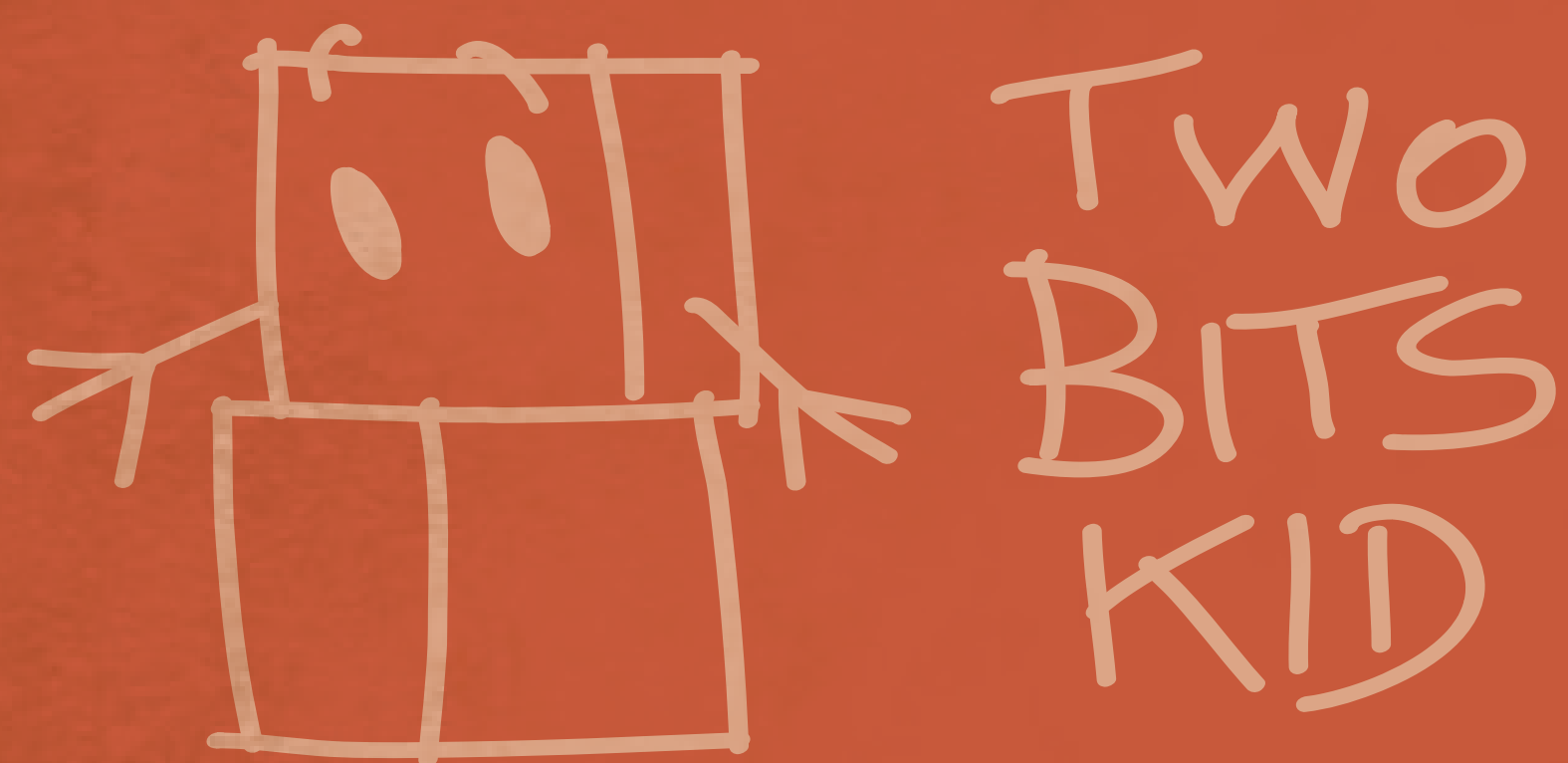


AEON OF SANDS

ART BOOK





Aeon of Sands - Art Book v1.2
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FOREWORD

During the development of *Aeon of Sands - The Trail*, we were often asked about how the idea of the game was born. However, the answer to that, to me, is hardly as interesting as the why: Why Aeon of Sands?

The answer to that is this: Aeon of Sands is a game built as a storytelling device. The game is all about a particular story, and how the player goes through it.

While the game largely fulfills the aspect of an old dungeon crawler, that is only the mean with which the player navigates it, or is challenged by it during his or her travel.

In truth, the game is the story: in Aeon of Sands, going through the story equals playing the game.

Moreover, I found the idea appealing not to try and narrate an epic, heroic, or macho fantasy, but a tale of inadequacy and struggle, in a medium that traditionally never cares about a story past the simple “accept quest, kill the dragon, get reward, be the boss”.

For us, Florian Fischer and me, the task was to create a world, its lore, a narrative, the presentation of it all, on one side. And on the other, to create the container for the gameplay device and the gameplay device itself, i.e. the “game”. In other words, we aimed at creating different layers of abstraction from the higher one, the narrative tapestry, to the lower one, the direct exploration of the world.

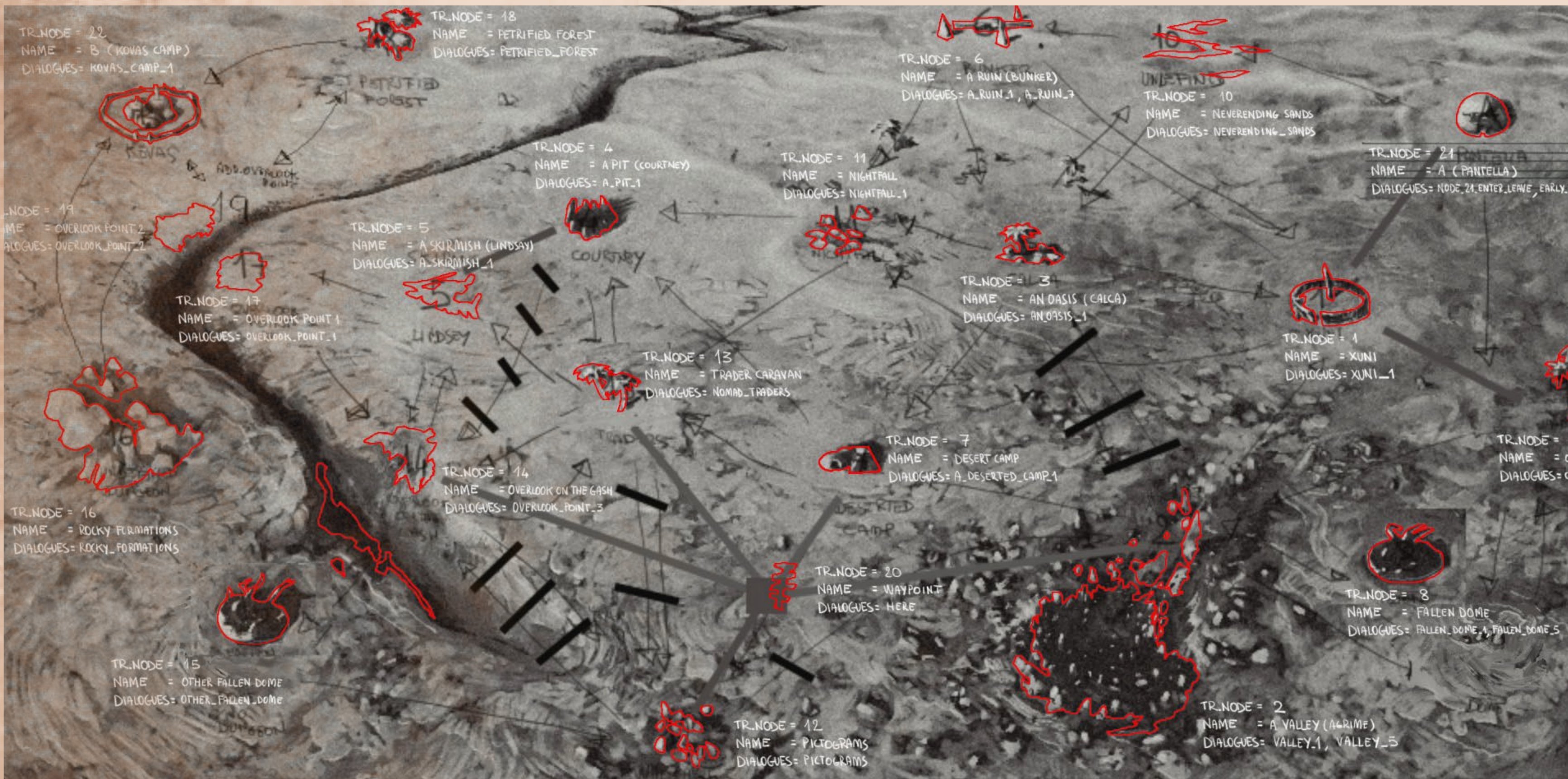
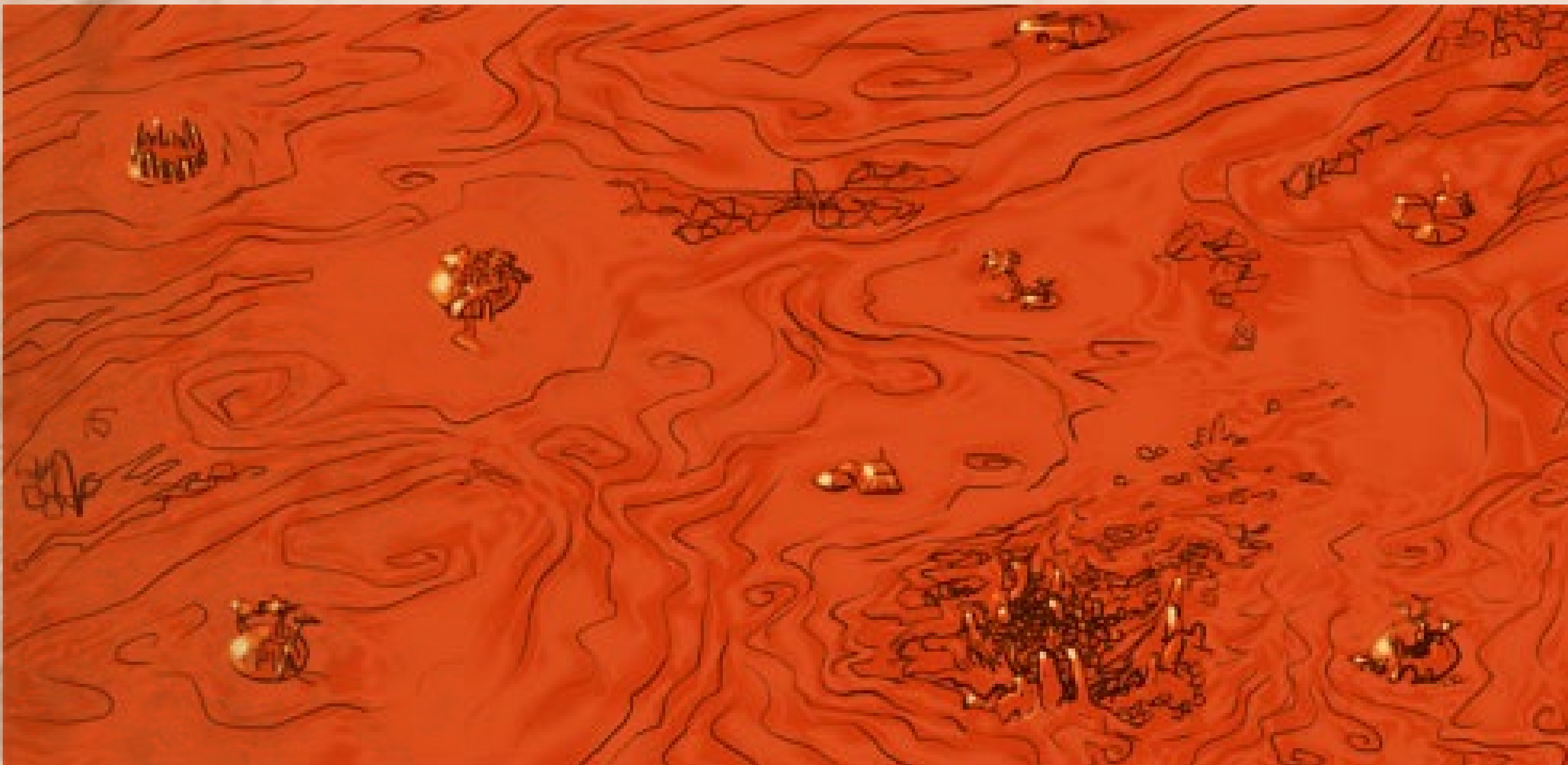
An interesting, yet simple reason to the why, but a very difficult task indeed.

As a result, this artbook is like a collection of postcards from our journey. Enjoy browsing through!

See you back at the end of the book, for our farewells!

Biella, 31/12/2018
Marco Pedrana



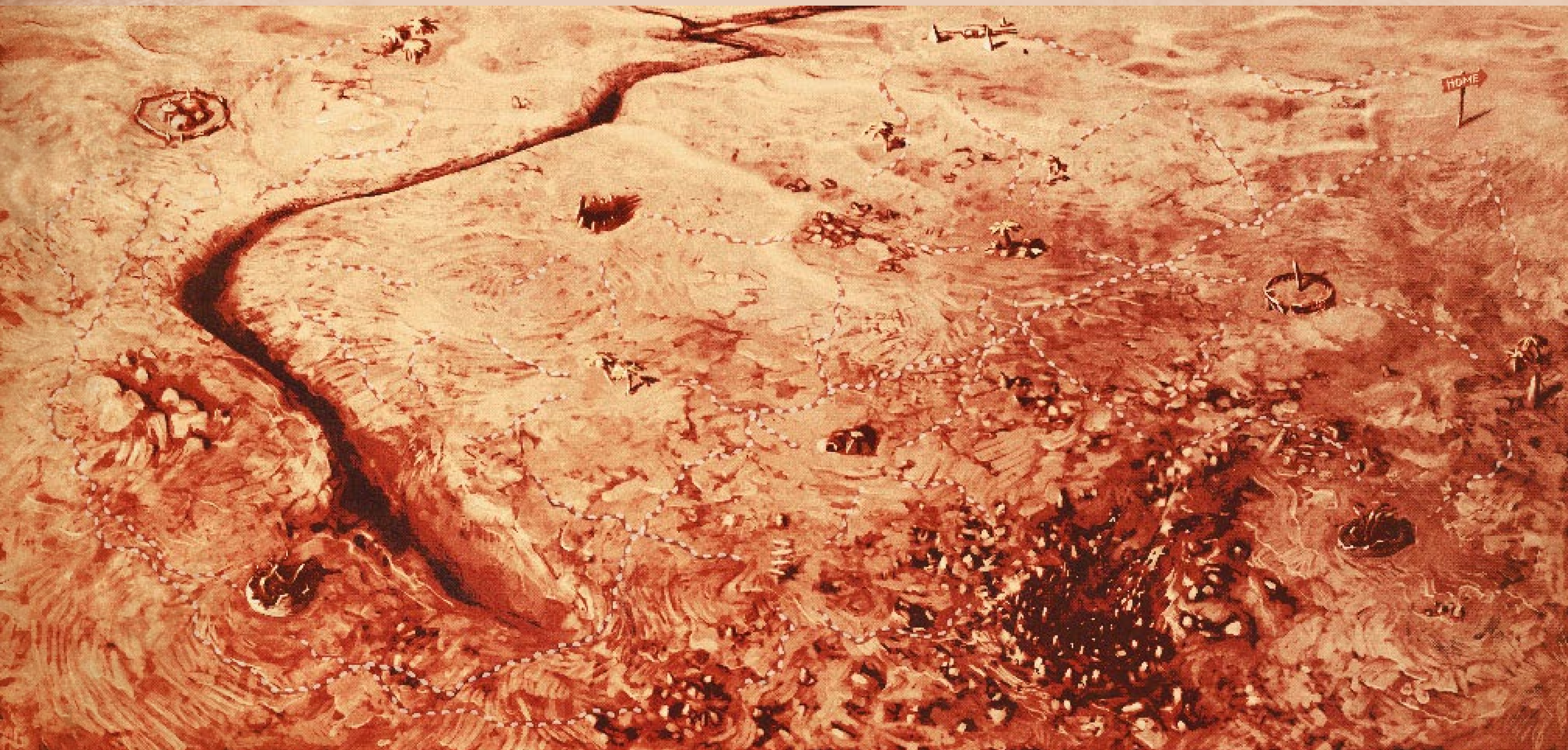


.01

/// WORLD MAP

Three iterations of the world map, from the early sketch, to the planning of the routes, to the rendering of an almost final version.

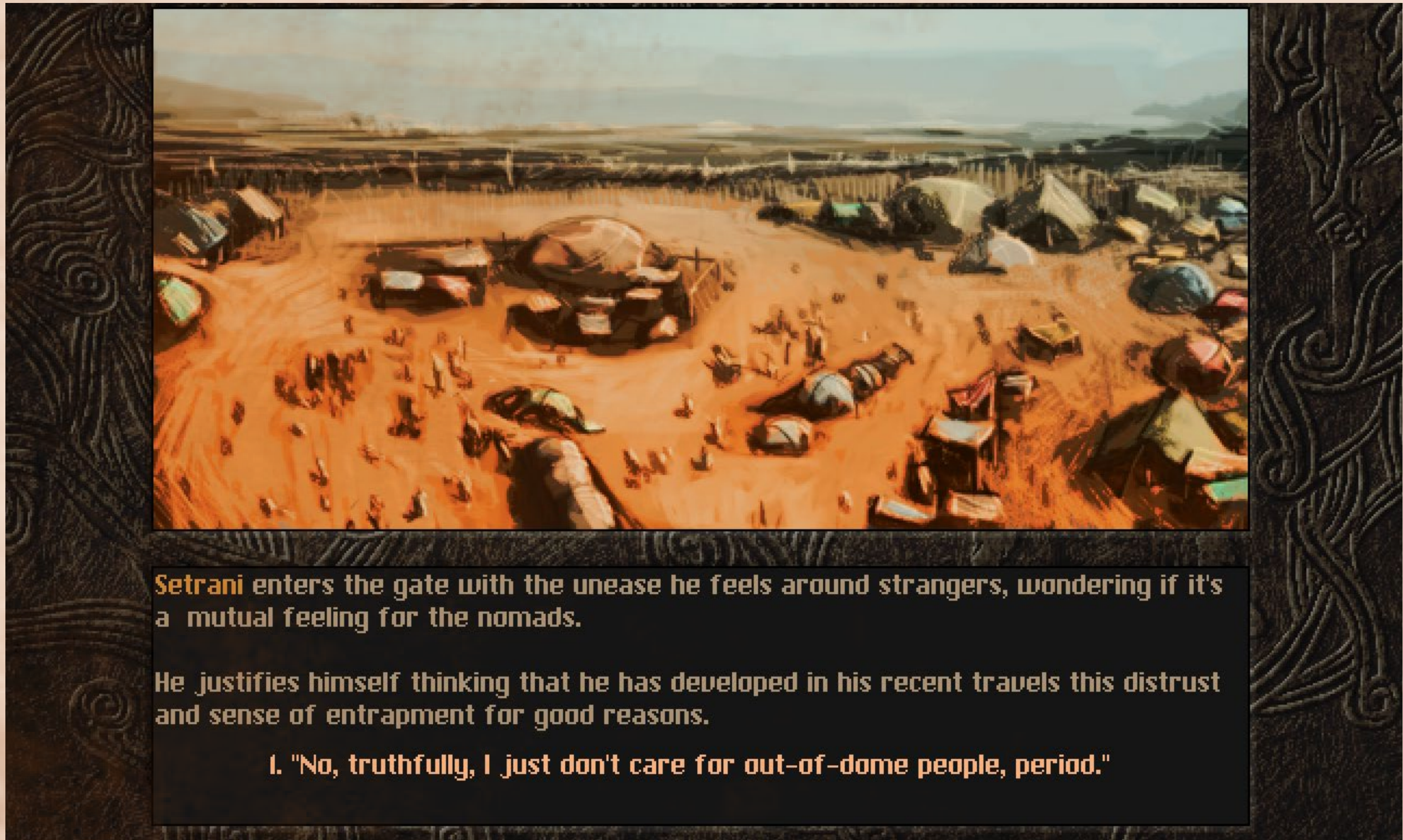
The whole of Aeon of Sands world is a desert.





.02

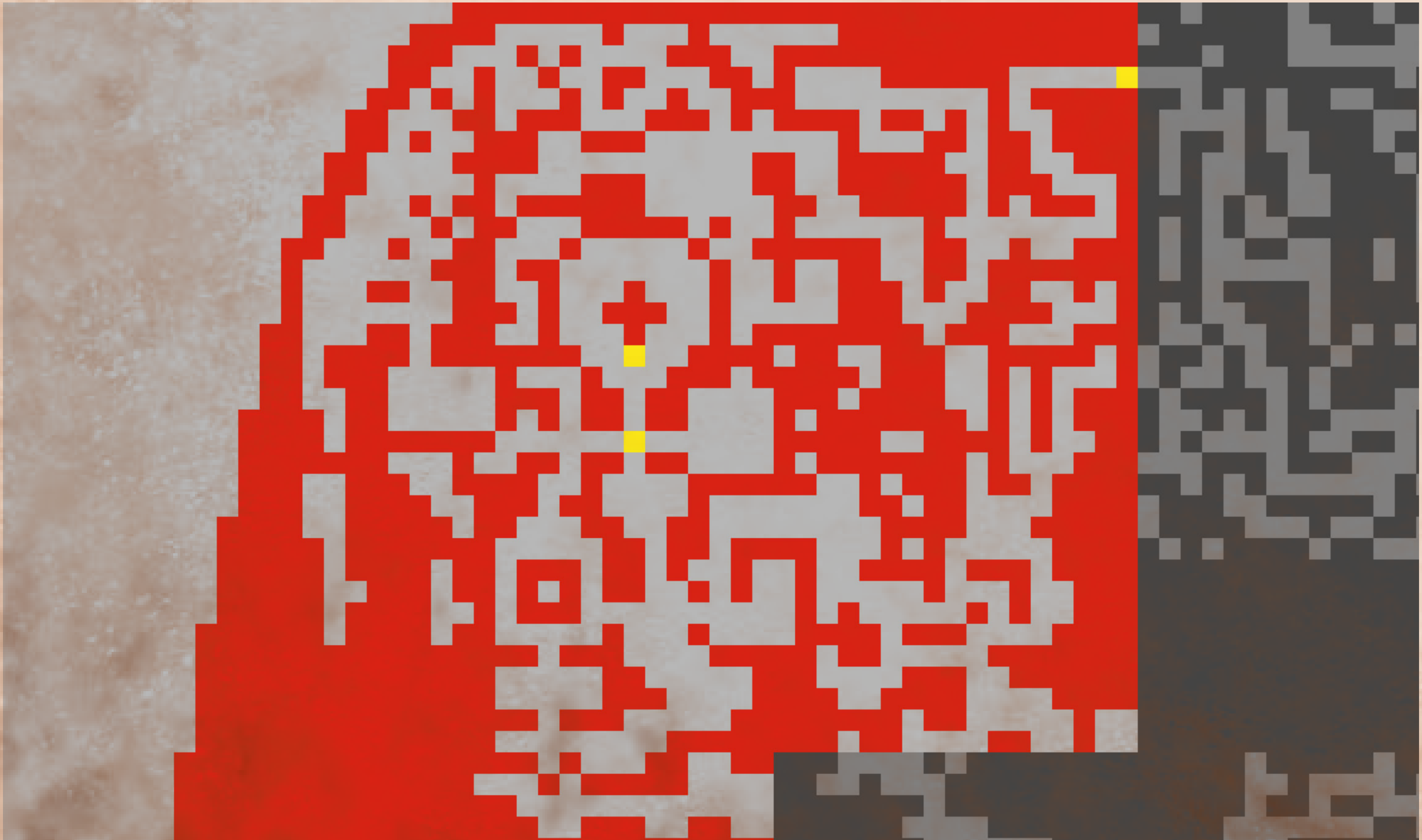
/// MAZES



Setrani enters the gate with the unease he feels around strangers, wondering if it's a mutual feeling for the nomads.

He justifies himself thinking that he has developed in his recent travels this distrust and sense of entrapment for good reasons.

I. "No, truthfully, I just don't care for out-of-dome people, period."



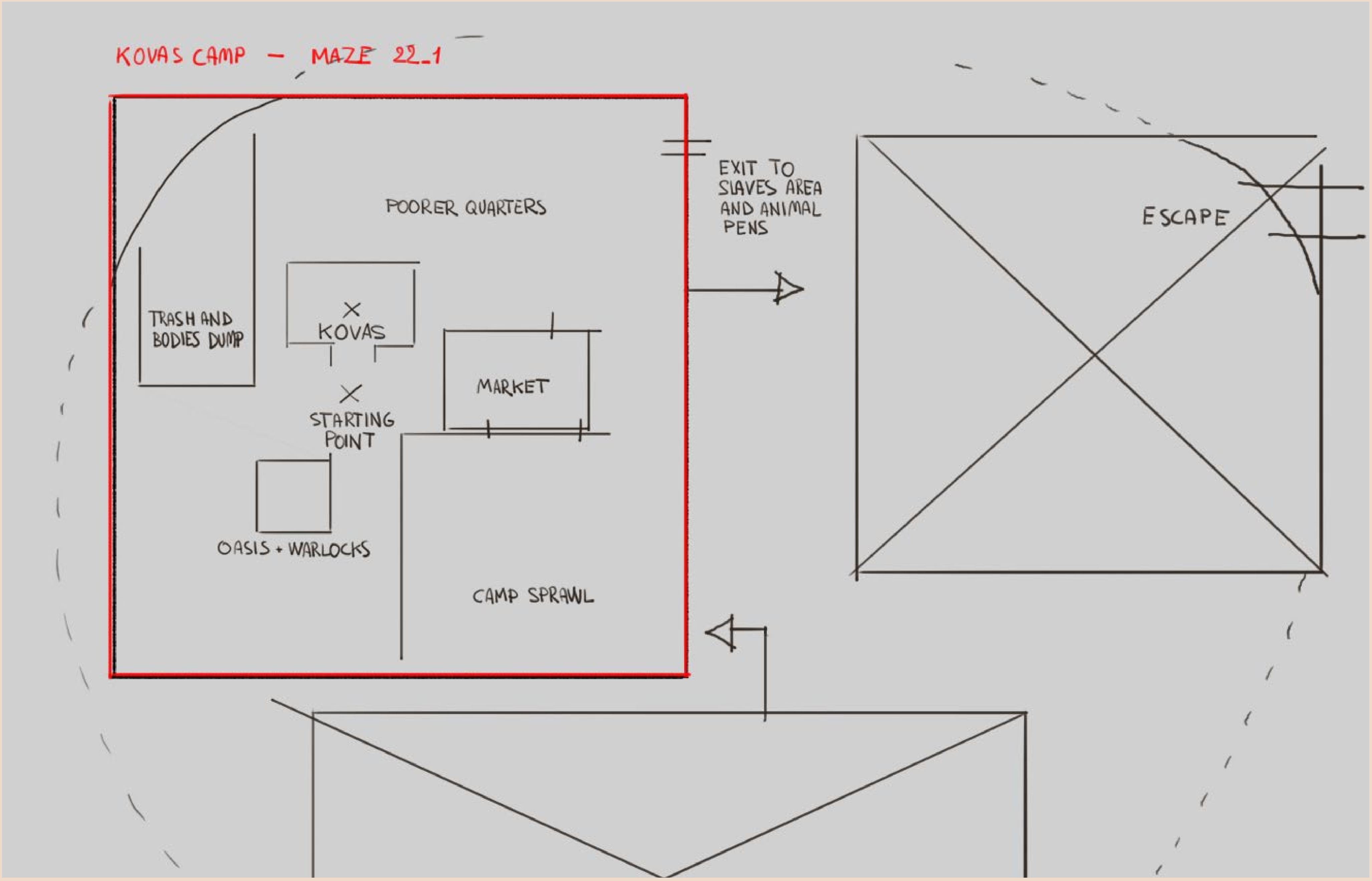
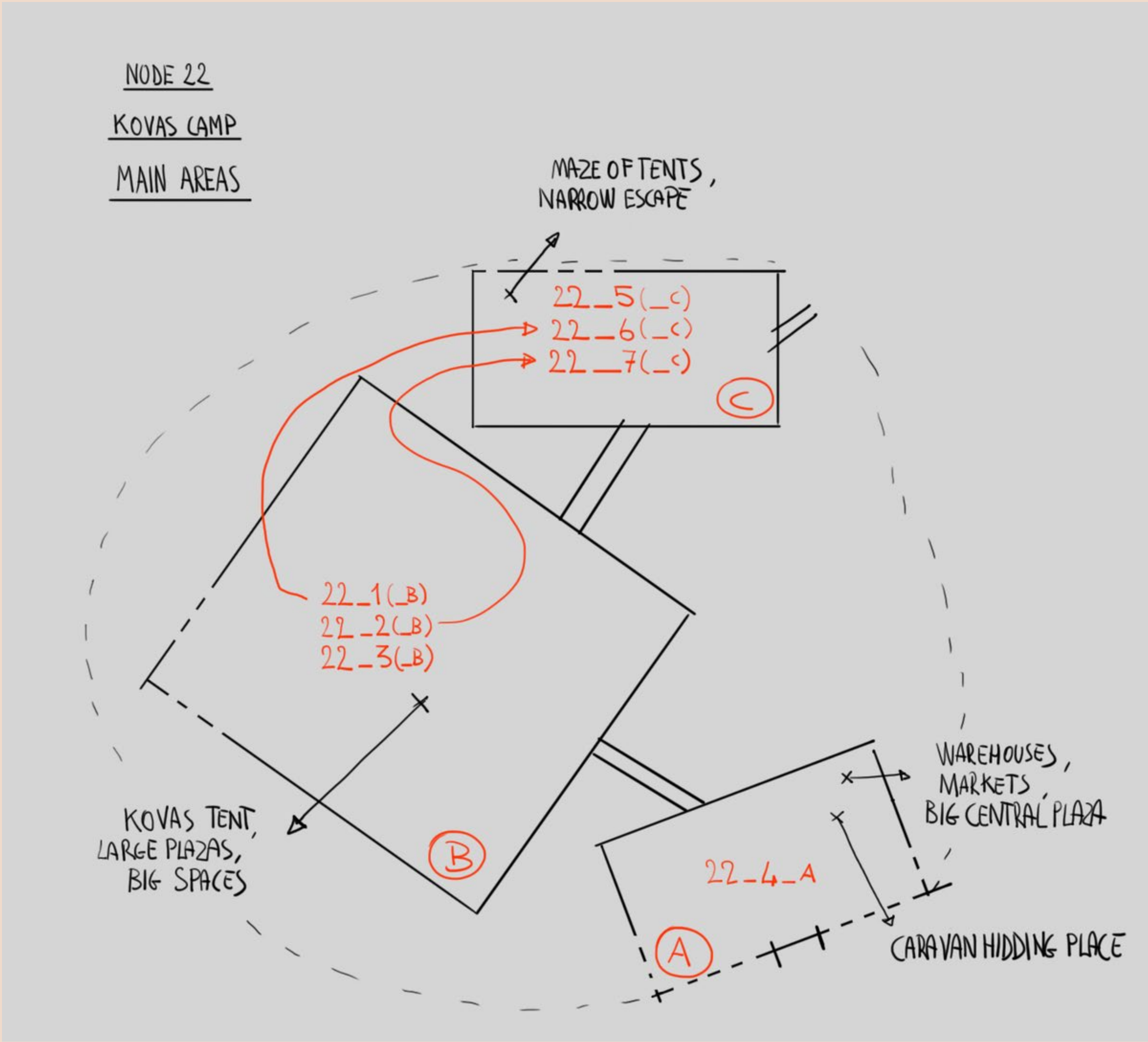
Left, on the worldmap, the party arrives at Kovas' Camp; its dialogue is triggered.

Kovas' Camp is one of the larger plot nodes in the game: depending by the players' current and past choices (items and companions found as well), one of sixteen different outcomes can be met.

Those outcomes take the player to about a dozen different sub-plot nodes, and to one of a dozen arenas / large mazes.

All of the above looks like one linear story to the player; it can either unfold in one of the different parts of Kovas' Camp, or in one of the many arenas representing the camp destroyed, or in nearby areas crawled by different monsters, or in a farther area where an ambush takes place, and even in an arena representing one of Setrani's dreams while sleeping in the camp.

Or, it unfolds in none of them, and the story can go on in further dialogues, bridging the gap to the city of Pantella, to where Setrani returns.



Above, on the left, five different paths through Kovas' Camp:

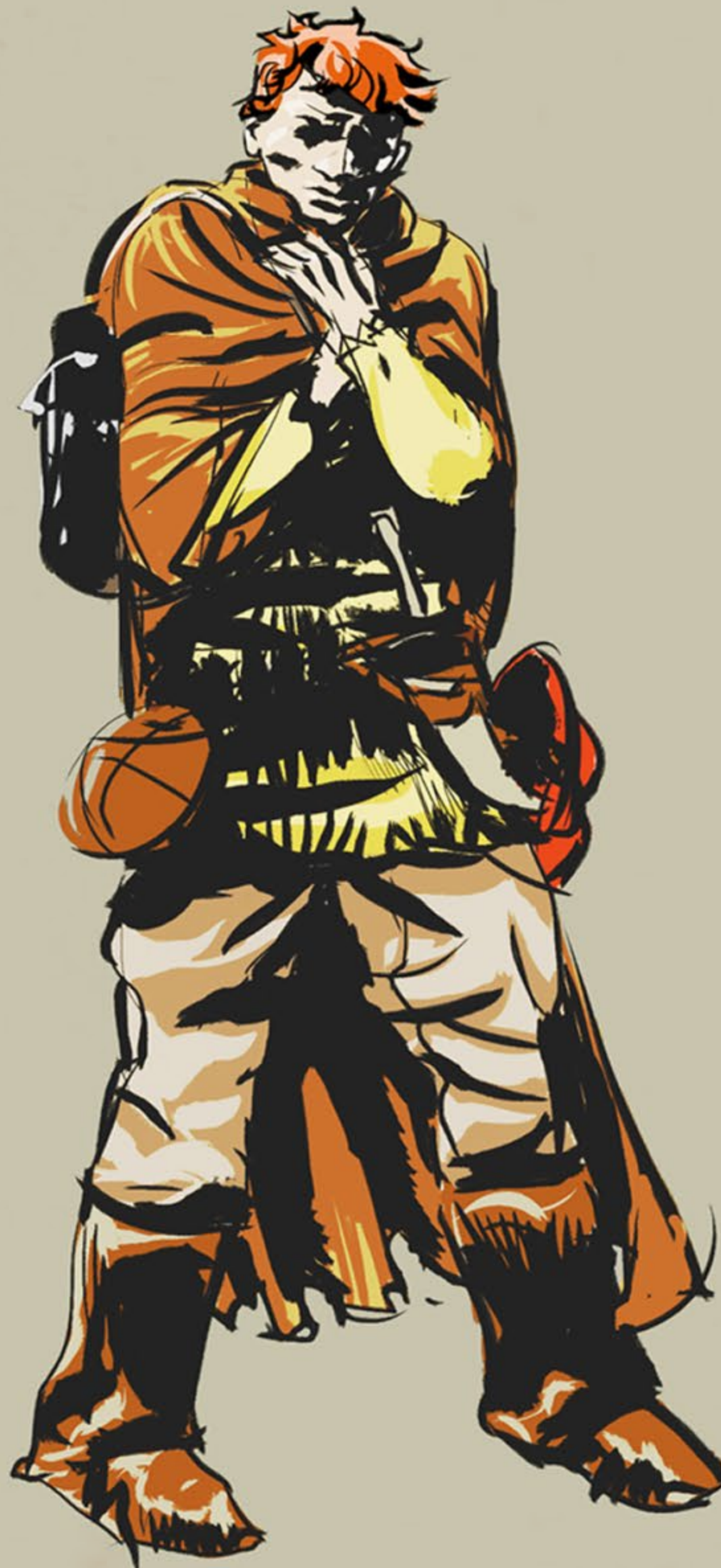
	maze 1	maze 2	description of exploration
1	22_1	22_6	a crawl from the core camp to the slaves quarters and the animal pens
2	22_2	22_7	like the above, but with different conditions and enemies
3	22_3	/	the core camp, where Nematazi can be fought, among the ruins of Kovas' tent
4	22_4	/	the nomad caravan plaza, where the scouting parties and the slave caravans are
5	22_5	/	a tougher slaves quarter, and animal pens, with again a slightly different pacing

Above, on the right, a rough description of one of the previous mazes, 22_1, defining the various parts and purposes of the area.



Above, left, the maze editor showing maze 21_1.

Above, right, the maze 21_1 in game.



.03

/// CHARACTERS

HARRO and SETRANI

Harro, the guard: rugged; world-savvy; perceptive; pragmatist; capable. Also, tired, hurt, and silent. He's loyal to Pantella, but he despises Setrani.

Setrani, the clerk: indecisive; fearful; lazy; inadequate. Capable of good, as long as it doesn't cost him, he doesn't understand the world outside Pantella, nor cares he to.



Left, AGRIME and COURTNEY.

Agrime leads with an iron hand a band of Pantellans rogues, exiled from the city and living in a quarry. They have cut all ties with their home town and, in the seclusion of their stone valley, survive by scavenge and robbery.

They worship the god under the sand, who, they believe, give them shelter from the mighty winds.

Courtney is an oddity. Nothing is known about where she comes from, but she apparently can survive the desert on her own.

She has a streak of craziness about her, and, apparently, she has a thing for water faucets.

Next page, more scrapped designs for Setrani.





.02/B

/// LOST



The discarded character selection panel in the game's prototype.

Originally you could select one of four possible main characters, each from a different tribe of the desert denizens, and with different goals.

Their stories we dropped in favor of Setrani's, and only Harro carried over on the final version of the game.

Still, in the lore of the game, their adventures took place: those events happened, before or after The Trail.