

THE IRON COVENANT



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW:

- **Theme/Genre:** Fantasy, Mystery, and Espionage
- **Tone:** Suspenseful with Heroic Undertones
- **Target Level for Players:** Level 5
- **Expected Duration:** 2 hours
- **Player Focus Preferences:**
 - Combat: Medium
 - Roleplay: High
 - Exploration: Medium

BACKSTORY AND SETTING:

WORLD OVERVIEW

The kingdom of Valeran is fraught with unease, stewing on the precipice of conflict with its neighbor, the Empire of Kaelthas. Peace, once maintained by The Iron Pact — an alliance of the kingdom’s bravest heroes and sharpest minds — now falters. The Iron Pact disbanded amidst betrayal decades ago, leaving a question of whether its remnants could be a beacon of hope or a re-emerging threat as The Iron Covenant.

LOCAL AREA

Arkwind Fortress stands as a bastion between Valeran and Kaelthas. A hub bustling with mercenaries, merchants, and nervous townsfolk, the air is thick with tension. Recently, explosions, cryptic symbols, and rumors of The Iron Covenant’s resurgence disrupt daily life. Are they here to protect Valeran or further its downfall?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Iron Pact’s dissolution, borne of betrayal, scattered its enchanted relics, leading to its fall. The proposed revival as The Iron Covenant has sparked fear and suspicion. Are they here to mend Valeran or tear it apart?

IMPORTANT NPCs

1. Commander Lysra Talven

A resolute protector, Lysra’s keen intuitions and staunch pragmatism make her a formidable leader. She seeks the truth about The Iron Covenant, wary of both nobles and potential spies.

2. Olric Two-Anvils

Renowned for his craftsmanship, Olric harbors secrets beneath his cheerful exterior. His personal woes mount after an explosion ravaged his workshop. Is his guilt genuine or a facade?

3. Seylin Wraethe

Cloaked in mystery, Seylin trades information for profit. Their knowledge is vast, but the trustworthiness of their intentions is as shadowed as their dealings.

4. The Dread Emissary

Enigmatic in presence and purpose, this masked leader holds the strings of the newly coined Iron Covenant. Friend or foe, their true mission remains obscured by layer upon layer of misdirection.

PLOT HOOK

OPENING SCENE

The adventure cracks open with tension-laden air as the party finds itself at the heart of Arkwind’s central mess hall. An unexpected explosion erupts from Olric’s smithy, rattling the fortress and spreading panic through the market square. The debris reveals distinct mechanical fragments inscribed with the forgotten crest of The Iron Pact, pulling at the threads of fate tied to a once and possibly future covenant.

Amidst the chaos, Commander Lysra arrives, her voice as commanding as the clamor of rising fear. “This explosion wasn’t mere misfortune nor foreign aggression — it’s an insidious hand within our ranks. Find those responsible before their shadow overtakes us all!”

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Uncover the mystery behind the smithy explosion, unravel The Iron Covenant's motives, and either broker peace or stir chaos with The Dread Emissary before their plans come to cruel fruition.

KEY LOCATIONS

1. STARTING AREA: ARKWIND MESS HALL AND MARKET SQUARE

- **Atmosphere:**
The environment is charged with urgency. The acrid smoke from the explosion blends with a cacophony of voices rising in panic, soldiers attempting to establish order amidst wild speculation.
- **NPCs & Encounters:**
 - **Commander Lysra:** Liaises with the party, setting the stage with background on the socio-political fractures.
 - **Fruit Seller:** Shares whispers of cloaked figures seen meandering towards the smithy during the night.
 - **Investigation Spot:** Searching the wreckage (Arcana/Investigation DC 15) may unveil runes believed belonging to an old Iron Pact artificer.
- **Possible Conflict:**
A distressed mob targets Olric with accusations of dishonor. The scene can devolve into violence or lead to a clarity-driven discussion (Persuasion/Intimidation).

2. INTERMEDIATE AREA: THE FORGOTTEN STORAGE TUNNELS

- **Atmosphere:**
Eerie echoes of the past haunt these dust-choked corridors — remnants of the once-mighty Iron Pact armory that now seems haunted by whispers of treachery.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Rune-Puzzle Trap:** Align runic glyphs to form the Iron Pact crest. A failed attempt triggers a concussive backlash (Dex Save DC 14 for half damage).
 - **Combat Encounter:** Confront spectral remnants (2 Shadows, 1 Wight) that linger from foul manipulation or tragic error.
- **Roleplay Opportunity:**
A discovered journal penned by a Pact member reveals the seed of betrayal and speaks of the safeguarded scattering of dangerous relics.

3. FINAL AREA: THE HIDDEN FORGE

- **Atmosphere:**
A cauldron of volatile energy, the forge acts as the heart of the Iron Pact's enduring influence. Surreal heat envelops everything, and the atmosphere vibrates with frenetic industrial echoes as constructs stir to life.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Boss Fight:** Confront The Dread Emissary (use Bandit Captain as a base with added Artificer-like features) and accompanying Shield Guardians.
 - **Environmental Hazards:** Navigate unstable platforms and evade molten rivers (Dex Save DC 13).
- **Resolution Choices:**
The truth, as presented by The Dread Emissary, offers a chance at a fortified Valeran using empowered relics. Will the party ally, betray, or neutralize this enigmatic foe?

ENCOUNTERS AND CHALLENGES

COMBAT

- **Tunnel Merchants:** Battle disguised mercenaries (4 Bandits, 1 Bandit Captain) who, in truth, guard the Covenant's covert entrances.
- **Final Battle:** Engage The Dread Emissary amidst automaton-infused chaos.

ROLEPLAY

- **Interrogating Olric:** Insight (DC 16) turns up his hidden knowledge, suggesting more connections to the infamous pact.
- **Negotiating with Seylin:** Offers provide nuanced layers of information swayed by leverage, with truth sometimes murky.

PUZZLE

- **Rune Alignment Puzzle:** Requires a strategic blend of Intelligence checks and clever application of runic ink (found in Arkwind).

CLIMAX AND RESOLUTION

FINAL CHALLENGE

Confronted with the Emissary's rigid vision, the party must dictate if such power will curb impending threats or lead to greater hazards. Diplomatic acuity, martial fervor, or shrewd persuasion will pivot Valeran's course through the tempest of their actions.

- **Stakes of Success or Failure:**
 - *Forge Stay:* Engineer peace or prepared defenses.
 - *Destruction:* Stoke flames of distrust, risking wider war.
 - *Alignment with Emissary:* Invite potential stratification and unrest.

NARRATIVE CONCLUSION

Where will the winds of political and social fate finally align? Heroes may influence a world on the cusp of change: will A newfound dawn or deeper divisions await Valeran?

REWARDS

LOOT

- **Clockwork Pendant (+1 AC while worn):** Banner of protection and mechanical ingenuity, encapsulating Iron Pact craft.
- **Gold:** Each player receives 150 gp, an estimate of recovered illicit funds.
- **Optional Artifact:** A relic weapon is theirs to claim and wield, such as a **Sword of Warding (+1, resistance to fire damage).**

STORY REWARDS

Commanding Lysra's trust, vilified notoriety, or legendary status awaits the chosen decision path.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

STAT BLOCKS

- Use standard entries for Bandit Captain, Shield Guardians, Shadows, and Wight. Customize The Dread Emissary with enhancements mimicking Arcane Trickster's array for engaging simplicity.

MAPS AND HANDOUTS

- Offer visual guides: a hand-drawn map of the forgotten tunnels, along with the Iron Pact crest sketch.

ATMOSPHERIC MUSIC

- Set the tone with instrumental ambiance. Suitable selections include "Mountain Fortress" or "Secrets in the Dark" to cast a mood befitting clandestine operations.

FLEXIBLE OUTCOMES

- Unresponsive parties find themselves thrust into urgency by escalating Kaelthas sabotage.
- Encourage and adapt to innovative solutions. Non-combat resolutions influence future narrative shifts, ensuring depth beyond martial preempts.

POST-GAME WRAP-UP

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

1. Which segment captivated your attention the most?
2. Did your decisions carry palpable weight throughout the story?
3. What balance of combat, roleplay, exploration would you seek in future ventures?

EPILOGUE

Reflect on the breadth of consequence and possibility: Does Valeran choose fortitude in unity, or find itself riven anew? Yet woven into the future lie deeper machinations — await the players' continued exploration into unforeseen layers.