



Image of  
Actual  
Hex!

# Hexplore: Borderlands

Inactive Volcano, River Fort, Village, and Tower

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## Outside the reaches of civilization, before the primordial chaos, lie the borderlands.

This is a set of tools and play aids to facilitate hex-crawling. This was a hidden game inside the core of Dungeons & Dragons from the very start. It was an assumed part of play by ancient bearded elders, engaged in obscure games of war and conflict. The guidelines for the generation of wilderness hexes were in the rules from the beginning, with the expectations that the characters would create the bastions of order to conquer these borderlands and push the chaos back. One of the reasons old-school high-level play held such great fascination is that a giant multi-player human-refereed tabletop game of civilization is fascinating.

*“When building a castle or stronghold, a character must first clear a hex or local area of monsters, entering the hex with a force of men and dealing with any lairs. . . The cleared area will remain free of monsters as long as it is patrolled, Patrols usually range up to 18 miles. . . though jungles, swamps and mountains will require a garrison every 6 miles to keep clear.*

*“Settlers can be attracted to cleared areas by spending money on improvements . . . or advertising. The costs and the number of settlers who move into the area are up to the Dungeon Master. . . the Settlers will pay taxes to help maintain the holding and the characters Mercenaries.”* -Expert Dungeons and Dragons, Cook/Marsh ©1981

*“You give him a map of the hex where the location is and of the six surrounding hexes. The player character and his henchmen and various retainers must now go to the construction site, explore and map it, and have construction commence.”* - 1st Edition Dungeon Masters Guide, Gygax ©1979

Hexplode gives you the contents of a hex, but more than that, it gives you a sense of discovery! When we explore, one of the greatest benefits is novelty. As your characters explore the very detailed illustration of the hex by crossing its varied terrain they will discover lairs, ruins, towns, castles, towers, dungeons, and more, each with an illustration. This sense of novelty they get from seeing the picture grants the same feeling as discovering something new, unknown, dangerous and exciting.

Hexplode also contains rumors for each hex along with pages usable for tracking the monsters and characters within. You can collect these single pages together to have a hex quick reference. I haven't labeled each hex, leaving space to label it so that it matches your fantasy map.

Major adventure sites are visible on the map, Lairs are related to features, but may be anywhere within a terrain feature, and landmarks are non-specified and can be placed anywhere the Dungeon Master wishes. Characters have not been named so they may match setting expectations freely. Sites are named, but feel free to rename liberally to match your setting. Blanks are left for you to add setting specific notes and statistics.



Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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River Fort: \_\_\_\_\_

Bard Tower: \_\_\_\_\_

Ruins: \_\_\_\_\_

Village: \_\_\_\_\_

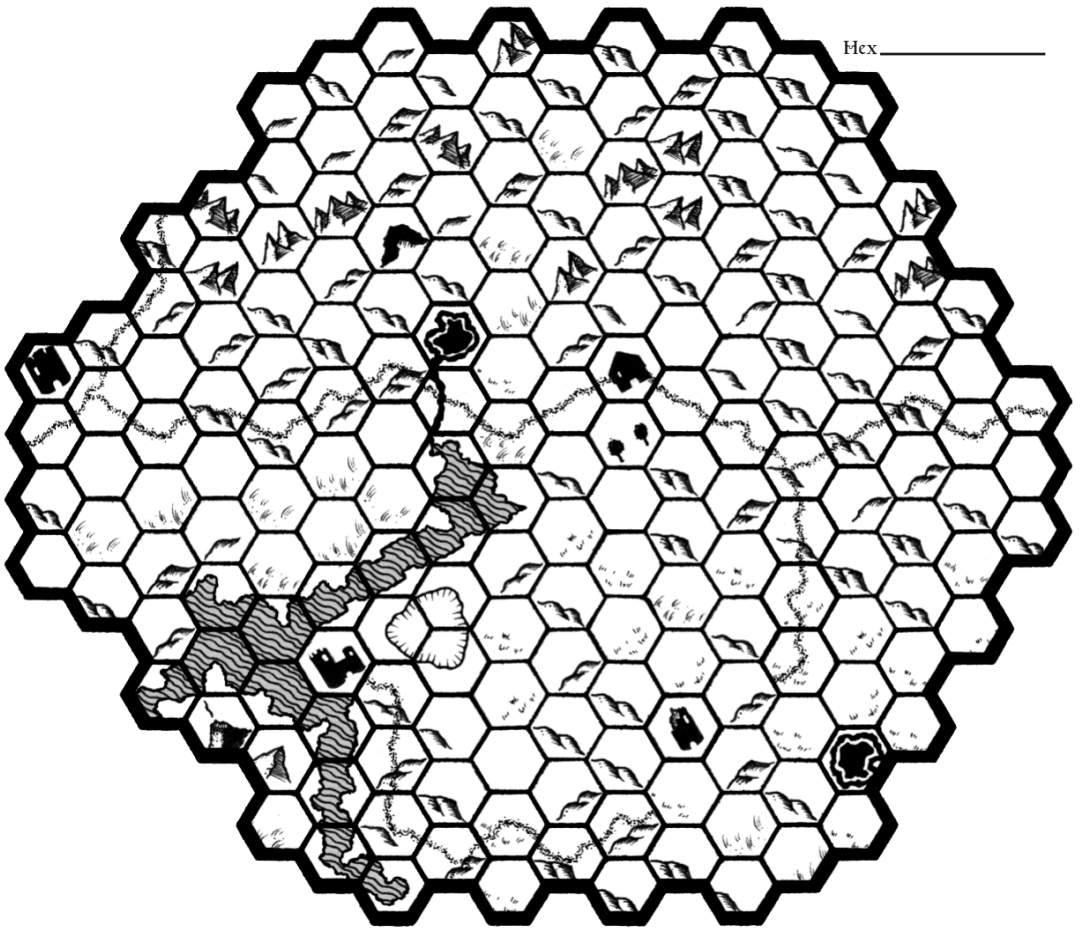
Dungeon: \_\_\_\_\_

Jungle inside volcano containing Ziggurat: \_\_\_\_\_

Landmarks: ☐ Talking Eagle, ☐ Overgrown Herb Garden, ☐ Tower Ruins, ☐ Albino's Hut

Lairs: ☐ Sunken Ship / Lake, ☐ Crumbled Worn Basalt Obelisk / Ruins, ☐ Cragg Hill Cavern Stone Formations / Hills North of Village





Hex \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
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River Fort: \_\_\_\_\_

Bard Tower: \_\_\_\_\_

Ruins: \_\_\_\_\_

Village: \_\_\_\_\_

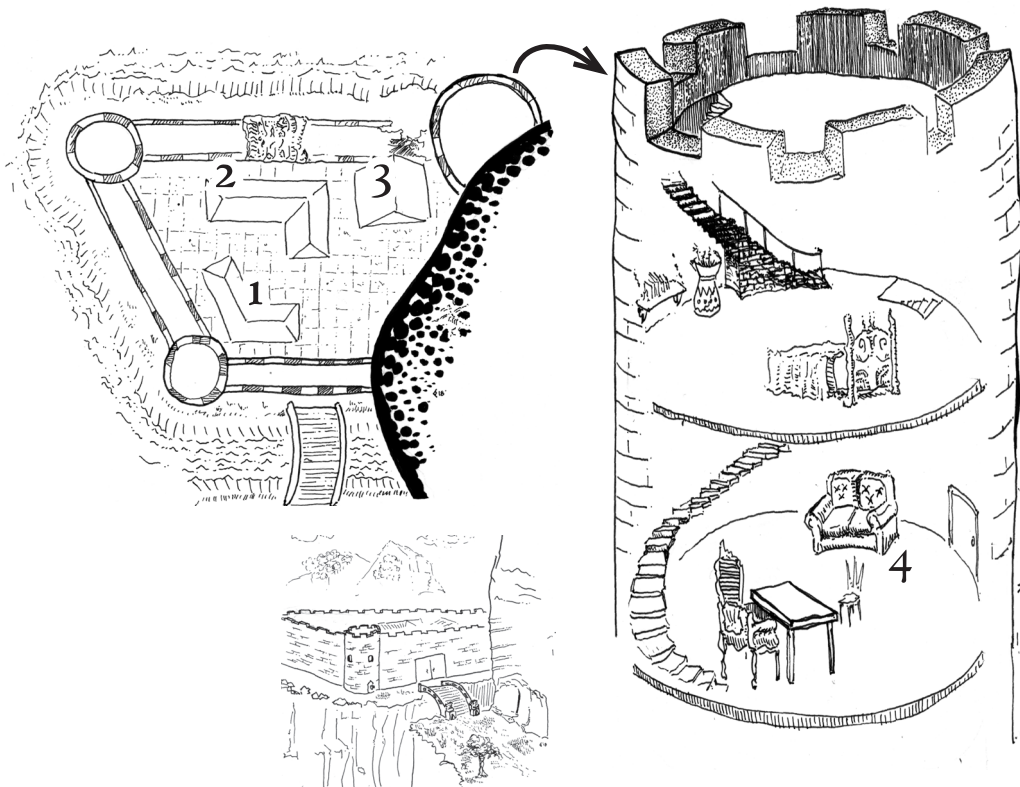
Dungeon: \_\_\_\_\_

Inside Volcano containing Ziggurat: \_\_\_\_\_

Landmarks: ☐ Talking Eagle, ☐ Overgrown Herb Garden, ☐ Tower Ruins, ☐ Albino's Hut

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This old and weathered river fort is known as the Ogre Fort, due to the large size of doors, buildings, and furniture. It is also known as Zardon manor. The inhabitants appear to be friendly if suspicious, though at night every person become possessed by their shadow selves and kill any visitors. They are chaotic evil.

1. Servant and guest quarters: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Main hall and feasting room: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Barracks and apprentice quarters: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Illusionist's Tower: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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13th Level Illusionist (Lord): \_\_\_\_\_

8th Level Fighter (Sergeant): \_\_\_\_\_

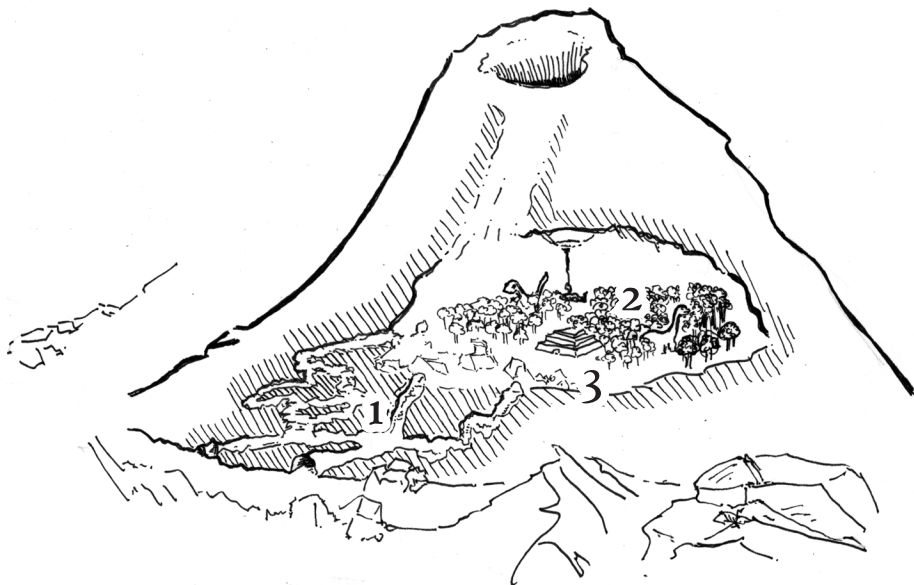
4th level fighter (Lieutenant): \_\_\_\_\_

4th level fighter (Lieutenant): \_\_\_\_\_

5th level illusionist (Apprentice): \_\_\_\_\_

3rd level illusionist (Apprentice): \_\_\_\_\_

22 0-level men (servants): \_\_\_\_\_



This inactive volcano is hollow, but the plane of fire seeps burning energy from a rift near the ceiling, providing dim light and warmth to the megafauna and megafauna within. In the center stands an ancient temple, filled with eldritch reptilian god/beasts. They collect slaves.

1. Tunnels, low and open, circling the base of the volcano: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Jungle mountain interior: \_\_\_\_\_

Tyrannosaurus Rex: \_\_\_\_\_

Triceratops: \_\_\_\_\_

Brachiosaurus: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Ziggurat to ancient chaos serpent gods: \_\_\_\_\_

A. Jeweled Statue, Sarcophagus containing serpent/man god/mummy: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Secret Temple Area, 2d6 Serpent Men Guards: 00000 00000 00 \_\_\_\_\_

Snake Idol, Gold Statue: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Rest Area, 1d4 Snakeman Priests and 2d6 serpent men Guards: 0000 || 00000 00000 00 \_\_\_\_\_

D. Secret Serpent Lair: 1d4 Snakemen Priests and an eight-headed Hydra 0000 || 00000 000 \_\_\_\_\_

Treasure Hoardx3: \_\_\_\_\_

E. Entrance: \_\_\_\_\_

F. Sacrificial Chamber. 1d4 Snakemen Priests, 2d6 Serpent/Men Guards, 1d4 Giant Snakes: 0000 || 00000 00000 00 || 0000 \_\_\_\_\_

G. Secret Deadly Trapped Basement: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasure Hoard behind Trapped Door: \_\_\_\_\_

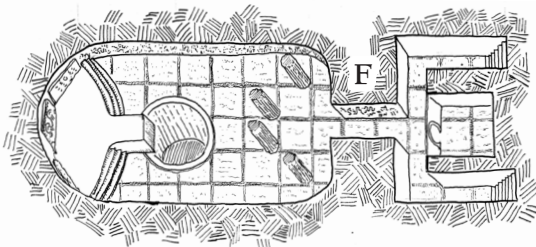
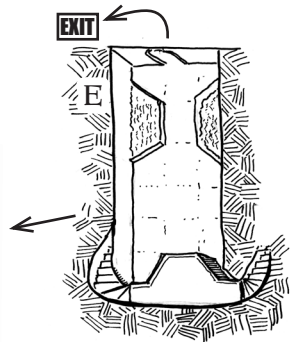
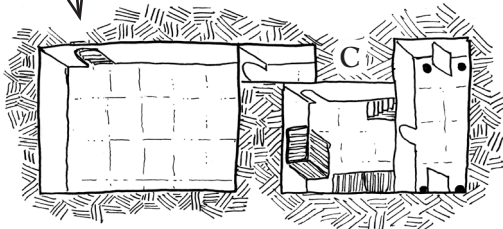
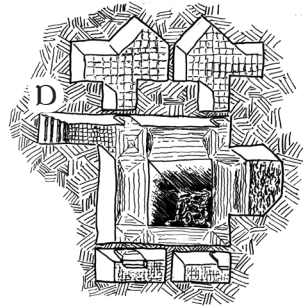
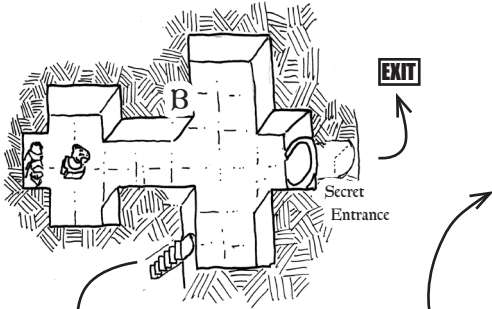
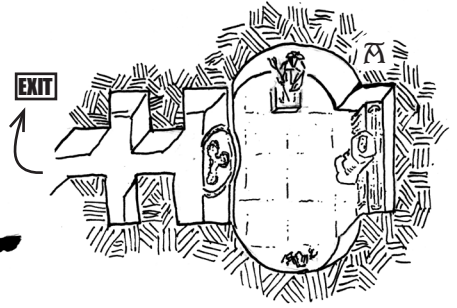
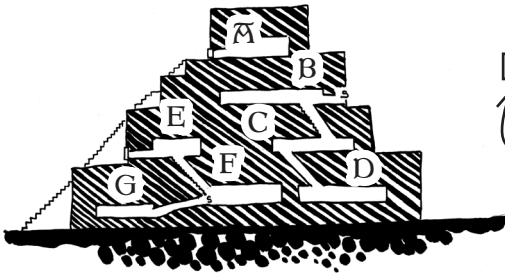
Scythe Trap: \_\_\_\_\_ Dart Trap: \_\_\_\_\_ Falling Rocks Trap: \_\_\_\_\_

Snakeman Guard: \_\_\_\_\_ Giant Snakes: \_\_\_\_\_

Snakeman Priest: \_\_\_\_\_

Hydra: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_



Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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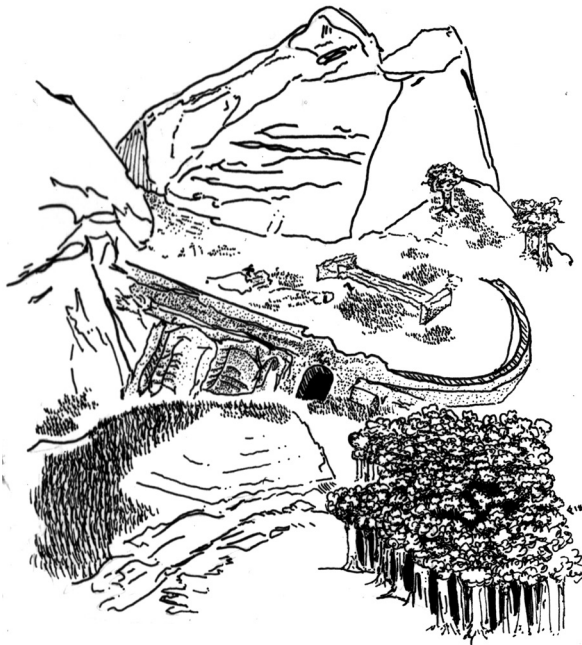
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#### Ruined Stadium of Dunge/wok:

decayed earthenwork stadium, ancient ruined columns, cracked marble, and clay. Under the earthenworks there are forgotten chambers, in which rests a demon lord. Trapped, he will bargain for his freedom. Ancient traps protect the imprisoned demon.

Moralinthe, the viscount of despair has a fat blubbery crab like body with four furry arms that end in vicious toxic claws. It has a serpentine gibbering face, with one small slitted rheumy white eye. It also possesses vestigial wings and a curled swine tail.

Bears wander the ruins, eating the large maggot like grubs the mowl while half-embedded in clay mounds.

1. Elevated Chamber w/view of 2: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Serpent head with jeweled eyes, Ash mound, Flame Trap engulfs the chamber.: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Infernal Tome on Pedestal, Ruined demonic tapestries on wall: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Cold Clay Chamber: \_\_\_\_\_

5: Moralinthe, Trapped in Circle of Protection: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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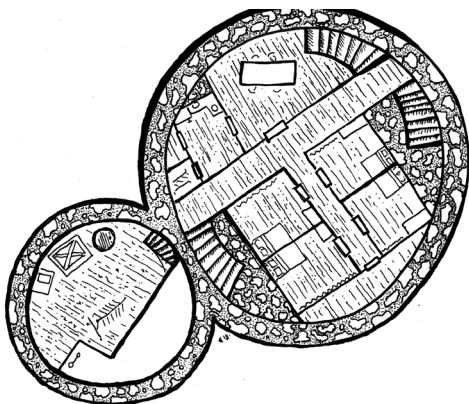
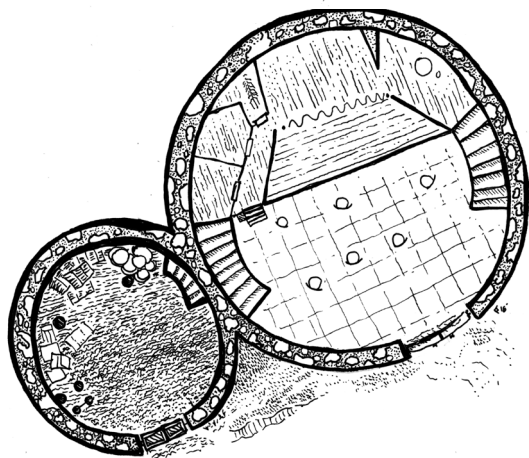
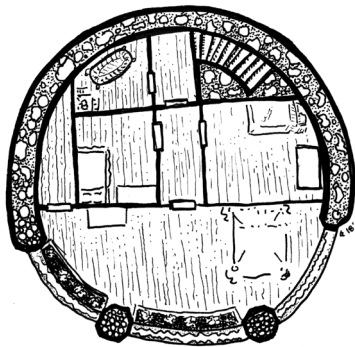
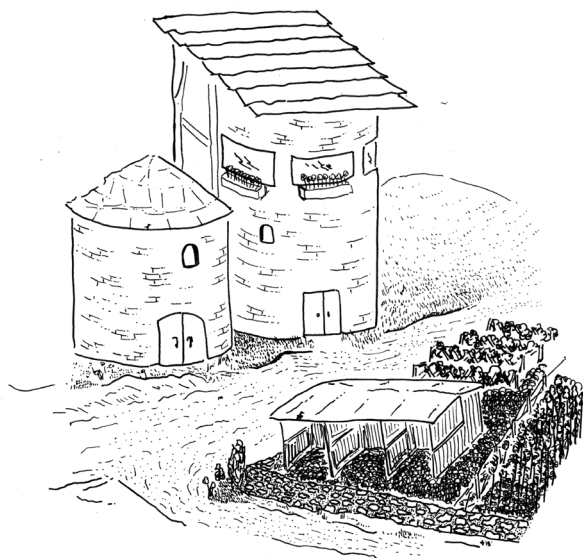
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The Bards Tower says simply that, in a wooden sign above the door. A troupe of 37 bards works Bard's Tower college, though all are not here at any time. Their leader is a 10th level bard, with two 8th level bards, four 6th level bards (see opposing page), 8 4th level bards following. The rest fight as 0-level men. The grounds support livestock and a large garden. Troupes frequently leave to perform in nearby settlements.

Notes:

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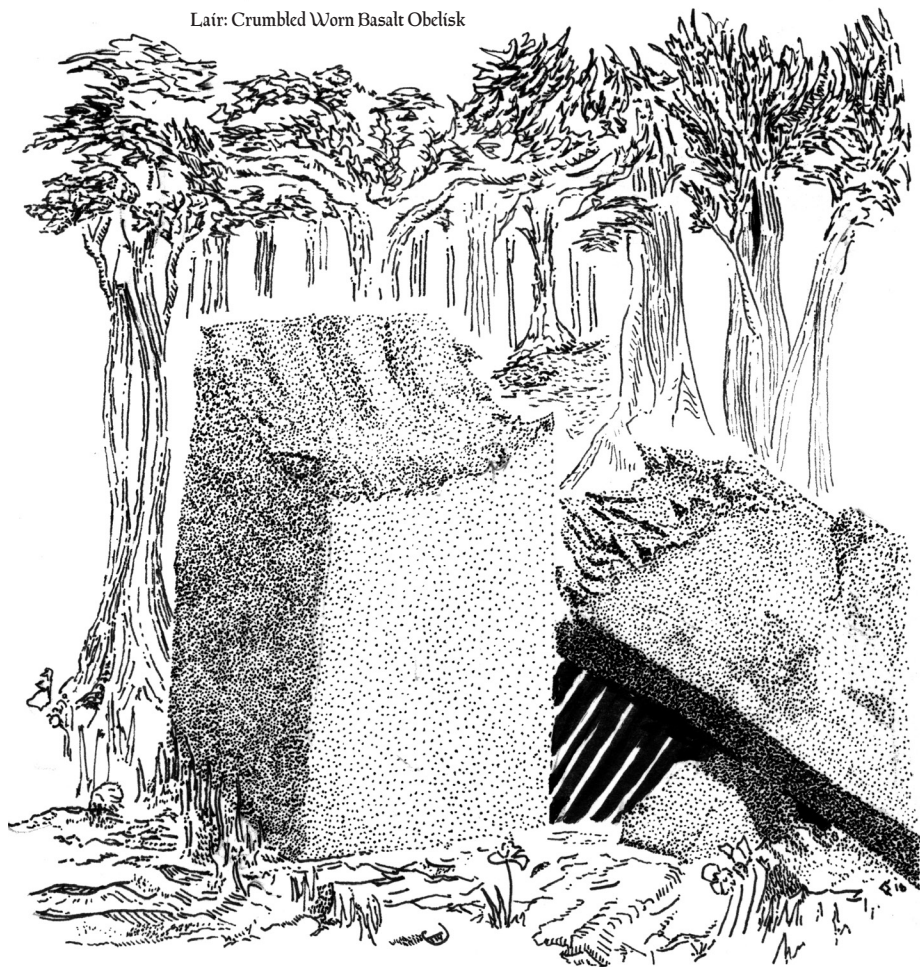
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Bards: 10th: 0, 8th 00, 6th 0000, 4th 00000 000 || 00000 00000 00000 00000 00



Lair: Crumbled Worn Basalt Obelisk

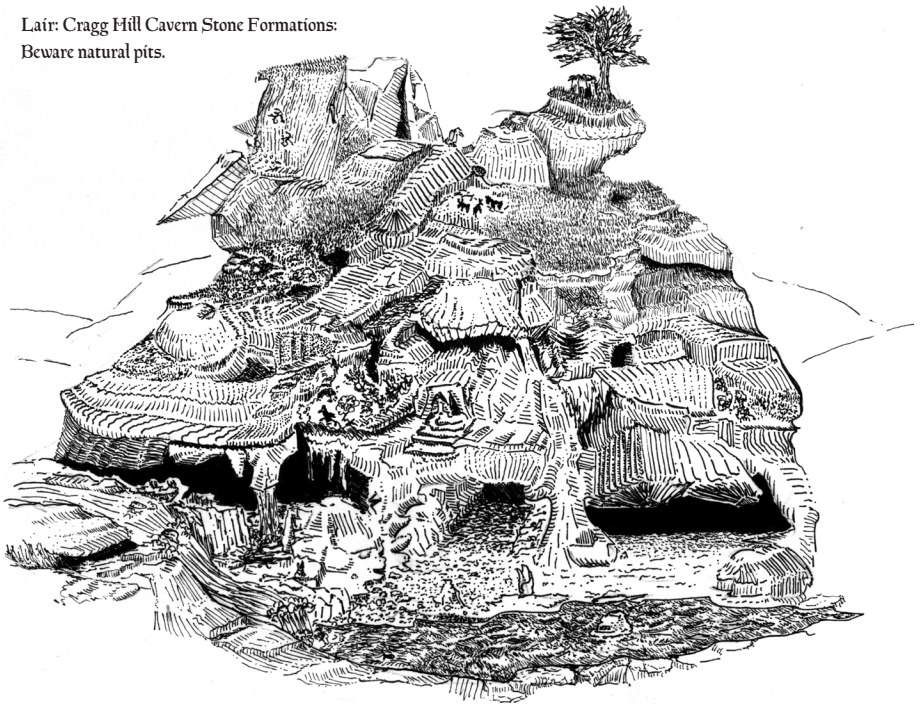


This hex contains three lairs, pictured here. Place anywhere in appropriate terrain. Determine what creature or animal inhabits each lair. If not patrolled, lairs will draw new occupants in 1d4 months.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Lair: Cragg Mill Cavern Stone Formations:  
Beware natural pits.

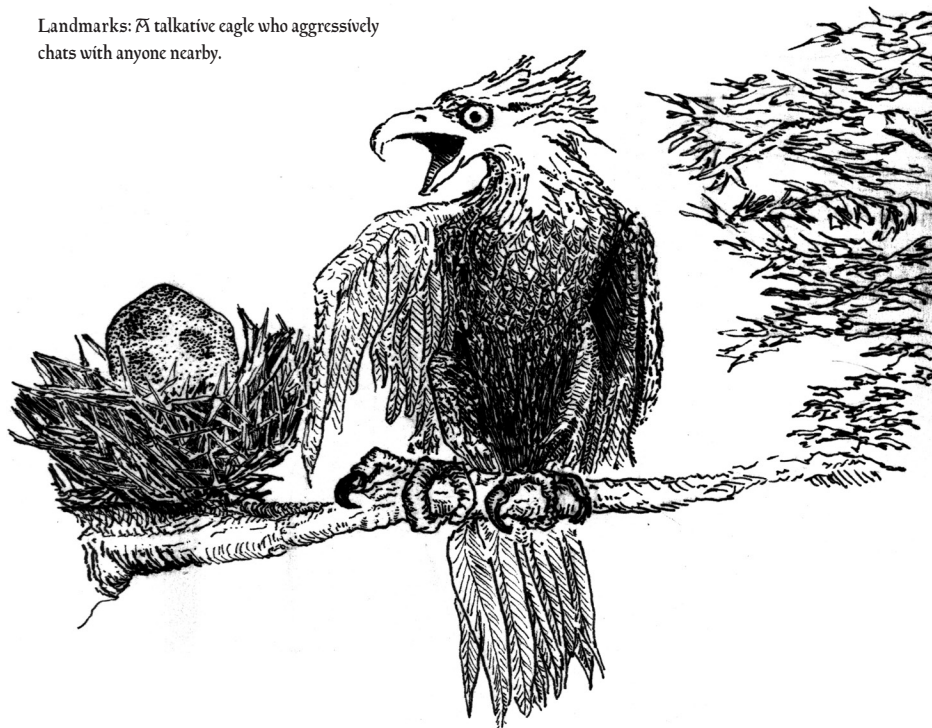


Notes:

Lair: Sunken Wreck



Landmarks: A talkative eagle who aggressively chats with anyone nearby.



Landmarks: Broken Tower and Temple Foundations





Landmarks: The house of an albino idiot  
woodsman, though afflicted with mongolism he is a  
superior warrior



Landmarks: Overgrown Ancient Herb Garden



### Rumors:

1. Bodies and weapons litter the floor of the bay.
2. Sometimes the wolves run wild in the hills; men have disappeared, some are found later, half-eaten.
3. One of the little ones, up at the village, sure does like visiting men.
4. Bodies of ancient monsters are sometimes found floating in the river.
5. There's a very annoying eagle up in the hills, talks to anyone that comes nearby.
6. Old Yorn lives up in the hills. He doesn't mean any harm to anyone, but be careful. He's daft.
7. The keepers of the river fort are very private people. Visitors are said to disappear sometimes.
8. There is a darkness in the river fort duke. It's not suggested to visit.
9. I've heard sometimes an evil voice is heard at night, near the old ruined stone.
10. More than one caravan has gone missing what crossing round the river. Hydra got them, that's what.

### Random Encounters for the Hex

### Activities

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. 1d4 Bears (1/2, resting 3/4 hunting)  | 1. Laying about in the grass resting       |
| 2. 2d10 Bandits  | 2. Approach with helpful overtures         |
| 3. 1d6 Bards   | 3. Drawing Occult signs                    |
| 4. 1d4 Gnomes  | 4. Attempting to rescue someone from a pit |
| 5. Travelers or a caravan  |  |
| 6. Birds take flight from a nearby treeline. They appear to be talking about you.                |  |
| 7. You come across some vomitus. Upon close examination you find human finger bones in the mess. |  |
| 8. You see an odd looking mountain spirit, who has bulbous eyes on stalks.                       |  |

### Other Notes.

There are is a crossroad in front of the Bard's tower. A band of out of work migrants stands here most days, asking travelers for work. They are of variable talent.

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