

The Mine of Malorod

Malorod (“Mountain of Gold” in Dwarven) is a mountain in a ridge that forms part of the borders of the human kingdom which includes Cauldron. Human miners were active in Malorod for over one hundred and fifty years, from the fourteenth to the fifteenth centuries. In the beginning, they searched for gold deposits on behalf of the local lord; instead, they found massive iron ore deposits, convenient for excavation and a source of reliable (if unspectacular) profit for the local lord.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the conveniently-sited ore deposits played out, and the profit margin disappeared. Rather than continue to work the much less accessible veins of ore for minimal return, the local lord sold their monopoly over the Mine to Dori, Freris’ paternal grandfather, in 1490. As dwarves, Dori and his sons Fari and Kari were better placed to make small but meaningful profits from their personal labour in the Mine. Following the mostly vertical veins and freighting the iron ore out of the depths of the Mine was not a challenge for dwarves, and their reduced overheads kept the family Mine financially solvent.

Fari married Froris, the weaponsmith, in 1510. Froris brought her own financial capital and tools to the Mine, and forging weapons on site improved the family profits. The twins, Fili and Kili, were born shortly before Dori’s death in 1515. Kari fell out with Fari in 1525, and left the Mine in 1535, when Fari and Froris bought out his half-share. Freris was born in 1540. When Kari died in 1560, his body was brought back to the Mine and he was buried in the Hall of the Ancestors.

Fari, Froris, Fili and Kili were all tortured and killed by Tongue-Eater and his hirelings in 1570 because of rumours that the Mine contained “true” iron, adamantine. Freris was high in the mine, clearing and repairing ventilation shafts, and didn’t return until two days after Tongue-Eater’s raid. She buried her parents and brothers in the Hall of the Ancestors.

Mine Layout

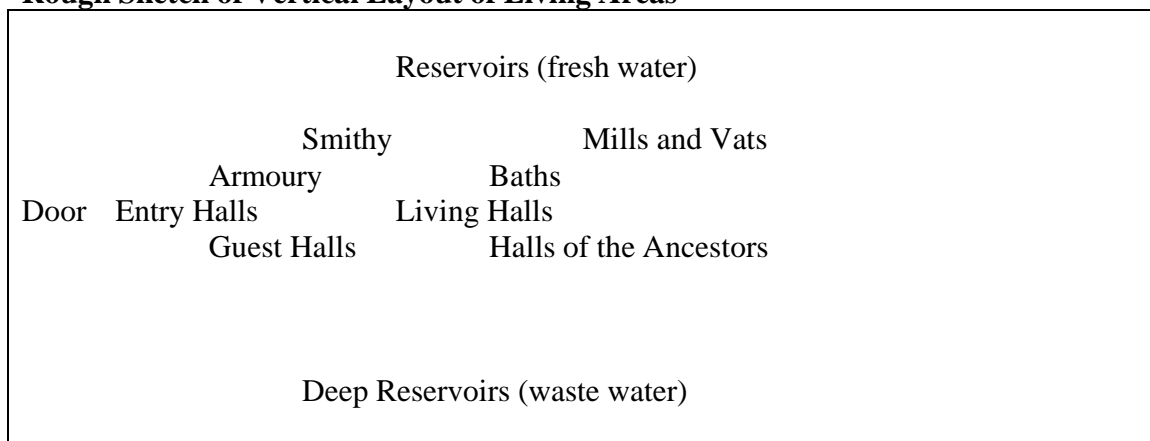
Before the dwarves bought the Mine, the human miners lived in a small community in a valley between two small ridges that joined shortly after the primary entrance to the Mine. Most of the buildings were wooden and poorly maintained. Inside the primary entrance were a series of large stopes (large excavated chambers) where the humans miners had excavated most of the massive iron ore deposits, leaving only the pillars and walls holding up the high ceilings undisturbed.

When the dwarves moved in, they made some changes. They installed a great door of carved stone at the primary entrance to the Mine, and set gates of iron bars across the ends of the lesser entrances, which served both as ventilation shafts and as “rear doors” in case of emergency. They converted the stopes into a series of halls, work chambers, and reservoirs that funnelled rain water through the complex so that they could grind and

concentrate the iron ore using water mills and flotation vats. The wooden buildings were allowed to deteriorate, and eventually all fell down and were used as firewood.

The approach to the Door now leads through a dusty waste that stretches between the two ridges, dotted with occasional signs of previous habitation (for example, building keystones, rusted iron pots and stoves). The trail that leads up to the Door is visible but not well maintained. The Door itself is a beautiful work of dwarven art, covered with geometric patterning (like Celtic art). There is a small door within the Door, with a good metal lock (DC 30 to open): Freris owns the key.

Rough Sketch of Vertical Layout of Living Areas



Most of the iron ore veins the dwarves were mining are above the level of the Door. There are a number of inclined shafts and cross-cuts that date back to the period of human mining, and these were principally used by the dwarves for ventilation and initial mapping of the Mine. Rather than follow the human practice of cross-cutting into veins, the dwarves preferred to work up and down a vein using raises, then manually freight the ore down to the working areas.

Reservoirs: numerous shafts funnel water into a series of large stopes that have been worked and sealed so that water isn't wasted, but is instead funnelled in a controlled fashion down into the living areas of the Mine.

Mills and Vats: the water in the reservoirs were principally used for the water mills and flotation tubs used to grind and concentrate the iron ore into usable material. There are a handful of much smaller oil reservoirs, most of which are empty (oil is used in the flotation process to help separate the ore from the unusable materials). The oil reserves are one of the goods Freris sold off over time to cover her living costs.

Smithy: as well as blast and smelting furnaces, there is an iron foundry and Freris' forge and smithy. Freris repaired and maintained her mother's tools as best she could: her mother's tools are where they should be, while her own tools (that she didn't take with her when she left the Mine) are in their lesser place in the smithy. The charcoal stockpile

is mostly depleted, as Freris didn't buy replacement charcoal as she used it over the years.

Armoury: the armoury is empty of all armour and weapons. Freris buried her family with the best, and sold the rest over time to cover her living costs.

Baths: there are several connected bath chambers with very large stone baths (like Roman baths), but as the furnaces are cold the water in the hot, warm and steamy bathrooms is as cold as the water in the cold bathroom.

Entry Halls: the entry halls have brackets for torches and lanterns. They include some of the largest and most well-shaped chambers in the Mine, built to show off to strangers and guests alike. Freris repaired the damage caused by the attack as best she could, and moved the ruined and damaged furniture to two chambers. As a result, the furnishings in the other chambers includes incomplete sets of three chairs with a non-matching fourth chair, all around a non-matching table.

Living Halls: the living halls include some of the largest and most ornately-decorated chambers in the Mine. The rooms used by Freris' parents and her brothers have been left as they were before the attack, except for some damaged furniture and torn clothing that Freris couldn't repair or mend. The quality of the clothing is generally good, as is Freris' children clothes: there is a notable change in the quality of her clothes following the attack.

Guest Halls: the guest halls are spartan when compared to the living halls and the entry halls, as dwarves got to stay in the living halls and non-dwarves generally camped outside. They do have brackets for torches and lanterns, unlike the living halls. However, Freris won't want her friends to stay in the guest halls.

Halls of the Ancestors: as well as Moradin's Forge (the Mine's "chapel", a functional mini-forge), the Halls of the Ancestors includes the burial hall of Freris' family. There are 33 large carved stone sarcophagi in the long hall, with space for at least as many again. In the first of the sarcophagi is Dori (grandfather), in the second is Fari (father), in the third is Kari (uncle), in the fourth is Freris (mother), in the fifth is Fili (brother), and in the sixth is Kili (brother); the seventh is for Freris.

Dori's sarcophagus has the most detailed carvings and a grand metal plaque engraved with his full name (Dori Alvisson), his life deeds (basically, he worked hard, invested wisely, and bought the Mine), and a lengthy benediction that praises his personal worthiness and notes his certain place at the feasts in the Halls of his Ancestors.

Kari's sarcophagus has detailed carvings and a metal plaque engraved with his full name "Kari Dorisson), a terse summary of his life deeds (basically, he worked hard), and a short benediction that tersely praises his personal worthiness (it doesn't say much more than that he was reliable, hard-working, and dependable in battle) and notes that he has joined his father in the Halls of his Ancestors.

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The other four occupied sarcophagi have very primitive carvings at best (done by Freris, who has no skill at stone-carving, when she was a child). Fari has something that was supposed to be a pick, Froris has a misshapen hammer and an anvil that's smaller than the head of the hammer, while Fili and Kili's sarcophagi are unornamented. A metal plaque has been placed on all four sarcophagi, though the one on Fari's sarcophagi is crooked and the one on Kili's sticks out too much. All four plaques have very primitive engravings (again, done by an unskilled Freris when she was a child) that read as follows:

Fari: "Fari Dorrison, my father, who owned the Mine of Malorod. He was killed when I was away, and I buried him here beside his father. He worked really hard and was careful with money."

Froris: "Froris Floisdottir, my mother. Her father, Floi Frarsson, made the necklace Glamir for an Elf named Hurin. She was killed too when I was away. I couldn't bury her next to my father, Fari. She was the most skilled smith, and made sharp swords and axes."

Fili: "Fili Farisson, my brother. He and Kili were twins. They both died at the same time, when our parents died too. I buried them both. He was big and strong, and mined a lot of iron."

Kili: "Kili Farisson, my other brother. He and Fili were twins, and he said he was the older one, but Fili was. They died together, as brothers should. I buried them next to each other. He was strong, big, and mined lots of iron."

Deep Reservoirs: where all the waste water and sewerage goes to. It must empty out somewhere further underground, as it never overflowed.

Cool Stuff To Do

- I don't want the Mine to be an adventure site, so no intruders or disturbances, please. It isn't haunted by ghosts or taken over by goblins – it's just an abandoned family mine.
- It would be fun if other characters got to explore the Mine without being guided around by Freris – but I don't know if anyone's going to have enough initiative or enthusiasm to do that. Freris is definitely going to check on most of the Mine while she's there, and the other characters will probably follow her around rather than sit by themselves in a dark room for a few hours.
- I'd very much like you to let the other players know that there's signs of the aftermath of the attack in the furnishings of the Mine, and I've given some suggestions in the descriptions of places like the Smithy and the Living Halls. I see this as a significant opportunity to showcase what a bleak place it was for a child to grow up in, full of empty storerooms and half-furnished chambers gathering dust, unchanged from thirty years earlier.

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- It would be great if I can concentrate on portraying Freris reacting to other characters' comments and questions rather than having to provide information about the environment to the other players. I expect I'll still do a lot of description, but I'll be trying to do it in character whenever possible (e.g. "The baths are up that way – you can use any of them, there won't be any heated water while the furnaces slumber.")
- The relatively small area that Freris lived in and used when she was by herself will hopefully stand out through descriptions of and activity in those locations.