

Hexed Places

The Sharp Hills



Created by Mark A. Thomas





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Artists

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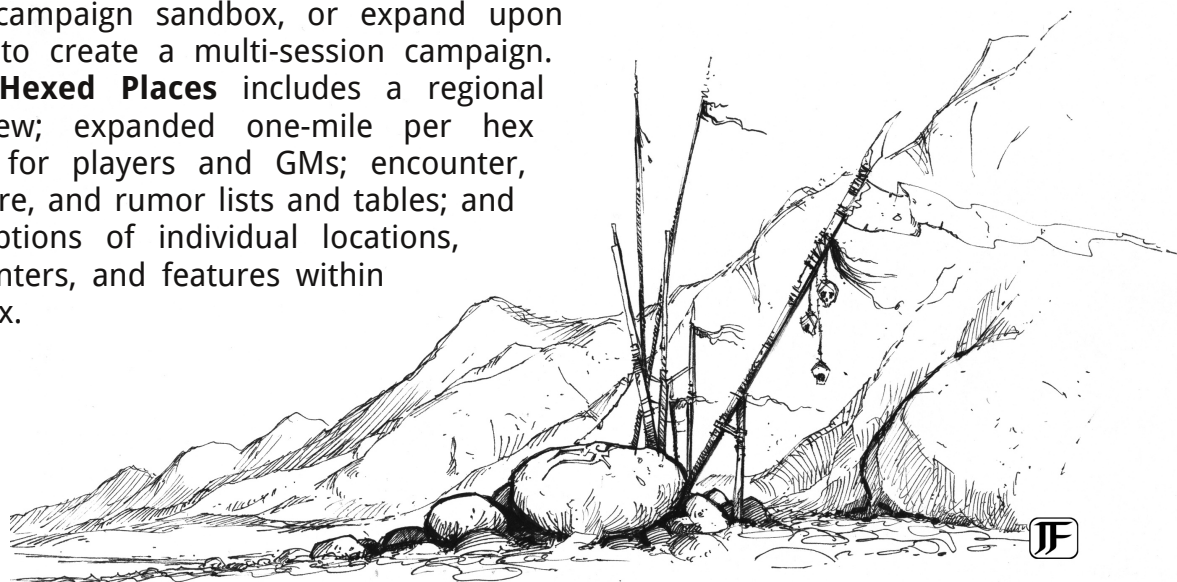
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About Hexed Places

Hexed Places are outdoor locations and encounters based on the classic six-mile hex format and OSR sensibilities. Use these locales as a quick side adventure, to fill a blank spot in your campaign sandbox, or expand upon them to create a multi-session campaign. Each **Hexed Places** includes a regional overview; expanded one-mile per hex maps for players and GMs; encounter, treasure, and rumor lists and tables; and descriptions of individual locations, encounters, and features within the hex.



Contents and Usage

Player and GM Maps

The maps offer a detailed look at the region at a one-mile per hex scale. The player version of the map does not include roads / trails or locale icons.

Introduction and Rumors

This section provides a broad overview of the region, outlining major physical features and obstacles. It also includes a set of rumors that may or may not provide accurate information about the area.

Locations

The major locations in the region are detailed in this section. Each location is referenced by hex coordinates and a name. Locations are ordered by their coordinates, northwest to southeast.

Encounters

This table reflects the typical creature population of the hex. Its primary purpose is to provide wandering monster encounters, but it can also be used to fill in blank spaces on the map or as a tool for populating nearby locales.

Extras

The Extras section details any unique creatures, treasures, or magic items mentioned in the text. It also includes any tables referenced in the main document.

Stat Blocks

All creatures and NPCs in Hexed Places include simple stat blocks as a standard frame of reference. Here is a sample:

Orcs (5) - AC 6 (13), HD 1, #AT 1, D 1d6, MV 9

Hate the sun. Treasure: 2d6 GP, 2d6 SP each.

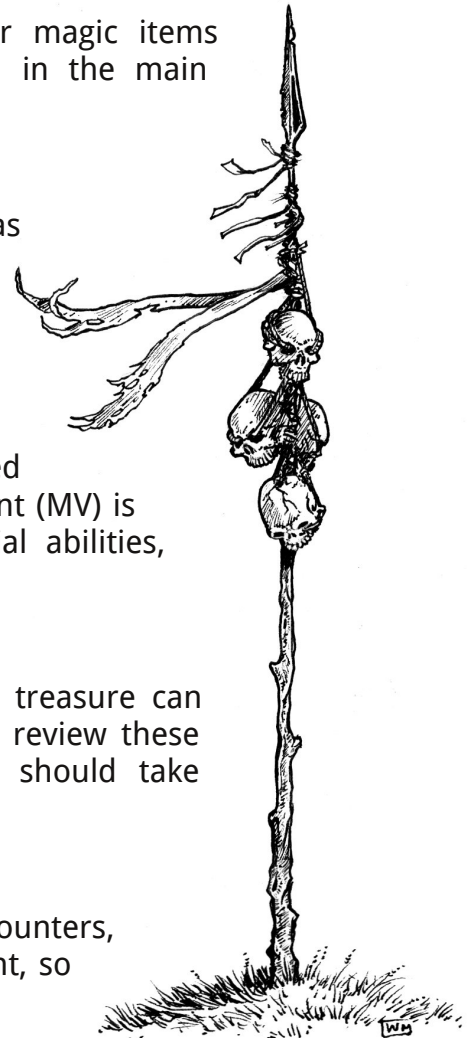
This stat block represents five, one hit-die Orcs. Armor Class (AC) values are given as descending (ascending). An unarmored character is AC 9 (10) and chainmail provides AC 5 (14). Movement (MV) is given in generic units. Unburdened humans are MV 12. Special abilities, class/level, and treasure are appended as needed.

Treasure

Creature and locale descriptions include treasure listings. Since treasure can have a major impact on the campaign, the GM should carefully review these listings and adjust them to suit their game. Intelligent foes should take advantage of any useful treasure they carry.

Experience

Hexed Places does not provide experience point values for encounters, foes, or treasure. Experience is very system- and group-dependent, so it's left in the hands of the GM.





Notes:



Notes:

The Sharp Hills

The Sharp Hills are a patchwork of dry and rugged terrain in the middle of an area of scrubby rolling hills and green plains. The **Red River**, which takes its name from its iron-stained water, splits the region into roughly equal halves. The two highest points in the Hills, **Round Top Mountain (Hex 02.03)** and the **Five Spires (Hex 06.00)**, rise above the jagged hills, and several small streams run through their many winding ravines to the Red River. Atop one of the greener hills, an enormous, pale yellow stone sphere, called **The Wart (Hex 02.01)** by locals, sticks out of the ground and serves as a prominent landmark. Aside from the river itself, there are two sources of fresh water in the Sharp Hills: **Skull Spring (Hex 03.05)** and the **Stink Pit (06.05)**. The only civilized visitors to the area are prospectors looking for gold in the river or silver and gems in the surrounding badlands.

Rumors

There are many small springs in the area, but most taste foul, and some are poisonous.

The prospectors that visit the Sharp Hills sometimes leave notes for each other at **The Wart**.

Despite its name, water from the **Stink Pit** is safe to drink.

There is a cave beneath the **Five Spires** where you can harvest mushrooms with magical properties.

If you're east of the river, it's best to stay under cover at dusk. Horrible flying demons take to the skies as the sun sets.

The prospectors who pan gold from the **Red River** sometimes disappear without a trace.

Cloven hoofprints mark the muddy banks of **Skull Spring**.

The **Red River** is too deep and wide to cross easily, except at **Flat Bend**.

A disused trail leads to the caves beneath **Five Spires**.

Someone lights a bonfire on **Round Top Mountain** at each new moon.

Leaving coins or gems out near your camp can appease the flying demons and prevent their attacks.



Locations

Hex 02.01 - The Wart

This 200-foot stone sphere protrudes from the crest of a large, scrubby hill and is certainly an artificial object, but no one knows its origins. The globe is half-buried in the earth and very easy to see from any nearby location with a clear line of sight. Its smooth surface is remarkably free of dirt, and the stone emits a faint aura of enchantment magic. Perhaps the two features are related.

A broad, flat ledge near **The Wart** shows signs of use, a fire ring, scattered wood chips and a poorly built lean-to. A faint trail winds its way south from the ledge and eventually leads to **Round Top Mountain (Hex 02.03)**. Prospectors who ply their trade in the Sharp Hills use this spot to trade goods and swap stories. They also use a large flat stone in a hollow log as a simple message box, and there is a 1 in 6 chance of finding a note beneath it. There is also a 1 in 6 chance of encountering **prospectors** here.

Prospector (1d2) AC 7 (12), HD 1+1, #AT 1, D short sword or crossbow, MV 9

Hardy survivor. Knows the terrain.

Treasure: 1d10-1 x 10 GP worth of raw gold, silver or gems

Prospector mule (1d2) AC 7 (12), HD 3, #AT 2, D 1d2/1d6 bite/kick, MV 12

Stoic nature. Loyal. Treasure: miscellaneous gear

While prospectors are unwilling to discuss their treasure-hunting activities, they will trade for food and other useful goods. Most can provide directions to the major sites in the Sharp Hills, given proper incentive.

Hex 02.03 - Round Top Mountain

The top of this so-called mountain - it's just a big hill - is a bare, rounded dome of native stone. Several crevices and ledges provide access to the flattened top. A faint trail leads southeast to the **Minotaur Den (Hex 03.04)**, and another runs north toward **The Wart (Hex 02.01)**.

Each new moon, the minotaurs use this site to perform a ritual honoring their bloodthirsty horned god. A large burned patch near the center of the hilltop marks the location of their bonfire. Cracked and gnawed bones, mostly human, indicate the nature of the sacrifice they make and the bloody feast that follows.



Locations (continued)

Hex 03.04 - Minotaur Den

Vertical rock faces and narrow, steep-sided canyons with slippery, rubble-covered slopes crisscross this area. Several of the maze-like canyons lead to the foul lair of **Gurlak** the minotaur shaman and his herd of 9 minotaur followers. Gurlak is a wily old bull with priest abilities. He speaks common and elven in addition to the bestial language of the minotaurs.

Dusty hides hang over the two cave entrances and disguise the openings (treat as concealed doors). The minotaurs use the three largest chambers as living quarters, with one reserved for Gurlak. They use two smaller caves as a storeroom and latrine. The innermost cave has a deep pit the minotaurs use as a prison. There is a 25% chance of 1d2 **prospectors** here.

The storeroom contains an unsavory collection of dried meat and a pile of prospector gear: clothing, tools, pack saddles, and camping kit. A huge boulder covers a pit that contains 2,200 GP worth of raw gold and silver nuggets, 18 low-value gems (base 10 to 60 GP each), and 50 GP, 450 SP, and 540 CP in loose coin.

Minotaur (9) AC 6, (13) HD 6, #AT bite/gore or weapon (+2 damage), D 1d4/1d8, MV 12

Overbearing charge. Unerring direction sense. Treasure: 25 GP

Gurlak (1) AC 6 (13), HD 7, #AT bite/gore or weapon (+2 damage), D 1d4/1d8, MV 12

Level 5 priest. Overbearing charge. Unerring direction sense. Clever tactician.

Treasure: 25 GP, +2 two-handed war hammer

The minotaurs favor polearms and two-handed axes, but many also carry **weighted harpoons** (see **Extras**), which they use against their hated enemies, the harpies. See **Harpy Hills (Hex 07.03)**. Gurlak may bargain with a party that can eliminate the harpy threat.

Hex 03.05 - Skull Spring

Skull Spring bubbles from beneath a massive boulder. A few scraggly trees shade the small pool, and a shallow creek trickles downhill to the Red River. Several humanoid and animal skulls hang from the boulder, held in place by wiry vines and weathered lengths of rope. The largest, a giant lizard skull, might fetch a handful of coins as a curio.

The inhabitants of the **Minotaur Den (Hex 03.04)** use Skull Spring as their primary water source, and several wandering trails run between the two locations. The ground around the spring is bare, packed earth, and there are faint hoof impressions here and along the trails.



Locations (continued)

Hex 05.05 - Flat Bend

The Red River spreads out as it crosses this grassy plain. Hoof marks and boot prints indicate three relatively safe places to cross the slow-moving river, and a ring of blackened stones marks an old campsite. The harpies from the **Harpy Hills (Hex 07.03)** often watch this area, hoping for easy prey. Double the chances of an encounter here.

Hex 06.00 - Five Spires

This cluster of tall, jagged peaks is the highest point in the Sharp Hills. The mountains have steep rubble-strewn sides that are difficult to climb. Bad weather makes things worse, as rainwater rushes down the slopes and floods the narrow ravines that lead to lower ground. The faint trail that leads here winds its way up a twisting ridge of stone before it ducks into one such ravine. A crevice in this defile channels water into a series of muck-filled caves. Inside, assorted fungi grow along the edges of muddy pools that are home to **giant salamanders**.

Giant Salamander (1d4) AC 9 (10), HD 3, #AT bite, D 1d6, MV 6 / 9 swimming

Unbreakable grip. Poisonous skin slime.

Characters may forage for mushrooms in these caves. Each turn spent searching has a 25% chance of uncovering 1d4 mushrooms (see the **Mushroom Table** in **Extras**).

Hex 06.05 - Stink Pit Spring

As the name implies, the waters that bubble out of this muddy hole in the ground reek of sulfurous rot. While the water is safe, few can stomach the smell. Anyone attempting to drink the water must save versus poison or suffer nausea for 1d8 rounds.

Hex 07.03 - Harpy Hills

These rugged hills are covered with thick vegetation thanks to many small springs in the area. Water from these sources flows down steep slopes and cliffs, forming tiny waterfalls, before gathering into a single stream that feeds the Red River. The largest spring flows out of a narrow box canyon with sheer, rocky sides.

Harpies inhabit the shallow caves and crevices scattered around the canyon walls. They are foul creatures who prefer to ambush victims or lure them into traps. The harpies often attack at dusk, using flight to approach quietly and escape quickly if the tide of battle turns against them. They love shiny objects, so many prospectors leave offerings of coins or cheap gems near their camps to distract the harpies when they attack.

The harpies use seven separate caves as dens, and reaching them without using flight requires a climbing check. Each cave contains sleeping pallets, a fire ring, some unsavory food items, 1d4 handfuls of coins and low-quality gems, and 1d6x100 GP worth of raw gold and silver.

Three sisters, **Sorena**, **Krove**, and **Arria**, lead the harpy flock and share the largest cave, which has double the usual treasure, plus a scroll of 2 priest spells and 3 potions (GM choice). The sisters are smart and cautious. They hate the inhabitants of the **Minotaur Den (Hex 03.04)** but know they cannot defeat their enemies in a direct conflict. They are more than willing to use others to accomplish their goal of eliminating Gurlak and his followers (and will undoubtedly double-cross any survivors).

Locations (continued)

Hex 07.03 - Harpy Hills (continued)

Harpy (14) AC 7 (12), HD 3, #AT 3 claw/claw/bite, D 1d3/1d3/1d6, MV 6 / 15 flying
Charming song. Tainted claws. Superior vision. Treasure: 15 GP

Sorena (1) AC 6 (13), HD 3+3, #AT 3 claw/claw/bite, D 1d3/1d3/1d6, MV 6 / 15 flying
Level 4 thief. Charming song. Tainted claws. Superior vision. Treasure: 25 GP

Krove (1) AC 7 (12), HD 3, #AT 3 claw/claw/bite, D 1d3/1d3/1d6, MV 6 / 15 flying
Level 5 magic user. Charming song. Tainted claws. Superior vision. Treasure: 25 GP

Arria (1) AC 4 (15), HD 4+4, #AT 3 claw/claw/bite, D 1d3+2/1d3+2/1d6+2, MV 6 / 15 flying
Level 4th fighter. Charming song. Tainted claws. Superior vision.
Treasure: 25 GP, +1 shield

The harpies dip their claws in their own excrement. Anyone clawed by a harpy must make a saving throw versus disease or suffer an **infected wound**. There is a 50% chance any group of harpies will have one or more **hooked harpy nets** (see **Extras** for details of infected wounds and hooked harpy nets).



Encounters (roll 1d20)

1-4 Minotaur or Harpy Hunters

Armed and alert minotaurs (west of the river) or harpies (to the east) are hunting prey. Either group will attack a weak-looking party (30% chance of attacking from ambush) or avoid a strong group.

Minotaur (1d3) AC 6 (13), HD 6, #AT bite/gore or weapon (+2 damage), D 1d4/1d8, MV 12

Overbearing charge. Unerring direction sense. Treasure: 25 GP

Gurlak will lead the minotaurs 15% of the time. See **Minotaur Lair (Hex 03.04)**.

Harpy (1d4+1) AC 7 (12), HD 3, #AT 3 claw/claw/bite, D 1d3/1d3/1d6, MV 6 / 15 flying

Charming song. Tainted claws. Superior night vision. Treasure: 15 GP

Sorena, Krove, and/or Arria will lead the group 30% of the time. See **Harpy Hills (Hex 07.03)**.

5-8 Minotaur War Party

A group of minotaurs is raiding their foes, the harpies. The minotaurs are armed, alert, and sneaky and will attack any group they encounter.

Minotaur (2d4) AC 6 (13), HD 6, #AT bite/gore or weapon (+2 damage), D 1d4/1d8, MV 12

Overbearing charge. Unerring direction sense. Treasure: 25 GP.

Gurlak will lead the group 50% of the time. See **Minotaur Lair (Hex 03.04)**.

9-10 Harpy Raiders

A flock of harpies is staging a flying raid against the minotaurs. They are ready for action, and most have hooked harpy nets (see **Extras**). The harpies will attack any group they encounter.

Harpy (3d4) AC 7 (12), HD 3, #AT 3 claw/claw/bite, D 1d3/1d3/1d6, MV 6 / 15 flying

Charming song. Tainted claws. Superior night vision. Treasure: 15 GP

Sorena, Krove, and/or Arria will lead any raiding party. See **Harpy Hills (Hex 07.03)**.

11 Giant Lizard

These huge predators roam the Sharp Hills, feeding on rock goats and the occasional prospector. They are aggressive hunters.

Giant Lizard (1) AC 4 (15), HD 8 #AT 3, D 1d6/1d6/2d6+3, MV 12

Excellent vision. Swift charge. Treasure: Hide makes excellent leather armor

12 Constrictor Snake (near river only, treat as Giant Lizard elsewhere)

Water-dwelling snakes usually don't grow to 40 feet in length, but this unique specimen has thrived in the relative isolation of the Red River. Once it wraps its coils around a victim, it will retreat to the deepest part of the river and drown its prey.

Constrictor Snake (1) AC 4 (15), HD 7 #AT 2 bite/constrict, D 1d6/2d6, MV 12

Ambush hunter. Constricting coils. Treasure: Attractive hide worth 500 GP

Encounters (continued)

13-14 Prospector

A lone prospector, either working his/her claim or traveling to/from **The Wart (Hex 02.01)**. Prospectors will try to avoid contact but are not hostile unless threatened.

Prospector (1d2) AC 7 (12), HD 1+1, #AT 1, D short sword or crossbow, MV 9

Hardy survivor. Knows the terrain.

Treasure: 1d10-1 x 10 GP worth of raw gold, silver or gems

Prospector Mule (1) AC 7 (12), HD 3, #AT 2, D 1d2/1d6 bite/kick, MV 12

Stoic nature. Loyal. Treasure: miscellaneous gear

15 Giant Beetle

While they typically feed on decaying plant matter, 6-foot long giant beetles will defend themselves with a powerful bite if attacked.

Giant Beetle (1d3) AC 3 (16), HD 3+3, #AT 1 bite, D 2d6, MV 9 / 3 burrowing

Peaceful scavengers.

16-18 Rock Goats

These sure-footed quadrupeds live on the steep slopes of the Sharp Hills. They are excellent climbers and can outrun most pursuers.

Rock Goats (1d4+1) AC 8 (11), HD 2, #AT 1 headbutt, D 1d4, MV 15

Sure-footed. Swift runners. Treasure: Shaggy hides (5 GP)

19 Manticore

Harpies dominate the skies above the Sharp Hills, but passing fliers do show up occasionally.

Manticore (1) AC 4 (15), HD 6+3, #AT 3 claw/claw/sting, D 1d3/1d3/1d8, MV 12 / 15 flying

Tail spike missiles. Favor human prey.

20 GM Choice

Choose from the entries above, add an encounter of your own, or use something from an adjacent locale.

Notes:

Extras

Hooked Harpy Nets

One on one, the harpies of the **Harpy Hills (Hex 07.03)** are no match for the inhabitants of the **Minotaur Den (Hex 03.04)**, so they rely on nets to snare and pin foes before they close in for the kill. Harpies weave thin leather cords and flexible grass fibers into 10-foot nets with weighted edges. They also add sharpened bits of bone to the webbing. While they are too big for one person to use effectively, two flying harpies can drop a net on foes from above. They also use them to set cunningly concealed traps and lure charmed victims into these snares. Any hit by a net entangles the target, who can only attempt to escape its confines. Victims suffer 1d2 damage each round from the spikes woven into the webbing.

Infected Wounds

The harpies of the **Harpy Hills (Hex 07.03)** taint their claws with their own waste, causing infected wounds. These injuries grow worse over time; each wound inflicts 1 point of damage per day to the victim. They also resist the effects of healing magic. Lesser curative spells heal just 1 hit point per application. A cure critical wounds spell will fully heal one infected wound. A cure disease spell will remove all infected wounds from the recipient, but it will not heal the damage already caused.

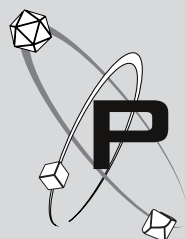
Weighted Harpoons

The inhabitants of the **Minotaur Den (Hex 03.04)** use these crude but effective weapons when they fight their hated foes, the harpies of the **Harpy Hills (Hex 07.03)**. Each harpoon has a barbed stone tip that is connected to a 50-foot long cord made from braided leather. They tie the other end of the line to a log or boulder. While this limits the weapon's range, any successful to hit roll of 18 or higher impales the target, which then has to deal with cord and dragging weight. These heavy weapons require great strength (16+) to use and inflict 1d8 damage. Removing an impaling harpoon does an additional 1d4 damage.

Mushroom Table for the Five Spires Cave (Hex 06.00)

Roll 5d8 and use the individual results to select entries from each column of this table or pick and choose entries as you please.

Roll	Color	Appearance	Size	Shape	Effect
1	Red/Black	Plain	Tiny	Capped	Deadly poison
2	Blue/Pink	Spotted	Hand-sized	Mat-like	Hallucinogenic
3	White/Gray	Variegated	Knee-high	Shelf-like	Alchemic properties
4	Yellow/Blue	Glowing	Waist-high	Puffballs	Paralytic spores
5	White/Red	Pulsing	Human-sized	Trumpet-like	Curative powers
6	Purple/Green	Translucent	Towering	Fan-shaped	Edible and delicious
7	Tan/Yellow	Ooze-like	Changing	Cupped	Smelly
8	Green/Gray	Spiky	Gigantic	Tentacles	Parasitic



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