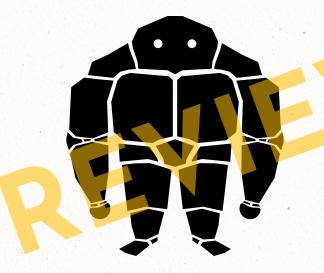


THE IRON MAIDEN

DELVE INTO A DWARVEN FACILITY USED TO CONSTRUCT SENTIENT GOLEMS!



THE IRON MAIDEN



written by Addison Short



Credits

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RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

To run this adventure, you need the Fifth Edition core rulebooks.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under a specific circumstance, as described in the text.

The core 5th Edition monster book contains stat blocks for most of the creatures found in this adventure. Monster stat blocks created specifically for this adventure will be included at the end. When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block in the core monster book. If the monster is not included in the core monster book, it will be included in the appendices of the adventure.

Adjusting Encounters

This adventure contains advice for adjusting encounters based on the number of characters in the party. You are empowered to modify the number of enemies in an encounter and their hit point totals as you see fit. If you need to adjust the difficulty of an encounter during combat, you can alter hit point totals without the player characters ever knowing and have enemies retreat or reinforcements arrive as needed.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout this adventure:

hp	hit points
AC	Armor Class
DC	D <mark>ifficulty</mark> Class
XP	experience points
pp	platinum piece(s)
gp	gold piece(s)
ер	electrum piece(s)
sp	silver piece(s)
ср	copper piece(s)
NPC	nonplayer character
LG	Lawful Good
NG	Neutral Good
LN	Lawful Neutral
N	Neutral
CN	Chaotic Neutral
LE	Lawful Evil
CE	Chaotic Evil
NE	Neutral Evil



The Iron Maiden

The Iron Maiden is a Fifth Edition adventure for 3 to 7 characters, optimized for a party of 4 characters of 1st or 2nd level.

Opal, a sentient iron golem, wants to learn more about their creator, a reclusive wizard that came to Eth Aldur from the outskirts of the city before allegedly forfeiting their life to create them. They want the characters to join them on an expedition to find and investigate where their creator came from.

BACKGROUND

Hidden in plain sight along one of the roads of the underearth, the dwarven scholar Tydur Brightreach set up a facility for the research, construction, and testing of golems. Tydur was especially interested in the prospect of creating autonomous, sentient life. After decades of research and failed attempts, they managed to create Opal, a sentient iron golem. When they concluded that Opal was a success in a controlled environment, they used magic to suppress their memories and set them loose near Eth Aldur to see what would happen in a live environment. Much to Tydur's delight, Opal was able to successfully integrate with the dwarven society there. Since the success of Opal, Tydur has been obsessed with replicating his results and is currently consumed with developing a successor.

Meanwhile, Opal has been living in Eth Aldur for decades now. Using her strength and resilience to heat to her advantage, she quickly became an indispensable asset at the dwarven forges. Over time, the magic that Tydur used to suppress her memories began to erode. Through fragments of memory and the resources of Eth Aldur, Opal was able to pin-point the likely location of Tydur and her origin.

GETTING THE QUEST

Characters may hear about Opal, the sentient iron golem, from anybody in the region. She is a point of fascination and curiosity for many, even after living in the region for decades. When the characters are traveling through the city, Opal hears word about a group of potential adventurers and sends a missive to them, inviting them to visit her workshop.





OPAL'S WORKSHOP

The workshop is a small building that radiates intense heat from inside.

Meeting Opal

Opal is a dwarf-sized iron golem with an opal gem emblazoned on the center of their chest. They speak haltingly, which obscures their unusual intelligence the result of a dwarven wizard using a humanoid soul, allegedly their own soul, as a component of the ritual to create the golem.

As an iron golem, Opal has the following changes:

- Their size is Medium.
- They have 190 (20d8 + 100) hit points.
- They can understand and speak Common and Dwarvish.
- They have an Intelligence of 18 (+4) and a Wisdom of 14 (+2).
- Opal's autonomy has progressed to the point where she is no longer compelled to follow Tydur's commands.

Opal is a subject-matter expert on the following topics:

- The creation of clay golems.
- The fabrication of prosthetic limbs.
- Mass production of parts by assembly chains and molds.

If this is the first time the characters are meeting Opal, she observes them briefly before determining that they may be suitable for her expedition: a hike along the roads to a hidden facility that she believes belonged to the wizard that created her. In exchange for joining her on this journey, Opal offers the characters a 20-percent discount on non-magical weapons or armor crafted and sold by her. Opal is prepared to depart at any moment. When the characters are ready, proceed to "Reaching Tydur's Research Facility."

General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations in Opal's Workshop have the following features.

Lighting. Iron sconces dot the walls of the workshop and its basement. Lit torches illuminate the first floor with bright light. The basement's sconces are barren and unlit.

Climate. The workshop's walls sweat under the heat and humidity produced by the building's private furnace.

Doors. All of the workshop's doors are 1 foot thick, 4 feet wide, and 6 feet tall. They have AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Except where otherwise noted, all of the doors are unlocked.

A locked door can be forced open by succeeding on a DC 20 Strength check. A creature that is proficient with thieves' tools can pick a locked door with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

The following locations are keyed to the provided map of Opal's Workshop.



1 - Show Floor

A set of double-doors opens into this wide room outfitted with three wooden tables. Set on the east and west tables are an array of metal armors, weapons, and accessories. The south table bears two metal dwarven ornaments on its ends and a statuette of an iron golem at its center. The sounds of a hammer clashing against metal ring from behind a curtain concealing the middle of the southern wall.

Encounter: Clay Golem Attendant. The show floor is attended by a **clay golem** created by Opal. The clay golem stands behind the southern table. They are instructed to take payment in exchange for any of the goods available on the tabletops — haggling is not an option and they know the price of each item — and to apprehend any thieves — a command which has only required execution once. If the characters make a ruckus or request Opal directly, the clay golem goes to the workshop and returns with Opal (see "Meeting Opal").

Display Items. All of the items in this room are forged from iron and demonstrate a mastery of metalworking.

2 - Workshop

Several wooden tables topped with metalworking instruments are placed around the room. A furnace blazes in the northwest corner.

Encounter: Opal. Unless the characters get Opal's attention sooner, Opal is found here (see "Meeting Opal").

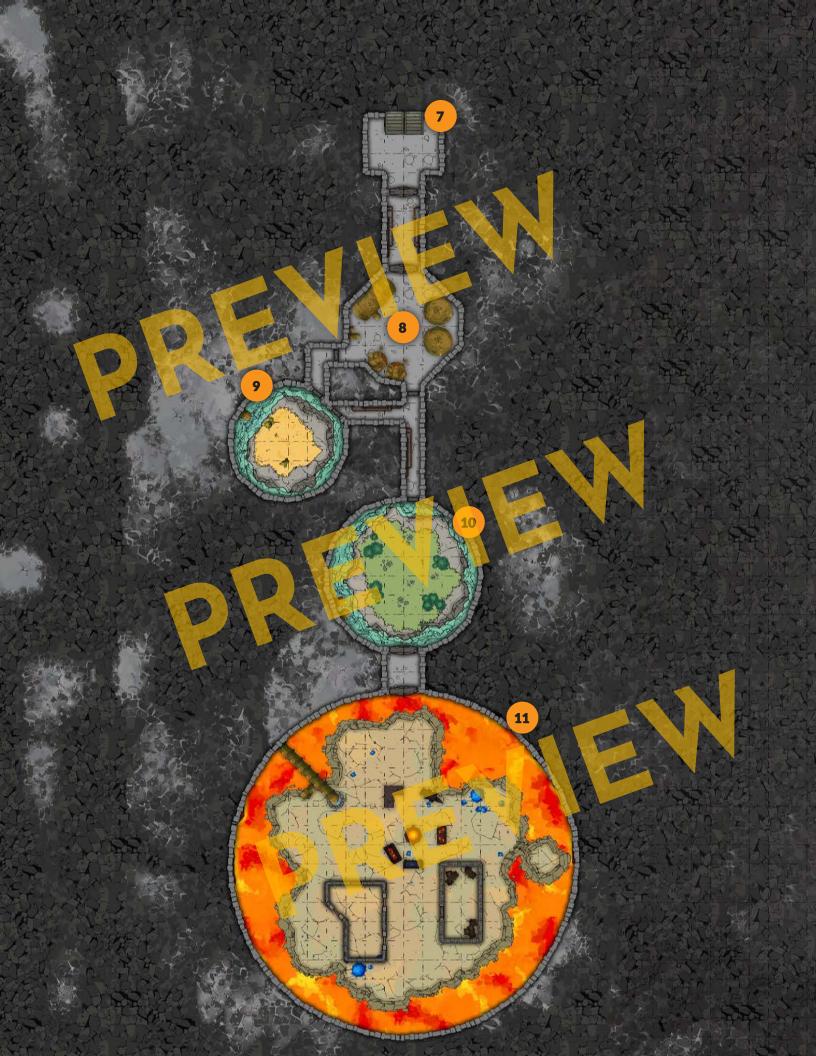
Metalworking Tools. The smith's tools located here are collectively worth 200 gp.

3 - Storage Closet

There are several crates in this closet which contain a variety of workshop tools and supplies.







REACHING TYDUR'S RESEARCH FACILITY

To reach Tydur's facility, Opal leads the characters out of the city and into the depths of the underearth. Read the following:

Opal charts a course along one of the less-traveled roads that spirals out from the city. As the road leaves the light of the city and darkness begins to swallow it, the path becomes illuminated by a symphony of bioluminescent glowworms.

While traversing the roads, the characters may talk amongst themselves or with Opal. After they are satisfied, read the following to introduce Tydur's facility:

At the end of a day's journey along the road, Opal turns off the path and trudges through the uneven terrain for a few minutes before stopping in front of a featureless stone door.

TYDUR'S RESEARCH FACILITY

The following locations are keyed to the provided map of the Tydur's Research Facility.

General Features

Unless otherwise noted, locations in Tydur's Research Facility have the following features.

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls. The surfaces of the facility are composed of stone.

Doors. All of the ruin's doors are 2 feet thick, 4 feet wide, and 6 feet tall. They have AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Except where otherwise noted, all of the doors are unlocked.

A locked door can be forced open by succeeding on a DC 20 Strength check. A creature that is proficient with thieves' tools can pick a locked door with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.



1 - Entrance

A featureless stone door is set into the wall of the natural stone cave.

Encounter: Bound Dust Mephit. When a creature gets within 10 feet of the door, dust swirls in front of the door and a **dust mephit** face forms on the surface of the door. The mephit, named Lutu, is bound to the door by magic and serves as a guardian to the facility; to this end, the mephit can open and close the door atwill.

Lutu was summoned and bound to the door four months ago, which they recount as an eternity of absolute boredom. Lutu has not seen Tydur come or go since and has grown apathetic to its fear of the old dwarf.

Lutu can be convinced to open the door by anybody claiming to bring food, water, or other "mortal necessities" as Lutu understands them. Alternatively, Lutu may offer to open the door if the characters can entertain. Successfully entertaining Lutu requires a successful DC 11 Charisma (Performance) check. On a failure, Lutu boos and expresses discontent by using their "Blinding Breath" feature on the characters.

2 - Research Lab

An angular stone table is placed in the center of this room with a set of bookshelves to its north and cornerdesks to its south. Parchment is scattered across each of the tables, some of the sheets are crisp and others are worn with age.

Encounter: Tydur's Simulacrum. Hunched over the southeast desk, furiously scribbling on a sheet of parchment, is a dwarf wearing crisp blue robes with silver trim. The dwarf is a simulacrum of Tydur (a **noble** with 4 hit points and an Intelligence score of 18). Their right arm is severed at the wrist and their face bears several scars that reveal glistening ice beneath their skin.A creature proficient in Arcana can recognize this Tydur as a simulacrum with a DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

Tydur's simulacrum expresses shock, quickly followed by dismay, at the presence of uninvited guests, though he is curious about Opal if she is present.

The simulacrum offers to answer any questions as best it can if the characters agree to leave afterwards. He provides the following information freely:

- He was created two months ago after an accident (which he doesn't know details of) killed the previous simulacrum. He has narrowly avoided death himself several times due to mishaps at the facility related to the construction of and experimentation with golems.
- Tydur and his apprentices are creating iron golems and assessing their intelligence. So far, their research

indicates that it may be possible to create more intelligent golems, but the process is fickle.

• The latest golem was created 7 months ago.

If the characters are unsatisfied with the information and press for more, he reluctantly offers the following information:

• Tydur intentionally allowed one of the iron golems to leave the facility and has been observing them from afar. If Opal is present, he presumes she is the same golem.

If the characters are still unwilling to leave, the simulacrum threatens and then engages them in combat.

Notes. A creature that spends 10 minutes skimming through the notes scattered around this room to learn or confirm the information that Tydur's simulacrum can offer (see "Encounter: Tydur's Simulacrum" above).

Bookshelf. This shelf holds a variety of arcane books and scrolls. A creature that searches through the shelves can find two spell scrolls of unseen servant, a spell scroll of arcane lock, and a spell scroll of locate object.



3 - Observatory

A wide glass dome with a flat top rises 5 feet out of the floor, offering a top-down view of a large rocky enclosure with two buildings and smithing equipment. The heat rising through the glass is palpable.

Glass Dome. The dome is composed of smooth glass crafted with *fabricate*. Peering through the glass, a creature can see everything in the enclosure (area 11): 40 feet below, two roofless buildings and smithing equipment are set on a rocky platform surrounded by magma. An iron golem is working on a set of hand axes.

Each 5-foot square of glass has AC 13, 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Additionally, for each adjacent square of glass that is destroyed, a square of glass loses 7 hit points due to structural damage.

4 - Dining Hall

There are two large barrels of alcohol tucked into an alcove to the northeast and a large stone table with five chairs, one lying broken on the ground, to the south.

Encounter: Apprentices. There are two apprentices (**cultists**) sitting at the table idly chatting in dwarvish about the results of their latest battery of tests they ran – a set of cognitive tests designed to measure new memory creation and retention. The apprentices are nervous about outsiders and attempt to flee deeper into the facility (hoping to find Tydur) if Opal is present.

To intimidate the apprentices into divulging information, the characters must either kill one of the apprentices or succeed on a DC 11 Charisma (Intimidation) check. On a failure, the apprentices dismiss any threats as bluffs and remark that Tydur will be here to rescue them soon. The apprentices can provide the same information that can be found in the research lab (area 2) and know the dwarven passphrase that suppresses the *arcane lock* on Tydur's sleeping quarters: "at any cost."

Table. The only set of dishware and utensils in the facility are set on the table. Two of the bowls have food scraps left in them, but everything else is spotless (the apprentices clean the dishware with prestidigitation).



5 - Kitchen

This plain kitchen features a stone countertop with a round water basin and an iron oven.

There is nothing of value here.

6 - Sleeping Quarter

Two lounge chairs and a bench are spaced around a small stone table that contains hot glowing coals. There are three iron doors along the south wall and a set of copper double doors inlaid with dwarven glyphs to the west.

Apprentice Rooms. The apprentices' rooms are barren except for beds and hold nothing of value.

Tydur's Room. The door to this room is sealed by *arcane lock*. This room is larger than the others. A creature that investigates the room discovers a journal on the stone bed. A creature spends 20 minutes pouring over the journal learns that Tydur is using his apprentices' souls as catalysts for the iron golems' sentience. If this information is shared with Opal, she is horrified and resolves to kill Tydur. She can be persuaded against immediate execution with a successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

7 - Stairs

These steep stairs descend 40 feet to connect the ground floor with the floor below.

8 - Golem Forge

Two smelters emit heat from the southern end of the room. Along the east and west walls are several large metal containers.

Encounter: Nervous Apprentice. There is one apprentice (**cultist**) standing at the southeast corner of the room fidgeting with their cloak. They are attending one of the pipes, opening and closing its connection to the desert enclosure while Tydur makes repairs inside the enclosure (area 9).

Metal Molds. The two cylindrical metal containers against the east wall have hatches that can be opened, revealing that they house molds used to cast pieces used in the assembly of an iron golem.

The horizontal cylindrical tank against the west wall has a hatch on its roof. When this tank is opened, the putrid smell of compacted blood and flesh washes over the room. A character that spends 10 minutes inspecting the device and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check determines that the device compresses a creature's body with a combination of magical and mechanical pressure. Transmutation magic then turns the compressed essence of the creature into a gemstone that houses their soul.

Containers. The containers are hot to the touch and contain heated water.



9 - Desert Simulation Enclosure

This enclosure is used to run preliminary measurements and tests on the golems to establish a baseline behavior.

A water-filled moat surrounds a rocky platform topped with sand and cacti. A copper pipe extruding from the wall's western side groans from an unseen stressor.

Encounter: Tydur. The old dwarf Tydur (**noble** with an Intelligence score of 18 and a +6 Arcana) is flying next to the copper pipe on the west wall. They removed several segments of the wall and stuffed their head into the wall to inspect the pipes.

Tydur carries a book with a spine that's too thick for its contents. A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check realizes that the spellbook is actually a set of bound scrolls, many of which have crumbled away from use. All that remains are two spell scrolls of shield and one spell scrolls of misty step, which Tydur uses in self defense if engaged in combat.

Tydur isn't interested or capable of fighting anybody and flees at the first sign of trouble. He will attempt to reach the golem that he's training in area 11. Should he reach the golem, he commands it to protect him; the golem only acts in selfdefense of themselves or Tydur and only takes actions to disarm or subdue other creatures. If Opal is present, the two golems maintain a stalemate, allowing the characters to corner Tydur.

Once Tydur is cornered, he relents and will answer any questions that the characters have. He can provide the following information:

- He has connections to several powerful merchant families in the city of Eth Aldur, which are how he has afforded the construction of the golems and this facility.
- The golems are given a spark of sentience by infusing them with a humanoid soul during their creation. If this information is shared with Opal, she is horrified and resolves to kill Tydur. She can be persuaded against immediate execution with a successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check.
- The golems' sentience has to be cultivated and refined through social training exercises, which take place in the enclosures.

Tydur is unrepentant about the methods he has used to create the sentient golems.



10 - Tropical Simulation Enclosure

This enclosure is used to test empathy and interactions with simple creatures.

A water-filled moat surrounds a rocky platform topped with flowery grass and bushes. The crushed body of a weasel sits in a patch of bloodstained grass near the center of the field.

Wildlife. There are two deer standing in the open and four weasels hidden among the bushes.

Blood-Stained Patch. Any creature can plainly see that the creature was crushed suddenly by an immense, evenlydistributed force (such as an iron golem's foot).

11 - Eth Aldur Simulation Enclosure

This enclosure is used to test each golems' ability to adopt an independent routine and express creativity.

A magma moat churns below an expansive rocky platform topped with two stone buildings and equipment for smithing.

Encounter: Quartz the Iron Golem.

Quartz is a semi-sentient iron golem and has the following changes:

- Their size is Medium.
- They have 190 (20d8 + 100) hit points.
- They can understand and speak Common, Dwarvish, and Elvish.

• They have an Intelligence of 18 (+4) and a Wisdom of 14 (+2).

Quartz expresses a curiosity toward any elves present, especially drow, and is eager to talk with them. Before being turned into a golem, the soul in Quartz was one of Tydur's apprentices, a dwarf named Eldul Bronzemaul. They were an academic interested in learning more about the drow elves that live in other parts of the underearth.

If Quartz is confronted with the knowledge that they used to be a dwarf, it takes them a minute to process the information and they begin to panic. They begin raging around the enclosure and breaking everything. Calming them down requires a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Alternatively, they stop rampaging after 30 minutes and sit down in the midst of the rubble.

Magma. Any creature that enters the magma or starts its turn there takes 42 (12d6) fire damage. Every foot moved in the magma costs 5 feet of movement.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

At the end of this adventure, the characters should have learned about the details of the facility and how Opal was created. Opal is distraught at the revelation that she was once a dwarf, taken advantage of and changed into a golem against her will, and needs four weeks to come to grips with the information. Additionally, she does her best to integrate Quartz into society in Eth Aldur as a research assistant at the library.

She does hold up her end of the agreement with the characters and grants the characters a 20-percent discount on non-magical weapons or armor crafted and sold by her.



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