



# THE INFERNAL EXCAVATION

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5TH EDITION ADVENTURE

AN ARCHEOLOGICAL MISSION INTO THE TERRIFYING DEPTH OF THE EARTH

**MONKEYDM**

# **THE INFERNAL EXCAVATION**

**THE INFERNAL EXCAVATION IS AN ARCHEOLOGICAL ADVENTURE DESIGNED FOR 4-6 LEVEL 12 CHARACTERS FOR USE WITH THE 5TH EDITION RULESET.**



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## PLOT HOOK

The players receive an ornate letter within the mailbox of their center of operation. The letter is of a dark red color, with golden inlays and a bit of golden wax tying it together. Opening it up reveals it is a letter from the Almendrud Academy of Advanced Archeology. The headmaster of the academy, renowned archeologist Wolfstein Almendrud has requested aid from an adventuring party, promising great rewards.

## CHAPTER 1. THE MISSING EXPEDITION

In which the players are served with tea, an explanation and then they head out on an adventure.

### CHAPTER 1.1. A TEA BREAK

At the end of the letter the players receive is a location where they are to come in order to further discuss the details of the mission, that is if they consider themselves fit for it. It is not far off from the center of a major city, maybe even the same as the player's base of operations.

Read this:

'As you find yourself in front of the given address, the sight in front you is marvelous. A large villa, akin to the X-men's house, guarded by tall fences of steel and a few imposing, yet neatly dressed bodyguards, all adorning twirled mustaches or fancy beards, seemingly to fit a certain aesthetic. All of them maintain a stern, yet welcoming aura. Once the two at the gate see you, they open it up for you to walk within the main courtyard, yet not saying a word. The courtyard is filled with all manner of rare flowers, and the large mansion with dark red walls is even more imposing from up close. As you walk closer to it, you notice a small figure, male, halfling, in a butler's outfit and with a mighty large mustache, smiling towards you from the top of the stairs. "The master is already awaiting you with tea. Come, posthaste!", he says, before darting off inside the manor.'

#### EUGENE ERLNSTEIN

**Information:** He is the butler of Wolfstein Almendrud, with a posh british demeanor and welcoming, overly-polite mannerisms. He is the one to welcome the party, leading them to Almendrud.

Read this:

'The small man quickly leads you through one or two corridors, stopping you briefly to ask you to leave your shoes on a shoe stand, as to not mess up the carpets. He then leads you into a large foyer, where a fireplace is stoking, behind it a large family portrait of Wolfstein, an orc gentleman with white hair and a monocle and next to him a smaller tiefling girl, looking about 10. In front of the fireplace, a tea set adorns a small mahogany table, surrounded by large velvet sofas. At the back of the room, facing the fireplace, is a lanky figure, dressed in a traditional three piece suit. The figure turns around to reveal themselves as Wolfstein Almendrud.'

Wolfstein will sit the players down and tell them that a little over a month ago he received a letter from a train conductor, saying that he found a small cave entrance next to a desert stop of the train. Hearing of this, Wolfstein sent out a team of archeologists. Long story short... After multiple additional teams have been sent in, none have returned from the cave. The train track was put out of commission while the dig site is investigated, so luckily no one outside the archeologists has disappeared, but things are getting dire and adventurers are needed. If they decide to help, they will be paid handsomely.

If the players accept his proposition, he will smile, finish his tea and tell them the train awaits them the following morning.



#### WOLFSTEIN ALMENDRUD

**Information:** A traditional orc gentleman, dressed in a suit, smoking a pipe, wearing a monocle and having a very precise demeanor. His voice is as posh as can be and he drinks his tea very slowly.

## CHAPTER 1.2. THE FIRST STOP

Read this:

'Midway through the next day, after a brief and uneventful train ride, you begin to hear the brakes be pressed and the train come to a screeching, LOUD halt. Looking out the window, you find yourself in a desolate patch of desert ground, with but a small wooden structure next to you. It is, for the most part, barren. You get off the train and find yourself alone. Still within the train, an annex of the Archeological Academy explains to you that it is here where the archeologists were left, but that the train staff is not going to stay, out of fear something dangerous is hiding below. He hands you a sending stone to call back the train and wishes you good luck, before the train quickly departs and you are left to your devices.'

The surrounding area is pretty desolate, but there are some bits worth exploring.

### AREAS OF THE FIRST STOP

#### 1 - BARRELS & CRATES

The bunch of barrels and crates is left unattended. Weirdly enough, on the inside they are full with food. They don't seem to have been touched in the past few weeks.

#### 2 - RAILCAR

A railcar is strapped with leather straps to small hinges. If the hinges would be let go off, the raid car would slowly drift into the cave. Right above the small entrance to the cave, there is a wooden sign which states "Archeological Site - DO NOT ENTER UNLESS VERIFIED". When the players go inside the car and go down, proceed to the next chapter.

#### 3 - SMALL SHED

A small shed is built on the side, with its windows covered by curtains and its door locked. The door can be unlocked with a **DC 18 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check**.

Inside, the players find a room with a single bed, neatly made, a wardrobe and a desk.

The wardrobe has inside two outfits for a female explorer, petite and well crafted. A **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals that, on the cuffs, the clothes have the initials L. A.

On the desk rests a single cup of tea, a tea kettle and a few bits of small, unusually red-ish rock. A player can discern more about the rock by performing a **DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check**, revealing the rock seems to be of the infernal plane. The players can also try to open a desk drawer, either by breaking it with a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** or a **DC 22 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check**. Inside, they will find a leatherbound notebook.

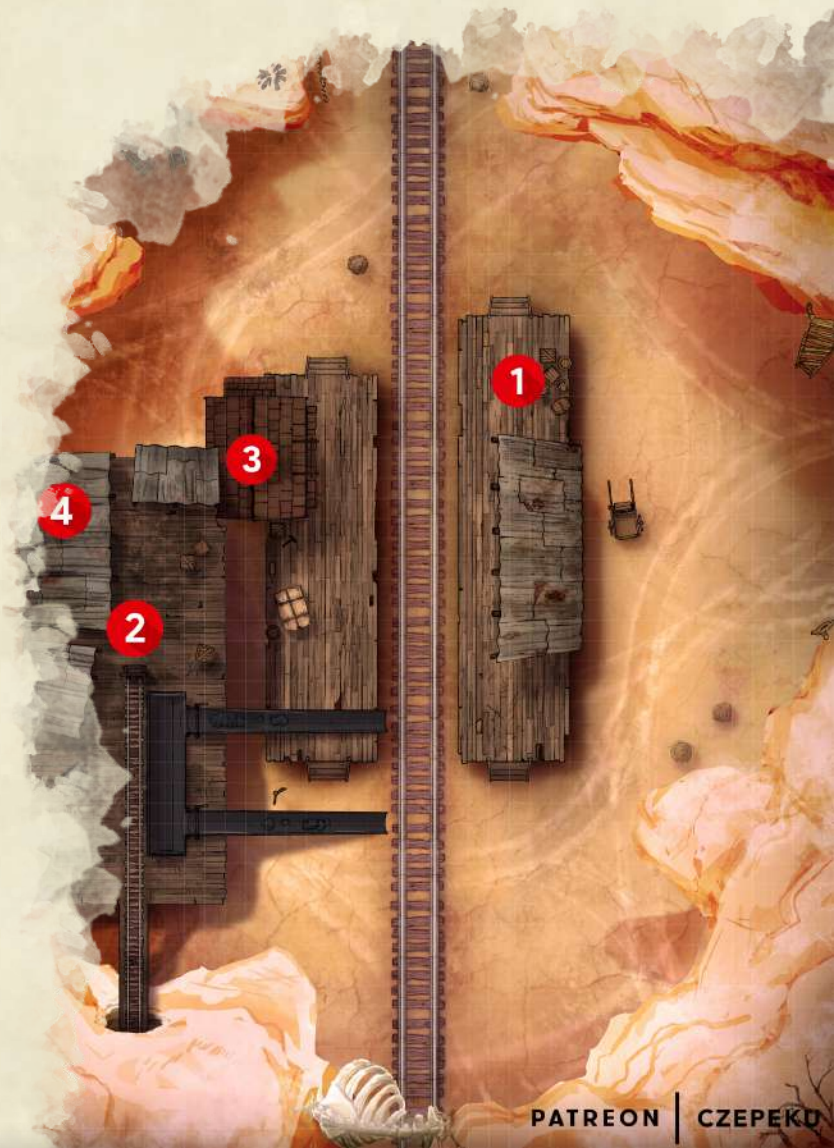
If they find the notebook, read this:

'The small leatherbound notebook seems to be of expert made. Inside, you can make out plenty of notes, all of them in common. The first detail the setting up of a railcar to the archeological site, then they proceed normally. Until they get a little different.'

MAP CREATED BY [CZEPEKU](#)

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### MAP 1: THE FIRST STOP





## CHAPTER 2. WITHIN THE CAVES

In which the players begin looking for the missing archeologists.

### CHAPTER 2.1. LINKING PROBLEMS

Read this:

'As you get onto the carts, you quickly begin to dart down the rails through narrow cave corridors. On the sides, you can make about rope attached from various hinges, most likely a way to guide yourselves back outside. At parts, the road gets a little bumpy, with the rails broken up or not fully intact, but, nevertheless, you arrive, with a thud, at the base of the rails. You find yourself in a cave system of sorts. Silence befalls you all.'

Characters with a **Passive Perception above 19** will hear the distant sound of chains rattling. Slowly, the players can move throughout the cave system, noticing chalk markings on the walls, various diamond and x shapes. If they picked up the journal in the previous chapter, they can attribute these signs to getting closer to the sights. A **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** or higher will make it so they discern burn marks onto the rocks.

After a while, lead players to **map 2**. By the time they get close, they can just about hear the sound of chains. Players with a passive Perception above 16 can also hear the distant sound of a struggle. In the middle of the map, **3 chain devils** patrol calmly. Chained to the ground, back against a pillar, is a young tiefling woman, half conscious.

The players can choose to approach it stealthily, distracting the devils and freeing the woman or head-on, facing the devils. Once they have freed the woman, she reveals herself to be Lisa Almendrud.

#### • Desert Site Log Entry 8

Fascinating. We've finally set up the car all the way down, allowing for faster transport. What seemed to be just your usual cave has proven to be much more. The cave system sprawls for a good bit, until it finally leads to a weirdly circular chamber, adorned with some pillars of sorts. On the ground, I found rocks of a weird texture. Reddish...

#### • Desert Site Log Entry 9

Slow and steady has indeed won us the race. By the incantations on the ground of the main chamber, I can safely say this has links to infernal plane. Some devilish presence resides over this place. I have told Renus to send a letter to father, requesting aid to close this site. Who knows that it could lead to if it gets to the wrong people?

#### • Desert Site Log Entry 10

Something is undoubtedly off. Renus has told me he has already sent the letter, but I haven't heard him cast sending once, let alone write anything down and send it via his familiar. He is acting quite weird. I understand this judgment is unfit, as we both are tieflings, but what if he is considering something?

#### • Desert Site Log Entry 11

I'm feeling a little ill today, but it is alright. I opted to stay and rest, while Renus and Magnus will lead the expedition for today. I have told them to search around, but avoid the main chamber as to not do something unruly. They seemed delighted not to have me bother them.

#### • Desert Site Log Entry 12

The bastards! They've written to bring new explorers for a wider search! Apparently they found more below. Regardless of how sick I am, I'm going back in, I can't allow them to mess something up.

#### • Desert Site Log Entry 13

They have messed something up. The cave began to rumble. I ran out as fast as I could, but I began to hear rattling chains. I TOLD THEM TO NOT GO IN SO DEEP. DAMN IT! Nobody else has come out... I think I'll have to go back in for them. Otherwise... This is a complete failure.'

### LISA ALMENDRUD

**Information:** The young and beautiful tiefling with purple-red skin is the daughter of the accomplished Wolfstein Almendrud, and she is a good archeologist herself. She reveals to the party they must get inside the lower chamber, or else doom will befall all of them. For this, the chain devils must be killed, because they need room.

## 4 - SMALL ENCAMPMENT

Underneath the small tin roof, you see a few sleeping bags, as well as some oil lanterns. You also discern some burn marks on the wood, like burning chains struck the wood. And there's a good bit of blood too...

**MAP 2: THE ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE**Map Created by [CzePeku](#)

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**CHAPTER 2.2. CRACKING THE CODE**

After she is freed, the devils are dealt with and she has room to breathe, Lisa will start looking at the archeological site and the pillars, trying to find a switch of sorts. She tells the party that her apprentice, Renus, betrayed her and is currently trying to summon a devil of sorts and that somehow he unlocked a door to the lower level of this cave. The players must help her also unlock said door.

**AREAS OF THE ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE****1 - HELL'S MOUTH**

On the ground, under recently displaced dust, the head of a hydra-like creature can be seen, although its neck seems to be burning in flames.

This imagery can be analyzed with a **DC 25 Intelligence (History) check**, revealing that there was once a story of a temple to the Hydra god, overtaken by devils.

**2 - TABLE**

A wooden table is filled with various archeological instruments, alongside the same red rock inside the shed outside. Also there is a small piece of paper with writing in infernal, mentioning numbers from 1 to 6, then some scratched out bits. A *ring of fire resistance* is hidden under some papers.

**3 - PILLARS**

Every pillar has some etched in writing on it. It is all in infernal, and it sounds incoherent at first, but must be pieced together.

- 3.A - *"As is known through history, that all that is built..."*
- 3.B - *"To break down and bring upon new greater buildings."*
- 3.C - *"And from the soot is to grow anew"*
- 3.D - *"And open the door to his realm. And break the ground we shall, bringing about a new day."*
- 3.E - *"The Lord of Soot guided us upon this pitiful structure"*
- 3.F - *"Is to break into ash and dust"*

The proper way to connect them is  
**3A - 3F - 3C - 3E - 3B - 3D**

Upon reciting the verse in correct order the ground begins to crack and rumble, until bits of it crack to reveal a staircase of jagged stone leading lower right in front of the Hydra's mouth, almost as if it is spitting out the stairs. From below, the players can hear the sound of flames, alongside screams of agony.





## CHAPTER 3. THE LORD OF SOOT

In which the players fight a pit fiend, find out the truth, then return home.

### MAP 3: THE HELLGATE

#### MAP CREATED BY [CZEPEKU](#)

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### CHAPTER 3.1. THE HELLGATE

Read this:

'As you venture down the stairs, the wounded Lisa Almendrud waits up and leans down. She wishes you good luck briefly, then falls back to unconsciousness, due to exhaustion. From below, the screams get ever louder and you begin to feel the temperature rising. You finally arrive below, in a massive room of jagged rock, where a portal is slowly opening up. You see a few archeologists having their energy syphoned into the portal and then another, a tiefling, the cause of this, holding onto a staff of sorts. He smiles wickedly, looking back towards you as you descend. "Good! More fuel for the Lord of So-" Before he can finish the sentence, his body gets griped by a large red hand emerging from the portal. Within a blink, his body is dragged within the portal. A moment of silence commences. Did he... fail? But then, the hand emerges once more. Then comes the first foot, then the second. The large being of red energy shows its teeth with a wicked howl. The fight is on. Or else it'll have no issue bringing in the rest of its fiery legion. Roll initiative.'

The party must now go toe-to-toe with a **pit fiend**. The luck is not in their favor, but perchance they can maybe do it!

Once the pit fiend is defeated, it will roar out, then disintegrate into soot. Without any more energy, the portal closes, although all the archeologists are dead, with their souls dragged into hell. The players could maybe seek to get them back on another adventure! For now, however, they can return home.

### CHAPTER 3.2. RETURN HOME

Upon their return home, the players will be handsomely rewarded. Lisa, on the other hand, will be handsomely scolded by her father, who swears to never send her out on missions again, despite her wishes. And so, they are reunited, yet none the more closer than they were before. The players, however, are MUCH richer.

[GET ALL THE MAPS BY CLICKING HERE](#)

# THANK YOU !

A big thank you to the reddit community, as well as all of those who follow and support me, without you I couldn't have brought this project to life.

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Maps created by [CzePeku on Patreon](#).

And now onto the next project...

Cheers !

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**A MASSIVE THANK YOU TO ALL MY PATRONS !**