soil, as if buried shallowly and exposed by the wind; its blade still carrying traces venom.

14

1403 (S) A merchant en route to 1102 to buy rare minerals from the reclusive miners who dwell somewhere in the swamp. Having never seen the miners' village (0902), the merchant is convinced that it is kept secret from him because of the splendid wealth amassed there and will take every opportunity to try and trick the miners into disclosing its location. So far his attempts have been in vain, since the mild-mannered miners seem intent to keep their homes hidden. He will pay the adventurers 200 shekels in gold if they find the village for him.

1404 (S) Foul-smelling water flows from a well-spring, undrinkable to all but beasts.

II: From a hidden observatory, a young woman spies on the hut of an old witch (1305) to report her doings back to the Crimson Mage. The witch is aware of this spy, and takes some pleasure in providing her with useless or erroneous intel that have thus far resulted in several faulty spells. The

woman will offer a handsome reward on behalf of her master in Dur Kurigalzu if the adventurer's manage to procure an elephant-hide scroll, containing knowledge on a primordial dragon that once lived in the waters here.

1405 (S) Tufts of hair and withered textiles stick out of the mud.

1406 (S) A hearth and a wellspring among some large rocks by the shores of the white marsh marks a common stop for caravans crossing the desert lands, and the last known campsite of the lost caravan. If the PCs have received beforehand information from someone outside the white marsh, or expertly followed the all but swept away tracks of the heavily loaded camels, this is where they arrive.