

The party awakens. They are not wherever they went to sleep: instead, they are in the baggage car of a Gothic-opulent steam train. It is dark and chilly, and all colours have a strangely blue tint. They are aboard the Train to the Land of the Dead:

Shub—Rhadaman

Shub-Rhadaman runs in one direction: to the Land of the Dead. The players, as living beings, do *not* want to go there. They will have the lowest possible social status there — lower even than ghostly destitutes and criminals, and *they get burnt as industrial fuel*.

In order to escape, they must halt the train before it reaches its sole stop, the City of the Dead. They can't simply jump off *en route* — the train runs through a lightless, timeless, total void.

The Carriages run from the baggage car at the back of the train (which they can loot) to the engine at the front. In between, the party may encounter as many carriages as you have time for (pick, or roll 1d4 and reroll unrepeatable results):

- **1–2: a passenger car**

Third Class, then Second, then First. Each time they enter a passenger car, the ancient, embalmed Conductor may appear. If they are conspicuous, he will check their tickets — which they do not have. If they looted the baggage car, they may have acceptable currency with which to buy tickets. Otherwise, they'll have to fight him. He'll try to restrain them with animated rolls of ticket-paper, and summon Maintenance to remove them. (Probably by hurling them off into the void.)

Third Class is full of ordinary ghosts on their way to their new unlife.

Second Class is full of (mostly) living ticket-holders, including:

- Drow spies lurking beneath broad-brimmed hats
- Two junior caterpillar-naga diplomats and their naked, tattooed elf secretary, manacled to his typewriter
- A party of Bureaucracy Elementals, who can temporarily declare specific actions illegal in their presence (such as stabbing Bureaucracy Elementals)
- A venerable warlock, off to bargain with his patron in person

First Class contains high-status newly deceased and planar diplomats; a carriage of private compartments, including:

- a confused, traumatised, freshly assassinated Emperor's ghost
- a levitating sarcophagus, bound in chains, radiating dread and arcane tingling
- a lich, catching up on his reading
- the Ocular Bishop, the only Beholder ever to convert to a church of Good. Scripture-embroidered eye-patches over every eye, accompanied by a small staff of seeing-eye acolytes. After many years, a high-ranked clergyman — humble penitent or devious long con?

If the players start shit in First Class, they are *extremely* likely to die.

- **3: a freight car**

The aristocrats of the afterlife have cold, dark, endless un-lives of being exactly the bastards they were in life. It costs fortunes to ship *objets d'art* in from the living world, even more to import living creatures for one's menagerie. Naturally, they do so as often and extravagantly as they can. Possible cargo includes such oddities as:

- a rare symbiotic shark/gelatinous cube
- a coin-operated fortune-telling Tarot automaton
- a beachball-sized soap bubble micro-universe, its existence maintained by psychic monks, meditating in shifts
- deliberately mislabelled crates of illicit ghost-killing magic weapons to arm revolutionary anarchists

...and anything else that sounds interesting.

- **4: a special car**

- **The dining car**

A live band (so to speak) plays subdued tunes. There's an open bar; use your preferred potions, poisons, drunkenness or carousing rules.

- **An open flatbed freight car**

Outside the train, it's killingly cold, and the air is barely thick enough to breathe. Out of sight of the passengers work the maintenance crew: skeletons wreathed in ghostfire (the heat-draining blue flames you get from burning ghosts) and scuttling arachnid repair golems. They don't take kindly to interruptions.

Anyone who falls off will fall forever through bottomless black. Try not to.

- **The maintenance car** Containing the conductor's office, cleaning supplies, and the maintenance crew's mess and bunks.

And then there's the Engine, manned by the Driver, a ghostfire-wreathed skeleton/cyborg extension of the locomotive.

He has a long fork with which to pluck up bottled ghosts and fling them into the furnace, which he'll use as a spear against intruders. He can vent noxious ghostfire fumes from his mouth, and fling the furnace door wide open to blast the players with cold; but doing either robs the engine of speed.

So does smashing him to bits, but it doesn't *stop* the train.

Inside the furnace, a vast fire-spirit in the shape of a bird is trussed in chains; these are anchored to ceramic plugs, moulded in the shape of grimacing faces, which can be smashed by someone (carefully) climbing around the outside of the engine. With enough broken, the fire-spirit will explode out of the boiler's confines and fly away.

Without power, the train will roll to a stop. When still, it summons a spectral station platform, its exit shining with the glow of genuine sunlight....