<u>Moria-like Locale for Old-School Adventuring</u>

Summary

Overland:

- A hex map large enough to project a significant mountain range, longer than it is narrow.
- The range is extremely treacherous and difficult to cross, and would take weeks for a party capable of accomplishing it. There may be some rewards for exploring this overland region, but they are few and far between and not worth the risk for most adventurers.
- This region would be ideally placed within the context of a larger campaign world where there are lots of things to see and do on either side, and going around the region, if at all possible, would take months. Therefore, being able to cross through this region somehow would be preferable.

Beneath the Range:

- The main location is a Moria-like underground complex connecting each side of the mountain range.
- There are a few entrances along either side of the range, and a few more within the range itself.
- Each entrance poses its own challenges: some may be very difficult to find, some may be very obvious but are difficult to get through due to being well guarded or protected through enchantment.
- The most direct route from one side to another at its thinnest point might take a mere week, if you know exactly where you're going, but there are enormous opportunities to explore its depths…or get lost.

The Passage Through:

- The complex is structured like a point map connecting various regions and points of interest.
- Locations are connected mostly by narrow and windy passageways, occasional open rooms, and typically no light sources. Some connections may instead be through underground river passages. The passages are not always clearly laid out, and sometimes might branch only to reconnect again, or offer side passages that only lead to dead-ends. This is not explicitly represented for each passageway, it is simply their common nature, thus travel time is variable.
- Average travel time is given in hours, and adjusted by a random modifier. An encounter is possible for each hour spent in the passage.
- These passages are usually direct connections between various locations, with meaningfully branching paths counting as a point of interest in itself, with two exceptions:

- - Random encounters can include strange rooms or areas, often with creatures, items of interest, or a bit of lore inside.
    - There are some secret connections to other areas that can be rarely stumbled upon accidentally, or sought out if they are known (though finding it can take some time, even if traversed before)
  - Passages are color-coded corresponding with certain maps or known routes through the area, making travel a little swifter or easier along them, should these routes be known beforehand.

Locations:

- Points of interest: smaller areas that are nonetheless noteworthy. These are usually not mapped, and can include things like interesting formations, clues to the area, or simply forks in the road. These are focused on interesting ideas, encounters, information gathering, and puzzles, rather than serious delving.
- Dungeons: these are areas fully mapped on a grid, and can be anywhere from just a few rooms or a single wider area to massive and sprawling locations with multiple levels. These might include substructures, watchtowers, a great staircase, mineshafts, storage areas, ruins, etc.
- Cavernous regions: these are massive areas, evoking, at their extreme, places such as Dwarrodelph within Moria, or a vast underground lake. These are not grid-mapped or given precise dimensions, but may be provided with a rough indication of the overall layout. Think of these as a single overland hex of variable size. Keyed locations can include:
    - Landmarks: usually fairly obvious places that players are bound to find as they traverse these regions, and their order is given depending from which passage the players entered the region. These can include things such as a stronghold, a bridge at a chokepoint, or a sprawling settlement. Landmarks are usually given more detailed maps, and can connect to dungeons.
    - Minor areas: points of interest or dungeons like above can also be found within these regions. The players will usually naturally stumble upon one of these while traversing, but will have to explore for much longer if they wish to find them all.
    - Secret areas: hidden rooms, treasures, and passages. These are almost impossible to find without some prior indication of their location, or a special gift in finding such things.

Possible Makeup:

- 3-5 cavernous regions each containing 1-2 landmarks, 4-8 minor areas (at least 1 of which is a dungeon), 1-3 secrets, and 3-6 passages to other locations.
- 25+ independent points of interest, with 2-3 connecting passages each (since I want random little out-of-the-way rooms and things to be possible random encounters along passageways, I want to avoid explicitly placing dead-end locations). Some may only be connected to through secret passages.

- 20+ dungeons including both independent locations and minor areas of cavernous locations. Half are a smallish collection of rooms, several are quite substantial, and 1 in particular should be just shy of a megadungeon in its own right.