

A FREE TABLE KEEPER · LONG ISLAND DUNGEON MASTER

HEATSTROKE HALLUCINATIONS

A d20 of what a character sees when the heat has them, and the one rule that makes it work: say it the way you say everything else.

one d20 in three bands · any level · no stat blocks · fifth edition (SRD 5.1)

Heat reaches a character by the book's own road, exhaustion. When a level of exhaustion comes from heat, roll once on the table below and describe the result. There is no new condition and nothing to track; the table rides the exhaustion the character already has and stops when that does.

The one rule. Describe the vision exactly the way you describe a real thing, in the words and the tone you used for the rocks a minute ago, in the same breath. No tell. Nobody else at the table sees it, and a character who is told it is not there goes on seeing it.

The die. Roll the d20. For a character with one level of exhaustion roll a d6 instead, and with two levels a d12. The d6 keeps the roll inside the first band, the d12 inside the first two, and the d20 opens all three.

When it ends. A vision goes when the character puts a hand on it, or when it would have to act like a real thing and does not: the water is dust at ten feet, the rider is a rock at two hundred. A long rest with food and water takes a level of exhaustion off, by the book, and the table has nothing to say to a character at zero.

I have run dry country at my tables for 30+ years, and the heat started working the day I stopped changing my voice for it.

WHAT THE HEAT SHOWS THEM

Roll it or pick it. The bands run from things that could be there to things that cannot be anywhere.

WHAT COULD BE THERE

D20 WHAT THE CHARACTER SEES

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| 1 | Water. A dark flat line of it a hundred yards off where the ground dips, with the light moving on it. |
| 2 | Shade. A stand of trees on the rise ahead, the shadow under them black and wide enough for everyone. |
| 3 | A road. Two wheel ruts cut clean across the way, running off to the left toward something. |
| 4 | A rider. One figure on the ridge, mounted, stopped, watching, too far off for a face. |
| 5 | A voice behind. The character's name, called once from the way they came, in a voice they know. |
| 6 | Smoke. A thin grey line going straight up a mile ahead, the kind a cooking fire makes. |

WHAT IS WRONG

D20 WHAT THE CHARACTER SEES

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| 7 | Their own tracks ahead. Bootprints in the dust in front of them, their own size and tread, going the same way. |
| 8 | Rain. The sound of it on the ground all around, heavy, and not one drop landing on anything. |
| 9 | A companion who is not here. Someone from an earlier journey walking in the line, keeping pace, saying nothing. |
| 10 | The sun in the wrong place. It stands where it stood at dawn, and the shadows run the wrong way. |
| 11 | A well. Stone-lipped and roofed, with a bucket on a wet rope, in open ground ten feet off the way. |
| 12 | Snow. It lies in the hollows and along the north side of the stones, and the air above it does not move. |

WHAT CANNOT BE THERE

D20 WHAT THE CHARACTER SEES

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| 13 | The ground breathing. The whole plain lifts and settles under them, slow, in time with their own breath. |
| 14 | A door. A plain wooden door shut in its frame, standing in the open with nothing on either side of it. |
| 15 | The dead. People the character has buried, in a line across the way, each in the clothes they died in, waiting. |
| 16 | A city. White walls and towers above the horizon with no ground under them, the gate open, a bell going inside. |
| 17 | Their own body. The character, seen from above, walking, small, from the height of a bird. |
| 18 | The sun speaking. It says the character's name, and then it says a second thing, low, that they cannot make out. |
| 19 | The sea. It comes in across the plain from the left, white at the edge, as high as a man, and goes over everyone. |
| 20 | The night. Dark falls at once, the stars come out all together, and the heat does not stop. |

WHAT THE PARTY REACHES FOR

The standard kit against heat, and what each one does to the table.

Water. A drink does not take a level of exhaustion off; by the book that takes a long rest with food and drink. The table does not know whether the waterskin is full.

Shade. Shade stops the next level from coming. It does not take off the ones already there, and a character sitting in real shade rolls the same die.

A tent. Shade that moves. The same ruling.

A mount. The mount is in the same heat and takes exhaustion by the same rules, and at two levels its speed is halved. The rider sees the same table from higher up.

Create or destroy water. Ten gallons of clean water in a container, or rain in a thirty-foot cube for the round. The water is water, and the ruling on water applies. The rain is real for one round, and for that round row 8 is true.

Lesser restoration. Ends one disease or one of four conditions, and exhaustion is not among them. It does nothing here. **Greater restoration** takes one level off, and a character at zero stops rolling.

Protection from energy. Resistance to fire damage. The heat here deals no damage. Nothing changes.

Calm emotions. Suppresses charmed and frightened. A vision is neither, and a character who is not afraid of the dead in the road still has the dead in the road.

A Medicine check. A DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check on another character finds the heat in them and finds that they are seeing things. It does not say what.

Lay on hands. Hit points, or a disease, or a poison. Exhaustion is none of those, and the vision stays.

Survival. A Wisdom (Survival) check finds real water or real shade where there is any, and then the rulings above apply. It does not sort a real well from row 11.

Being told it is not there. Describe it again, the same way.

WHERE IT RUNS

Anywhere your table already hands out exhaustion for heat: a desert road, a drought summer, a forge hall, the bottom of a mine, a sealed tomb at noon. The table does not care what is hot, only that the character is.

The tables are mine. 30+ years of real tables.

LONG ISLAND DUNGEON MASTER

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