

SHENAN-AGAN

The Time Loop Heist Game



Shenan-Again

The Time-loop Heist Game

Beta Test Edition

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Shenan-Again

Welcome to 21st century Earth, otherwise known as the world right outside your window.

Everything's pretty much the same as whenever you last checked. Unemployment keeps going up. Except, you know, when it doesn't. Everyone complains about taxes and gas prices. Your grandpa likes to remind you how much better things were back in his day. You know, back when the US was at war in Korea and all. Or was that Vietnam?

...Where were we? Right. Everything's pretty much the regular old planet Earth you're used to.

Except one thing. A couple years ago, the government¹ discovered a whole bunch of extraterrestrial technology that nobody quite understands. At least, we assume it's extraterrestrial, unless some country's been off building some crazy tech and not telling us about it. Which is definitely possible.

Point is, they found some of this tech,² and as shady government organizations are wont to do, they covered it all up and pretended it didn't exist. They gave it some kind of technical, sciency name,³ but most people who're "in the know" just call them Coils. The specialists who've been allowed to examine the Coils are pretty sure they can do a lot more than we've realized, we just don't know how to work them. We're like a bunch of cavemen that've discovered an iPhone, and the only part we've figured out how to

¹ Whose government? What branch of the government are we talking about here? What country do they even represent? No idea. Probably more than one, honestly. Some kind of shady, intergovernmental agency with so many secrets, even their secrets have secrets. Dubious motives and morals. You know the type.

² Where did they find this, you ask? First, stop interrupting. I hate inserting footnotes mid-sentence. Second, I have no idea. Maybe they dug them up from under the pyramids. Or Stonehenge. Or they fell down on a meteorite. Don't know. Don't care.

³ If you were gonna ask if I knew the sciency word, the answer is no. In case you haven't noticed, that's the answer to a lot of your questions. That's cause they're pretty stupid questions. Which is why I answer them down here, in the footnotes, which most people don't even bother to read anyway. Point is, I don't give one refried pinto bean what the Suits call the thing, long as it gets the job done.

use is the pizza button on the Domino's app.⁴ But we have figured out one thing the Coils do, and it's a heck of a lot better than one-click pizza, let me tell you.

You might be wondering how I know all this, given that it's top-secret, need-to-know kinda info. Great question. Thing is, over the past couple years, a few of those Coils have... gone missing. One of them eventually made its way into my hands,⁵ and I've been using it in various business dealings ever since. It's quite handy. What exactly does it do? Well, I'm not the best person to ask, as my grasp on the subject is even more tenuous than the experts. Who, to be quite frank, knows next to nothing.

But I'll give it a go. When we turn the Coil on,⁶ it bends the spacetime continuum. Creates an anomaly. In plain English, it starts a time loop, like in that movie where Bill Murray relives the same day over and over. Except this Loop only lasts an hour instead of a day, and it only repeats three times. So you get three tries at whatever you want to do during that hour, but the last one's the one you're stuck with. I've had some of my own genius types take a gander at my Coil,⁷ and they agree that there's a heck of a lot more this thing can do. Given the money we're already making on this thing, I'd love to find out what else it can do. The boys in the lab warn me that further experimentation could have catastrophic consequences. Potentially apocalyptic-level stuff, apparently. But hey, you can't expect big rewards if you're not willing to take big risks. Am I right?

⁴ This blew my mind when I first heard about it. It's not enough that we could order from our phones, we needed to be able to do it with just one click. I dunno. I find that level of laziness kind of inspiring.

⁵ How did I come by a top-secret alien machine that most people don't even know exists? It's a long story. I'm not gonna get into it now. Suffice it to say it involved two long-distance phone calls, some anonymous transfers of cryptocurrency, and a one-eyed woman with an albino ferret.

⁶ By pointing a bunch of electromagnets and crap at it. No, apparently the aliens didn't think to include an "on" button. Or we just haven't found it yet.

⁷ They were utterly bamboozled. I realize no one actually says bamboozled with a straight face, but that's exactly what they were. There's just no other word for it. And my face is never straight. Now that we've got that straight...

Part 1 - “The Mark”

An Overview

Shenan-Again is all about controlled chaos. You and your friends will take on the role of a crew of thieves attempting to pull off a difficult heist using a stolen Coil, a piece of alien technology that warps time. You’ll enjoy thrilling, daring successes, but you’ll also face crushing—yet quite often hilarious—failures. In the end, Shenan-Again is a game about taking calculated risks and learning from your mistakes. It’s about second (and third) chances.

See, Shenan-Again isn’t just a heist story, it’s a *time-loop* heist story. In the game, you’ll relive the same heist three times, one hour each time, so you get three chances to get it right. The second and third time around, you’ll already know a lot of what’s going on, and the rules in this book help reflect the experience you gain through each iteration of the loop as you work to perfect your plan.

The Game

To play you’ll need five people: one Gamemaster (GM) and four players. The Gamemaster acts as a kind of narrator, presenting the situation to the players, and the players, each acting as a member of the thieving crew, take actions to overcome obstacles and pull off the heist. It’s possible to play with as few as four, or as many as six, but we strongly recommend getting five

people. You'll also need a table, a notebook, some dice of at least two different colors, and a handful of index cards. It doesn't take long to learn the rules of Shenan-Again. We've outlined everything carefully in this rulebook to make sure it's clear and give tips and examples, but in practice one player who's read this rulebook can easily explain the game to the rest in just a few minutes and you can get right into playing.

A game of Shenan-Again begins by establishing the scenario. The Gamemaster will let you know what you're stealing, and who from. Then you'll put together a crew. Once that's settled, you'll start a one hour timer. You'll take turns explaining what you'd like to do, and rolling dice to see if you succeed. The GM narrates the results of your success or failure, you decide what to do next, and so on. After one hour, the timer will go off, and the loop will reset.

Most likely, the first time around will devolve into an absolute mess before the end, despite your best efforts. That's okay! You'll learn a lot, and laugh a lot, and you'll be ready for round two! On the second time around, you remember what happened in the first loop, but the people you're robbing don't, which gives you an edge.

Even still, unless you're exceptionally lucky, you probably won't quite pull off the heist on the second try either. That's for the third and final loop. First time's mostly just figuring out what you *don't* want to do. Second time's about figuring out what you'd actually like to do. And the third time's for getting it right.

Rulebook Layout

Now, before we dive into the rules, let's take a look at how this book is organized. We've divided it into four main Parts. Each subsection has a link that will jump you back to the Table of Contents, and the Table of Contents has links to every Part and most subsections.

- *Part 1, "The Mark"* – deals with the overall concept of the game and the organization of the rulebook.
- *Part 2, "The Crew"* – a bit longer, and deals with the specific mechanics of gameplay. This is the section that will cover the rules of the game. It'll walk you through creating a character, how to work the timers, how to decide if you succeed or fail at certain actions, and what it takes to pull off the heist and win the game. At the end of Part 2 you'll find summaries of all the core rules, with links to the relevant sections.
- *Part 3, "The Plan"* – explains the job of the Gamemaster. If you're a player, not the Gamemaster, you don't need to read Part 3, and in fact, some sections might contain spoilers, so browse this section at your own risk! It's broken down into advice on running a game of Shenan-Again, followed by a section on building your own scenarios.
- *Part 4, Scenarios* – a list of scenarios we've provided. This section in particular is one you should avoid if you'll be a player, not the GM, as it'll include maps, notes on the various non-player characters, obstacles, etc.

Summaries

- If you see a block of text like this, it's a Summary to review and to use for reference
 - Summaries will often use bulleted lists
 - A summary will usually follow a full-length description of a particular rule
-

Blocks of text like this contain Examples. They might contain short paragraphs, like what you see here. These will often contain examples of play which can help you to see how a certain rule would apply during the game.

- *They might also use bulleted lists*
 - *Examples use this fun, smaller font, just like Summaries!*
 - *But they'll be indented and italicized, rather than separated with lines*
-

What is Shenan-Again?

- A topsy-turvy heist game of risk-taking and time-looping
 - 3-6 players (ideally four), 3-4 hours
 - The GM sets the scene; the players make choices to deal with obstacles
 - Summaries and examples in each section
-

Part 2 - “The Crew”

What you need

- 20 six sided dice of one color
- 2 six sided dice of another color per player
- A notebook
- A timer
- One 3x5 index card per player
- Some jazzy heist music

Setting up

1 – Set the scene

To begin, the Gamemaster will describe some basic information about the scenario. He may have everything planned out, or he may call for some input on certain elements. In most games of Shenan-Again, you won’t get a detailed description of all the security features and obstacles you’ll encounter. He’ll describe mostly the details you can see from outside the area or the building, and perhaps a detail or two from inside that your team managed to get your hands on beforehand. Most of your final plan will be based on experience from the first and second iterations.\

2 – Create Character Concepts

Each player will be playing a member of the crew, and each will have a certain skill set. In this section you'll create a single, short sentence called a Concept that describes your character, their Role in the crew, and something unique about them.

First, take your index card and write down a single word that describes the Role your character plays in the crew. Write this word in the middle of your index card, *with room on both sides to add additional words before and after your Role*. Your Role is the reason they decided to bring you along—it represents what you're good at, what makes you useful. Your Role should be fairly limited, but not so limited that you can only really do one thing. “Tech guy” is probably too general (try something like Hacker or Demolitions Expert,) while “Safehacker” is probably too narrow. (Try Burglar.)

Roles

- *Con – Passing themselves off as other people, talking their way out of tight spots, and generally lying through their teeth.*
- *Burglar – Picking locks, cracking safes, hotwiring cars, sneaking about*
- *Hacker – Disabling security cameras, messing with communications systems, interfacing with tech/machinery*
- *Muscle – Shooting, punching, kicking*
- *Demolitions expert – Blowing stuff up*

Next, add another layer to your character with a single adjective tacked onto the front of your Role. While your Role will be reflected in *what* you do during the game, and has an impact on certain gameplay mechanics, the adjective you choose will be reflected in *how* you do those things, and should impact the way you play your character. Don't think about it too hard, just write down the first adjective that pops into your head! Here are some examples to get you thinking:

Adjectives

- *Snarky Con*
- *Loyal Burglar*
- *Distractible Hacker*
- *Cheerful Muscle*
- *World-weary Demolitions expert*

Finally, add the word, “with...” *after* your Role, and follow that up with a single noun. This could be an object, a relationship, a physical, emotional, or mental condition, or anything else that adds a unique aspect to your character. Again, this noun is purely to make your character more fun and interesting to play, so don't worry about whether it will be applicable to the heist. Once everyone's finished their Character Concept, make sure you also each take two dice from the smaller pile. These are your Skill Dice, which will be discussed later on. Each player can have a unique pair of Skill Dice, if desired, the important part is that they're distinct from the main pile of dice, your Luck Dice.

Sample Character Concepts:

- *Snarky Con with a daughter*
- *Loyal Burglar with an old photograph*
- *Distractible Hacker with something to prove*
- *Cheerful muscle with a chronic cough*
- *World-weary Demolitions Expert with an authority issues*

While your Role determines *what* your character will do and how good they'll be at it, the adjectives and nouns you use add a few extra details to give you an idea of *who* your character is. Unlike the Role you choose, the other parts of your Concept won't give you any special advantage, but they make playing your character more fun.

3 - Choose your Leader and a Scribe

Every crew needs a good leader. Your leader is like your captain, keeping your crew organized and on course. They need to keep their cool under pressure and take decisive action to adapt to unexpected changes. As with each of the other steps in setup, don't take too long deliberating here. If no one steps forward, nominate a player, hopefully someone who's naturally assertive and feels comfortable taking charge and giving orders.

In addition to a leader, you should also choose someone to be the Scribe. Essentially, the Scribe's job will be to write things down as they happen, which we'll discuss in more detail later

on. For now, just know that the Scribe will be writing things down that you'll want to remember in the future. We'd suggest choosing two *different* players as the Leader and the Scribe.

4 – Start the timer

Now that you've assembled your crew and chosen a leader, you're ready to begin. Set a timer for exactly one hour. We'd highly recommend putting the timer up on a television screen so it's clearly visible to everyone. Having the timer large and clearly visible in big, red letters helps build up the tension in the game and keep everyone invested. If it's impossible to put it on the TV, you can always use a physical timer, or your phone or tablet. Whatever device you use, make sure that the screen won't power off during the game.

The timer's there for more than just practical purposes. The looming countdown provides a constant reminder of your impending deadline for each loop, which creates a tangible energy and sense of urgency at the table. Because the timer plays such a pivotal role in the game, we recommend finding a timer that has a look and sound that adds, rather than detracts, from the atmosphere, which is why we'd urge you to use an online timer, cast to a TV screen, with big, red digits and a loud, scary alarm sound. It's great fun!

Finally, before you start the timer, make sure you've got some jazzy tunes playing in the background. If you don't know what we're talking about with this, look up the soundtracks from popular heist movies and TV shows like *The Italian Job* and *Leverage*. This may seem like a minor detail, but we can't stress enough how much this small touch adds to the mood of the game.

Together with the timer, it creates a great atmosphere that's the perfect mix of playfulness and tension.

As you start the timer, keep in mind that you *will* feel like there isn't enough time in each hour. That's on purpose! One of the joys of a game of Shenan-Again is the chaotic scramble as you rush to get everything done before the time runs out. You might consider taking short breaks between loops so people can get a drink, use the bathroom, and replenish snacks, but we encourage you *not* to pause the timer during gameplay. This game is all about making quick decisions, rolling with failure, and laughing as things spiral out of control. It's often said that you should look before you leap, but in Shenan-Again, it's more fun to *leap* before you *look*!

Setting up

- Set the scene
 - Create character concepts
 - *Adjective + Role + "with..." + noun*
 - Choose a leader and a scribe
 - Start the timer
-

Gameplay

Here you'll find all the rules for rolling dice and determining successes and failures, so make sure all the players are familiar with what's covered in this section before you begin playing. Each topic in this subsection is followed by a short summary of the rules, and at the end of the section there's a full summary of the core rules for reference.

Planning

As soon as the timer starts, begin planning. During the first loop, you'll probably make a more general plan, focusing on how you'll get in. In the second and third loops you'll refine and perfect that plan based on your experience. The leader takes charge during planning, and he'll mediate between players with differing approaches, deciding on the best course of action for the crew. Don't take too much time on this step. Your time is much better spent just going for it, and while it's not entirely realistic, it's way more fun if you just kinda wing it. Doing *something* is always more fun than sitting around deliberating. You'll probably want to take a moment at the beginning of each new loop to reassess your plan, but again, don't let it eat up too much time. Remember, you're on the clock!

Taking turns

There's no set turn order in Shenan-Again. Instead, it's up to the crew to switch from one crewmember to another depending on what needs to happen next. In-world, your characters are

all equipped with earpieces, so you can generally communicate with one another in real time. You can use this to make suggestions about who should go next and how you can deal with obstacles that arise. Bring those suggestions to your crew's leader, not the Gamemaster, because the leader calls the shots. He decides who goes when. The leader should make decisions quickly, as deliberating too long will eat up precious time. Sometimes it'll be clear from the situation who needs to go next. At other times it'll be more ambiguous.

If you're the leader, wherever possible, try to spread tasks out evenly between the players so that everyone can contribute and have a good time. Even if you're not the leader, you can help out with this by noticing if one player's being left out, and suggest ways to put their skills to use. It can be helpful at times to assign players to pair up and work together, especially if you have a larger group. These pairs are always fluid from one minute to the next, subject to adaptation based on the needs of the heist.

A lot of situations rely on a sequence of events. *First* the Conman distracts a guard, *then* the Burglar sneaks past. But sometimes you'll want two players to do something "at the same time." In this case, you still choose one player to roll first, but rather than resolving any of their recovery rolls if they fail, (*see [Failing a Roll](#)*), immediately switch to the other player. Once they've both made their first roll, you can keep resolving their failures and/or let other players take turns based on the situation.

Aaron, Liz, Maggie, and Sam are playing a scenario in which their crew attempts to steal a priceless statue from an archeological dig. Liz, the Muscle, is also the crew's leader. She says, "Alright guys, how're we gonna get in?"

Maggie, the Burglar, suggests that she could sneak over to get a closer look.

"Go for it," Liz says.

Maggie rolls to see if she can sneak up closer, and she succeeds. The GM tells her that there's a fence around the perimeter, and they check everyone's ID at the gate. Sam, the Con, suggests that Maggie steal someone's badge so he can use it to get in. Aaron, the Hacker, suggests that instead they dig their way under the fence.

Liz thinks about it for a second and decides that it would be useful to have a badge once they're inside, but thinks it might be too risky to steal one. Instead, she tells Sam to "casually" snap a picture of someone's badge as they're walking in or out, and plans to have Aaron use photo editing software to create a fake ID badge.

Challenges

Not everything you attempt will automatically succeed. Many times you'll be attempting to do something very difficult, with limited time, and/or with limited information. To reflect this difficulty, the GM will call for you to roll a Challenge to determine if you succeed or fail.

Luck Dice

You should have twenty dice of a single color in the middle of the table. This is a shared pool of dice called your Luck Dice. Whenever you're called upon to roll for a Challenge, you can

roll as many Luck Dice as you wish in order to overcome the Challenge. As long as you roll a six on at least one die, you succeed. This doesn't mean adding up your results, you're looking to see if *at least one die comes up as a six*. If you don't roll a single six, you fail.

- *If you take three dice and roll: 5, 5, and 3 you fail*
- *If you take four dice and roll 2, 1, 6, and 3 you succeed*
- *If you take one die and roll 6, you succeed*
- *If you take six dice and roll 1, 3, 5, 4, 3, 2 you fail*
- *Etc*

However many Luck Dice you choose to roll, as soon as they're rolled, they are all removed from play for the remainder of the current loop. At the beginning of each loop, all twenty Luck Dice are returned to the pool and can be rolled again. On the first loop, you'll almost certainly feel you don't have enough dice to make them last the whole hour. That's okay! It's how the game is built. Keep in mind that you'll have two more times to get everything right, so for that first loop, just learn what you can and enjoy it as everything spins out of control.

Skill Dice

If you're rolling a Challenge that's related to your Role, (say the Hacker is trying to disable some security cameras), you may add your two Skill Dice in addition to any number of Luck Dice. In this case, you must roll at least one six on any one of the dice you roll, regardless of which type

of die it is. If you wish, you can just roll your two Skill Dice with no Luck Dice, though your odds of rolling a six on just the Skill Dice are fairly slim.

- *The Burglar could add their Skill Dice to pick a lock, but not to knock someone out*
- *The Hacker could add their Skill Dice to access an elevator's control panel, but not to lie to someone*
- *The Con could add their Skill Dice to pass themselves off as an employee of the people you're robbing, but not to crack a safe.*
- *The Muscle could add their Skill Dice to shoot someone with a sleeping dart, but not to decrypt a secure email*

If the Challenge doesn't relate to your Role, but you don't want to waste any Luck Dice on it, you can always roll just one of your Skill Dice alone, without the addition of any Luck Dice. This represents a last-ditch effort which you know you have little chance of pulling off, but you try it anyway. *Whatever dice you'll be rolling, you need to decide beforehand which dice, and how many, and roll all of them at once.*

Luck Dice and Skill Dice

- Two Skill Dice (if your Role applies)
 - Two Skill Dice + any number of Luck Dice (if your Role applies)
 - Any number of Luck Dice (if your Role does *not* apply)
 - Just one skill die (if your does *not* apply)
 - 20 Luck Dice per 1-hour loop
-

Advantage

In a time-loop, you have a distinct edge in that you literally relive the same moments multiple times, allowing you to predict what will happen before it occurs and adjust accordingly. One of the ways this is reflected in gameplay is in the choices you make. You'll end up adapting your plan to avoid the mistakes you made in previous iterations, and you'll use what you learned to do better the next time around.

Another way this is represented in Shenan-Again is through the mechanics of the dice. As we mentioned above, under normal conditions you need to roll at least one *six* to succeed at a roll. However, if you've attempted the exact same Challenge roll in a previous iteration of the loop, you will succeed as long as you roll at least one five *or* six, even if you failed before.

If you actually *succeeded* at least once on the same Challenge roll in a previous loop, you will succeed as long as you roll a *four*, a five, or a six. For this higher level of advantage, it doesn't matter whether you succeeded in the last loop, or how many times you succeeded. Maybe it's the second loop, and you succeeded in the first loop. Maybe it's your third, and you succeeded on the first but failed on the second, or maybe you succeeded both times. Regardless, as long as you've succeeded *at least once* at doing *exactly* the same thing, you'll succeed on a four, five or six.

Advantage only counts if you've previously attempted the *exact same thing*. In many cases, this means it'll have to be in the same room, in the same situation. It doesn't necessarily have to be the exact same time, but the circumstances need to be nearly identical. It's not just a question of having picked *any* lock, it's whether you've picked that *specific* lock before. When it comes to people, it's not just whether you've tackled *that* guard before, it's whether you've done it in the same space in basically the same situation.

Aaron, Liz, Maggie, and Sam have infiltrated the dig site. They're on the second loop. Liz, the Muscle and the leader, instructs Sam to find out who has the key to the bunker where the artifacts are stored. He strikes up a conversation with one of the people working the site.

"How long have you been working here?" Sam asks.

Sam's had this conversation before. He didn't succeed in getting this info last time, but this time at least he knows what not to say. The GM, Matt, calls for a challenge roll. "You're on fives or sixes," he reminds Sam.

Sam figures it's important that they figure this out, so he takes three Luck Dice to get pretty good odds.

Maggie reminds him to add his Skill Dice, since this is clearly related to his Role as the Con.

Sam smiles. "How could I forget?"

He rolls 4, 3, 1, 5, and 5. Since he rolled at least one five or six, he succeeds this time. They get the info they need, and proceed with the next step in their plan.

Advantage

- Previous attempted → increased odds
 - Failed before → Success on a 5 or a 6
 - Succeeded before → Success on a 4, 5 or 6
-

Teamwork

On some Challenge rolls, you can increase your odds of success by working together. This can take many different forms. One person might give another person a boost to climb over a wall, the Con might distract a guard while the Burglar sneaks past, or a player might help the Muscle to tackle someone. It's ultimately up to the GM's discretion what will count for teamwork and what will require separate rolls, but in general a team roll can be done when one player is acting to assist another player, rather than completing two separate, equally necessary steps.

To roll as a team, decide who should roll first. They decide how many dice they'll use, just like a normal roll. If they succeed, the group succeeds collectively, and no one else has to roll. If they *fail*, the next player has a chance to roll. As long as at least *one* of the players rolling for the Challenge rolls at least *one* six, the group counts as succeeding collectively.

Liz, Aaron, Sam, and Maggie need to get the storage bunker's passcode from the site director. Liz decides to send Aaron, the Hacker, to the director's trailer so he can get the code off his laptop. They send Sam to keep the site director distracted, hopefully buying Aaron enough time to hack into the laptop.

"Roll for it," says Matt, the GM, "And remember, this is your first time, so you're on sixes. I assume Sam's rolling first? What do you say?"

Sam nods. "I ask him about his daughter. He said he had a daughter last time, right?" Sam grabs two Skill Dice plus one Luck Die, for a total of three dice. He rolls 2, 1, and 5.

Matt shakes his head. "The director doesn't seem interested in talking to you right now. He starts heading back to his trailer."

Sam says, "I warn Aaron! I say, 'Hey, you've got incoming! Almost done in there?'"

Aaron grabs his two Skill Dice plus two Luck Dice for a total of four, and mutters, "This better work."

Aaron rolls 1, 1, 6 and 3. "There's a six!" he shouts. "Now I'm getting the heck out of that trailer."

An attempt at a team roll counts toward advantage in future loops just like any other Challenge roll. However, the advantage applies to the group as a whole, not just to the individual who succeeded or failed their particular roll. So if the pair or group failed at that same team roll before, each player will succeed on a five or a six, and they succeed collectively as long as *at least one* player rolls a five or a six.

If the pair or group succeeded at the same team roll at least once before, they will succeed as long as at least one player rolls a four, a five, or a six. Keep in mind that as always with advantage, it only applies if the situation is the same, which means in order to apply advantage on something you did through teamwork before, you'll need to have the same people do the same things.

Teamwork

- Decide who's involved
 - Decide who rolls first
 - As long as at least one player succeeds, the group succeeds at the task
 - *Advantage and teamwork*
 - *Failed before*—everyone succeeds on a 5 or 6
 - *Succeeded before*—everyone succeeds on a 4, 5 or 6
-

Failing a roll

Succeeding a Challenge roll is pretty self-explanatory—what you were trying to do pretty much works as you intended. But what happens if you *don't* succeed? It means a lot more than just whatever you're trying to do “not working.” If you fail a Challenge roll—if you don't roll *any* sixes (or any fives or fours when rolling with advantage)—this introduces a new complication which will need to be dealt with.

The GM will decide what the consequence is that's tied to failing. Maybe you did it, but it took much longer than you expected and someone catches you in the act. Maybe instead of working as you'd intended, it backfires. The GM section of the rulebook (Part 2 - “The Mark”) contains more tips and examples on how to handle failed rolls, but suffice it to say that it means something happens that complicates the situation for you and your crew.

An important note on failed rolls is that *you'll never fail in exactly the same way twice*. If the Demolitions Expert plants a bomb in the first loop and his failed roll causes it to blow up early that time, that doesn't mean failing the same roll next time will result in it blowing up early. It might blow up too late, or it might not blow up at all. Since failure is always unpredictable, it's impossible to plan around failing. You can't count on predicting the outcome of a failed roll. This also means that a Challenge roll to recover from a failure by dealing with its direct consequences will *never* count for any kind of advantage in future loops, whether or not you succeed, because those circumstances were the result of a failed roll, which means it won't happen the same way again.

Liz, the crew's leader and Muscle, needs to take out the guard on post in front of the storage bunker. She decides to give him a quick kick to the stomach and then get him in a headlock. She decides to take three Luck Dice in addition to her two Skill Dice, for a total of five dice. She rolls 1, 5, 2, 5, 4. No sixes!

"Ah well, we've still got two more loops to get it right," says Aaron. "Next time it'll be fives or sixes to take him down."

"So, as you go for that kick," says Matt, the GM, "Instead of connecting with his stomach, your foot smacks into his walkie-talkie, sending it flying off his belt and smashing into the wall. The guard takes off running toward the dig site, limping slightly. What do you do?"

Failing a roll

- Doesn't go as you intended
 - Adds a new complication
 - Unpredictable—won't ever happen the same way twice
 - No advantage earned from roll to recover from a failure
-

Looping

We've talked around the time-loop aspect of Shenan-Again quite a bit up until this point, but now we're going to dive into the specifics. In a game of Shenan-Again, your crew is using a Coil, a piece of mysterious extraterrestrial technology that can bend the space-time continuum, to pull off a challenging heist.

If you've seen *Groundhog Day* or *Edge of Tomorrow*, you've already got a pretty good grasp on how this works. The difference here is instead of living the same day over and over, you repeat just one hour, and you only live through that hour three times in total. The last time is the final, the one that "sticks."

The Coil, when activated, creates a circle of light around it which has no visible source. Unlike earthly machinery, a Coil is eerily silent. In fact, it almost seems to deaden the sound

around it. A few seconds after it's activated, it emits a flash of brilliant white light, and sends the people who were standing inside the circle into a time loop which will repeat three times.

From the moment the light fades, there's exactly one hour until the loop resets. As soon as that hour is up, each person who's "in" on the time loop (those who were standing in the circle when it began), will see a similar flash of white light, and find themselves back where they began. Not only back *where* they began, though. They'll also be back *when* they began. No one else will have any memory of what happened.

That's when the second loop begins. Likewise at the end of the second loop, everything resets to the exact moment when the Coil was activated, and begins again. The third loop is different, however, because instead of resetting after one hour, time continues to flow normally. The third loop is the final loop, so *that's* when you need to make sure you pull off the heist. Doesn't matter if you pull it off the first time or the second time, everything will reset and you'll have to do it all over again. You've gotta make sure you get it right on the *third* loop.

Since you get three loops, don't be too worried about messing things up! Try things out, learn, and gain experience, and enjoy the ride!

Dice

You begin each loop with twenty Luck Dice. Your Skill Dice stay with you the entire time and can be used over and over, but once you use a Luck Die, it's gone for the duration of that

loop. Place the used Luck Dice in a bowl or cup, or hand them to your GM. At the beginning of each loop, return all the Luck Dice to play.

Timestamps

Often, it can be to your advantage to be aware of precisely when certain things happen. If you want to take advantage of a moment when a security guard takes a bathroom break, you'll want to know exactly when that happens.

From a practical standpoint, no one's memory is perfect. To resolve any disagreements about when something happened, we've created a simple rule: as players, you *can't* count on a precisely timed event occurring a certain time unless you have it written down.

This is where the scribe comes in. In addition to any other information that you'd like to keep track of, it's *very important* that the scribe note down the timestamps of key events. Remember that any timestamps for events caused by you as players is subject to change, and will only happen that way if you do everything in exactly the same way, so the most essential timestamps to record are for events that happen without your intervention, like people arriving on the scene from somewhere else, or a shift change.

Maggie, the Burglar, is hiding in a vent inside the storage bunker.

"The door opens, and a few archeologists descend into the bunker. They open the vault and carefully load the statue the players plan to steal onto a cart and roll it out of the bunker."

"Didn't we see that cart before?" asks Liz.

"Yeah," says Aaron, "We saw that last time, but we weren't sure what was in it. Good to know!"

What time is it?"

"There are fourteen minutes on the clock."

Liz grimaces. "It'll be tight, but that's our best shot. Sam, write that down."

Sam, the Con, is also the crew's scribe, and he writes in his notebook: 14 minutes, archeologists remove statue from bunker.

Looping

- One hour for each loop
 - Twenty Luck Dice every time
 - Record timestamps of key events
 - Pull off the heist by getting in, getting the thing, and getting out before the third and final timer goes off
-

Pulling off the heist

You get three chances to pull off the heist. The first loop will mostly be a learning experience. During the second loop, you'll start to solidify your plan. It's in the third and final

loop that you'll need everything to come together. At the beginning of the third loop, you'll still set a timer for one hour, but this time, it represents something different. When that third timer goes off, the loop doesn't reset. Instead, if you haven't successfully pulled off the heist before that third timer goes off, you're caught.

To pull off the heist, you need to do three key things:

1. Get in
2. Get the thing
3. Get out

This may sound overly simple, but essentially everything you do will be contributing to one of those three points. It's unlikely, but possible, that you'll complete all three in the first loop, or the second. If you do, don't celebrate yet! The loop is still going to reset at the end of the hour up until the third iteration, so it's that third time that really counts.

It's fairly easy to determine whether you've "gotten in" or "gotten the thing." It'll usually be a clear yes or no. But how do you know if you've successfully "gotten out?" In the end that's up to the GM, and we cover this question more thoroughly in Part 3. But the short answer is that you need to either lose whoever's following you, or get to a predetermined "escape point" like a boat, a plane, or just somewhere you can disappear like a hideout. If your scenario includes an escape point, which is generally the case, your GM will let you know at the beginning of the game.

If, during one of the first couple loops, you *all* get caught before the timer runs out, you have two choices. You can always try different ways to escape and get on with the heist, but if that

doesn't seem to be doing much good, you can decide as a group that you're just gonna call it quits on that loop, and skip to the next one. If so, reset the timer to one hour and start like normal. In this case, you assume that your characters spent the rest of the time bantering, making fun of their captors, and so on, until the hour ran out, but since that's kinda boring overall, you can skip that and cut straight back to the good old heisty stuff.

If you reach your escape point without getting caught, congratulations! That's the end of the game. You successfully pulled off the heist, and can now enjoy your (unjustly) earned wages! If you don't escape by the end of the final loop, it's still the end of the game, but instead of ending up as millionaires, you likely all wind up in jail. But what's life without some risks along the way?

Liz and Maggie decided to switch out the cart with the statue for an empty cart while Sam, the Con, distracted the archeologists. As they were loading the statue onto a truck that Maggie hotwired, Aaron checks the security feeds from the site.

"Looks like they realized what happened," says Matt, the GM. "They're sending security after you."

"Uh... guys.... I point to my laptop screen," says Aaron.

Liz glances at the clock. "We've got two minutes left. I floor it."

The group doesn't have any Luck Dice left. "Do I roll one or two dice for this?" she asks Matt. Matt replies, "You've got good reflexes as Muscle, so your Role applies. Roll both your Skill Dice."

"Come on..." Liz mutters. Her dice clatter on the table: A three and a four. "Well shoot!"

"You screech around the corner and start racing down the road, dodging potholes," says Matt, "And the trucks from the dig site quickly fall behind as you race toward your rendezvous point with the helicopter."

"I think we're gonna make it!" says Sam.

"What about that roll Liz just failed though?" wonders Maggie.

"You hit a pothole, sending you careening toward the trees and slowing you down." Matt adds, "One of the security trucks pulls in front, cutting you off."

"Is there any way around him?" Liz asks.

"Only if you want to do some offroading."

"Guess that's the only option." Liz rolls her two Skill Dice again: 3 and 6.

"Nice!" says Matt, "You drift around the truck, barely maintaining control as your car slides across the grass. The truck makes a quick U-Turn, and he's back on your tail."

"We've only got thirty seconds, guys..." says Maggie.

"Hey," says Aaron, "Can I do like they did in Italian Job, and switch all the lights to make a traffic jam?"

Matt nods. "Sure, but if you mess it up, you might end up in the traffic jam yourself, or worse."

"We're down to thirty seconds. We gotta lose him." Aaron rolls his two Luck Dice: 4 and 6.

"You did it!" Matt grins. "You hear screeching tires and a lot of angry horns as the intersection behind you turns into a wall of cars, cutting off the security team. By the time it gets sorted out, you're miles away in an unmarked helicopter. You finished with six seconds left on the clock."

Summaries

Setting up

- Set the scene
 - Create character concepts
 - *Adjective + Role + “with...” + noun*
 - Choose a leader and a scribe
 - Start the timer
-

Luck Dice and Skill Dice

- 20 Luck Dice per 1-hour loop
 - You can roll two Skill Dice (if your Role *does* apply)
 - Or two Skill Dice + any number of Luck Dice (if your Role *does* apply)
 - Or any number of Luck Dice with *no* Skill Dice (if your Role does *not* apply)
 - Or just one skill die with *no* Luck Dice (if your Role does *not* apply)
-

Advantage

- Previously attempted → increased odds
 - Failed before → Success on a 5 or a 6
 - Succeeded before → Success on a 4, 5 or 6
-

Teamwork

- Decide who's involved
 - Decide who rolls first
 - As long as at least one player succeeds, the group succeeds at the task
 - *Advantage*—applies to the whole group involved
-

Failing a roll

- Doesn't go as you intended
 - Adds a new complication
 - Unpredictable—won't ever happen the same way twice
 - No advantage earned from roll to recover from a failure
-

Looping

- One hour for each loop
 - Twenty Luck Dice every time
 - Record timestamps of key events
-

Probability Charts

SLIM CHANCE 0-35
RISKY 35-65
PROBABLE 65-75
LIKELY 75-90
SURE THING 90-100

At Least One 6

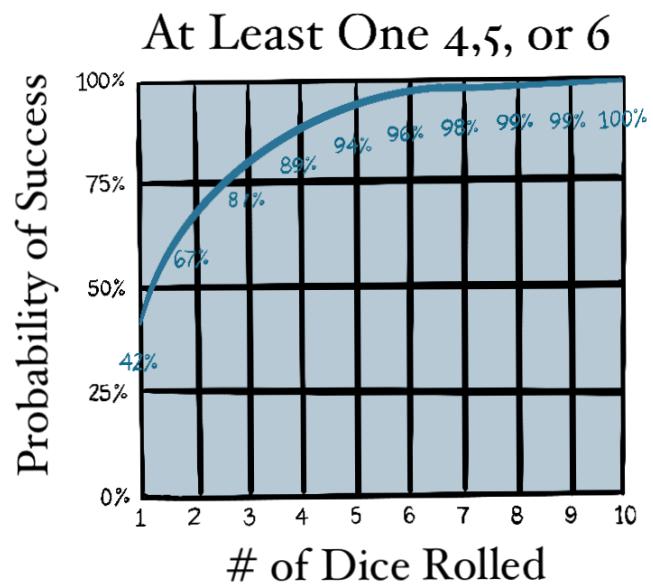
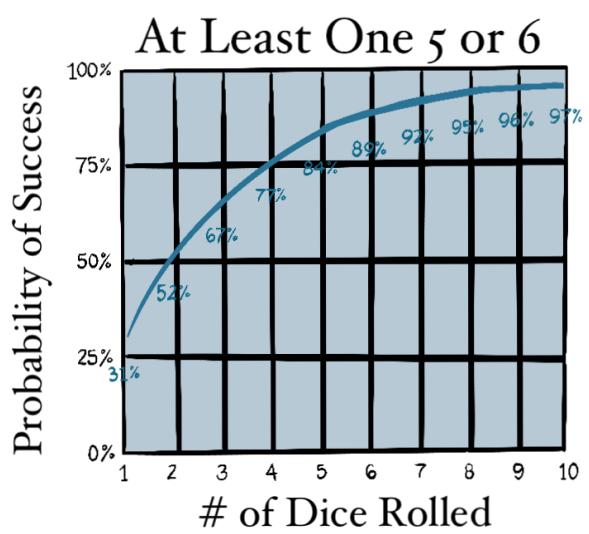
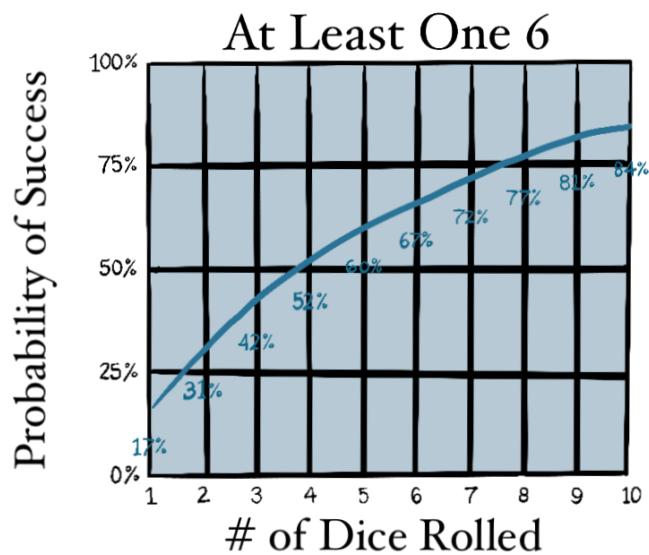
3	42%
4	52%
5	60%
6	67%
7	72%
8	77%
9	81%
10	84%

At Least One 5 or 6

3	67%
4	77%
5	84%
6	89%
7	92%
8	95%
9	96%
10	97%

At Least One 4,5, or 6

3	81%
4	89%
5	94%
6	96%
7	98%
8	99%
9	99%
10	99.6%



Part Three – “The Plan”

The Gamemaster

Up until now, this rulebook has mainly addressed how to *play* a game of Shenan-Again. This section will cover how to *run* the game. You might have previous experience running tabletop roleplaying games, or this might be your first time. Either way, we highly recommend you read this section, as running this game is likely a little different from what you’re used to.

This section will follow a similar flow to how we taught you the mechanics of the game in the first two sections. First, we’ll consider the setup of the game from the perspective of the GM, then the various elements of gameplay. We’ll conclude with some tips on building your own scenarios for Shenan-Again, though we’d suggest you familiarize yourself with the scenarios we provide in Part Four to get a sense for how they’re designed.

How to Prepare

Resources

Included with this rulebook are a couple of additional resources we recommend you use while you play. First, the Challenge Tracker is a simple method for keeping track of advantage based on previous attempts at a challenge. You can either print out the Challenge Tracker, or create a copy of it and use it digitally. In the large gray box marked “(Challenge)”, make a note to remind you what specific challenge was attempted. Make it specific enough that you’ll recall which

scenario, so rather for the Burglar's roll to sneak past the security camera at the gate, rather than writing just "Sneak", perhaps jot down, "Sneak - gate camera."

Second, is the probability charts. These are listed as tables, which are conveniently divided into color based on the level of probability, and below the same odds are shown in the form of probability curves. The table and curve on the far left explain the odds of rolling at least one six with a given number of dice, the middle table and curve do the same for rolling at least one five *or* six, and on the right you'll find probabilities for rolling at least a *four*, five or six. We recommend you share the chart with your players, or print it out.

Choose a Scenario

As Gamemaster, you've got a bit more prep-work to do than the players. Your job is to set the scene for the players. You explain the scenario, you describe the outcomes of their rolls, and you play the other characters that the players encounter. To do all this, you'll need a scenario. A scenario is basically like the roadmap for your story. It doesn't tell you what the players *will* go or what they *will* do, but it gives you an idea of some of the places they *could* go, and most importantly it outlines what obstacles will get in their way.

We won't go into detail here on how to build your own scenario. That's covered later on. Each of the scenarios we provide in Section 4 comes with everything you'll need to start playing, so all you need to do is read through the description of the scenario you'd like to play and familiarize yourself with the key points. The description will always include:

- A goal (often something your players will be trying to steal)
- A setting (where the story will take place)
- Known obstacles (ones you tell your players about up front)
- Hidden obstacles (ones that will come up as they play)
- Extra obstacles (in case your players are really skilled or really lucky)
- NPCs (non-player characters)
- A map

You'll probably want to print out pages with the map(s) so your players will have them for reference. If you don't want to print them out, or can't, you can display it on the screen of your laptop, phone, or tablet, or even just jot down a rough sketch on scratch paper.

Music

We mentioned this before, but it's worth mentioning again. Having some thematic music in the background makes a huge difference in setting the mood. It adds a sense of momentum and energy to the game. Find a playlist on YouTube or Spotify or make your own. The soundtracks from heist movies or TV shows are a great choice. Make sure the volume's balanced so it's audible, but you don't have to shout over it.

[Explain the rules](#)

Once everyone's gathered at the table, make sure you're all clear on the rules. Perhaps all the players have read through the rulebook, or maybe you're the only one who knows the rules, and you'll have to teach them. Although we took our time laying it all out clearly, you'll find that you can explain the basic rules in just a few minutes. If you're taking a minute to go over the rules before playing, *don't* read through all of Part 2. Use the Cheat Sheet of summaries at the end of Part 2 to remind yourself and just go over things quickly and concisely.

Resolve any questions that the players have before you start the timer, but don't worry if they're not 100% clear on everything at first. We've found that the rules very quickly become clear once the players begin rolling.

[Probability chart](#)

At the end of Part 2, following the Cheat Sheet summary, you'll find the probability chart that shows the odds of rolling at least one six with 3-10 dice respectively, and the same for at least one five or a six, and for at least one four, five or six. We'd recommend that you either print this out, or have it accessible to the players on a device so they can make informed decisions on how many dice to roll, especially if this is the first time they'll be playing.

Set the scene

Before you have your players start creating their character Concepts, make sure you give them an overview of the scenario. Explain the basic premise and let them know what obstacles they'll be aware of going in. Don't give too many details, just enough so they'll feel confident choosing their Roles to match the needs of the scenario and so they'll have something to work with when they start the first loop.

Set expectations

If your players have played other tabletop roleplaying games, they'll probably come in with certain assumptions of how things will work, so it's important to set up the right expectations, especially when it comes to where this game is different. In most tabletop RPGs, you can take as much time as you want discussing options and making plans. But Shenan-Again is meant to be a wild ride with hardly a second to breathe. Make sure your players understand that the timer will not be paused under any circumstances. They *will* feel like there isn't enough time—that's part of the point! The crazy rush to throw together a plan on the fly, coupled with unpredictable failures and sudden detours, give Shenan-Again a feeling of controlled chaos from the moment the timer starts.

The Player Characters

Roles

We like to allow the players to come up with their own Roles for their characters, but they generally fall into one of the following categories:

- Burglar (sneaking, climbing over/around/on top of things, picking locks, sleight of hand, pickpocketing, etc)
- Con (lying, forging documents, disguises, getting information out of people)
- Muscle (punching stuff, jumping, driving, shooting)
- Hacker (Cameras, alarms, elevators, emails, codes/passwords, etc)
- Demolitions expert (blowing holes in things, distractions, etc)

They can always phrase their Role differently, and a different word might suggest a slightly different take on the Role. Additionally, some scenarios might bring to mind the possibility of specialists that relate directly with the heist in question. As the players are choosing their Roles, guide them toward Roles that will have various useful applications. If a player wants a Role that feels excessively narrow, encourage them to rephrase it in a way that opens it up to more uses. On the flipside, don't let anyone choose a Role that would let them do just about anything.

A player whose Role is “Equipment Guy” might sound fun, but in the end he basically takes away everyone else’s job. Ideally the important steps in pulling off the heist should be fairly

evenly distributed between the players. Rather than having one player character who manages all the tools and equipment, you can assume that each player character has the tools relevant to their Role. Guns for the Muscle, computer equipment for the Hacker, perhaps disguises for the Con, and so on.

Adjectives and nouns

This one's a bit more open-ended. Be sure to remind the players that the adjective and noun they choose won't impact the mechanics of the game in any way. These words are added to flesh out the character in terms of roleplaying, so make sure your players aren't agonizing over the decision. Encourage them to pick the first word that comes to mind and move on.

Leader

The game runs more smoothly if the crew's leader is a player who is themselves a natural leader. Players need to get used to turning to their leader when they have a suggestion or would like to try something, rather than turning to you, the GM. You generally go through the leader, not giving something a turn unless he gives the go ahead.

If no one volunteers to be the leader, suggest a player who you believe would feel comfortable and confident taking charge. But if you do get into the game and the leader isn't acting assertively, gently remind him or her by asking, "So, what do you do next?" Additionally, if you

notice a particular player being given fewer turns, help bring them into the spotlight by suggesting a way their skill could prove useful in the given circumstances.

Running the Game

Set The Scene

As Gamemaster, it's your job to help the players visualize the space they're interacting with. Use the maps we provide with each scenario, and/or create your own maps and visual aids, so they can get a feel for the lay of the land. For each of our scenarios, we've prepared a handful of NPCs, a series of specific obstacles, and a map, but if you're creating your own, we'd suggest you come to the game prepared with a few notes on those details to keep yourself organized.

Obstacles

Both as you're planning and as you're running the game, remember that your job is *not* to come up with a story. A story is the result of characters pursuing a goal and running into *obstacles* which impede them in that pursuit. This creates *conflict*, which is resolved by the *choices* the characters make.

As GM, you'll give the players their *goal* and present *obstacles*, but they're in charge of coming up with characters and choosing how to deal with the obstacles in front of them. *That's* what creates the story—their choices. When you're thinking about obstacles, whether you're reading about them in a scenario, or writing your own, or describing them to the players, avoid the

temptation to think of solutions. Leave that up to the players. Both you and the players will have much more fun if you discover the story together, rather than trying to force the players along on a story you came up with. Everyone will have more fun if you force the players to rely on *each other*, rather than you. Help them to give each player a chance in the spotlight. In general, we'd stay away from outlining specific solutions to Obstacles for your players, but if you notice a player who hasn't rolled dice recently or seems less engaged, suggest to the group ways that they could help solve a particular problem. Make sure everyone gets to participate!

There's something magical when you bring a series of obstacles to the table, and the players come up with solutions to those obstacles that you never would have dreamed up in a million years. It's hilarious, spontaneous, and incredibly fulfilling. It's not just an act of creation, it's an act of discovery. No one knows exactly what's going to happen. The players don't know what you'll throw at them, you don't know how the players will react, and *neither* of you know how the dice will fall. It's a thrilling experience, and we hope you create some unforgettable memories as you play Shenan-Again.

Consequences of failure

Don't fall asleep yet! We're not quite done. Remember how we were talking about that magical, adventurous feeling of not knowing exactly what will happen? That feeling is key to a game of Shenan-Again, which always seems to turn our expectations upside down every time we

play. A great way to ensure that your players feel that too, and keep them on the edge of their seats, is keeping the consequences of failure interesting.

Think about a story you enjoy, whether that's a TV show, book, or movie. When the protagonist tries something and fails, does it ever just "not work?" Chances are, it adds some kind of complication which makes the story more interesting and drives it forward. That's how a consequence for a failed roll in Shenan-Again should feel. Another key point here is to *mix things up*. If the players think that a failure will have a certain result, come up with a consequence that's totally different from what they would have thought.

Keep the game fresh and interesting by making sure that the result of failure is always unpredictable. You can't plan how you're going to fail, right? If you succeed, that usually means things go about how you planned, but if you fail, that means things play out in a way you *couldn't have anticipated*. This forces you to adapt and keeps you on your toes.

Make sure that your consequence always requires the players to take a *new* approach, rather than just rolling for the same thing again. To help you think of different types of consequences, we've broken them down into three types, but there are infinite different ways things could go wrong, these are just a few ideas:

- "Yes but..." – The player who was rolling technically succeeds, *but* something they hadn't intended also happens. This still counts as a failure when it comes to

calculating advantage, and consequences from this are treated just like any other failure.

- “Instead” – The player meant to do one thing, but instead, they end up doing something very different.
- “Seems like it worked.” This can be a fun one to throw in sometimes, but use it sparingly. In these cases, the player *knows* they failed the roll, but you just smile and tell them that it seems like it worked. In your head, you’ve thought of something that went wrong, but you don’t tell the players yet. Instead, just leave them guessing about what might have happened, and keep that reveal for a bit later down the road.

Avoid having the complication from a failed roll be “You get caught/captured.” That’s kinda boring, *unless* it moves the story forward somehow. Just having them locked up in an empty room isn’t interesting, but if that locked room is also occupied by some poor minion who’s displeased the boss, or has a broken floorboard that leads down into the basement— now *that’s* interesting.

Now let’s get into some specific examples:

- *Hacker tries to access the elevators, but fails his roll*
 - *Maybe all the elevators stop where they are, and the doors open directly into the elevator shafts*

- *Or the elevators start going up and down constantly to random floors*
- *Or it works, but unbeknownst to the Hacker, someone noticed him on their server and is now silently tracking his location*
- *Demolitions expert tries to blow a hole in the wall*
 - *Maybe he blows a hole, but breaks a water pipe and the hall starts flooding*
 - *Or he blows a hole, but the building catches fires*
 - *Or he blows a hole, but it's barely large enough to wriggle through*
 - *Or instead, the ceiling caves in*
 - *Or it looks like it works perfectly... until they try to climb through, at which point it collapses under them.*
- *Conman tries to gain someone's trust*
 - *Maybe the person become suspicious*
 - *Or they aren't suspicious at all, but still do something TOTALLY different from what the Conman wants*
 - *Or it seems like it works, but the person is just playing along and watching the Con closely to figure out what's going on*
- *Thief tries to pick a lock*
 - *Maybe their lock picking tools break inside the lock*
 - *Or they take too long and someone notices*
 - *Or they trigger an alarm (could be unknown to them, and just ominously tell the Thief that it "seems to work," leaving them to wonder what went wrong)*

- *Or they damage the lock, and when they step through and close the door, they end up locked inside that room*
- *Muscle tries to knock someone unconscious*
 - *Maybe the person knocks him down and runs off*
 - *Or they dodge and call in backup*
 - *Or they seem to be unconscious, but were just dazed, and wake up as soon as the Muscle turns away*
 - *Or they yell before going down, alerting other people nearby*

[Managing the Time Loop](#)

A game of Shenan-Again takes place over three iterations of the time loop, which naturally breaks the story into three acts. As your players move through the game, a good rule of thumb is to make sure that the players are rolling Challenges every three to five minutes. The timer itself should motivate the players to keep moving things along, but if things start to drag, throw in a new obstacle or complication to keep up the pacing. Basically, if you're not sure whether you should call for a roll on a certain action, you should probably call for a roll. It's more fun! Even if there doesn't seem to be much chance of "failure" with a particular action, there's always a way it could go wrong. Now, obviously don't call for a roll to open unlocked doors, or walk down unguarded hallways. But also, if you have too many unlocked doors and unguarded hallways, you're probably doing something wrong. A game of Shenan-Again should be challenging and constantly subvert the player's expectations.

Each one-hour loop should build on the last one. Although they're living the same hour each time, for the most part things should happen quite differently each time. This will naturally happen due to the random rolls of dice, the changes the players make to their plan, and the advantage they earn through practice. However, it also falls on you as GM to make sure that each loop feels different by upping the challenge each time. This should feel fairly natural as well, as long as you have more obstacles prepared than they can possibly get through in the first or second loops. Statistically and through practice, we've found that 12-16 is a good target number of obstacles for a scenario, and the scenario's we've provided reflect that.

Your goal as GM is for the players to win, but you don't want to make it easy for them. A perfect game of Shenan-Again will be up in the air until the last minute or two, or ideally the last thirty seconds. To create that tension, there needs to be a real fear of failure, so if you're in that third loop and the players are clipping along a little too fast, throw a wrench in their plans by introducing a new complication.

It's critical that you don't break the sense that they're in a time loop, so things can't *change* from one loop to the next. Not exactly, that is. But there are several ways of getting around this. First, whenever the players fail a roll, they'll fail in a different way than they did before, which can create a chain of events that lead to things happening quite differently than they did before. Second, if the players change elements of their plan, which they undoubtedly will, they can't count on all the NPCs acting in exactly the same way. Even if they do things in a similar way, but the

timing is different, it gives you an excuse to mix things up, because the NPCs involved will be in different places and different states of mind than before.

On top of all that, odds are the players will only get about halfway through the heist the first time, and perhaps three quarters of the way through the second time, so there's plenty of room for keeping certain obstacles hidden until they get closer to their goal. Try to limit the number of new obstacles introduced in the final loop to just a couple, though, mainly one or two complications for getting out. If everything seems to be going fairly smoothly in the final loop, perhaps the cops show up right as they're escaping, and you could end the game with an epic car chase.

Try to avoid having failure lead to the whole group getting caught and captured too early in any given loop. Usually, each failure should introduce a complication which makes it harder to pull off the heist, making everything take longer. That should be why they won't get very far into the heist the first couple times—*not* because they're caught half an hour in, but because everything goes wrong, and they end up spending a good chunk of their time just trying to sort through all the chaos.

It should be easy to avoid having them get captured too early, because there's no “cap” at which a failure means they're caught. Each failure just introduces a new, exciting challenge to overcome. But if the players' luck completely fails them, and there's no reasonable way to keep them from being captured before the hour is up, feel free to give them the option to skip the remaining time, reset the timer, and just get right into the next loop.

If you follow the rule of thumb of calling for a Challenge roll every 3-5 minutes, you should find a rhythm that keeps up the tension until the last second, without making it impossible for the players to win. Remember, there should be a *real* possibility that the players fail, so most games should end with mere seconds left on the clock.

Overall, you shouldn't have to worry too much about guiding the story in any particular direction. Let your players surprise you! A game of Shenan-Again is always full of twists and turns that no one at the table could've predicted, and that includes you as the gamemaster.

Scenarios

Each scenario below contains a list of non-player characters, a brief description of the situation, and a list of suggested obstacles. Keep in mind that what we provide are *suggestions*. We expect you'll pull out obstacles as needed, and it's unlikely that you'll end up using everything we provide in a given scenario. Think of the list of obstacles more like a toolkit, rather than the outline of a plot. The plot will come as a result of the choices the players make. As they begin to make choices, give them obstacles as needed to build the tension and keep things interesting.

In general, your goal is to force the players to think creatively, adapt to unexpected problems, and spread out the work evenly between them. Allow the players to come up with their own plan, encourage them to make use of everyone's skills, and roll with whatever whacky solutions they come up with to the obstacles you set before them. A good rule of thumb is to throw a new obstacle in their path every five minutes or so. With each Loop, remember to be consistent. Don't add or change obstacles unless the players do something differently than they did in previous Loops, or reach a point they hadn't gotten to before. But every failed roll is an opportunity to change things up, because the players won't ever fail the same way twice.

Maps

For reference during the game, we recommend you print out the maps at the end of each scenario, but if you prefer, you can use the map provided and sketch out a copy for your players, or share the image of the map with your players so they can all reference it digitally.

Clowning Around

Non-Player Characters:

Jasper Beck: *Shrewd Ringmaster with a plan for everything*

Weston Rask: *Charismatic Animal Trainer with a sadistic streak*

Bill Murdock: *Quiet Clown with a secret agenda*

Trisha Worthing: *Paranoid Tour Manager with a temper problem*

Hank Biser: *Thoughtful Strong Man with a missing tooth*

The Mark:

How do you feel about clowns?⁸ We're headed to the circus! They got this albino lion, Sheila,⁹ as well the elephant Elmer,¹⁰ and several tigers, zebras, bears, and monkeys.¹¹ If it makes you feel any better, the circus is involved in some kinda smuggling ring.¹² We'll drop you off in the forest nearby. Maps show the whole circus, the Big Top tent, and the ringmaster's trailer.

⁸ They sure give me the heebie jeebies. Does that phrase date me?

⁹ Your cut's \$6M for the lion. That's six million, by the way. Beats me why a genetic defect causin' freaky white fur makes you worth so much, but that's the buyer's problem, not ours.

¹⁰ Not to be confused with Elmo. \$3 million for Elmer.

¹¹ \$1 million for the lot of them. And an extra \$5 million for the complete set—lion, tigers, bears and all. No idea what makes these animals so pricey. Not that I'm complaining.

¹² But honestly, if you feel the need to justify your crimes, you're probably in the wrong line of work.

Initial Obstacles:

Explain these obstacles to the players before you start the first timer

Crowds

The Circus always draws a big crowd, which will make it complicated for the players to extract the animals without drawing attention to themselves.

Cages

The cages are kept locked, but the players aren't sure who keeps the keys. Could be the ringmaster himself, or one of the employees. (*It's the animal trainer, Weston Rask, but don't tell the players that, let them figure it out. The Ringmaster keeps the key to Sheila and Elmer's cages in his trailer.*)

Thugs

Rather than conventional security, the ringmaster hires thugs who blend in with the crowd and keep an eye out for troublemakers.

Show in the Big Top

An animal show begins in the Big Top at the forty minute mark, and ends at the ten minute mark. During the show, the animals will be used, though the players don't know in what order. (*First the zebras are brought out, then the bears, then the tigers, then the monkeys, then the elephant walks in from his pen, parading through the main entrance rather than entering from backstage, and finally Sheila finishes the act.*)

Cameras

Each animal cage is equipped with a security camera which feeds directly to monitors in the ringmaster's trailer and the main office.

Additional obstacles:

Add in any of these obstacles as needed, but don't feel the need to all of them, and feel free to improvise some obstacles of your own as you go.

Arson

Ten minutes in (at the fifty minute mark), Trisha Worthing sets fire to the ringmaster's trailer in an attempt to burn up a file of photographs that the ringmaster is using to blackmail her. Unless the players see her in the act, they'll only know that the trailer caught fire, and they'd need to investigate if they want to know how the fire got started. If they're in the trailer, they'll hear someone throw something through the window.

Poison

During the animal show, Hank Biser sneaks into Sheila's cage and poisons her in an act of revenge against Weston Rask. If any of the players are watching the show in the first Loop, describe how Sheila drops dead right as the animal trainer places his head in her mouth. The players would need to figure out what happened and make a plan to stop him if they want to get

Sheila out of there alive. In response, the circus crew locks up the rest of the animals, posts some of their thugs to watch them and tries to send the panicked crowd back out to the carnival booths.

FBI

Bill Murdock, the clown, is actually an FBI agent undercover, looking for evidence of the circus's smuggling ring. He's not aware of the planned robbery, but if he catches wind of it, he'll try to stop them. He's trying to take down this circus, but that doesn't mean he'll stand back and let them be robbed. He's got some of his team blending into the crowd. He and his team will be watching everyone, including the players, for suspicious activity.

Animals

If the players sedate the animals, many will likely be too heavy to carry. Some complications with interacting with each animal are listed below, though how the players gain this information is up to them. For example, they might have the Hacker try to get ahold of notes off the computer in the main office, or get the Con to talk to someone who knows, or just learn by trial and error.

Elmer

Elmer the elephant will only follow the players if they learn some specific keywords that he responds to. The command to get Elmer to follow you is "ka palaan."

Sheila

Sheila the lion will respond well if you speak to her in a slow, smooth voice, but if you make any sudden movements or loud sounds, she'll attack.

Tigers

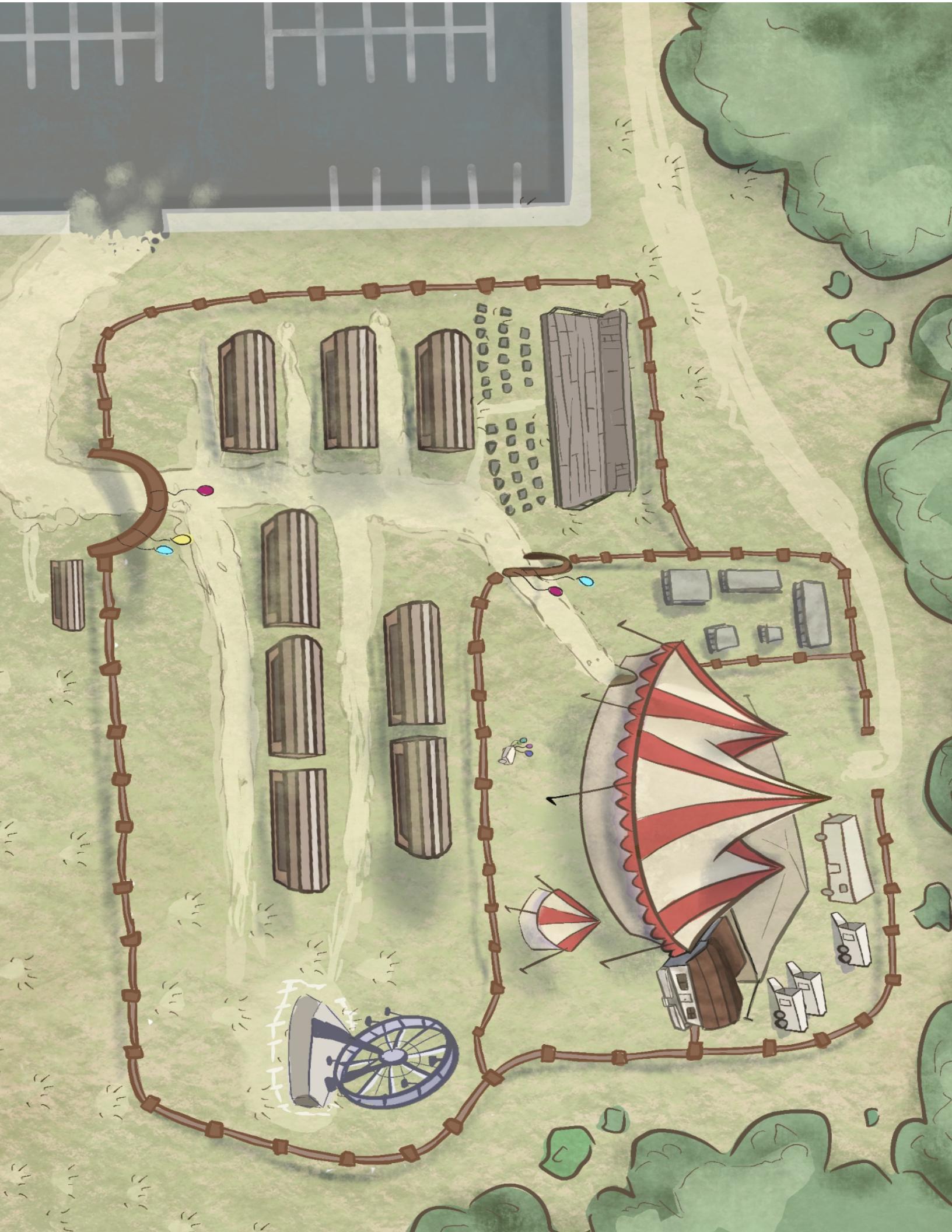
The tigers will respond to a soft growl in the back of your throat, almost like a purr. This will calm them down. It should be done in the same tone as the animal trainer's voice, either by the conman or played in a recording taken by the hacker.

Monkeys

The monkeys will climb away to the top of the cage, from which points they'll be very hard to get to. A Burglar might be able to climb to catch them. They aren't hungry, but it's possible to draw their attention with something shiny or unique that engages their curiosity.

Bears

The bears respond mostly to food, anything that's got a strong smell. The vendors at the carnival sell some foods that might work, but you'd need a lot of it to catch the bear's attention, and buying that much will draw suspicion.





Yacht-zee

Non-Player Characters:

Jared Adelson: *Corrupt politician with a sweet tooth*

Samantha Adelson: *Blunt businesswoman with a reputation to keep up*

Eyolf “The Wolf” Brun: *Fearsome chief of security with a bad knee*

Timothy Glenn: *Stuck-up appraiser of art with an impeccable sense of style*

Mark Volkov: *Soft-spoken assassin with no conscience*

Lady Agnes Hawtrey IV: *Loud-mouthed rich widow with a big puppy*

The Mark: Jared Adelson’s throwing his 50th birthday party. He’s some rich bloke, and he’s invited a whole gaggle of rich groupies. There’s fancy food, music. You get the picture. The kinda people you can rob silly without any remorse.¹³ Adelson’s yacht also happens to house a collection of rare sculptures. We want the Anubis¹⁴ statue, but there are a dozen other pieces worth swiping if you can get your hands on them. We’ll set the Coil up on the dock. Oh, and you get a speedboat. Which is neat.¹⁵ Maps show the four decks of Adelson’s yacht, from top to bottom.

¹³ But let’s face it, that’s true of just about anyone except little orphan kids and single moms.

¹⁴ I’m told he’s the Egyptian god of the dead. Not, as I initially suspected, anuses.

¹⁵ Just for the duration of the job... we’ll want it back after.

Initial Obstacles:

Explain these obstacles to the players before you start the first timer

Boarding

Guests boarded the boat while it was stopped. Now the boat's moving.

Guests

Guests arrive on the yacht via smaller boats, and check in with invitations. The crowds also make it harder to do anything without drawing attention.

Private Security

Security constantly sweeps the nearby waters with searchlights and radar. You don't know where guards are posted, but there's at least one on each deck.

Entrances

There are two entrances to the art gallery. One is from the outdoor deck, filled with drunk party guests. The other is through the private suites, which may or may not be occupied. It's also immediately below the sun deck's pool, and above the kitchen / storage areas in the middle deck.

Additional obstacles:

Add in any of these obstacles as needed, but don't feel the need to all of them, and feel free to improvise some obstacles of your own as you go.

Orchestra

Currently, there's an orchestra playing near the pool, which is a potential entrance to the gallery from above.

Gallery Security Guards

There's a security officer at the main entrance, as well as one inside the gallery.

Motion sensors

Each piece of art is monitored by highly sensitive motion detectors. The only evidence of this, if the players don't investigate, is a sign saying, "Please don't touch." If you so much as lay a finger on one, it'll trigger an alarm and seal both entrances to the gallery.

Ventilation

There are air ducts throughout the yacht, including in the gallery, but there are metal grates welded in place at various intersections over the gallery, making it difficult to use the ducts as a point of entry or exit.

Hired Hitman

30 minutes in, Mark Volkov attempts to kill Adelson. She's caught and detained in a locked room on the lower deck, but Eyolf Brun is injured in the encounter. Rather than worry the

guests, Adelson continues the party and plans to contact the police at 45 minutes in, so they'll arrive at about 5 minutes before the hour, after the guests have left.

Closing the gallery

At around 45 minutes in, the gallery is closed. Without player intervention, there won't be many guests inside at that moment, and it won't take much time to close it up.

Locks

To open either door, both to get in and out of the art gallery, you need an ordinary key to physically open the door. The lock can alternatively be picked by the Burglar. Mr. and Mrs. Adelson both have a key. It's possible for the burglar to copy this key, but they would need to have it.

USB Key

You also need a USB key to deactivate the magnetic seal. While the magnetic seal is active, if the USB key isn't inserted within ten seconds of unlocking the door, it will trigger an alarm. The USB key can be copied by the hacker, but he needs to physically have the USB key to make a copy of it. When Adelson is attacked on a lower deck 25 minutes in, his USB key is damaged and no longer usable. It's possible for the hacker to repair it, or even copy the damaged key onto a fresh USB, but they would need to have it.

Appraisal

Timothy Glenn, at 35 minutes in, enters the art gallery with a locker filled with equipment.

Once the guests leave, he begins his examination of the Anubis statue to determine its worth. He doesn't conclude his examination until 55 minutes in, assuming he isn't interrupted.

Mr. Fluffers

Lady Agnes's "puppy," Mr. Fluffers, is a large, vicious rottweiler. He's loose in her quarters, and will attack anyone who enters, barking loudly.

Volkov's Room

Volkov is the other guest with a VIP suite bordering the art gallery. If anyone enters Volkov's room after he leaves it at 15 minutes in, it's rigged to burst into flames in what will appear to be a natural gas leak, destroying all evidence that might convict him.

Fireworks

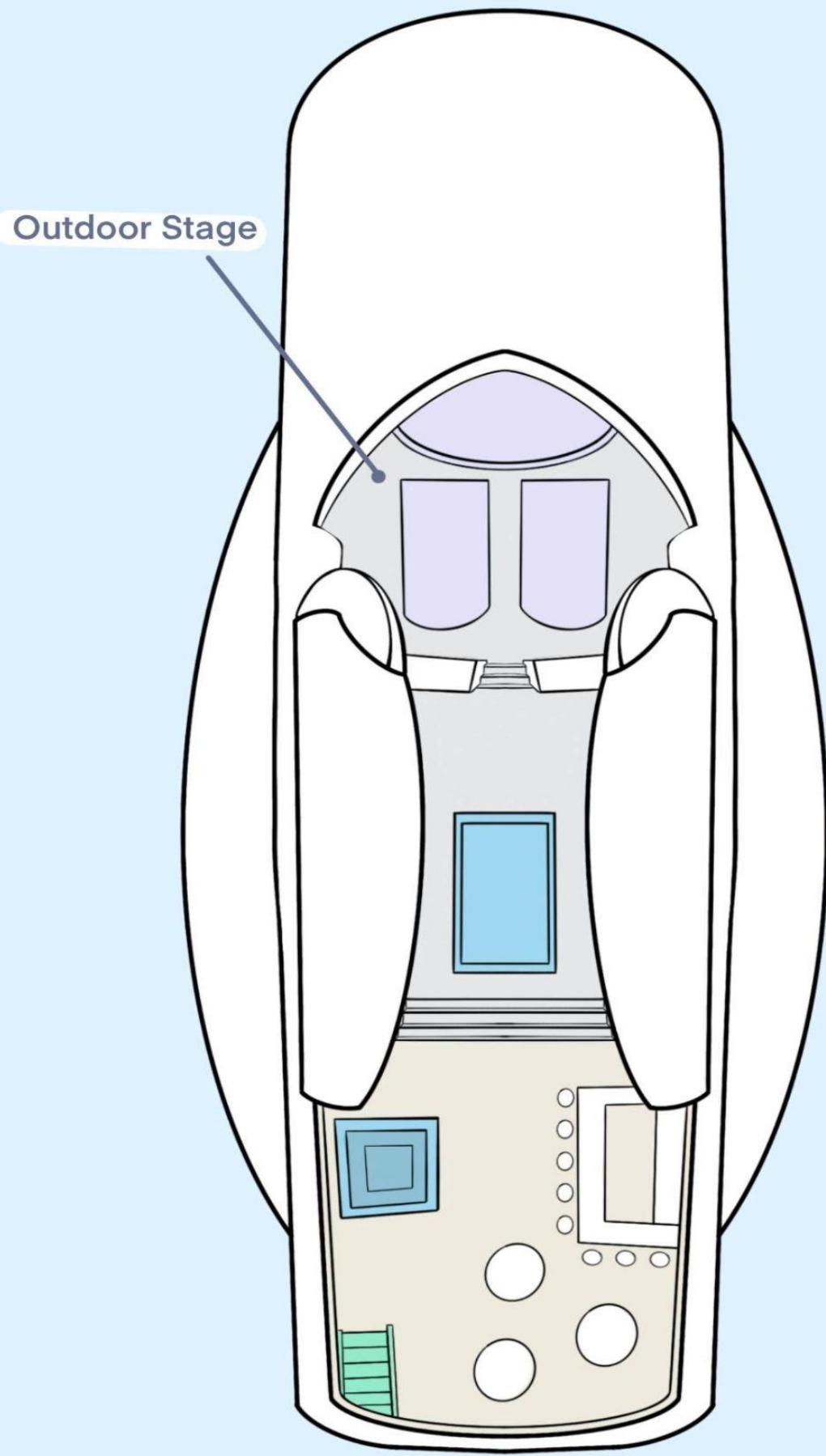
Adelson plans to have an impressive fireworks show toward the end of the evening. How this might become an obstacle depends a great deal on the players. They might inadvertently do something that causes the fireworks to malfunction and explode, which could be fun. But they might not even be an obstacle. It could be very useful for the players to learn that the fireworks

will go off, unless interrupted, beginning at 40 minutes in and lasting until 50 minutes when the guests begin to leave.

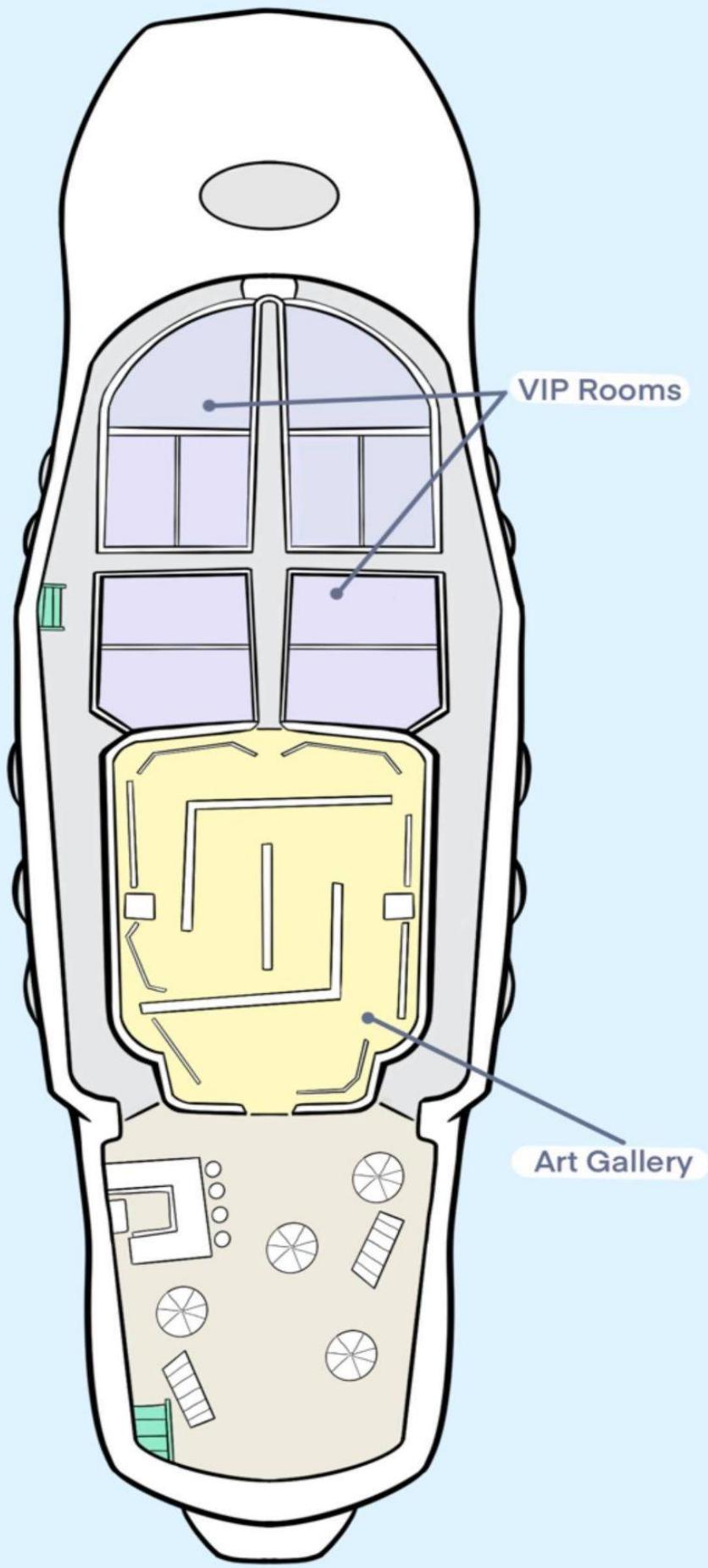
No Way Back

If the players make it into the art gallery too easily, or you just want to up the challenge, consider adding an obstacle that makes it impossible for them to leave the same way they came in. You might use one of the above obstacles as inspiration, or you might come up with your own. Say they make it through Lady Agnes's suite; perhaps someone came to investigate the noise of the barking dog. If they climb through the floor or ceiling, perhaps it's simply impossible to carry the statue through those narrow spaces, or perhaps security's on their tail. In any case, try to force them to rethink their exit plan.

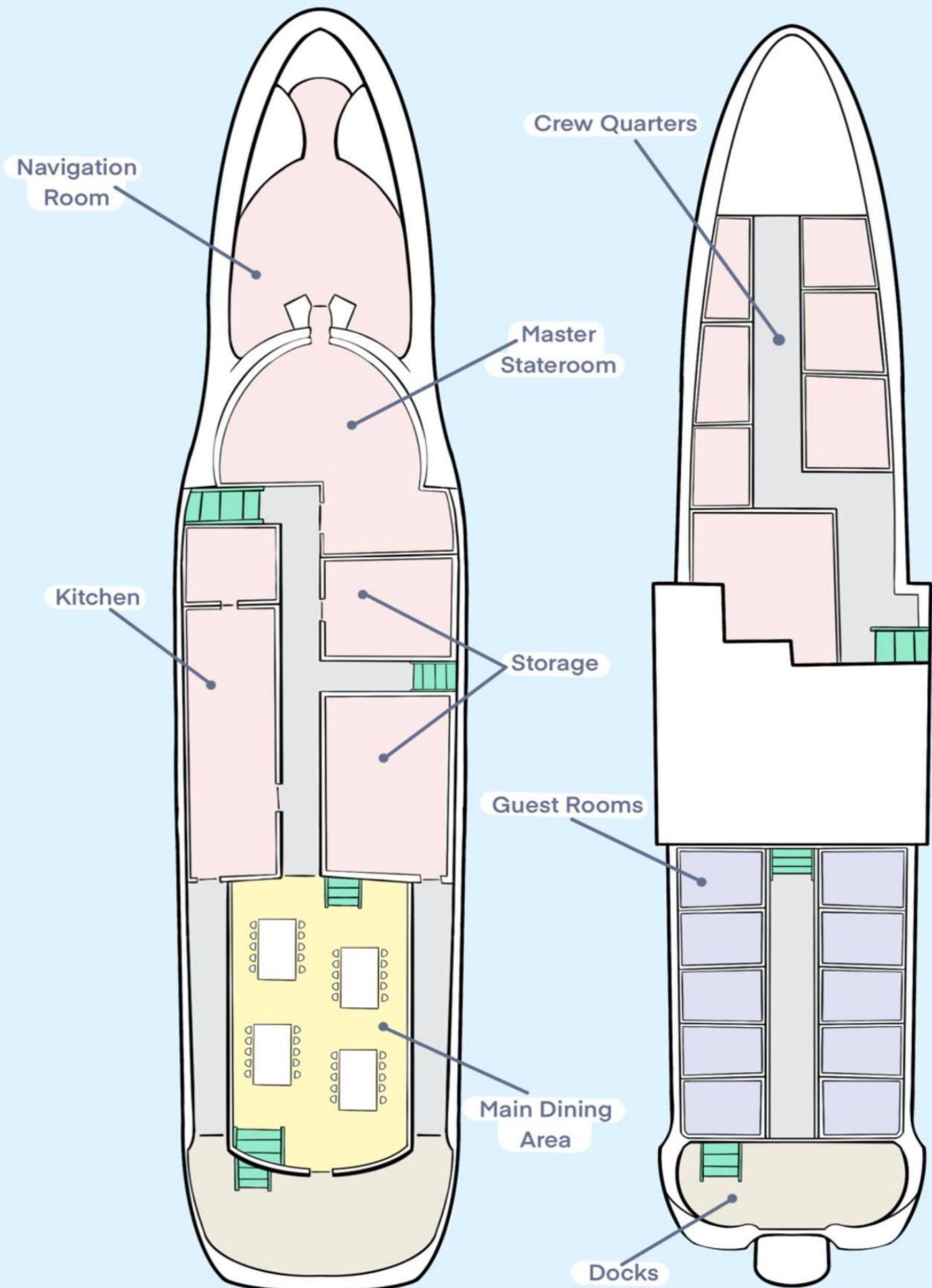
Sun Deck



Upper Deck



Middle Deck Lower Deck



Brook's Edge

Non-Player Characters:

Amos Fiddler: *Surely Sheriff with a limp*

Sally Doyle: *Middle-aged Shopkeeper with a sharp eye*

Obadiah Covington: *Wiley businessman with a nice suit*

Joel Cobbs: *Lazy banker with a fancy suit*

Jackie Frost: *Reckless bandit with striking red hair*

The Mark: Obadiah Covington's movin' a Machine¹⁶ from ol' Mexico, up through the frontier, and into the city. The train'll pass right smack through Brook's Edge, where it's scheduled to pick up a load of coal. Ya'lls job is to grab that there Machine and get her loaded on our steamboat at the river, before them city folks take notice. We'll get you set up in a cow shed near the edge of town. My boy Bart drew you up a real nice artistic rendition of Brook's Edge, for which you best be grateful.¹⁷

¹⁶ What's this Machine, you ask? One of 'em newfangled gizmos what messes with time and such.

¹⁷ We nearly lost old Bart once. Told us he was quitting our line of work to become a painter. We soon knocked some sense into him.

Initial Obstacles:

Explain these obstacles to the players before you start the first timer

Timed Lock Mechanism

The entire railcar in which the Machine is being stored is sealed shut with a locking mechanism that can only be opened from the inside.

Dummy Cars

There's only one Machine on the train, but there are also three identical decoy cars.

Bulky and heavy

The Machine is far too large for the players to carry any distance, it takes at least three people just to lift and drag it slowly.

Train's Schedule

The train's schedule has been kept under wraps, so you're not sure about its arrival or departure times.

Additional obstacles:

Add in any of these obstacles as needed, but don't feel the need to all of them, and feel free to improvise some obstacles of your own as you go.

Train Robbers

The players aren't the only ones intent on robbing this train. At five minutes into the Loop, a group of mounted bandits led by Jackie Frost emerge from the hills near the coal mine and attempt to board the train to take off with the load of cash from its ordinary armored car. The players likely won't see this, especially not on the first Loop, but they'll see its effects: the attempt causes Obadiah Covington to decide not to stop in the town as scheduled. As the train approaches the town, the players will quickly notice that it's not stopping.

Hired Militia at the Station

Obadiah Covington hired a militia to keep an eye on the town while the train's stopped there. They'll be patrolling the streets on foot and on horseback, and a group of them will be at the station as long as the train is there (assuming that the players find a way to get the train to stop.)

Guards in the cars

Each car, both the real car and the dummy cars, houses armed guards who've locked themselves in and are ready to shoot anyone who enters before they arrive in the city.

Locks within Locks

The Machine is locked inside a safe inside the armored car.

Dynamite

Obadiah Covington doesn't want anyone else getting their hands on the Machine. He has it rigged to explode if anyone attempts to remove it from the safe. Additionally, any use of explosives in or near the armored car that contains the Machine will set off the dynamite and ruin the Machine.

Wanted Poster

Sally Doyle recognizes one of the player characters from a wanted poster and calls in the sheriff. He's on their tail after this.

Greedy Banker

The banker, Joel Cobbs, hired Jackie Frost and her gang to rob the train. If that attempt doesn't work out, he'll send some men to take another crack at it. If the players don't manage to stop the train or board it, have Cobbs blow up the bridge across the river with some dynamite to stop the train. If he learns about the Machine, he'll attempt to blow open the railcar containing it, not realizing that explosives will damage the Machine.

Moving Train

The players must remove the Machine from the train while it's moving, either because it never stopped in the first place, or because the train suddenly starts going once they're onboard. Save this until they're close to successfully removing the Machine.

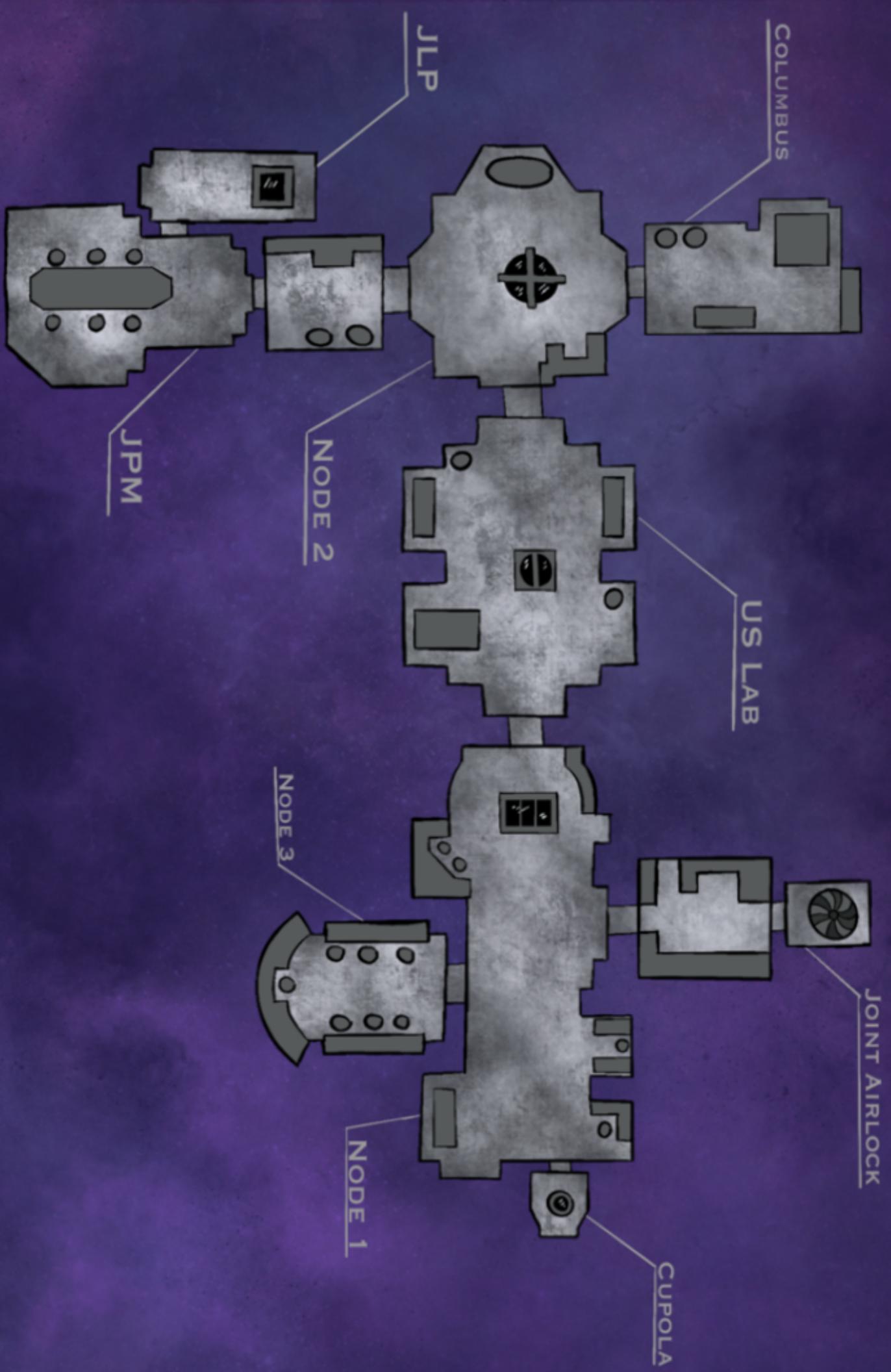
Sandstorm

Starting 30 minutes in, the entire town is swept with a blinding sandstorm, which makes it hard to see, move, and even breathe for anyone outside during the storm. The storm can continue for however long it remains interesting and entertaining, but if it goes longer than 10-15 minutes, try to find new challenges presented by the sand storm. Apply it to whatever the specific situation is at that time. For example, maybe the howling wind makes it hard to start a needed fire, or sand clogs a locking mechanism on the railcar or the safe.

Brook's Edge



Around the World in Ninety Minutes coming soon....



Escape from Attica Coming Soon....



Playtesters

This rulebook is incomplete. That's where you come in. Thanks for your willingness to help out!

One of the main purposes of this phase of playtesting is to iron out issues with how we present the game in the rulebook, and your feedback is indispensable. Once you've finished a playtest, please scan the QR code below, or go to <https://forms.gle/LFdMGF4Q4aAF9Zej6> to complete a quick survey about your experience.

Thanks again for your help, and we look forward to hearing about all your Shenan-Agains!

