

Elven Tower Cartography

My name is Derek Ruiz and this is part of my monthly releases on Patreon. You can visit my website www.elventower.com to see more of my work.

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Map 87 - Abandoned Mine

Cartography by:



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I tell you that place was not a good place to dig and mine. Duke Fordant came into his current position a few years ago, a fair ruler but lacking experience. The worst problem of his was that he didn't have first person experience of the terrible things in the world. May Lathander, Chauntea or whatever god he believes in protect him from a real war.

Everybody knows there was value in the nearby mountains but even we the dwarves did not bother to mine them. Of course I said yes when they offered me to conduct the mining operation. A few other dwarven brothers were part of the main miner's force too. I could see it in their eyes, and I felt it myself. We dwarves have a special sensitivity for rock formations, underground tunnels and rocky architecture. It's something elves and humans would never understand.... Being only surface dwellers, even I cannot explain it but we felt there was something below us. That mine or should I say, the mountain, did not belong to us or to Duke Fordant as he liked to claim.

Something roamed just under our feet. I swear I could even hear footsteps or dragging sounds under the floor. Twice I asked the miners to dig, so we could find those caves under ours, but there was nothing. Or it was deeper than we dug. After months, the mine was probably the best business Duke Fordant could ever want, there was a rail for mine carts and daily shipments of coal, rare ores and some precious metals. One day calamity struck us, the earth shook to its core and the main tunnel, the one with the railroads collapsed. Scores of miners were assumed dead, since we started digging out the rocks and debris, only to discover the blockade went as deep as the mine itself. Some must have died crushed, while a few of them were probably trapped alive in the farthest reaches of the mine.

Along with the mine's railway destruction, an adjoining room's floor collapsed on itself, sending another section of them mine in the depths. What was revealed was an abyss. The hole seemed to have no end. It was a doorway to the deepest well I ever saw. Some miners died

there too, but since we had access to the yawning hole, we decided to go down and look for them.

I must confess I was scared to go

down. But being the one in charge of the mine and a dwarf myself, no human could ever see me afraid to go down a cave. Call it dwarf pride if you want. Anyway, we descended with the help of an improvised winch and continued on with the help of ropes and climbing gear. After our initial descent, we realized the cave went ever deeper and deeper. A feeling of foreboding crept up my spine the farther we climbed down. Few people know, but there are some connections between the underdark and the surface world. Some of the biggest dwarven cities are located near such passageways. They get you from the surface to what we call the upper underdark. Which sits right below the surface. But the depths hide darker secrets the deeper you go. Even dwarves do not visit some places, evil entities inhabit the darkness and should never be bothered.

After some days of exploration I saw the changes in the rocky tunnels. The natural rock formations that only occur under the world. I knew we had reached the underdark. Without a proper map to confirm our location, further exploring was dangerous. Hell ! Even with a map there's no safety, most places are uncharted anyway. In my 200 years I hadn't found an undocumented access or heard of a new discovery.

When we returned to the surface, I requested an audience with Duke Fordant. I was shown to his audience room and

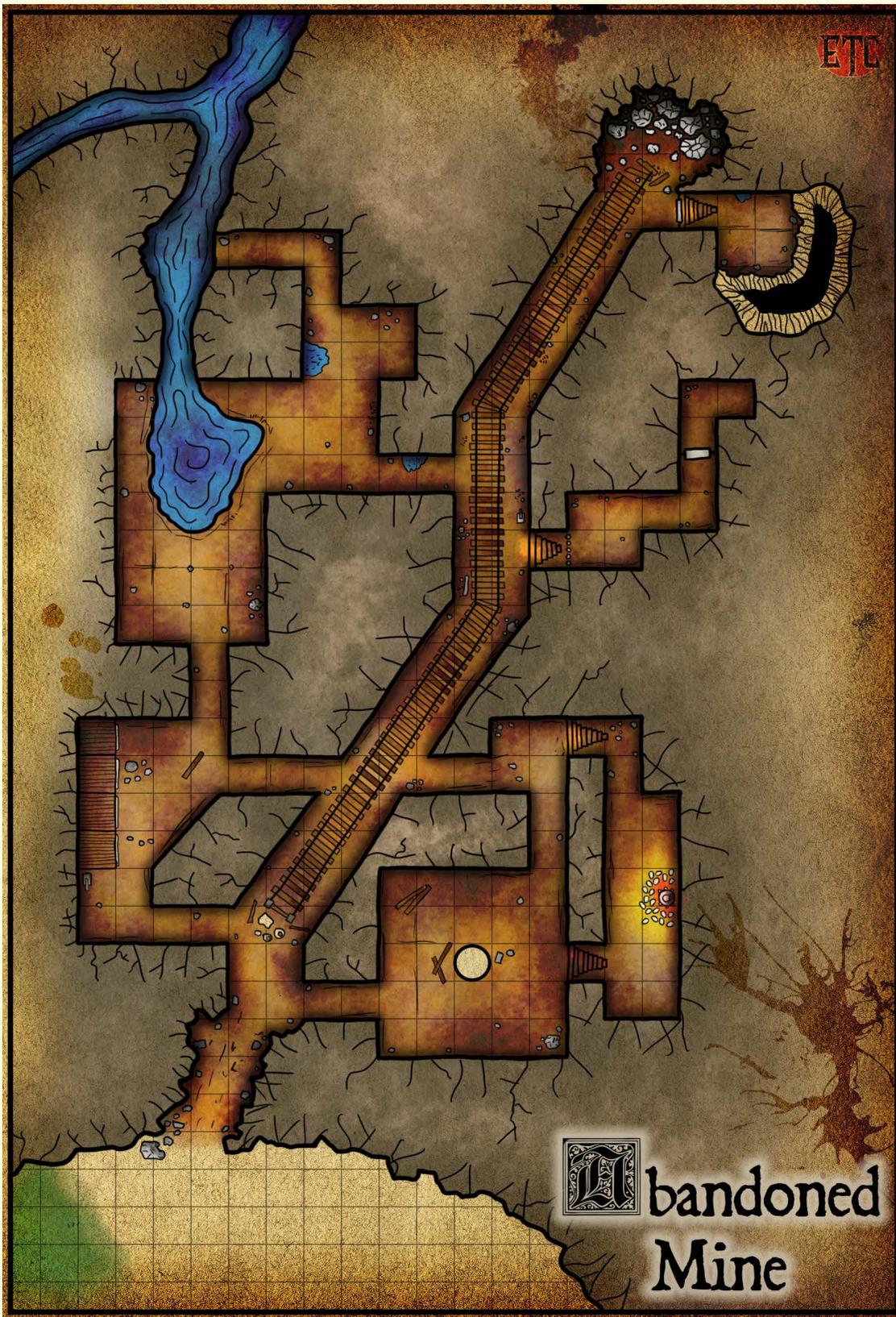
he heard what I had to say. I told him of our journey and I said it was imperative to take prompt action. The mine had to be caved in and forgotten. We could do it in a matter of days. Me and the remaining dwarves could even do it for free. Unfortunately the Duke wouldn't have any of it. He lamented the lost of the mine and the miner's lives, but he would have the mining operation continue and reestablish its current quota. He was seduced by his position and the wealth the mine brought to him and his stead. Me and the other dwarves quit that day. What he thinks are "dwarven fears and excuses" is something real, but he or any human will ever understand how the rocks talk to us.



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Roll 20 Ready !!!

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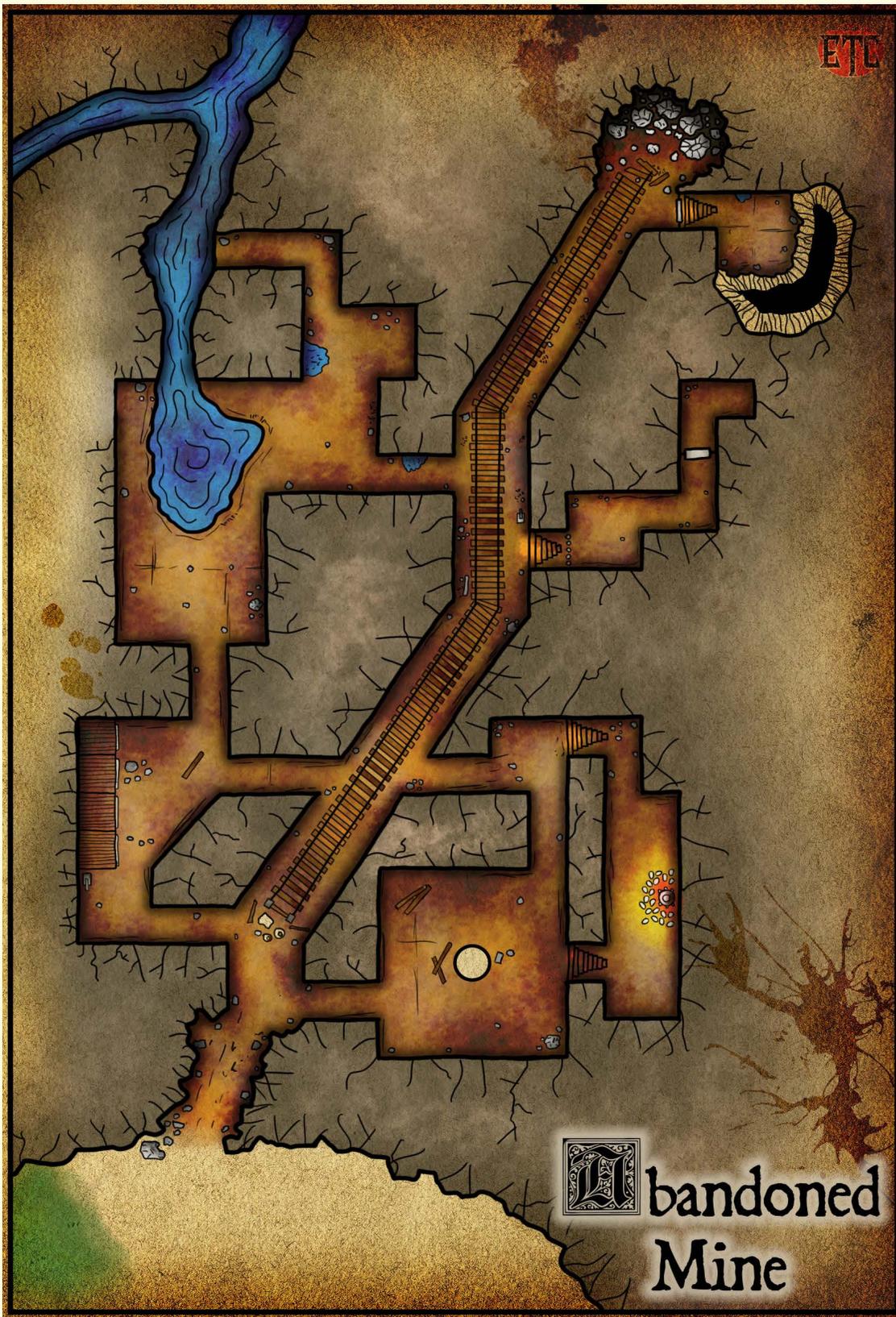


Grid Map

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No grid Map

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