Plot & Scenes

## A Guide to Events and Challenges

# Setting: The Midnight Express

The train is divided into six important zones in this order: the **engine**, **coach car**, **dining car**, **sleeper car**, and finally the **lounge car**. Each car has a **front**, **back**, and **lower level**.

A character needs a single simple action to walk from **front** to **back** or **back** to **front** and a simple action to pass through the **doors** that connect between the **upper levels** of each car. Therefore it’s possible to move from the front of one car to the front of another in a single turn by exhausting both your complex and simple action. Taking the stairs to the **lower level** is also a simple action.

DINING

ENGINE

COACH

LOUNGE

SLEEPER

## On Top of the Cars

Characters can use a complex action to attempt to climb on top of a car’s roof from a door or window. This climb action requires a Hard (DL 8) Athletics roll. Failure causes the character to take 1d10 damage as they swing dangerously on the side of the train until their next turn when they can either safely return to an adjacent as a free action car or attempt the athletics roll to climb to the roof again as a complex action.

While on top of the roof there is no front or back or doors so it takes only a simple action to move from car roof to car roof. Climbing back into the cars from the roof is a simple action that requires a Hard (DL 8) Athletics roll. Failure causes the character to take 1d10 damage as they swing dangerously on the side of the train until the end of their next turn, at which time they may safely enter the car.

# The Engine

The engine is an up-to-date modern train engine. In the **front** there are chairs and controls similar to a cockpit. In the **back** is a cramped motor room with little room for maneuvering or hiding. There is no safe way to access the **lower level** of the engine.

### Engine Features:

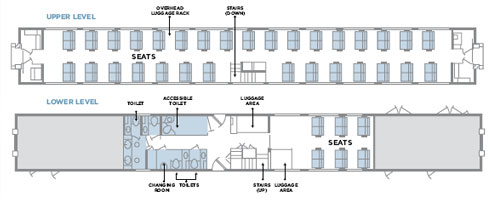
* **Back Door Locked:** The door to the engine room is locked and requires the key from a crewmember to unlock. A successful Hard (DL 8, CL 20, Est. 2 turns) Electronics or Mechanics challenge can disable the lock.
* **Crew:** Adam Stanislaw and an unnamed crewmember are usually in the **front** of the Engine operating the train.
* **Controls:** From here anyone can speed up or slow down the train (DL 6 Electronics or Mechanics roll), or attempt to contact railroad officials using the **radio**.

# Coach Car

The cargo car is lined with passenger seats in the **upper level.** Several **public toilets**, extra seats,and compartments filled with luggage and crew supplies in the **lower level**. There are plenty of opportunities to use the seats and compartments to **hide** or **take cover**.

### Coach Features:

* **Luggage:** Most characters have their personal equipment and affectations with their carry-on luggage in the sleeping car. There may be additional useful equipment or items to be found among other passenger’s luggage, at the Narrator’s discretion.
* **Crowded:** The coach passengers and seats create plenty of opportunities for characters opportunity to use **Stealth** or to find **soft cover** in a fight. If startled these passengers can become a **panicked mob**.



# Dining Car

The **upper level** of the dining car has tables and seats along both the **front** and **back**. In the **center** of the car is the entrance to the **kitchen**. The kitchen has stairs that lead into a **lower level** extension.

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### Dining Features:

* **Booths:** Theindividual **tables** are bolted to the floor and cannot be removed without considerable time and effort. The booths still can be used as hard cover and concealment, but require a simple action to enter.
* **Knives** and other utensils are available in the kitchen.

# Sleeper Car

The **front** of the Sleeper Car is divided into five bedrooms; A through E. B and C have an adjoining door, as do D and E. The **back** of the sleeper is broken into 10 small “roomettes” that have benches and cots. In the **lower level** there several **toilets** and a **changing room**, as well as four more roomettes and a sixth bedroom.

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### Sleeper Features:

* **Locks:** Most of the rooms in this car have simple locks for privacy. These locks require a key from the occupant or an Easy (DL 6) Athletics or Mechanics rolls to break or disable.
* **Private:** The different rooms in this car give characters many opportunities to hide themselves or items with a **Stealth** roll. Almost all of the rooms are locked at any particular moment.

# Lounge Car

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The **front** of the lounge car contains an **observation area** with couches and swivel seats. In the center of the car is a **lounge and bar** area. In the **back** is more private **table seating** similar to the tables in the **dining car**. In the lounge there is a muted television picking up local broadcasts.

### Crew Quarters Features:

* **Back Door Locked:** The back door to the lounge car is the end of the train so it is securely locked. The lock requires a key or a hard (DL 8) mechanics roll to disable. There is also an alarm attached to the door to notify the crew if anything opens it. Disabling the alarm is a hard electronics roll.
* **Strange Broadcasts:** The television seems to be randomly cutting between a Hungarian weather broadcast and another signal from some unknown source. There is a lot of static and interference but occasionally brief glimpses of a writhing slick dark surface and inhuman howls behind the roaring static. A rare (DL 10) electronics roll will allow someone to tune the TV or any other radio receiver to pick up the second broadcast.

# Plot Events

The events of this story happen in a very constrained location and envelope of time. The players only have 30 rounds worth of actions before events reset again. As such, the actions and events of the Narrator Personas are explicitly scripted into the following time-line.

Players interacting with the Narrator Personas can and **should** change their actions. These reactions, however, are based largely on the character’s motivations and the interpretation of the Narrator.

# Scene 1: Introduction to the Cast

The player characters are all sitting wherever they like in the Lounge car. A pleasant and attractive woman (Jasmine) attends the bar and makes pleasant chitchat anyone who orders a drink. A middle-aged gentlemen and young woman are seated at a table and booth in the back. Alexis, Jacque, and Lodan recognize the couple as Joseph and Scylla.

Finishing her drink, the woman stands and picks up a room key from the table.

Joseph reaches into his jacket for his wallet. “Please, it’s on me.”

Arrogantly smirking, Scylla tosses down a wad of Euros and room key. “Spare me your courtesies.”

After each time this scene is run, ask the players to introduce themselves by indicating where they in the car and what they are doing. After the introductions, Scylla looks about for Lodan and gestures that she wants to speak privately to him and then travels to the **sleeper car**. Joseph remains at his seat, sipping a cocktail.

Explicitly tell the other players that you’re going to have a small scene with Lodan as Scylla so they should mingle amonst themselves for more detailed introductions. If any of the other characters attempt to secretly follow Lodan and Scylla then have them roll Stealth with Lodan’s Awareness with as the DL. Scylla will aggressively confront anyone that Lodan alerts her to.

# Scene 2: Scylla (and Lodan) lose the Score

Scylla is going to Joseph’s car to retrieve what she purchased from him. If Lodan walks with Scylla then she is quick to share that she is not impressed with Joseph and doesn’t trust him. She confides in him like she has no one else she can open up to. The conversation is short. Allow Lodan only two questions before you interrupt with conversation by opening the Joseph’s room and revealing that Ivan is lying collapsed and bleeding in the room!

### To start the scene:

“Can you believe that we’re reduced to dealing with pigs like that? If this is not exactly what he promises then I am looking forward to strangling him.”

### If Lodan asks about the key, or what they’re buying:

“Let me do the heavy thinking, dear, I just scored us a ticket home! Better yet, probably some payback too! Those god-pests won’t even know what hit them.”

### If Lodan asks how they afforded it:

“Twenty Talents definitely weren’t easy to come by. To get them I had to pull some strings and double-deal a bit with these cattle.”

### To end the scene:

Scylla turns the key and opens the door to bedroom D cautiously. Immediately a man’s shoe is visible from the open sliver. Once the door is opened wide it’s clear there is a man lying slumped onto the ground. He wears a dark suit with a white shirt stained red with blood! –Cut to the other players.

# Scene 3: Back at the Bar

It’s time to get everyone else involved now! This scene assumes that some of the players have remained in the lounge car.

### To start the scene:

Address the characters that are in the lounge car. Jasmine, the bartender, asks, “I’m sorry for the wait, one of our staff members seems to be late from his break. Can I get anyone some beverages or appetizers?”

Immediately after the characters respond with their orders, a young man (Nerad) steps into the lounge car. He straightens out and dusts off his employee uniform and glances at Jasmine before hurrying over to Joseph’s table. She shoots him a cross look as he avoids her gaze.

Nerad

Final Scene A: (No Conditions are Met)