

The Midnight Memory Express



Dungeon Master's edition

The Midnight Memory Express offers quiet compartments, punctual service, and discreet transport for passengers who would rather leave something behind.

OPENING READ-ALoud

Rain streaks the saloon windows as the train rocks through the dark. A woman pulls away from the child beside her, knocking a cup across the table. "I'm sorry. Where is your mother?" The child holds out a small brass bird. At the carriage door, a conductor straightens his gloves and says, "Please remain calm. Some passengers experience uncertainty after a transaction." The woman turns toward him. "What transaction?"

Credits

Adventure and publication credit: bandolek.

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Rules basis: Dungeons & Dragons Fifth Edition, SRD 5.1 (2014). Memory devices, brass cargo porters, Nera Vale's statistics, and the train and transfer procedures are original homebrew material for this adventure.

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Overview

A woman wakes aboard a night train and cannot recognize the child beside her. The conductor insists that the railway's memory cargo is legitimate. Somewhere between the sleeping compartments and the locomotive, three stolen recollections travel under seals meant to protect voluntary sales.

The Midnight Memory Express is an original adventure for four 6th-level characters, using *Dungeons & Dragons, Fifth Edition, SRD 5.1* (2014). It takes approximately 4-5 hours, including investigation, a pursuit or cargo confrontation, and a contested arrival. Most encounters can end without combat. Two encounters offer the most likely fights; successful negotiation can prevent both.

The adventure begins with the characters already aboard the express. Their tickets and ordinary reasons for traveling require no additional explanation. If a stronger connection helps, one character previously met passenger Mara Pell and her daughter Iona, or the railway hired the party as ordinary journey escorts.

The central question is larger than identifying a thief: **who may decide what happens to a memory once it has been separated from the person who lived it?** The adventure gives that question concrete owners, contracts, devices, and consequences. It does not require characters to accept memory trading or to abolish it.

Content boundaries: nonconsensual memory extraction, family estrangement, disputed consent, and commercial exploitation. Iona is ten years old. No opponent targets her, uses her as a hostage, or requires her presence near a fight. Her distress can remain understated or occur offstage. Before play, establish whether descriptions of forgotten relationships or voluntarily surrendering painful experiences need adjustment.

Rules assumption: memory recording, extraction, and restoration are explicitly **homebrew**. They affect particular autobiographical recollections, not character levels, proficiencies, prepared spells, class features, alignment, or player control.

DM Introduction

Nera Vale, a licensed memory courier, is smuggling three stolen recordings among three legitimate purchases aboard the Midnight Memory Express. Her buyer, Orin Dask, commissioned an especially intimate family recollection and paid her to conceal its origin. Nera extracted Mara Pell's memories connecting her daughter Iona's present appearance with their shared childhood experiences. She then stole porter Ben Orrel's recollection of a railway inspection seal and passenger Tessa Venn's recollection of seeing the theft. The three victims retain their other memories, abilities, and personalities. Nera used three prepared extraction tips while they slept; all three tips are now exhausted.

Conductor Hett Brindle believes the sealed shipment contains only voluntary sales. Admitting an unlawful extraction would threaten his reputation and expose the railway to compensation claims, so he initially treats Mara's distress as an unfortunate contractual consequence. He is defensive rather than complicit. The characters become involved when Mara wakes and refuses to accept that the unfamiliar child beside her is her daughter. Interviews and searches reveal gaps in the passenger timeline, a duplicated inspection mark, and a manifest whose consent entries do not match its cargo. These independent clues point toward Nera and a six-slot case in the baggage carriage.

Nera wants the case delivered, her commission paid, and her license preserved. She prefers forged authority, bargaining, and escape to killing witnesses. Two brass cargo porters obey the case's registered routing tag; neither can distinguish a legal shipment from a stolen one. Dask waits at his private terminal with two hired guards and a wagon. He knows the family recording was stolen but intends to present himself as an innocent buyer of a sealed consignment. The party can seize or redirect the cargo, persuade the conductor to change the stop, negotiate a surrender, expose Dask at the transfer, or pursue the case after it leaves the train.

Without intervention, the express reaches Dask's terminal, the case enters his wagon, and the stolen recordings become inaccessible in his private vault that morning. The victims survive with their losses; Iona remains with Mara under a trusted adult's care, but their relationship requires rebuilding. Recovering the case permits each available donor to choose restoration, continued storage, or destruction. The three voluntary recordings must be considered separately from the stolen ones: recovering stolen property does not grant ownership of every memory beside it. A complete victory restores access to all three stolen recollections, protects the voluntary donors' choices, and establishes evidence against Nera or Dask. Partial victories can save particular memories, secure compensation, stop a transfer, or expose the crime even when another objective is lost.

At a Glance

ELEMENT	AT THE TABLE
Party	Four level 6 characters
Runtime	4-5 hours
Starting position	Rear passenger saloon, C1
Destination	Dask's private terminal, unless the route changes
Immediate problem	Mara does not recognize Iona
Culprit	Nera Vale, licensed courier
Buyer	Orin Dask
Cargo	One case; six recordings; three stolen and three voluntary

ELEMENT	AT THE TABLE
Likely combat	Baggage interception and terminal transfer
Maximum ordinary hostile roster	Nera, two brass porters, two guards
Principal deadline	Eight travel boxes before arrival
Rest expectation	Begin with normal resources; no short rest assumed
Central evidence	Passenger timeline, duplicated inspection mark, conflicting consent records
Resolution device	One restoration cradle in C3
Guaranteed rescue fee	200 gp for the party when its agreed conditions are met
Additional evidence reward	75 gp for the party, paid later by railway investigators

First-session guide

Prepare the six recordings first. They determine what the investigation discovers, what Nera bargains with, and what the ending can restore. Put six numbered tokens beside a sketch of the case. Do not treat the case as an indivisible objective once someone opens it.

Next, prepare three tracking sheets:

- **Travel:** eight empty boxes, with room to add two.
- **Custody:** the location and holder of each recording.
- **People and equipment:** Nera's current hit points, each porter's current hit points and orders, the routing tag's holder, the case's condition, and the train's route.

Begin with the opening read-aloud. Let the characters react before Hett explains the railway's position. Iona's statement and Mara's ticket give the party something tangible immediately; no introductory skill check is needed.

Run the first encounter until the party establishes protection for Mara and a direction for inquiry. Then present three accessible leads together: the sleeping compartments, the consent records, and the baggage carriage. The numbered scene order is a likely route, not a required sequence.

When the party obtains persuasive evidence, change Hett's behavior. His defensiveness should not survive an unmistakable mismatch between a victim and the supposedly voluntary shipment. Similarly, a surrendered Nera stays surrendered unless the party's treatment or an explicit escape opportunity changes her decision.

Reserve approximately forty minutes for the terminal situation and twenty minutes for restoration and ownership decisions. If time becomes tight, use the stated cuts rather than rushing those decisions.

Hook

The Midnight Memory Express offers quiet compartments, punctual service, and discreet transport for passengers who would rather leave something behind.

Shortly before midnight, that promise breaks.

Mara Pell wakes in the saloon, looks at the child sleeping against her shoulder, and asks whose daughter she is. Iona produces their matching tickets and a brass bird Mara gave her that afternoon. Mara recognizes her own handwriting on the ticket envelope. She remembers having a daughter. She cannot connect those memories to the child standing in front of her.

Conductor Hett Brindle arrives with a familiar explanation: the railway carries licensed memory transactions, and regret after a lawful sale is not evidence of a crime.

Mara says she sold nothing.

The next stop belongs to the company receiving the train's sealed memory cargo.

Stakes

Three stolen recordings are aboard the train. Each can be recovered independently.

RECORDING	WHAT IS MISSING	CONSEQUENCE IF INACCESSIBLE
1: Mara's family connection	Recognition of Iona through a specific cluster of shared experiences	Mara knows she has a daughter but cannot recover these experiences or instinctively recognize Iona
2: Ben's inspection recollection	His memory of examining and marking this shipment	Ben cannot explain the seal discrepancy and faces dismissal
3: Tessa's witnessed theft	The interval in which she saw Nera extracting Mara's memory	A direct witness cannot presently describe the crime

These losses are not progressive dementia and do not spread. New experiences remain possible. Mara can choose to trust Iona and build new connections even before restoration. Ben can inspect the case again. Tessa can reconstruct events from physical evidence.

Three other recordings were sold voluntarily. Their owners' present wishes differ. The party's handling of those recordings may earn trust, create a dispute, or violate the same principle it sought to defend.

The railway also has something at stake. Hett can preserve appearances and enable a crime, or acknowledge a breach and help repair it. Dask's guards must decide whether their wages justify helping a buyer seize disputed personal property. Nera can accept responsibility, surrender only part of the shipment, or risk losing everything through

flight.

Failure has specific limits

Losing the case does not kill anyone or erase further memories. Breaking one recording does not destroy the others. Missing the private-terminal stop does not prevent later investigation. The adventure's immediate opportunity closes when the cargo leaves, but the setting continues to contain roads, witnesses, contracts, and a named buyer.

No ending automatically reverses a recovered memory or causes an escaped villain to steal it again.

Factions

The Nightline Railway

Representative: Conductor Hett Brindle.

Goal: Complete the journey safely and avoid a scandal that makes passengers distrust licensed memory transport.

Leverage: Carriage keys, passenger records, authority over the route, a restoration cradle, and a compensation strongbox.

What changes its position: Two independent discrepancies, one recovered stolen recording viewed with its owner's permission, Nera's confession, or proof that a consent entry was forged.

Observable pressure: Hett initially orders everyone back to their seats. Once persuaded, he pins his brass authority badge outside C3 and announces that the disputed cargo is under railway hold.

Limit: The railway cannot grant consent on a donor's behalf. Its carriage contract permits temporary evidence custody, not sale or compulsory restoration.

Vale's Licensed Courier Service

Representative: Nera Vale.

Goal: Deliver six recordings under a clean manifest, collect the remaining commission, and retain a usable identity in the trade.

Leverage: Possession of the routing tag, knowledge of Dask's commission, forged paperwork, and the ability to cooperate against the buyer.

What changes its position: Loss of the case, a convincing escape offer, proof that Dask intends to abandon her, or a credible promise to distinguish her cooperation from his commission.

Observable pressure: Nera first corrects people's legal terminology. When cornered, she stops using titles and begins naming what each person could lose.

Limit: Nera does not harm Iona or deliberately smash recordings. She threatens legal seizure and reputational damage more readily than violence.

Dask's Mnemonic Exchange

Representative: Orin Dask.

Goal: Acquire rare private experiences while preserving the appearance of legitimate collecting.

Leverage: A private platform, hired guards, signed purchase contracts, and ready money.

What changes its position: Witnesses beyond his control, documentary proof of his commission, a diverted arrival, or custody of the recordings becoming public.

Observable pressure: Dask places a receipt pad on the case before anyone has agreed to deliver it, treating ownership as already settled.

Limit: His two guards were hired to protect a lawful transfer. Neither agreed to assault railway staff or conceal a proven theft.

The Journey Clock

Use **eight travel boxes**. Each box represents approximately ten minutes of the remaining journey. The train reaches its destination when the eighth box is filled.

The clock organizes meaningful activity; it is not a penalty for talking at the table.

What advances it

Fill one box when the party completes a substantial activity:

- Resolving one of Encounters 1-5 for the first time.
- Conducting an additional comprehensive carriage search.
- Making a second extended interview after leaving that passenger.
- Spending ten minutes copying, repairing, resting, or experimenting.
- Waiting intentionally for ten minutes.

Walking between carriages, asking a brief follow-up, showing an already obtained document, or examining an obvious object does not fill a box. A fight or chase and its immediate aftermath fit inside the encounter's single box. Do not add another box for its combat rounds.

If characters undertake activities simultaneously, advance by the longest activity, usually one box, rather than charging once per character. Run separated groups in alternating short exchanges. Opposition also has only its actual location and actions; Nera cannot personally interfere in two carriages at once.

A listed failure cost that fills a box replaces that activity's normal box unless the text explicitly says **additional**. Ordinary failed checks never create unspecified time penalties.

Arrival during unfinished business

When the final box fills:

1. Finish the current combat round, if any.
2. Announce the platform lights and the slowing train.
3. Place every person and object where the party left them.
4. Begin Encounter 6 with the actual custody state.

Arrival does not teleport Nera, the case, or either porter to a prescribed position. If the case remains in C4, Dask must obtain it there. If the party holds it in C1, his people must walk there or negotiate.

Changing the schedule

Encounter 5 can add **two boxes once** by ordering a cautious approach. This increases the arrival threshold from eight to ten. It does not erase filled boxes or reset an encounter.

A successful diversion sends the train to a public railway platform instead. Reuse the terminal's architecture as a public-station layout, applying all public-arrival substitutions below and in Encounter 6. The two stations are different places: private evidence, money, vehicles, and guards do not move with the reused drawing.

An emergency stop pauses travel while the train remains stationary. It attracts railway responders after thirty fictional minutes. It prevents immediate delivery but creates a stranded-train custody problem rather than an automatic conviction.

Resting

A short rest takes one hour under the 2014 rules and therefore fills six travel boxes. The party may take one if enough journey time remains, or after safely stopping the train. Explain that arrival or an active opponent's plans may occur during it.

No encounter assumes a short rest. Do not refresh hostile creatures when they change carriages or return after negotiations.

Scene Flow

1. A Child Without a Familiar Face KEY: C1 EXPECTED TABLE TIME: 25 minutes ENTRY LEADS: Opening disturbance WHAT CAN CHANGE: Victim protection; railway cooperation; initial evidence EXITS: C2 interviews, C3 records, C4 cargo
2. The Passengers' Missing Minutes KEY: C2 EXPECTED TABLE TIME: 40 minutes ENTRY LEADS: Tickets, berth assignments, witness names

WHAT CAN CHANGE: Timeline; Nera's cover; donor wishes EXITS: C3 verification, C4 interception, C1 care
3. The Ledger and the Cradle KEY: C3 EXPECTED TABLE TIME: 35 minutes ENTRY LEADS: Hett's claim, inspection mark, consent disputes WHAT CAN CHANGE: Legal hold; case access; restoration knowledge EXITS: C4 cargo, C5 routing, C6 bridge
4. Glass in the Baggage Car KEY: C4-C5, optional roofs EXPECTED TABLE TIME: 45 minutes ENTRY LEADS: Manifest, physical trail, direct search WHAT CAN CHANGE: Custody of case and individual recordings EXITS: C3 restoration, C5 refuge, C6 route
5. Who Chooses the Next Stop? KEY: C6 EXPECTED TABLE TIME: 25 minutes ENTRY LEADS: Approaching terminal, cargo dispute WHAT CAN CHANGE: Delay, diversion, stop, or unchanged route EXITS: Any carriage; terminal
6. The Contested Transfer KEY: T1-T4 EXPECTED TABLE TIME: 45 minutes ENTRY LEADS: Arrival or deliberate rendezvous WHAT CAN CHANGE: Final custody, arrests, escape, settlement EXITS: Restoration, public station, road pursuit

Allow **15 minutes** for transitions and **25 minutes** for restitution and closing choices. With a short break, the expected session runs about four and a half hours. Combat-heavy play may approach five hours.

Useful cuts

Short interview route: In Scene 2, put Tessa and Ben together in the aisle. Each gives their initial statement without a separate introductory exchange. Keep the conflict between their recollections and the physical timeline. This saves approximately ten minutes.

Nera stays to bargain: If the party already controls both exits from C4, she does not attempt a futile chase. Resolve the baggage encounter through negotiation or a brief fight, saving ten to fifteen minutes.

Bridge by speaking tube: Once Hett supports the party, he can make the route decision from C3 through the speaking tube. Run Encounter 5 as a conversation among Hett, engineer Ada Senn, and the characters. Do not charge movement time or invent a malfunction. This saves ten minutes.

Early recovery: If the characters have already secured all six recordings and diverted the train, Encounter 6 becomes a public custody hearing with Dask attempting a contractual objection. Retain the decision and evidence procedure; omit loading actions and combat deployment.

A skipped location remains available later. Its objects, occupants, and unspent opportunities remain in their established state.

Locations

The express consists of six carriages arranged in a single line. C1 is the rear. C6 is the front. Normal passage runs through broad central aisles and five-foot enclosed gangways.

The complete dimensions and coordinates appear in **Map Specifications**. Those coordinates are authoritative. Descriptions below identify uses and discoveries without changing the plan.

C1: Passenger Saloon

A brass samovar trembles on a bolted sideboard. Green seats face narrow tables; rain turns the windows into dark mirrors.

Table purpose: Opening emergency, neutral meeting space, and a protected place for passengers who should not enter dangerous scenes.

Present initially: Mara, Iona, Hett, and the party.

Useful objects: Matching tickets, Iona's brass bird, Mara's envelope, a call bell, and a railway notice advertising licensed memory transport.

Pressure: Other passengers want reassurance. Public accusations spread quickly from here, but so do requests for help.

Discoveries: Mara has no consent receipt. Her tickets were purchased together. The bird's base bears a date and a short inscription in her handwriting.

Return state: Mara and Iona stay here unless they choose C2A or accompany a trusted adult. If Mara has recovered her recording, use recognition and cautious conversation rather than repeating her initial rejection. Broken crockery is cleared after the first encounter; it does not reappear.

C2: Sleeping Carriage

Four narrow compartments open onto a wide central aisle. Each contains a long convertible berth, a folding wash shelf, and enough open floor for two Medium creatures beside the berth.

• **C2A:** Mara and Iona's compartment.

• **C2B:** Nera's compartment.

• **C2C:** Tessa's compartment.

• **C2D:** Dr. Suri En's compartment.

Table purpose: Establish the timeline, distinguish legitimate sales from theft, and investigate Nera's movements.

Present initially: Tessa in C2C; Suri in C2D; Nera in C2B until alerted. Ben passes through the aisle after Scene 1.

Useful objects: A scratched wash shelf, a torn booking slip, Nera's commission letter, and three exhausted extraction tips in her locked travel pouch.

Pressure: Privacy is a reasonable concern here. A search without consent or Hett's authority creates witnesses to the party's conduct.

Return state: Opened compartments remain opened unless someone closes them. Confiscated papers and extraction tips stay with their actual holder. Nera does not return to her berth merely because the party searches it later.

C3: Records and Refreshment Office

A counter divides official paperwork from a modest refreshment service. Behind it, labeled drawers hold contracts. A padded brass cradle stands beneath a reading lamp.

Table purpose: Check ownership, obtain railway authority, and understand safe restoration.

Present initially: Clerk Omi Tal, a noncombatant who uses the SRD commoner statistics.

Useful objects: Passenger register, consent ledger, duplicate inspection stamp, restoration cradle, and compensation strongbox.

Pressure: Omi fears being blamed for the forged entries. A clear promise to preserve originals earns more cooperation than a threat.

Discoveries: The manifest lists six recordings but contains only three valid donor receipts. The inspection mark appears twice with an identical chipped edge, despite Ben remembering only a single preliminary inspection.

Return state: Legal holds remain recorded. Money paid from the strongbox remains paid. The cradle's use does not replenish extraction tips or repair destroyed recordings.

C4: Baggage and Bonded Cargo

Canvas trunks fill secured racks along both walls. The central aisle remains open. A six-slot recording case sits in a numbered rack recess beneath a copper routing plate.

Table purpose: Recover or divide the shipment and expose the difference between possession and ownership.

Present initially: Brass porter P1. Nera comes here when alerted or when the party finishes its second investigative encounter, unless already detained.

Useful objects: The recording case, routing plate, fixed tie-down rings, a roof ladder, and a bonded-cargo register.

Pressure: P1 blocks unauthorized removal. It does not object to people standing in the aisle or reading exterior labels.

Discoveries: The case's stamped weight includes six recordings. Its outer seal repeats the flawed inspection mark. Slots 1-3 have fresh blue lacquer; slots 4-6 use older amber seals.

Return state: A removed case leaves an empty recess. P1's damage and order remain. Broken rack doors remain broken. The blue and amber seal difference does not recur on replacement objects because there are no replacements.

C5: Service Carriage and Transfer Cage

Tools hang above narrow workbenches. At the forward end of the northern wall, a barred transfer cage connects to an exterior loading hatch.

Table purpose: Give the courier a defensible destination and make the eventual transfer spatially concrete.

Present initially: Brass porter P2 beside the cage.

Useful objects: Cage lock, exterior hatch latch, wheel chocks, spare lanterns, and an ordinary tool cabinet.

Cage access: Hett carries the cage key; Nera has an issued duplicate in her travel pouch. A keyholder adjacent to the door can lock or unlock it with one object interaction. Without a key, thieves' tools and a DC 14 Dexterity check take one action; failure costs the action and leaves the lock closed, with retries allowed. The barred door has AC 15, 20 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. At 0 hit points it opens and cannot be relocked without repair. The loading hatch is independent: a creature adjacent to either latch can open or close it with an action, as specified in Scene 6. Locking the cage door never seals that hatch.

Pressure: P2 follows the routing tag's valid carrier. If ordered to hold the cage, it remains there until released, disabled, or shown railway override authority.

Discoveries: A delivery slip names Dask and lists payment for "one authenticated maternal recognition sequence." This slip is evidence of the buyer's interest but does not, by itself, prove that he knew consent was absent.

Return state: Cage custody matters. A case locked inside remains inside; a porter outside cannot reach through the

bars to move it. An opened hatch stays open unless someone closes it.

C6: Locomotive Control Cab

The front carriage houses a compact enchanted drive behind a locked maintenance grille. Ordinary levers control speed, brakes, and the next authorized route signal.

Table purpose: Decide the journey's destination and address the cost of stopping a train full of passengers.

Present initially: Engineer Ada Senn. She uses SRD commoner statistics and does not fight unless personally attacked.

Useful objects: Brake lever, route selector, speaking tube, timetable, and signal acknowledgment lamp.

Pressure: Ada will not abandon the controls to inspect evidence personally. Someone must bring it, relay it through Hett, or make a credible emergency report.

Discoveries: A public junction remains available through travel box five. After that point, the train can slow or stop, but a diversion requires railway assistance.

Return state: A selected route, confirmed delay, damaged control, or engaged brake stays that way. Ada does not reverse a valid safety decision merely because a character leaves.

T1: Arrival Platform

The platform meets the northern side of the train at floor level. The relevant transfer area lies beside C5; the rest of the train remains reachable along the platform.

Table purpose: Public witnesses, interception, and access between train and terminal.

Initial private-terminal occupants: Dask, guard G1, and guard G2 at the wagon.

Pressure: Dask attempts to turn a disputed transfer into a completed delivery before anyone organizes an objection.

T2: Transfer Wagon and Yard

A north-facing wagon waits beneath a hooded lantern. Two harnessed horses stand beyond its shafts.

Table purpose: A visible, interruptible escape mechanism.

Useful objects: Wagon straps, wheel brake, harness buckles, yard gate.

Pressure: The wagon cannot depart merely because the case touches it. Loading, securing, and driving require actions.

T3: Receiving Office

At Dask's private terminal, a dry office overlooks the yard. His duplicate commission agreement rests in a folio on the desk. At the public station, T3 is a railway receiving office with blank custody forms, a timetable, and ordinary ledgers; it contains neither Dask's counterpart nor his cash. The same floor plan does not transfer those objects between stations.

Table purpose: Independent evidence and a negotiation space.

Private-terminal discovery only: The duplicate agreement includes the phrase omitted from Nera's letter: "Consent unnecessary; authenticity essential."

Return state: Documents removed from the office do not reappear. A searched desk remains visibly disturbed unless someone spends time restoring it.

T4: Public Road

The north gate opens onto a maintained road. It leads to a public railway office five miles east and Dask's vault house three miles west.

Table purpose: Escape, pursuit, and consequences beyond the platform.

Pressure: Leaving the map changes the scale of pursuit; it does not make the wagon vanish.

Encounter Matrix

1. The Passenger Who Sold Nothing EXACT POSSIBLE OPPOSITION: No combatants PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE: Protect Mara and establish grounds to investigate NONCOMBAT LEVERAGE: Tickets, absent receipt, Hett's duty FAILURE CHANGES: Investigation continues without official keys
2. Three Gaps in the Night EXACT POSSIBLE OPPOSITION: Nera, only if still present and attacked PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE: Reconstruct movements and identify affected passengers NONCOMBAT LEVERAGE: Privacy agreements, amnesty for unrelated conduct FAILURE CHANGES: Witnesses withdraw; physical clues remain
3. A Signature Is Not Consent EXACT POSSIBLE OPPOSITION: No combatants PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE: Establish lawful hold and learn restoration

NONCOMBAT LEVERAGE: Ledger mismatch, inspection flaw, Omi's cooperation FAILURE CHANGES: Access takes time or becomes unauthorized
4. The Six-Slot Case EXACT POSSIBLE OPPOSITION: Nera, P1; P2 only if actually reached or summoned PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE: Secure recordings and prevent transfer NONCOMBAT LEVERAGE: Override authority, commission evidence, bargaining FAILURE CHANGES: Nera or individual recordings move to C5
5. The Last Public Junction EXACT POSSIBLE OPPOSITION: No combatants unless pursued enemies arrive PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE: Choose route, delay, or stop NONCOMBAT LEVERAGE: Safety authority, evidence, emergency procedure FAILURE CHANGES: Private arrival remains imminent
6. Receipt Before Delivery EXACT POSSIBLE OPPOSITION: Dask, G1, G2, plus surviving enemies actually present PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE: Resolve custody and prevent unwanted departure NONCOMBAT LEVERAGE: Commission agreement, witnesses, valid hold FAILURE CHANGES: Wagon departs with its actual cargo

Dask and the guards do not arrive aboard the moving train. The porters do not multiply when a scene begins. A porter destroyed in C4 leaves only its wreckage unless characters deliberately move it.

Scenes

Scene 1: A Child Without a Familiar Face

Runtime: 25 minutes.

Objective: Establish what happened to Mara and obtain a workable mandate to investigate.

Stakes: Mara needs immediate support while the railway's first response could normalize the theft.

READ-ALoud

The conductor lays a passenger list beside the wet table. Two punched tickets lie underneath it, tied together with blue thread. The child sets her brass bird beside them and steps back. Its little wings open when she presses the tail. The woman watches the mechanism, then studies the handwriting scratched into its base.

Arrival condition: This follows the opening after the immediate reactions. If a character has already moved the group somewhere quieter, retain the tickets and bird but substitute that location's table or seat.

Immediately evident: Mara is frightened but coherent. She knows her name, destination, occupation, and that she has a daughter. She cannot recognize Iona as that daughter.

Discoverable without a check: The tickets were purchased together. Mara recognizes her handwriting on the envelope. The inscription on the bird reads, "For Iona, who notices everything. -M."

Encounter 1: The Passenger Who Sold Nothing

Location: C1.

Trigger: A character questions Mara, Iona, or Hett about the disturbance.

Opposition: None. Hett is an institutional obstacle, not an enemy combatant.

Visible pressure: Hett wants the conversation concluded before it alarms the entire carriage.

Hett begins with: "I am not disputing her distress. I am disputing that distress proves an unlawful transaction."

He believes Mara may have sold a memory and regretted it. A calm request to see the corresponding receipt exposes the weakness in that position.

Procedure

1. Let the party establish who stays with Mara and Iona.
2. Provide each passenger's immediate statement.
3. Ask what evidence the party offers Hett or what authority it claims.
4. Resolve his response, then present the three investigation routes.

Mara's statement: She bought two tickets, packed a bag for her daughter, and expected to visit a relative. She has never sold a memory. Her last clear recollection before the gap is lying down in C2A while Iona watched rain race along the window.

Iona's statement: A woman with a silver seam on one glove checked their tickets at the compartment. Later Iona went to C1 for warm milk with Suri. Mara followed after waking. Iona does not know the woman's name.

Hett's statement: Six recordings were accepted under a licensed courier's manifest. The shipment is bound for

Dask's terminal. He has not personally examined each donor receipt.

Useful checks

• **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine):** Mara's condition is consistent with the known, narrow effects of a memory recording. Success also reveals a small circular pressure mark behind her left ear. Failure leaves the cause uncertain; it does not establish illness or deception.

• **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight):** Hett is protecting his professional judgment, not displaying knowledge of a theft. Failure gives no reliable conclusion.

• **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion):** With one concrete discrepancy, persuade Hett to grant supervised access to C2 and C3 immediately.

• **No check:** Two independent discrepancies, or a direct contradiction in his paperwork, secure that access.

The pressure mark can also be found through a careful, consensual examination without a roll, taking the encounter's remaining time. Medicine determines how quickly its significance becomes clear.

If characters use magic

Detect magic reveals a fading divination aura at the pressure mark and stronger auras farther forward, but does not identify a thief. *Zone of truth* can establish that Mara sincerely denies selling the memory; apply the spell's normal Charisma saves each turn; she cooperates once affected, but cannot voluntarily fail under these 2014 rules. A successful save is not evidence of dishonesty. Neither Hett nor Mara treats spellcasting as inherently hostile if its purpose is explained.

Lesser restoration does not return a recording; this is neither a disease nor one of that spell's listed conditions. Tell the player this before spending the slot if the character examines the magical effect. *Remove curse* likewise has no relevant curse to remove. The complete restoration procedure appears later.

Escalation

If the party threatens passengers or makes unsupported accusations, Hett withholds his keys and asks Omi to protect the records. He does not lock characters inside C1.

If the party offers care, documents the mismatch, or proposes a limited inquiry, Hett softens. He can admit uncertainty without first declaring Nera guilty.

Immediate protection

Mara chooses whether Iona stays beside her. If she needs space, Suri can supervise Iona in C1. The child is never required to prove the family relationship through an emotional performance.

Characters may agree on a simple introduction: "This is Iona. Your tickets and belongings say you traveled together. You can take time." Such care is a meaningful success even if the recording is not yet recovered.

Railway contract

Once persuaded that intervention is warranted, Hett offers a **50 gp party advance** for investigating Mara's apparent loss and securing evidence or disputed cargo. He authorizes a recovery budget of **up to 200 gp total**, including that advance, but does not yet know how many recordings were stolen or who is responsible. Omi pays the advance from C3 when the party next visits.

He specifies that reasonable rescue efforts earn the advance even if recovery fails. Once the missing receipts or victims establish the three stolen recordings, he assigns **50 gp per intact stolen recording secured**, up to the remaining 150 gp. Explain those terms as soon as that evidence becomes available and before any destruction decision. Until discovery, do not announce the count or identities. Partial payment terms are detailed in Rewards and Follow-Up.

Success: Hett provides supervised access, introduces Omi, and agrees to a temporary prohibition on unloading disputed cargo.

Fail-forward: Hett refuses official assistance, but Mara gives permission to inspect C2A. Iona identifies the silver-seamed glove, and the public cargo notice names C3 as the records office.

Transition: Matching tickets lead to C2; the missing receipt leads to C3; the manifest's destination leads directly to C4. Fill one travel box when the party leaves this initial emergency.

Scene 2: The Passengers' Missing Minutes

Runtime: 40 minutes.

Objective: Reconstruct the theft window and distinguish witnesses, victims, and voluntary donors.

Stakes: Nera benefits if every embarrassed passenger appears equally suspicious.

READ-ALoud

Four compartment doors face a broad strip of worn carpet. A porter stands beneath a swinging lamp, turning a punch stamp over in his hands. From one open doorway, a woman in a violet dressing gown says, "I heard the latch twice. I am certain about that." In the neighboring compartment, a doctor folds a blanket over an empty seat.

Arrival conditions: Omit the final sentence about the doctor if Suri has remained with Iona in C1 or moved elsewhere; she does not return to C2 automatically. Omit Ben if he has moved elsewhere. Replace Tessa's spoken line with a description of her folded dressing gown if she is absent. If Nera has fled, C2B is closed and unattended unless someone previously opened it.

Immediately evident: Ben is confused about a task he normally remembers precisely. Tessa is irritated by her own missing interval. Suri wants the investigation to avoid

treating every memory sale as coercion.

Encounter 2: Three Gaps in the Night

Location: C2 and compartments C2A-D.

Trigger: Interviews or compartment searches.

Opposition: Nera alone, if she is still here and the party initiates violence. Other passengers are noncombatants.

Objective: Obtain two independent links between Nera and the compromised shipment.

The encounter is substantive because each witness has a reason to withhold something, and the party must decide how to obtain access without flattening those distinctions.

The passenger timeline

Times below are factual events for the DM. Give players only entries they establish.

TIME	EVENT	AVAILABLE CORROBORATION
22:50	Nera boards with three lawful recordings already sealed in slots 4-6	Original receipts in C3; bonded-cargo register
23:00	Ben checks the case's outer latch and makes the preliminary inspection mark	His notebook; chipped inspection punch
23:04	Suri takes Iona to C1 for warm milk; Mara remains asleep in C2A	Suri; Omi's refreshment chit
23:06	Nera uses her first prepared tip on sleeping Mara	Tessa's later recoverable memory; mark behind Mara's ear
23:08	Tessa sees Nera leave C2A with a blue-sealed vial	Tessa's recording; blue lacquer fleck on C2A's shelf
23:10	Tessa returns to her berth and falls asleep	Suri saw her close the door; Tessa's reading lamp
23:12	Nera takes Tessa's recent witness memory using her second tip	Tessa's pressure mark; Nera's three-tip pouch
23:15	Ben naps briefly on the aisle bench after his scheduled shift	His shift card; Omi saw him settle there
23:16	Nera takes Ben's inspection memory and copies his punch mark	Ben's pressure mark; duplicate stamp in C3
23:18	Nera places slots 1-3 in the case and files a substituted manifest	Register's second entry; Omi remembers delivery
23:20	Mara wakes, enters C1, and does not recognize Iona	Opening scene

Nera carried the case from C4 to C3 only for paperwork before the adventure; it now begins in C4. Ben's missing memory concerns the preliminary inspection, not all knowledge of railway procedure.

Ben Orrel, porter

Wants: Keep his job and understand whether he made an error.

Initially says: "I checked the latch. I know I did. But I cannot tell you what I found."

Conceals: He slept during the last minutes of his duty period. He fears this matters more than the theft.

Leverage: Promise to distinguish his lapse from another person's crime. Hett's reassurance also works.

What he gives: His notebook records the first inspection at 23:00 and sketches the punch's chipped edge. He remembers Nera asking whether an inspection memory could be recorded for training purposes; he refused.

Check: DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) earns the admission about sleeping if the party has not reassured him. On failure, he asks Hett to attend before answering. This delays that interview until Hett arrives but leaves the notebook available with Ben's permission.

Tessa Venn, passenger

Wants: Recover her missing interval without exposing a private argument recorded in her travel journal.

Initially says: She heard C2A's latch twice and remembers intending to report something. She cannot retrieve what she saw.

Conceals: Her journal contains an affair unrelated to the theft.

Leverage: Agree to inspect only the page covering the journey, with Tessa holding the book.

What she gives: A sentence written at 23:09: "Courier, silver glove seam, blue glass; ask conductor after she passes."

Check: None if the party accepts her limited access condition. DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) is needed only to persuade her to surrender the entire journal. A failed demand makes her refuse that broader search, not destroy the relevant page.

Dr. Suri En, voluntary donor

Wants: Preserve the validity of her own deliberate choice while helping Mara.

Initially says: She sold a tightly bounded recollection of one wartime triage shift. She retained her medical knowledge, factual understanding, and ability to speak about what happened.

Conceals: Nothing relevant to the crime. She dislikes strangers assuming regret.

What she gives: A genuine amber-sealed donor receipt for slot 6 and confirmation that Nera's glove has a silver repair seam.

Choice: Suri currently wants her recording kept sealed and returned to her physical custody if recovered. She does not presently want restoration or destruction.

Medical help: She can identify extraction pressure marks through a ten-minute examination of willing patients. This can run alongside other interviews and does not add another box.

Nera Vale, courier

If not alerted, Nera is in C2B reading a timetable. She admits carrying licensed recordings and identifies slots 4-6 correctly. She describes the blue-sealed recordings as "late additions whose privacy I must protect."

She will not name their donors voluntarily.

Her defense: Records are in C3; the case is sealed in C4; she claims the conductor has already accepted responsibility for checking consent.

Useful pressure: A specific reference to Mara's pressure mark, Tessa's written note, or the preliminary inspection causes Nera to abandon this compartment at her next unopposed opportunity. She walks toward C4; she does not teleport there or immediately start combat.

Insight: DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) reveals that her concern sharpens when someone mentions the blue seals. This is a behavioral clue, not proof of guilt.

Truth magic: Nera may refuse voluntary questioning. If caught in *zone of truth*, she says, "I delivered the documents required of me," or remains silent. She cannot know whether she succeeded on a save unless the spell or another feature tells her.

Searching compartments

C2A, with Mara's permission: A blue lacquer fleck lies on the folding wash shelf. No check is required for a careful search. DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) also identifies a round indentation matching a vial base. Failure leaves only the fleck.

C2B, Nera's compartment: Its ordinary door is locked if she has departed. Hett's key opens it. Thieves' tools and a DC 14 Dexterity check open it without damage; failure consumes the search activity and leaves the lock closed. A second attempt is possible in another activity. The door has AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Inside, Nera's travel pouch contains three exhausted extraction tips and her commission letter. The pouch lock uses the same DC; its key is on Nera. Taking the pouch preserves the evidence even if the party cannot open it yet.

A visible booking slip under her berth lists Dask as the paying customer. Finding it does not require opening the pouch.

C2C and C2D: Searches require the occupants' consent, Hett's supported authority, or a deliberate intrusion. Neither room contains a surprise monster or a second thief.

Unexpected approaches

A familiar can watch the aisle or follow Nera. It cannot read a document concealed inside a closed pouch without accessing it. Invisible characters can observe her movements; successful observation should work.

Detect thoughts may reveal immediate concerns about the case or commission. Resolve deeper probing under the spell's normal rules. Revealing Nera's involvement early accelerates the investigation; it does not remove the custody question.

A character who impersonates a railway inspector can make a DC 14 Charisma (Deception) check to persuade Nera to discuss the case's slot arrangement. On failure she requests Hett's confirmation and heads toward C3 if unopposed. This creates a confrontation with paperwork rather than revealing the same information anyway.

Success: The party links Nera to the extraction window, learns that some sales are authentic, and obtains written evidence or a credible witness chain.

Fail-forward: Even if passengers refuse invasive searches, Suri's genuine receipt establishes what a valid transaction looks like. Ben's public shift card and the C3 ledger remain independent routes.

Transition: The copied inspection mark and genuine receipt point to C3. Nera's movement, the booking slip, and blue lacquer point to C4. Fill one travel box after the initial interview-and-search activity; additional comprehensive searches or extended return interviews use the normal clock rules.

Scene 3: The Ledger and the Cradle

Runtime: 35 minutes.

Objective: Establish a hold on the disputed recordings and learn how to handle them safely.

Stakes: A sealed case can conceal both theft and legitimate consent.

READ-ALoud

A reading lamp illuminates six ruled entries in an open ledger. Beside it sits a brass cradle lined with soft gray felt, its headrest connected to a single glass socket. The clerk keeps one hand on a drawer of receipts. "I can show you what arrived," she says. "I cannot make the missing papers appear."

Arrival conditions: If the party already holds the ledger or receipts, describe the open drawer and cradle instead. If Hett has declared a legal hold, his badge hangs outside the office and Omi begins cooperatively.

Encounter 3: A Signature Is Not Consent

Location: C3.

Trigger: The party requests records, compares a receipt, or brings a recording here.

Opposition: None.

Objective: Determine which entries are defective and obtain safe access to the case or cradle.

Omi accepted Nera's substituted manifest at 23:18. It lists six recordings but attaches only three donor receipts. Omi assumed the remaining documents were filed separately because the case bore Ben's inspection mark.

Immediately evident: Six manifest lines, three attached receipts.

Available by ordinary comparison: The legitimate receipts cover slots 4, 5, and 6. Slots 1-3 cite nonexistent receipt numbers.

Uncertain detail: A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check establishes that the three added lines were written with different ink over lightly scraped paper. Failure does not erase the receipt mismatch; it means the party cannot yet prove physical alteration.

Establishing a hold

Hett accepts any one of these evidence packages:

- The missing receipt numbers plus Mara's denial.
- Tessa's written note plus the blue-sealed additions.
- Nera's commission letter plus a victim's extraction mark.
- Nera's confession.
- A recording preview, authorized by its donor, showing the stolen content.

With a package, no persuasion check is needed. Hett writes a hold covering slots 1-3 and separately requires verification before slots 4-6 leave the train. He gives the party the case latch key and a signed override card for the brass porters.

Without a package, DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) secures a ten-minute inspection under Omi's supervision. On failure, the party can obtain a second clue, use unauthorized means, or approach the cargo physically. Hett does not become immune to later evidence because one check failed.

The copied stamp

The duplicate punch rests in Omi's returns tray. Nera claimed Ben had dropped it. It is a soft-metal impression made from his original tool.

Comparing it with Ben's notebook requires no roll. A DC 12 Intelligence check using smith's tools, jeweler's tools, or Investigation identifies that it was made recently and is too soft for routine railway use.

Possessing the duplicate establishes forgery equipment but does not alone prove which memories were taken.

Learning the cradle

Omi demonstrates with an empty socket:

1. Place one intact recording in the socket.
2. Set the selector to **Preview**, **Return**, or **Erase**.
3. For **Return**, the matching donor rests a hand on the contact plate and verbally agrees.
4. Hold the operating lever for the required duration.

The selectors have distinct shapes as well as labels: an eye, an open hand, and a crossed circle. The device gives audible feedback and visible light before an irreversible operation.

Give **Handout: Operating the Memory Cradle** when this demonstration or a careful examination occurs.

The cradle's full mechanics are in **Memory Rules and Equipment**. A character can understand its normal operation without an Arcana check. Arcana is useful for detecting tampering or diagnosing damage, not for withholding the basic instructions.

A practical consent puzzle

The party may propose restoring everything immediately. Omi asks whose permission covers slot 5, whose donor is not aboard, and whether Suri has changed her stated choice.

Resolve each slot separately:

- A present donor can authorize preview, restoration, storage, or destruction.
- A person claiming to speak for someone else must provide a relevant prior instruction.
- A commercial purchase document permits physical custody under its terms; it does not allow a buyer to impersonate a donor at the cradle.
- No general majority vote overrides an individual donor's decision.

There is no hidden "correct answer" that requires all six recordings restored. The playable objective is an informed disposition that respects the actual people and the evidence.

Access through other means

A rogue can open the case in C4 without obtaining Hett's key. That does not grant the porters an override, but characters may restrain, distract, or negotiate around them.

A character proficient with Arcana can spend an activity examining the routing records. On DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana), they produce a temporary override card valid for **one named porter for ten minutes**. On failure, the card visibly fails its test at the desk; no porter is silently activated

against them. Materials cost 5 gp from ordinary conductive wire and sealing foil, available in C5. When the ten minutes expire, the temporary instruction ends and that named porter resumes its last still-valid non-temporary order, under the hierarchy in Courier Routing Tag. Record that order before the override begins. A valid signed railway hold still outranks the tag; without any valid prior order, the porter stands by where it is. It never restores old custody by teleporting cargo or reversing completed transfers. This is homebrew device work, not a spell.

Forging Hett's signature requires DC 15 Dexterity with a forgery kit and access to a sample. Failure creates a visibly defective document. A successful forgery fools the porter's limited reader but may have later consequences if discovered by staff.

Compensation and copies

If Hett offered the rescue fee, Omi pays the **50 gp advance** here and records it. The strongbox originally contains **200 gp**, all belonging to the railway. It then contains **150 gp** until further payment.

Omi will make certified copies of evidence during another party member's ten-minute activity. Preserve originals if possible. A photograph, magical transcription, or carefully witnessed copy can still support the later evidence reward.

Success: The party obtains a valid hold, porter override, case key, and clear handling instructions.

Fail-forward: The ledger mismatch remains discoverable even if the party damages its relationship with Hett. The case can be opened by other means, and Suri can help operate the cradle once instructions are available.

Transition: The manifest names rack C4-R and the transfer cage C5-Q. The route timetable shows the approaching public junction. Fill one travel box for the first records investigation.

Scene 4: Glass in the Baggage Car

Runtime: 45 minutes.

Objective: Secure the stolen recordings before Nera can move them into a completed transfer.

Stakes: Possession can split; saving one recording may matter even if the whole case escapes.

READ-ALoud

Numbered trunks sit behind brass rails. In one open recess, six small circles gleam through the padded lid of a glass case. A broad-shouldered brass porter stands beside the rack with one hand resting on its latch. Over the central aisle, a painted arrow points forward: **TRANSFER CAGE**.

ARRIVAL CONDITIONS: IF THE CASE HAS ALREADY MOVED, REPLACE THE SECOND SENTENCE WITH "ONE OPEN RECESS IS EMPTY EXCEPT FOR A RECTANGULAR PATCH OF CLEAN FELT." IF P1 HAS MOVED OR BEEN DISABLED, OMIT ITS DESCRIPTION OR DESCRIBE ITS ESTABLISHED STATE. IF NERA IS PRESENT, ADD OUTSIDE THE - READ-ALoud

she stands at the position listed in the geometry table, watching the party's hands.

Encounter 4: The Six-Slot Case

Location: C4, potentially extending into C5 or the roof route.

Trigger: Someone attempts to inspect, claim, or move the case; Nera reaches it while challenged.

Initial opposition: P1, plus Nera if she is actually present.

Possible additional opposition: P2, only after it is reached in C5 or receives an audible command and travels from there.

Objective: Control the case, its individual recordings, or the legal authority directing its movement.

Starting circumstances

Use the actual state:

- **Party arrives early and quietly:** P1 guards the case. Nera remains at her current location until alerted.
- **Nera reaches the case first:** She has the routing tag and may open the rack, but has not automatically taken a full round of actions before the party arrives.
- **Hett has issued a hold:** P1 accepts the override card when presented within 5 feet.
- **The party has already seized the case elsewhere:** Resolve any remaining porter or courier confrontation there; do not place another case in C4.

P1 announces, "Bonded cargo. Present routing authority." It allows ordinary conversation and inspection of exterior labels.

Case access

The padded case is **24 pounds**, including six one-pound recordings. It is two feet long and can be carried in one hand, subject to normal carrying capacity. It does not reduce speed merely because it is the adventure objective.

Opening its latch requires the key, an action with thieves' tools and a successful **DC 14 Dexterity check**, or breaking the latch. The latch has **AC 15**, **10 hit points**, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Damage directed specifically at the latch does not also damage the recordings.

Removing or inserting one recording takes an action. Once open, a character can identify slot numbers and seal colors without a check. Reading all labels takes an action in combat or a brief examination outside it.

Nera's first offer

Nera offers to surrender **Mara's recording, slot 1**, if allowed to deliver the remaining five.

She frames this as solving the party's immediate problem. She knows slots 2 and 3 are also stolen and does not volunteer that admission. The party can accept a partial recovery, insist on all three, or demand her surrender.

If shown Tessa's note and the ledger mismatch, Nera offers all three stolen recordings in exchange for safe passage off the train at the next stop. She will also name Dask as the commissioning buyer if promised that her cooperation will be recorded.

The characters can make this bargain without becoming obligated to conceal evidence or guarantee a court's decision. State its actual terms aloud.

Porter orders

The routing tag can issue one short command as an action to **one porter within 30 feet that can hear it**. A command must concern carrying, guarding, yielding access to, or releasing the case. It lasts until completed or replaced.

The tag cannot order either porter to attack an unrelated person, leave the train during motion, destroy a recording, or obey commands beyond its hearing. See the complete item description for the override hierarchy.

P1's default order is to guard the case's rack. P2's default order is to receive the case at C5-Q and hold it for delivery.

A valid railway override supersedes the tag. Once a porter reads the signed card within 5 feet, it obeys the card's named custody instruction until Hett revokes it in person or another valid railway card replaces it.

If initiative begins

Nera tries to take the case and reach C5-Q. She attacks only creatures actively preventing her escape or seizing the cargo.

- **P1 blocks the nearest unauthorized carrier** and uses its Clamp attack to grapple rather than inflict damage when possible.
- **P2 remains in C5 unless called.** Hearing combat alone does not rewrite its order.
- **Nera uses movement and her bonus-action Dash or Disengage.** She does not receive a free move before initiative.

There are no reinforcements beyond P2. If Nera spends an action calling P2 while within 30 feet, P2 follows the new order on its next turn and moves along the central route at its normal speed. Record its path; it cannot pass through occupied hostile spaces or closed cage bars.

Terrain and useful actions

Use the map table's open central aisle, racks, ladder, and cage.

- Racks provide **half cover** to a creature on the opposite side of their open framework.
- A creature cannot end its movement inside a rack's solid footprint.
- Closing a rack gate takes an object interaction; securing its latch takes an action.
- A tie-down ring can anchor rope. Attaching a prepared rope takes an action; no check is needed when unopposed.
- A creature may shove, grapple, disarm through applicable features, or attack an object using ordinary rules. There is no universal free "snatch the held case" action: taking it from an unwilling holder requires that holder to release it, become incapacitated, or be overcome through an applicable rule or negotiated contest.

For a simple improvised tug over a case neither side has secured, use opposed Strength (Athletics) checks as each participant's action. The winner moves the case into their own space; a tie leaves it in place. This **homebrew contest** does not strip an item from a creature carrying it securely while freely moving.

Roof pursuit

Nera chooses the roof only if the central aisle is blocked and she can reach the C4 ladder. The roof network has three hatches, at C2, C4, and C6, and the connected carriage roofs shown on the map. Nera enters through C4 and chooses C2 or C6 as an exit according to the actual pursuit.

Climbing a ladder uses normal climbing movement. Roofs are level, ten feet above the carriage floors. The five-foot gaps between roofs can be crossed with normal jumping rules. A running long jump therefore crosses a gap automatically for a creature whose Strength score permits five feet.

Roof hazard, homebrew:

- **Warning:** Wet roof plates, visible gaps, and buffeting air are obvious before climbing.
- **Trigger:** A creature Dashes on a wet roof, is shoved there, or remains standing there when emergency braking begins.
- **Check:** DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, at most once per creature per round.
- **Failure:** The creature falls prone. If it occupied an outermost five-foot strip beside a side edge, it also slides to that edge and hangs by one hand.
- **Recovery:** A hanging creature can use an action and succeed on DC 10 Strength (Athletics) to climb onto the adjacent roof square. An adjacent creature can pull it up with an action and no check if able to lift it.
- **Further failure:** A failed climb leaves the creature hanging. It falls only if it releases its grip, becomes incapacitated, or takes damage and fails a DC 10 Strength saving throw.
- **Fall:** Ten feet to the trackside ground causes 1d6 bludgeoning damage. The landing area is gravel beside the

rails, not beneath the wheels. The train continues moving unless stopped.

- **Exhaustion/reset:** The hazard persists while roofs are wet and the train moves. Stopping removes the wind and braking triggers; wet running still risks falling prone.

A secured rope prevents the slide from becoming a fall but does not prevent prone. Crawling avoids the Dash trigger. Flight bypasses roof gaps and this surface hazard. Teleportation works normally to a destination satisfying the relevant spell's requirements.

Do not punish a flying character with an invented anti-flight field. Their mobility can decisively win the pursuit.

Case damage and partial recovery

The protective case has **AC 15, 20 hit points** and immunity to poison and psychic damage. At 0 hit points it breaks open but its padding protects the recordings from that same damage event.

Loose recordings have **AC 13, 3 hit points** and immunity to poison and psychic damage. An unattended loose recording takes damage from an effect only when that effect damages objects. Carried recordings follow the effect's normal treatment of worn or carried objects.

A broken recording permanently loses its stored recollection unless extraordinary magic explicitly provides another solution. No explosion jumps from one vial to another.

Nera will not deliberately break a recording. If a player threatens to do so, she believes a visibly credible threat and bargains accordingly, but the donor's interests remain part of the consequences.

Morale

Nera offers surrender at **20 hit points or fewer**, when both exits are controlled, or when she loses the case and has no credible route to reclaim it. She accepts restraint in exchange for protection from Dask.

A porter stops fighting when its valid order is fulfilled, the authorized holder orders it to yield, or it reaches 0 hit points. It does not surrender from fear.

Success: The party secures some or all recordings, obtains Nera's cooperation, or redirects the porters.

Fail-forward: Nera reaches C5-Q with the actual cargo she carries. The party retains any removed recordings and evidence. She must still survive the terminal transfer.

Transition: Recovered recordings can go to C3; a fleeing courier leads to C5; an approaching destination makes C6 relevant. Fill one travel box for the confrontation, including a chase and its immediate aftermath.

Scene 5: Who Chooses the Next Stop?

Runtime: 25 minutes.

Objective: Decide whether the train delays, diverts, stops, or continues.

Stakes: A route change protects custody but affects every passenger and does not itself resolve ownership.

READ-ALoud

Three signal lamps glow above the engineer's desk. A route diagram shows a public junction branching from the line before the private terminal. Beside the brake lever hangs a red instruction plate. The engineer keeps one hand on the speed control. "Tell me what you need changed," she says, "and what is coming down this line behind us."

Remote C3 opener: If the party speaks through the office tube, replace the C6 read-aloud with: "Omi lifts the speaking-tube cap. A bell answers through the brass pipe, followed by the engineer's voice: 'Tell me the change you need. I can report the signals from here.' The timetable lies beside the ledger." Ada verbally supplies the current junction availability, braking sequence, and acknowledgments; the party cannot see her desk or operate its controls from C3. They can request that she perform an agreed operation using the same action and time costs.

Arrival conditions: If the public junction has already passed, its lamp is dark; replace "shows a public junction branching" with "marks a public junction behind the train." If brakes are engaged, describe the stationary control and Ada monitoring the pressure gauge. Do not repeat the impression of an untouched control panel after someone has altered it.

Encounter 5: The Last Public Junction

Location: C6, or C3 through the speaking tube.

Trigger: The party requests a route or speed change.

Opposition: None unless an already tracked pursuer enters.

Objective: Obtain a deliberate operational decision with known consequences.

Ada's primary duty is passenger safety. She is willing to prevent an unlawful transfer but wants an actionable instruction rather than a shouted accusation.

Immediately evident: The public route is available through the end of travel box five. The cautious-approach setting can add two boxes. The emergency brake can stop the train.

Discoverable without a check: In C6, the red instruction plate gives the brake sequence and warns people to sit or brace. The signal diagram states that an acknowledged public-junction request is sufficient; no secret code or guessed phrase is required.

Four operational choices

Continue to the private terminal. No check. This keeps Dask within reach and preserves the chance to obtain his duplicate agreement. Characters may prepare an ambush, public accusation, or controlled delivery.

Cautious approach. Hett's authorization, proof of a disputed bonded shipment, or DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) convinces Ada. Add two travel boxes to the arrival threshold, once. The train still reaches its chosen terminal. A failed check means Ada requests Hett's approval; it does not consume another box beyond this encounter.

Divert to the public platform. Available only before more than five boxes are filled. Hett's authorization or a clear evidence package from Encounter 3 suffices. Ada sets the selector, sends the signal, and waits one minute for acknowledgment. The journey still ends at the existing threshold; the branch has a compensating shorter approach.

If the party lacks evidence and authority, DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) persuades Ada that the danger warrants a diversion. Failure leaves the private route selected, but new evidence can change her mind before the junction passes.

Emergency stop. Any creature adjacent to the brake can operate it. A deliberate stop uses the safety sequence below. Ada does not physically fight someone using the brake, though she may object to an unnecessary stop.

Emergency brake procedure

This is a **homebrew train hazard**.

- 1. Warn:** Ring the brake bell as an action or clearly order Ada to do so. Its sound reaches all six carriages immediately.
 - 2. Brace:** Creatures have until the end of the following round to sit, lie prone, hold a fixed rail with a free hand, or secure themselves with a line.
 - 3. Brake:** Pulling the lever takes an action. The train stops at the end of the next round.
 - 4. Resolve:** An unbraced standing creature on a carriage floor makes a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. On failure it falls prone and takes 1d4 bludgeoning damage. Braced creatures are unaffected.
 - 5. Roof:** Apply the roof hazard instead of this floor effect. Do not require both saves.
 - 6. Cargo:** Secured racks and the latched case remain safe. A loose closed case slides five feet toward the front if space permits; it does not break. Loose recordings slide likewise and take 1 bludgeoning damage on striking an obstacle.
- Pulling the lever without warning skips the opportunity to brace; resolve the effect at the end of the next round. The lever is visibly marked, so consequences are available before commitment.

The brake remains engaged until Ada releases it. Releasing it and restoring movement takes one minute; the journey

clock resumes from its prior filled boxes. Repeated braking cannot add unmarked travel time, but a stationary train genuinely pauses arrival.

If someone damages the controls

The brake lever and route selector each have AC 15, 15 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Breaking the selector locks the current route. Breaking the brake lever leaves the brake in its current position.

Ada can repair one damaged control in twenty minutes with C5 tools and help from one character. A character proficient with tinker's tools can instead attempt a DC 14 Intelligence check over ten minutes. Success repairs it; failure leaves it unchanged and consumes that time. Repeated attempts are possible.

Destroying the enchanted drive is beyond a casual lever attack. Its maintenance grille is a separate locked barrier. The adventure does not require rules for demolishing the locomotive; ordinary object adjudication and consequences apply if the party undertakes that larger project.

The cost of a stop

Passengers lose connections, perishable cargo warms, and railway responders reach the train after thirty stationary minutes. These are real consequences, not reasons to forbid stopping.

Hett can send a signal report naming the disputed case. If he cooperates, responders arrive expecting an evidence-custody problem. If he does not, they arrive expecting a disabled train and hear everyone's account.

Dask cannot load a wagon beside a train stopped miles short of his platform. Nera must escape on foot, negotiate, or remain aboard. A stopped-train conclusion can therefore secure the recordings while leaving Dask's knowledge less directly proven.

Hostile interference

If Nera actually pursues someone into C6, she tries to prevent a diversion by arguing that her contract requires the private stop. She does not understand the engine better than Ada and cannot silently override a confirmed route.

If combat erupts, Ada takes cover behind the control desk. Attacking her risks the train continuing under its last setting; it does not summon more enemies.

Success: The party obtains the route or delay it wants, or deliberately chooses the private stop with a plan.

Fail-forward: Private arrival remains, but the characters know where the case must go and can prepare the transfer. A failed persuasion check does not close the emergency-brake option.

Transition: Fill one travel box for this decision unless handled concurrently with another ten-minute activity through the speaking tube. Return to unfinished leads while boxes remain, or proceed to the terminal using actual positions and custody.

Scene 6: The Contested Transfer

Runtime: 45 minutes.

Objective: Determine who leaves with each recording and establish what can be proved.

Stakes: A completed receipt could conceal a theft; a hasty seizure could violate voluntary donors' choices.

READ-ALoud

A roofed platform slides beside the windows. Under a hooded lantern waits a narrow wagon, its horses already harnessed toward an open yard. A man in a pale coat holds a receipt pad against his chest. "The consignment first," he calls. "Disputes can be heard once delivery is complete."

Choose the actual location: Use the default opener only for an actual private-terminal arrival. Use the public-platform alternative only after that diversion. For a custody meeting while stopped between stations, use the stopped-train opener below. None of these changes the case's holder or moves absent people into the scene.

Stopped-train alternative:

READ-ALoud

The wheels are still. A faint hiss runs along the pipes beneath the floor, and lamplight rests on the carriage windows. From farther down the aisle comes a passenger's question: "Are we waiting here?"

DM guidance: Hold the meeting in the characters' current carriage, or move there using the ordinary carriage routes. Hett and Omi attend only if present or summoned and given time to walk there. Dask, his wagon, horses, and terminal guards are absent unless a separate, established journey brings them here. Nera and the porters retain their actual positions, custody, orders, and hit points. Before thirty stationary minutes, no railway responders have arrived. At thirty minutes, two neutral responders reach the train; announce their visible approach before they enter and use the inspectors' custody procedure. No platform, unloading hatch alignment, or wagon-loading clock is created by this meeting. Keep the journey clock paused until the train actually resumes movement.

Private-terminal arrival conditions: If the party holds the case elsewhere, Dask addresses Hett or the nearest character; no case appears beside the wagon. If Dask has received advance warning that the transfer is canceled, he instead asks for a meeting.

Public-platform alternative: Replace the read-aloud with:

READ-ALoud

Blue railway lamps illuminate an open platform. Two uniformed inspectors wait beside an empty baggage trolley. Farther down the platform, a man in a pale coat closes a pocket watch and looks toward the train's cargo doors. One inspector lifts a hand. "Before anything moves, who is declaring custody?"

Dask absent: Omit the sentence beginning "Farther down the platform" from the public-platform opener. His absence leaves both inspectors and their custody question unchanged.

Dask reaches the public platform by a parallel service road if the diversion was signaled at least one box before arrival. If it was concealed or arranged later, he is absent; his contractual objection arrives with a messenger after the immediate custody decision.

Encounter 6: Receipt Before Delivery

Location: T1-T4, adjoining C4-C6.

Trigger: Arrival, attempted loading, or a custody meeting after stopping the train.

Private-terminal opposition: Dask, G1, and G2, plus Nera and either porter only if actually present.

Public-platform opposition: Dask as a negotiator if present; the two uniformed inspectors replace his guards and are neutral.

Objective: Secure a defensible disposition of the recordings before the unwanted cargo departs.

Neutral Inspectors' Custody Procedure

Use this procedure for both public-platform inspectors and the two responders who reach an emergency-stopped train after thirty stationary minutes. One takes statements; the other witnesses and seals disputed property. They seek safe custody, not an instant criminal verdict. They do not presume that every recording was stolen or that Dask has arrived.

1. Record the present state. Ask who physically holds the case and each removed recording. List intact, restored, and destroyed slots separately. Record the identities of witnesses actually present. No one surrenders an item merely because this scene begins.

2. Establish a limited hold. A signed Hett hold, or any two independent concrete discrepancies from the Evidence and Investigation Reference, establishes a hold over the specifically implicated recordings without a check. One victim's account plus that victim's missing receipt is sufficient for their recording. With only one discrepancy, the inspectors obtain the corresponding C3 receipt or take the second witness's account; this takes ten minutes when the records or witness are aboard and reachable. Failed optional persuasion does not remove that route.

3. Choose the interim custodian. With the current holder's cooperation, seal disputed intact recordings in the case and place it in C3's locked compensation cabinet after its money is secured separately. Hett holds the cabinet key, witnessed by the second inspector; if Hett is absent or implicated, that inspector retains the key and stays beside the cabinet. If C3 or the cabinet is unavailable, the second inspector keeps the sealed case in hand in the occupied carriage. Write a receipt naming each slot and its holder. A party that refuses transfer can retain physical custody and receive a written non-transfer request; refusal does not magically seize the case or trigger combat.

4. Separate consent from custody. Confirm the three voluntary contracts individually. Arlo may exercise his repayment clause; Suri may reclaim her sealed recording under hers; Leda's existing sale remains valid unless contrary instructions are actually obtained. An unchallenged lawful recording may be released to its entitled holder. A specific unresolved objection places only that slot on hold. Restoration, preview, and erasure still require their stated permissions and procedures. A hold does not authorize any of them.

5. Resolve or defer openly. Verified stolen recordings go to their respective donors when they request them, or remain sealed at their request. Genuine unresolved contract objections receive a public railway hearing at Bellweather within twenty-four hours; the documented custodian retains those slots meanwhile. The inspectors give every claimant a copy of the inventory and hearing notice. Dask can object if present or later send a statement; his absence neither proves guilt nor defeats a supported hold. Recovered slots, evidence rewards, and custody beyond his unilateral reach count under the existing reward rules.

This procedure creates no wagon or additional hostile creatures. The party may finish with protected memories and a documented unresolved claim.

Dask's opening position

Dask claims that a purchase agreement gives him the right to receive the sealed consignment before objections are investigated.

He offers **150 gp to the party** for delivering the complete case without further delay. This is an illicit settlement offer, separate from the railway rescue fee, and creates the outcome described in Rewards. He calls it compensation for inconvenience.

If confronted with the missing receipts, he blames Nera. If confronted with Nera's letter, he says he expected lawful procurement. If confronted with his duplicate agreement from T3, a credible witness to his instruction, or Nera's cooperative testimony plus corroborating payment records, his innocent-buyer position collapses.

Three routes to a clean hold

The party can establish custody without winning a fight.

Railway authority: Present Hett's hold. The guards refuse to load slots 1-3 while the hold is active. Dask may argue over slots 4-6, but he must identify their valid contracts individually.

Witnessed proof: Show two independent evidence sources to G1 and G2. Nera's confession plus the ledger mismatch qualifies. The guards step away from the cargo and insist on outside review.

Negotiated separation: Dask may accept the three lawful recordings and surrender his claim to the stolen ones if no one has yet proved his commission. This arrangement still requires the voluntary donors' actual contract terms and current instructions. Suri can demand her sealed recording under her contract's return clause; Arlo can rescind his sale by repaying the agreed price.

Dask accepts a settlement that saves his reputation when the alternative is exposure. He will sign a receipt acknowledging return of slots 1-3 if the party insists. Such a receipt is useful evidence even if his deeper involvement remains unproved.

Access to the receiving office

These folio-search instructions apply only to private-terminal T3. At the public station, the inspectors freely permit use of T3 for statements and provide blank forms; searching its desk cannot reveal Dask's private counterpart or money. For evidence of his commission there, use Nera's testimony plus her payment letter, or his actual admission. A later trip to the private office is a separate follow-up.

Private-terminal T3 is unlocked during arrival. Dask expects clerks to bring papers through it. A character can enter openly by asking to inspect the buyer's counterpart of the agreement.

If Dask refuses, the office remains physically accessible through its platform door or road door. G1 watches the platform approach only while not occupied elsewhere.

The incriminating folio is on the desk. Finding it takes an action if someone has been told what to seek, or one minute of searching without that lead. A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check identifies the relevant page immediately on a quick search; failure means the character needs the full minute.

Taking the folio may be unauthorized, but reading or copying its relevant page can establish the commission. The adventure does not require theft of every document in the office.

The loading clock

Use combat rounds if anyone contests the transfer physically. There is no abstract countdown that loads the case despite intervention.

A completed transfer requires:

1. Open the loading hatch: One action by a creature adjacent to its interior or exterior latch. This may already

be done.

2. Move the case to the wagon: Actual movement and a free hand. Removing it from the cage or another holder must first be legally or physically possible.

3. Secure the case: One action by a creature adjacent to or aboard the wagon.

4. Drive: G2, or another capable driver in the driver's position, uses an action to move the wagon twenty feet north.

The horses and wagon move together along the clear lane shown in the map. After a second Drive action on a later round, the horses have passed the north edge but the wagon remains at y 65-80 on the mapped road, available for another round of interception. A third Drive action moves the wagon to y 85-100 and the horses to y 100-110, taking the entire team beyond the map. Leaving the map does not prevent pursuit.

The wagon cannot move if its wheel brake is engaged, its horses are detached, the gate is closed, or its path is blocked by a substantial obstacle. A driver can release the wheel brake as an object interaction while in the driver's position. Releasing a harnessed horse takes an action at its harness; cutting a harness strap requires 5 slashing damage against AC 11.

A closed yard gate is opened with an action at either latch. It has AC 15 and 25 hit points. It is not locked initially.

Opponent procedures

Dask: Stays behind G1 or retreats to T3. He orders and bargains; he does not attack armored adventurers with his letter opener. If seized, he offers cooperation and demands witnesses.

G1: Tries to interpose between unauthorized intruders and the wagon. If combat begins without clear proof of theft, G1 uses a spear and withdraws once badly injured.

G2: Remains the driver unless the wagon cannot move. G2 does not abandon the horses to join a distant fight.

Nera: Uses her actual remaining hit points and possessions. If already surrendered, she does not automatically rejoin Dask. If betrayed by him, she gives evidence against him.

P1 and P2: Obey their current valid orders. They can carry the case or protect a holder but cannot drive the wagon. Neither appears on the platform without traveling through an open door or hatch appropriate to its footprint.

Guard morale and employment limits

A guard stops fighting at **5 hit points or fewer**, when Dask abandons them, or when shown a valid hold and credible proof of theft. A guard will not attack a child, helpless passenger, or surrendered person.

A DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check backed by one concrete discrepancy persuades one guard to suspend involvement while records are checked. Two independent proof sources persuade both without a check.

An unsupported threat may make them defend themselves. A credible offer to pay their outstanding wages-**10 gp each**-gets their attention but does not automatically make them surrender lawful duties. This payment comes from whoever offers it and is not reimbursed by the standard reward.

Interventions and their exact effects

- **Hold or seize the case:** Prevents loading while custody remains.
- **Take one recording:** Protects that recording only; the remaining case can still depart.
- **Close the hatch:** Delays that route until someone opens it; does not seal other carriage doors.
- **Close the gate:** Prevents northward departure until opened or broken; loading can continue.
- **Calm or restrain the horses:** Stops movement while the effect applies. Use normal spell or handling rules. DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling), as an action with a free hand at a horse's head, makes the pair stand for one round unless damaged. Repeating this is possible, but the handler must remain in position.
- **Block the lane:** A creature standing in front of the team causes G2 to stop rather than run them down. If a different driver deliberately attempts a collision, use a DC 13 Dexterity save; failure deals 2d6 bludgeoning damage and knocks the creature prone beside the lane. The wagon moves only ten feet that action. This is homebrew and is not G2's behavior.
- **Fly or teleport onto the wagon:** Works normally. The character still needs actions to unstrap or take the case.
- **Destroy a wheel:** A wheel has AC 15, 15 hit points. At 0 hit points the wagon cannot move until repaired. Damage does not transmit to the case.
- **Silence:** Prevents spoken routing commands within the spell's area, but does not cancel existing porter orders.

No intervention resets completed actions unless it physically undoes them. Closing the gate does not unsecure the case. Releasing a harness does not return a removed recording to its slot.

If the wagon escapes

Record exactly which slots leave and who travels with them. The road remains visible.

Characters with sufficient speed, mounts, flight, or teleportation may pursue immediately. Beyond the map, the wagon travels at ordinary road pace toward Dask's vault house three miles west. It has no supernatural speed or concealment.

For a concise pursuit, compare the party's sustained movement options with the wagon and resolve one concrete interception opportunity at a road toll barrier half a mile away. The barrier is normally closed at night; Dask's driver needs one minute to wake the keeper. Characters

who can reach it in time can attempt another negotiation or seizure using the existing roster and hit points.

If no immediate pursuit is practical, Hett records the destination and sends a report. The current session can end with a partial victory and a named recovery objective.

Success: The party secures the relevant recordings, separates lawful claims, and prevents an unwanted departure or obtains a defensible settlement.

Fail-forward: Some cargo leaves, but recovered slots, copied contracts, testimony, and established donor wishes remain valid. The party can still earn partial compensation and the evidence reward.

Transition: Bring accessible recordings and willing donors to C3, a public station, or another safe place with the cradle. Resolve each slot and update the campaign-state ledger.

People at the Table

NPC: Mara Pell

Role and first impression: A practical bookbinder with ink permanently worked into the side of one thumb. She is trying to solve an impossible social situation without pretending to recognize someone.

Want: Understand what happened and decide whom she can trust.

Fear: That others will insist on a relationship she cannot presently feel, or that hesitation will hurt Iona permanently.

Immediate goal: Obtain a quiet place, reliable evidence, and time to think.

Voice: Precise, apologetic questions. "I believe that you believe me. Please tell me what I knew."

Knows: Her own identity, family facts outside the extracted cluster, journey purpose, and that she never agreed to a sale.

Hides: She feels ashamed of her inability to respond as Iona expects.

Leverage and relationships: She can authorize examination and restoration of slot 1. Her testimony directly contradicts the forged consent entry.

Responses: Kindness makes her willing to participate. Pressure makes her request Suri or another trusted witness. Betrayal makes her withdraw consent until she has independent advice.

Table use: Keep her a decision-maker. Once the recording is recovered, she may request a preview first or choose immediate restoration. Her default preference is restoration after the procedure is explained.

NPC: Iona Pell

Role and first impression: A watchful ten-year-old holding a brass mechanical bird.

Want: Be believed and remain near someone safe.

Fear: Being blamed for Mara's distress.

Immediate goal: Show the tickets and inscription.

Voice: Concrete observations. "The glove was mended here. I watched the silver thread."

Knows: The courier's glove detail, when Suri took her for milk, and ordinary family experiences.

Hides: Nothing relevant. She may stop answering when overwhelmed.

Leverage: Her observation identifies Nera's appearance; her evidence supports the relationship without serving as magical proof.

Table use: One clear clue and a human connection. She does not need to accompany the investigation.

NPC: Hett Brindle

Role and first impression: A conductor whose immaculate gloves suggest that order can be maintained through sufficient care.

Want: A safe journey and a defensible official record.

Fear: Discovering that his confidence enabled a crime.

Immediate goal: Keep the initial disturbance contained.

Voice: Formal distinctions, later shortened by honesty. "That is a complaint. This"-tapping the receipt gap-"is evidence."

Knows: Railway authority, schedule, carriage keys, compensation terms, and how to issue a porter override.

Hides: He accepted the courier's license as a substitute for personally checking every receipt.

Bargains: Will acknowledge his lapse if the party preserves evidence and avoids endangering passengers.

Threats: Intimidation can obtain temporary access, but it does not make him falsify a report.

Table use: A movable institution. Once convinced, he should materially help.

NPC: Nera Vale

Role and first impression: A composed courier with a silver repair seam along one glove and a habit of aligning papers before answering.

Want: Finish the commission, escape consequences, and retain professional standing.

Fear: Dask portraying her as a lone criminal while keeping the recordings.

Immediate goal: Keep scrutiny on paperwork long enough to move the case.

Voice: Exact commercial language. Under pressure: "He bought the absence as much as the memory."

Knows: All six slots, the three thefts, the routing tag, and Dask's commission.

Hides: Her letter omits the buyer's most incriminating phrase, but she heard it in person and knows his office counterpart includes it.

Offers: Individual recordings, all stolen recordings, testimony, surrender.

Responses: A specific bargain is more effective than moral denunciation. If Dask abandons her, she becomes a willing witness. If the party violates a promised safe surrender, she stops volunteering information but cannot undo already secured evidence.

NPC: Orin Dask

Role and first impression: A collector in a pale coat who handles receipts as if they were deeds to land.

Want: Own rare subjective experiences while remaining welcome in respectable markets.

Fear: A documented pattern of commissioning theft.

Immediate goal: Complete delivery before the dispute gains outside witnesses.

Voice: Courteous, impersonal ownership claims. "We are discussing an asset with a chain of title."

Knows: Slot 1 was stolen by commission. He did not specify the later thefts of Ben's and Tessa's memories.

Hides: The duplicate agreement in private-terminal T3 explicitly waived consent. He leaves it there when traveling to the public station unless an actual prior event established otherwise.

Offers: Money, return of selected recordings, withdrawal of contract claims.

Responses: Public proof makes him seek a settlement. Violence makes him retreat. Captivity makes him demand formal handling rather than fight.

NPC: Arlo Reed

Role and first impression: A retired gardener carrying a carefully wrapped cutting.

Location: C1 after the opening, unless invited elsewhere.

Want: Reconsider a memory sale without being told his original decision was foolish.

Sold memory: Slot 4, one evening keeping vigil beside his dying spouse.

Current preference: He regrets the sale and wants restoration if he can rescind it.

Contract: He may cancel before delivery by repaying 50 gp. He has the full 50 gp in his luggage and willingly returns it. No character must subsidize this.

Voice: Patient, unfinished sentences. "I wanted the room to stop being the first thing I remembered. I did not expect to miss the chair."

Table use: Demonstrates that voluntary consent can coexist with later regret and a valid contractual remedy.

NPC: Leda Wren

Role: An absent perfumer whose recording occupies slot 5.

Sold memory: A particular dawn walk through her childhood citrus garden.

Known wishes: Her signed contract authorizes sale and private preview by the purchaser. It does not authorize restoration without her participation.

Current status: Not aboard. She can be contacted by message at the address on her receipt or by suitable magic.

Table use: A limit on convenient resolution. The party can preserve and return her property or respect a valid sale; it cannot invent her present wishes.

Supporting voices

Ben: "There should be a moment when I remember doing it."

Tessa: "You may read the relevant line. You may not read my life."

Suri: "Choice is not proved by whether you approve of it."

Omi: "I can certify the copy. Please stop putting wet gloves on the original."

Ada: "The brake is simple. The people standing behind it are the complication."

Memory Rules and Equipment

All rules in this section are **homebrew for this adventure**.

What a recording contains

A recording stores one bounded autobiographical sequence or closely related cluster identified before extraction. The six recordings here contain experiences, not souls, complete personalities, or general knowledge.

Extraction removes ordinary access to the recorded experiences and, where specified, their associated recognition. It does not alter written records, other witnesses, skills, class features, factual knowledge outside the bounded content, or memories made afterward.

A donor can learn facts about the missing period from evidence. Knowing those facts is distinct from regaining the lived experience.

Identifying a recording

Each vial has a slot number, a donor resonance, and an exterior label. Labels can be forged; resonance cannot be changed with ordinary tools.

A willing donor touching their own intact vial recognizes that it belongs to them, though the contents do not return automatically. A non-donor feels only a mild vibration.

Identify reveals the recording's function, donor name as registered by the extraction, and whether it remains intact. It does not replay the content. *Detect magic* reveals divination magic in an intact recording.

Preview

The cradle previews one recording to one viewer seated at the headrest.

Activation: An action to select Preview and pull the lever.

Duration: One minute.

Effect: The viewer experiences a detached, clearly recorded impression of the stored event. It does not become the viewer's own memory and grants no proficiency or mechanical ability.

Consent: The cradle does not mechanically require donor consent for preview. The ethical and contractual decision therefore matters. A preview performed without permission is still an intrusion even when it reveals useful evidence.

Limits: One viewer at a time; no remote projection; no additional copy. Preview does not consume the recording.

Interruption: Ending contact or releasing the lever stops the preview. It may be restarted; the recording is unchanged.

Restoration

Activation: The matching donor touches the contact plate, verbally agrees to return, and an operator selects Return.

Time: Ten uninterrupted minutes per recording.

Target: The living donor of that recording, physically present.

Effect: The stored recollection returns. The vial becomes clear, inert glass. The donor retains memories formed during the gap.

Consent: A conscious donor must agree. An unconscious donor cannot be restored through this device merely because another person believes restoration would help.

Interruption: If contact breaks or the device loses power before ten minutes, restoration does not occur and the intact recording remains available. No partial personality change occurs.

Capacity: One recording at a time. No daily charge limit. Restoration consumes that recording's stored content once.

Aftereffects: The donor may rest or talk, but no imposed condition, exhaustion level, or compulsory emotional response applies.

Erase

Activation: Select Erase, lift the red guard, and hold the lever for one full minute.

Warning: The vial glows red and the cradle sounds a repeated bell throughout that minute.

Effect: At the end of the minute, the stored recollection is permanently destroyed and the vial becomes inert.

Interruption: Releasing the lever before completion preserves the recording intact.

Consent: The device does not enforce donor consent for erasure. Someone who performs it takes responsibility for that decision.

Limits: One recording at a time. Erasure does not affect the donor's other memories or memories already restored.

Restorative and investigative magic

The recordings are discrete magic items rather than ongoing spells. *Dispel magic* does not suppress or end a magic item's properties under the normal 2014 spell rules.

For this adventure, **greater restoration** cast on the donor while an intact matching recording is within 5 feet can restore that recording immediately, consuming its content and the spell's normal components. This additional interaction is homebrew. It still requires the donor's consent.

No spell automatically proves legal consent. *Zone of truth*, *detect thoughts*, divination, and similar abilities can supply strong evidence using their normal limitations.

A destroyed recording cannot be repaired by *mending*: repairing its glass does not reconstruct the lost content. This fact is detectable through *identify* or a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) examination before someone relies on that plan.

Item: Six-Slot Recording Case

Appearance: Dark wood, brass corners, felt-lined slots, a transparent padded inner lid.

Weight: 24 pounds loaded; 18 pounds empty; each recording weighs 1 pound.

Use: Protects and transports six recordings. One action opens an unlocked latch; one action removes or inserts one recording.

Capacity: Exactly six. There is no extradimensional space.

Protection: AC 15, 20 hit points; poison and psychic immunity. Breaking the case protects contents from the same damage event, after which exposed recordings use their own statistics.

Owner: The courier service owns the case; its contents have separate claims.

Value: 15 gp as ordinary fitted luggage once released from evidence custody. It is not included in the reward total and cannot be sold while the railway holds it as evidence.

Recovery: Repair requires ordinary materials worth 5 gp and one hour of competent craft work. Repairs do not restore lost recordings.

Item: Courier Routing Tag

Appearance: A copper badge with two sliding brass teeth.

Activation: An action, presenting the tag and speaking a valid instruction.

Target and range: One brass porter within 30 feet that can hear the speaker.

Duration: Until completed or replaced.

Valid commands: Carry, guard, release, or yield access concerning the named recording case.

Limits: Cannot compel unrelated violence, memory destruction, driving, leaving a moving train, or commands outside hearing. It controls at most the two porters assigned to this shipment, one command per action.

Authority: A valid railway override takes precedence. The tag cannot countermand that override.

Charges/recovery: Unlimited commands; no attunement. Its authorization expires when Hett closes the shipment record, after which it is an ordinary copper tag worth 1 sp.

Owner: Licensed courier equipment; normally surrendered with Nera's effects or returned to the railway.

Item: Prepared Extraction Instrument

Appearance: A palm-sized silver instrument with a replaceable glass tip and a contact cup.

Current contents: Three exhausted tips. No unused tip is aboard.

Original activation: One uninterrupted minute of contact with a willing or unconscious creature, using a tip calibrated to a named autobiographical sequence. An unwilling unconscious target makes a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw at completion. Success prevents extraction, consumes the tip, and wakes a naturally sleeping target; failure creates one recording.

Limits: One tip records one bounded sequence. It cannot remove abilities, spells, levels, souls, or memories not included in its calibration. Combat use is impractical because contact must remain uninterrupted for the full minute.

Recovery: Tips do not recharge. Preparing a new tip requires specialized laboratory equipment, one day, and 100 gp of materials; none of those facilities are aboard.

Current table use: Evidence. The party cannot reuse the three spent tips to take more memories.

Value: No lawful immediate resale while it is evidence. The instrument's eventual disposition belongs to the investigation, not the adventure's treasure reward.

Item: Restoration Cradle

Appearance: A brass headrest and contact plate beside a single felt-lined glass socket.

Weight: 40 pounds; bolted to C3's counter by four ordinary fasteners.

Power: A self-contained enchanted cell. It works when the train is stopped or when removed from the train.

Removal: Ten minutes with common tools, or one minute with a successful DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' or tinker's tools. Failure leaves it attached; force risks damage.

Durability: AC 15, 25 hit points; immunity to poison and psychic damage. At 0 hit points it is inoperative. An inserted recording is protected from the damage event that disables it.

Repair: Two hours, tools, and 25 gp of parts at a station workshop. No check is required for a trained railway technician.

Functions: Preview, Return, and Erase as above. No charges or attunement.

Owner: Railway property. Hett can authorize temporary removal for a rescue, but it is not a reward item.

Opposition Statistics

The brass porters and Nera are original homebrew creatures designed for this adventure. Their statistics are complete below. Listed challenge ratings are encounter guidance, not substitutes for the objective-based difficulty of the scenes.

Nera Vale

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)

Speed 30 ft.

10 (+0)

DEX: 16 (+3)

CON: 12 (+1)

INT: 15 (+2)

WIS: 12 (+1)

CHA: 16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +4

Skills Deception +5, Investigation +4, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Dwarvish

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Courier's Footing. Nera has advantage on saving throws against falling prone because of the train's movement or the roof hazard. This does not protect her from being shoved or from ordinary spell effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Nera makes two rapier attacks.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Bonus Actions

Quick Exit. Nera takes the Dash or Disengage action.

Reactions

Deflecting Guard. Nera adds 2 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. She must see the attacker and be wielding her rapier. This affects only that attack.

Equipment: Leather armor, rapier, dagger, thieves' tools, forgery kit, routing tag, instrument pouch key, 20 gp. Her compartment pouch holds the exhausted extraction instrument and commission letter until moved.

Tactics: Escape with evidence and cargo. She does not gain Sneak Attack, spells, or a hidden memory-draining combat power.

Brass Cargo Porter

Medium construct, unaligned

Use these statistics separately for P1 and P2.

Armor Class 15 (brass plating)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 25 ft.

16 (+3)

DEX: 10 (+0)

CON: 14 (+2)

INT: 6 (–2)

WIS: 10 (+0)

CHA: 5 (–3)

Saving Throws Str +5

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands Common and Dwarvish; speaks fixed cargo phrases

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cargo Authority. The porter follows the command hierarchy described under the routing tag. It can read a presented override within 5 feet. A valid override changes its behavior immediately when presented as an action; no saving throw applies.

Construct Nature. The porter does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Heavy Frame. The porter weighs 260 pounds and occupies one five-foot square. It is not Large and does not gain extra reach.

Actions

Piston Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Clamp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one Medium or smaller creature. *Hit:* The target is grappled, escape DC 13. The porter can grapple only one creature at a time and cannot use Piston Fist while maintaining the grapple. It can release the target without an action. The target is not restrained.

Carry or Handle Cargo. The porter manipulates the case, a latch, or a recording using the same actions required of another creature.

Tactics: Block unauthorized removal, grapple a carrier, and stop when authority changes. It does not attack someone merely for touching an unrelated trunk.

At 0 hit points: Inert, not explosive. A railway workshop can repair it later. It cannot be restored during the encounter by a free command or by *mending* alone.

Terminal guards G1 and G2

Use the **Guard** stat block from **SRD 5.1, Monsters: Nonplayer Characters**, with no changes.

For convenient play:

- AC 16; 11 hit points; speed 30 feet.
- STR 13 (+1), DEX 12 (+1), CON 12 (+1), INT 10 (+0), WIS 11 (+0), CHA 10 (+0).
- Perception +2; passive Perception 12.
- Spear +3 to hit, reach 5 feet or range 20/60 feet; 1d6 + 1 piercing damage, or 1d8 + 1 when used with two hands for a melee attack.
- Common; challenge 1/8, 25 XP each.

Each carries chain shirt, shield, and spear. These are the terminal's property, not treasure awarded for resolving the dispute.

Dask, railway staff, and passengers

Use the **Commoner** stat block from **SRD 5.1, Monsters: Nonplayer Characters** when statistics become necessary.

AC 10; 4 hit points; speed 30 feet; all abilities 10. An improvised club attack is +2 to hit for 1d4 bludgeoning damage. Dask and staff do not ordinarily make attacks.

Iona should remain outside combat. If a rule requires her statistics, use commoner statistics with no weapon, but do not introduce her as a tactical target.

Wagon horses

Use **Riding Horse**, **SRD 5.1, Monsters: Miscellaneous Creatures**.

Each is Large, occupies a ten-foot square, has AC 10, 13 hit points, speed 60 feet, Strength 16, Dexterity 10, Constitution 12, Intelligence 2, Wisdom 11, Charisma 7; passive Perception 10. Hooves are +5 to hit, reach 5 feet, for 2d4 + 3 bludgeoning damage.

The harnessed pair does not independently attack. The wagon's controlled twenty-foot movement is the encounter procedure for maneuvering through the platform yard, not the horses' maximum road speed.

Difficulty, Scaling, and Rest Assumptions

The default adventure uses **one Nera, two porters, and two terminal guards**. Dask is a negotiator. No other hostile combatants arrive.

Nera and two porters together offer 850 base XP; adding the two guards makes 900. The full group's adjusted difficulty is modest for four 6th-level characters. This is intentional. Limited aisles, custody, movement, and bystanders create decisions without requiring a long attritional battle.

Expected hostile damage is approximately 15 from Nera's two hits and 10 from each porter's hit before accuracy. Grappling instead of striking reduces that output. Avoid converting every porter turn into damage merely because the party has strong combat abilities.

Three characters, levels 5-6

P2 remains an inert reserve unit with no active power cell. Remove it from the active roster everywhere; its body can remain fixed beside the C5 workbench as scenery, outside usable movement squares. Nera has **45 hit points**. G2 drives and will not fight.

All other procedures remain unchanged. The routing tag can command only P1 in this version.

Four characters, level 5

Use the default counts but reduce each porter to **24 hit points**. Nera offers surrender at **25 hit points** rather than 20. This reduces combat duration and cumulative harm without adding new actors.

Five characters, levels 6-7

Keep the same counts. Nera has **75 hit points**; each porter has **40 hit points**. P2 begins under an order to receive the case at C5-Q, as usual; it is not moved into C4 for convenience.

Do not increase the number of guards or place larger creatures in the narrow compartments. Strong characters should gain a real advantage from superior mobility, control spells, and action economy.

Resource-sensitive parties

If the party begins depleted, Hett can secure time for a short rest after an emergency stop. He cannot compress a one-hour rest into ten minutes. Alternatively, emphasize Nera's negotiated surrender and the guards' employment limits.

No reward depends on killing an opponent. Use milestone advancement or award the same encounter XP for overcoming the relevant opposition through negotiation, restraint, evidence, or successful bypass. Do not award the same creature's XP again after it changes location.

Map Specifications

There are **two core maps**: the express and the terminal. Each has a separate DM and player-safe view. Coordinates below define the site; illustrations must follow them.

All coordinates are in feet. Rectangles are written **x-range** × **y-range**. A creature's listed position is its full occupied square or rectangle, not a center point.

Orientation: Increasing x runs toward the front of the train or east along the platform. Increasing y is north. Carriage floors and terminal platforms use z = 0. Roofs use z = 10.

Grid: Five feet for tactical use. Doors and passages align with the grid unless explicitly described.

Map 1: The Express

Overall boundary: x 0-265, y 0-20. Six carriages joined by five enclosed gangways.

KEY	BOUNDARY OR FEATURE	DOORS, MOVEMENT, AND CONTENTS
C1	x 0-40 × y 0-20	Rear saloon
C2	x 45-85 × y 0-20	Sleeping carriage
C3	x 90-130 × y 0-20	Records office
C4	x 135-175 × y 0-20	Baggage carriage
C5	x 180-220 × y 0-20	Service carriage
C6	x 225-265 × y 0-20	Control cab
G12	x 40-45 × y 5-15	Enclosed, level gangway
G23	x 85-90 × y 5-15	Enclosed, level gangway
G34	x 130-135 × y 5-15	Enclosed, level gangway
G45	x 175-180 × y 5-15	Enclosed, level gangway
G56	x 220-225 × y 5-15	Enclosed, level gangway
Main aisle	y 5-15 within every carriage	Ten feet wide; no fixed furniture

KEY	BOUNDARY OR FEATURE	DOORS, MOVEMENT, AND CONTENTS
End doors	At each carriage end, y 5-15	Ten-foot opening; normally open during service
C1-S	x 5-30 × y 0-5 and x 5-30 × y 15-20	Fixed saloon seating and tables; difficult terrain if climbed across
C1-B	x 30-35 × y 15-20	Solid refreshment sideboard
C2A	x 45-65 × y 0-5	Door at y 5, x 55-60; berth occupies x 45-55
C2B	x 65-85 × y 0-5	Door at y 5, x 65-70; berth occupies x 75-85
C2C	x 45-65 × y 15-20	Door at y 15, x 55-60; berth occupies x 45-55
C2D	x 65-85 × y 15-20	Door at y 15, x 65-70; berth occupies x 75-85
C3-D	x 95-115 × y 0-5	Solid counter, ledger, cradle
C3-L	x 120-125 × y 15-20	Records and compensation cabinet
C4-RS	x 140-170 × y 0-5	Solid cargo racks
C4-RN	x 140-150 and 155-170 × y 15-20	Solid cargo racks interrupted by a clear five-foot door approach at x 150-155
C4-R	x 155-160 × y 15-20	Case recess within northern rack; accessed from y 10-15
C4-H	x 170-175 × y 5-10	Ladder and roof hatch; climb ten feet
C2-H	x 75-80 × y 10-15	Ladder and roof hatch; climb ten feet
C5-W	x 185-210 × y 0-5	Solid tool benches
C5-Q	x 195-210 × y 15-20	Transfer cage; bars along y 15
C5-QD	y 15, x 200-205	Five-foot cage door, ordinarily unlocked for receipt
C5-LH	y 20, x 205-210	Exterior loading hatch; five-foot opening
C6-D	x 245-260 × y 0-5	Control desk; levers accessible from adjacent aisle
C6-E	x 245-260 × y 15-20	Locked drive grille; solid obstacle
C6-H	x 230-235 × y 10-15	Ladder and roof hatch; climb ten feet

Each carriage also has a **five-foot exterior passenger door** in its north wall, centered on x 20-25, 60-65, 105-110, 150-155, 190-195, and 235-240 respectively. These doors open onto the terminal platform when docked. C4's northern rack is interrupted at x 150-155, leaving an unobstructed five-foot route from its aisle through the passenger door; the case recess remains at x 155-160. Opening one during motion exposes the moving ground; no unseen step or catwalk appears outside.

Windows are glazed, two feet wide, and not ordinary Medium-creature exits without breaking frames. They provide line of sight where furnishings do not block it. A broken window can accommodate a Tiny creature freely or a Small creature squeezing; a Medium creature requires removing its frame over one minute.

Named initial positions

ACTOR/OBJECT	FULL FOOTPRINT
Mara	C1, x 15-20 × y 0-5, seated
Iona	C1, x 20-25 × y 0-5, seated
Hett	C1, x 30-35 × y 5-10
Party starting area	C1 aisle, x 5-25 × y 5-15; choose four unoccupied squares
Ben when in C2	x 50-55 × y 10-15
Tessa	C2C, x 55-60 × y 15-20
Suri	C2D, x 65-70 × y 15-20
Nera in berth	C2B, x 65-70 × y 0-5
Omi	C3, x 110-115 × y 5-10
P1	C4, x 150-155 × y 10-15
Case	Within C4-R; reachable from x 155-160 × y 10-15
Nera if guarding case	C4, x 160-165 × y 5-10
P2	C5, x 205-210 × y 10-15
Case destination	C5-Q, x 200-205 × y 15-20
Ada	C6, x 245-250 × y 5-10

The cage's three interior squares remain usable. Its door admits one Medium creature at a time. P2 starts outside it, leaving access through the door unobstructed. A carrier can enter the cage, move to its eastern square, and reach the exterior hatch. The case is small enough to pass through that hatch.

All porters are Medium. Scaling changes hit points or removes P2; it never enlarges a footprint or fills the aisle with an extra creature.

Roof geometry

Every carriage roof has its carriage's full x/y boundary at z = 10. The five-foot spaces between carriage roofs are open gaps above the enclosed gangways. The gangway roofs are rounded and not stable walking surfaces; falling onto one causes the normal ten-foot fall damage and leaves the creature prone there, able to climb to an adjacent carriage roof with normal climbing movement.

The C2-H, C4-H, and C6-H hatches connect their floor squares directly to the corresponding roof squares. Roofs contain no additional hidden hatch, elevated weapon mount, or secret route.

The clear interior distance from C4's rear doorway to C5-QD is approximately seventy feet along the aisle and into the cage. Nera cannot cross that entire route with a single thirty-foot move. Her bonus-action Dash makes sixty feet available. Spending both her action and bonus action on Dash makes ninety feet available, enough for the seventy-foot route if it is clear, but leaves no action to lock the cage or perform another action-cost task that turn. Otherwise she needs prior positioning or another turn.

Train schematic

The rendered map sheets below provide this route network; the coordinate tables remain the tactical reference.

The player version omits "case rack," "transfer cage" if not yet publicly identified, and all occupant markers. It may retain ordinary service-room names and visible roof hatches. The hatches are not secret.

Map 2: Terminal

Mapped boundary: x 130-290, y 0-80. This covers the transfer end of the train. Rear carriages continue west beyond the map.

At docking, convert train coordinates to terminal coordinates by **adding 10 to x**. The train retains y 0-20. Thus C5 occupies x 190-230, y 0-20, and its loading hatch lies at x 215-220, y 20.

KEY	BOUNDARY OR FEATURE	CONNECTIONS AND OBSTACLES
T1	x 130-290 × y 20-40	Level platform; clear except wagon footprint
T2	x 180-240 × y 40-60	Open transfer yard
T3	x 240-280 × y 40-60	Receiving office
T4	x 130-290 × y 60-80	Public road
Yard opening	y 40, x 195-220	Twenty-five-foot opening from platform into yard
Yard north gate	y 60, x 195-215	Twenty-foot opening to road; initially open
Office front door	y 40, x 250-255	Five-foot door to platform; initially unlocked

KEY	BOUNDARY OR FEATURE	CONNECTIONS AND OBSTACLES
Office road door	y 60, x 260-265	Five-foot door to road; initially unlocked
Office desk	x 265-275 × y 45-50	Solid desk; folio on top at the private terminal only. Public station: blank custody forms and timetable.
Wagon	x 200-210 × y 25-40	Ten feet wide, fifteen feet long, facing north
Horse H1	x 195-205 × y 40-50	Large footprint
Horse H2	x 205-215 × y 40-50	Large footprint
Driver position	x 200-205 × y 35-40	On wagon, not an extra obstacle
Dask	x 225-230 × y 25-30	Clear platform square
G1	x 215-220 × y 30-35	Clear platform square
G2	Driver position	Begins aboard wagon
Public inspectors	x 225-230 × y 25-30 and x 230-235 × y 25-30	Replace Dask's guard deployment on public arrival; Dask waits at x 250-255 × y 30-35, immediately south of the office door

Railings border the platform's north edge outside the yard opening and office door. They are four feet high, provide half cover, and can be climbed with five feet of additional movement. The platform's west and east ends are open.

The paired horses occupy a twenty-foot-wide harness span. That span fits the twenty-five-foot yard opening and twenty-foot north gate. Their team and wagon move straight north without turning. Their harness footprint takes precedence over the simplified "pair" language in the encounter.

The loading hatch faces a clear five-foot strip of platform at y 20-25. A carrier can step out, move west along that strip, and reach the wagon's southern or eastern side without crossing its footprint. The wagon is not directly beneath the hatch.

The entire team fits through the north gate. After the first twenty-foot Drive move, the horses occupy y 60-70 and the wagon y 45-60. After the second, the horses occupy y 80-90 and the wagon y 65-80; the cargo has left the platform but remains on the mapped road for another interception opportunity. Only after a third Drive action does the wagon reach y 85-100 and the horses y 100-110, leaving the map entirely.

Terminal schematic

The rendered map sheets below provide this route network; the coordinate tables remain the tactical reference.

Public-station map overlay: Keep all architectural dimensions. Replace the private wagon at x 200-210, y 25-40

with an empty, unpowered baggage trolley of that footprint; remove both horses, both guards, and all private evidence annotations. The trolley moves only by actual handling and is not an escape vehicle. T3 contains public railway papers, not Dask's folio or 150 gp. Mark inspectors at their public positions; place Dask only if his road journey has brought him here. Public T4 leads along the railway access road; the private office and vault distances listed under T4 apply only at the private terminal. Do not run the private loading clock here. Use Neutral Inspectors' Custody Procedure.

The player version shows architecture, ordinary doors, wagon, and visible horses when present. It removes starting-position markers, evidence labels, the folio notation, and any route arrows labeled as an escape plan.

Map asset briefs

These map assets are delivered with this module as 300 ppi PNG sheets with SVG masters.

ASSET PATH	AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE	FORMAT AND PLACEMENT
assets/maps/midnight-express-train-dm.png	DM reference; all keys, footprints, roof connections, initial positions	Landscape US Letter reference, color with grayscale-safe linework; beside location key
assets/maps/midnight-express-train-player.png	Player navigation; ordinary architecture and visible access only	Landscape US Letter handout; no occupants, cargo secret, or evidence labels
assets/maps/midnight-express-terminal-dm.png	DM transfer reference; wagon, full horse footprints, doors, positions	Landscape US Letter reference; beside Encounter 6
assets/maps/midnight-express-terminal-player.png	Player transfer decisions; visible architecture and equipment	Landscape US Letter handout; no evidence or escape-plan labels

Use a restrained ink-and-watercolor railway plan, pale floors, dark walls, and high-contrast doors. Keep scale bars and labels as typeset text. Do not place decorative trunks, steam, or shadows over usable squares.

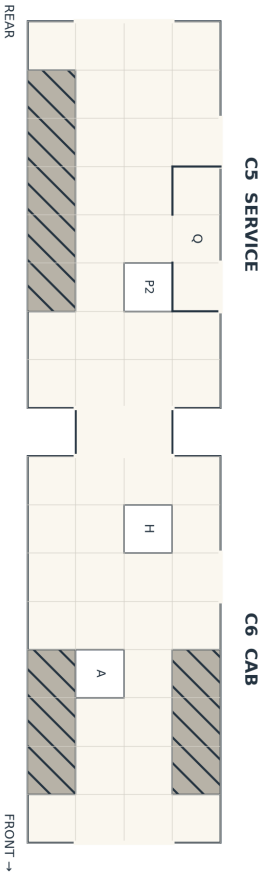
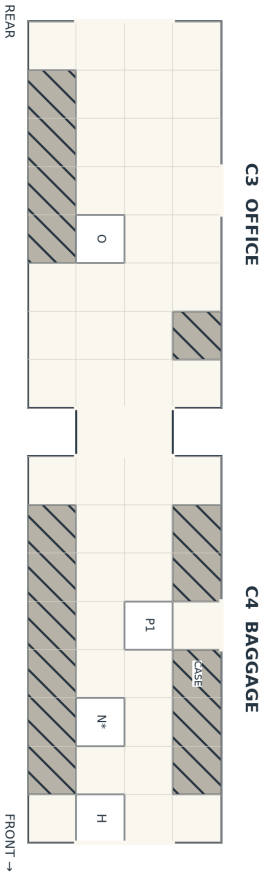
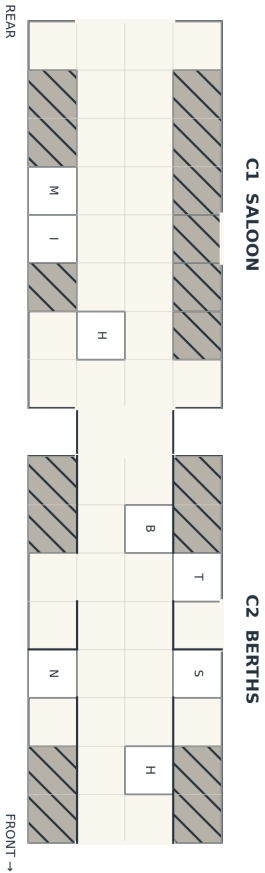
Train caption: "Six carriages, one continuous aisle, and three visible roof hatches."

Terminal caption: "The loading route remains open to inspection-and interruption."

DM Map Sheets

THE MIDNIGHT MEMORY EXPRESS

Carriage plans | DM ONLY - starting positions



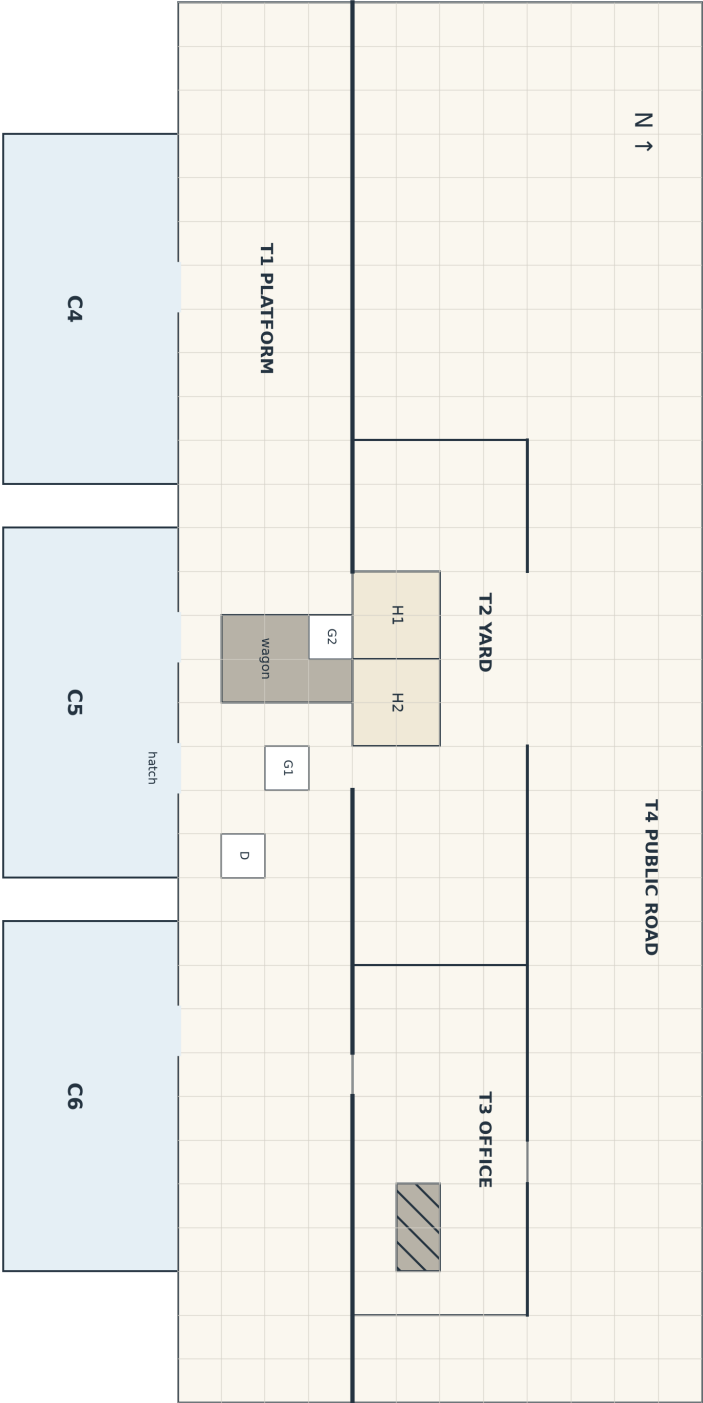
GRID: 5 FEET | NORTH UP | H: ROOF HATCH, +10 FT | Panels continue C1 → C2 → C3 → C4 → C5 → C6.
Each inter-car gangway is 5 ft long and 10 ft wide. Roof gaps are 5 ft; gangway roofs are not stable walking surfaces.
M Mara / I Iona / H Hett / B Ben / T Tessa / S Surf / N Nera / O Omi / A Ada
N* is Nera's alternate guarding position, never a second creature. P1/P2 are the two porters. Q: transfer cage.

Map key: use the keyed location descriptions on the following pages.

The Midnight Memory Express

THE MIDNIGHT MEMORY EXPRESS

Terminal plan | DM ONLY - private arrival



GRID: 5 FEET. Horses occupy full 10 x 10 ft spaces; their 20 ft harness span fits the north gate.
Train coordinates shift +10 ft east when docked. C5 loading hatch: x 215-220. Clear loading strip: y 20-25.
Drive 1: wagon y 45-60. Drive 2: y 65-80, still interceptable on the road. Drive 3: y 85-100, fully off-map.
Public arrival: inspectors replace guard deployment at x 225-235, y 25-30. Dask waits at x 250-255, y 30-35.

Map key: use the keyed location descriptions on the following pages.

Recording Reference

This ledger is DM-only; hand out only the evidence acquired at its stated scene. Record custody separately from consent.

SLOT	DONOR AND CONTENT	CONTRACT AND DISPOSITION
1	Mara; recognition through shared experiences with Iona	Stolen. Return to Mara; restore only with her current consent.
2	Ben; inspection of this shipment	Stolen. Return to Ben; restore with his consent. His new inspection remains valid meanwhile.
3	Tessa; witnessing the extraction	Stolen. Return to Tessa; restore with her consent. Preserve her privacy during preview.
4	Arlo; vigil beside his spouse	Voluntary sale; he can cancel before delivery and supplies the 50 gp repayment himself. He requests restoration.
5	Leda; childhood garden at dawn	Valid sale and purchaser's private preview permitted. Leda is absent; contact her or maintain documented custody. Do not invent consent to restore.
6	Suri; her voluntarily sold recording	Follow her receipt's withdrawal clause and current request for a sealed return; do not restore or preview against her wishes.

Evidence and Investigation Reference

The mystery has multiple routes to each essential conclusion.

CONCLUSION	ROUTE ONE	ROUTE TWO	ROUTE THREE
Mara's loss was not a documented voluntary sale	Her denial plus no receipt	C3 nonexistent receipt number	Authorized preview of slot 1
Nera had access during the theft window	Iona's glove observation	Tessa's written line	Suri's account of Nera's movement
The cargo paperwork was altered	Six entries, three receipts	Scraped ink and substituted lines	Nera's commission and confession

CONCLUSION	ROUTE ONE	ROUTE TWO	ROUTE THREE
Ben's inspection authority was copied	Notebook sketch and duplicate punch	Soft-metal stamp examination	Restored slot 2
Tessa witnessed the theft	Her journal line	The bounded content label of slot 3	Authorized preview or restoration
Dask commissioned a theft	Private-terminal T3 duplicate agreement	Nera's testimony plus payment letter	His admission under credible exposure
Some sales were legitimate	Suri's receipt	Original C3 contracts	Donors' own accounts

A failed check changes access, speed, confidence, or relationships. It does not delete every route to a conclusion. Conversely, successful evidence should actually resolve uncertainty; do not keep demanding new checks because the players reached the answer sooner than expected.

Evidence custody

For each physical item, note:

- Who found it.
- Where it was found.
- Who currently holds it.
- Whether an original or copy remains.
- Which witnesses can confirm the finding.

The later 75 gp evidence reward requires a coherent package, not immaculate modern forensic procedure. Ordinary adventurers can preserve useful proof through witnesses and clear records.

Strong evidence packages

Against Nera: Three missing receipts, two victim statements, and either her instrument or a direct recording of the theft.

Against Dask: His duplicate agreement, or Nera's cooperative testimony supported by his payment letter and a recovered commissioned recording.

For railway reform: The substituted manifest, copied inspection mark, and Omi's account of accepting the additions.

Destroying the recordings does not erase written evidence. Restoring them consumes the magical originals but creates living witnesses who can describe their recovered experiences. Record that restoration was performed and by whom.

Handouts

DM Distribution Guide

These instructions are private. Detach or share each player page separately only after its acquisition point.

Two Tickets and a Brass Bird - Distribution: Give when the characters inspect Iona's tickets and bird during Scene 1. The physical items remain with Iona unless she agrees otherwise.

Tessa's Relevant Journal Line - Distribution: Give only when Tessa permits access to the relevant entry or the characters obtain it through an actual search. This handout excludes her unrelated private writing.

Preliminary Inspection Note - Distribution: Give when Ben shares his notebook.

Cargo Manifest Extract - Distribution: Give when the party inspects the C3 manifest. The missing attachments become evident when the receipts are compared.

Suri's Donor Receipt - Distribution: Give when Suri shares her receipt or the corresponding original is examined in C3.

Nera's Commission Letter - Distribution: Give when the party opens Nera's travel pouch or she voluntarily supplies the letter.

Operating the Memory Cradle - Distribution: Give after Omi's demonstration or a careful examination of the cradle. This handout contains operation instructions, not the unseen contents of recordings.

Arlo's Cancellation Clause - Distribution: Give when Arlo discusses reclaiming slot 4 or the party examines his original contract.

Leda's Sale Terms - Distribution: Give when slot 5's original contract is examined. It does not supply a new statement of Leda's present wishes.

Dask's Counterpart Agreement - Distribution: Give only when the party obtains or reads the relevant folio page in private-terminal T3, or a tracked holder actually brings that document to a settlement. Public-station T3 has no counterpart; diversion does not move the folio. Dask cannot produce it remotely or from memory as this original handout.

Recording Disposition Form - Distribution: Give once the party has established the case's contents and begins resolving ownership. This is a blank decision aid, not an order to restore everything.

Handout: Two Tickets and a Brass Bird

NIGHTLINE RAILWAY

Two passengers: Mara Pell and Iona Pell

One shared sleeping compartment

Final destination: Bellweather Junction, onward connection

The tickets are tied together with blue thread.

On the brass bird's base, in small hand-scratched letters:

For Iona, who notices everything. -M.

Handout: Tessa's Relevant Journal Line

23:09.

Courier, silver glove seam, blue glass; ask conductor after she passes.

She came from the compartment opposite. The little girl was still away with the doctor.

I should write this down before I decide it is none of my business.

Handout: Preliminary Inspection Note

23:00 - Bonded case accepted for preliminary inspection.

Outer latch sound. Three amber seals visible.

Final contents review pending receipt of late paperwork.

Punch mark: left edge chipped.

B. Orrel

Beneath the note is a small sketch of a circular mark with a triangular notch missing from its left edge.

Handout: Cargo Manifest Extract

CONSIGNMENT: SIX-PLACE GLASS RECORDING CASE

Courier: Nera Vale

Receiving customer: Orin Dask

SLOT	EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION	RECEIPT REFERENCE
1	Family recognition sequence	R-441
2	Professional inspection interval	R-442
3	Corridor observation interval	R-443
4	Evening vigil	R-417
5	Citrus garden at dawn	R-419
6	Triage shift	R-422

Attached donor receipts: R-417, R-419, R-422.

Inspection mark applied. Delivery scheduled at the private terminal.

Handout: Suri's Donor Receipt

DONOR: Dr. Suri En

RECORDING: One specified triage shift, bounded by the opening and closing bells

PAYMENT RECEIVED: 50 gp

The donor retains all medical knowledge, general factual recollection, and experiences outside the agreed interval.

The donor may reclaim physical custody before final delivery. Reclaiming custody does not require immediate restoration.

The recipient may not authorize restoration on the donor's behalf.

Signed: Suri En

Handout: Nera's Commission Letter

Vale,

The three ordinary purchases are acceptable, but they are not the reason for this commission.

I require one authentic maternal recognition sequence, recent enough that the subject still expects to act upon it. An imitation or a reconstruction from testimony is of no interest.

The additional payment remains due upon delivery of the sealed case.

Use the established terminal and keep the records consistent.

-O. Dask

Handout: Operating the Memory Cradle

MEMORY CRADLE - PASSENGER INSTRUCTIONS

Eye: Preview

Insert one recording. One seated viewer receives a detached impression over one minute. The recording remains intact. Obtain the donor's permission.

Open Hand: Return

The matching donor must be present, touching the contact plate, and willing. Hold the setting for ten uninterrupted minutes. The memory returns; the glass becomes empty.

Crossed Circle: Erase

Lift the red guard and hold for one full minute. The bell sounds throughout. Releasing the lever before completion preserves the recording. Completing the operation destroys the stored memory.

One recording at a time. Do not strike, heat, or open the glass.

Repairing broken glass does not repair a lost memory.

Handout: Arlo's Cancellation Clause

DONOR: Arlo Reed

RECORDING: One evening vigil

PAYMENT RECEIVED: 50 gp

Before final delivery, the donor may cancel by returning the full payment.

Upon cancellation, the recording must be returned intact. Restoration remains the donor's choice.

No additional cancellation charge applies.

"I have kept the money," Arlo has written beneath the clause. "Please ask before you decide for me."

Handout: Leda's Sale Terms

DONOR: Leda Wren

RECORDING: Dawn in the western citrus garden

PAYMENT RECEIVED: 50 gp

Sale includes physical custody and private preview by the purchaser.

Restoration requires the donor's physical participation and consent.

Any dispute concerning delivery may be held for review at a public railway office.

Correspondence: Leda Wren, Wren & Glass Perfumery, Bellweather Junction.

Handout: Dask's Counterpart Agreement

PRIVATE COMMISSION - BUYER'S COUNTERPART

Supplier: Nera Vale

Buyer: Orin Dask

Subject: One authentic maternal recognition sequence.

Consent unnecessary; authenticity essential.

The supplier is responsible for a consistent transport record. The buyer will receive the sealed consignment at the established terminal.

Additional procurement fee due on delivery: 150 gp.

Signed: Orin Dask

Acknowledged: Nera Vale

Handout: Recording Disposition Form

RECORDING DISPOSITION

Slot: _____

Donor: _____

Current holder: _____

Donor's stated choice:

☐ Restore☐ Keep sealed☐ Transfer under an agreed contract☐ Destroy☐ Hold pending contact or review

Permission for preview, if any: _____

Witnesses: _____

Final location or completed action: _____

Rewards and Follow-Up

Reward ledger

Railway advance OWNER: Nightline Railway QUANTITY: 50 gp ACCESS CONDITION: Accept reasonable recovery work RECIPIENT: Party total
Railway completion balance OWNER: Nightline Railway QUANTITY: Up to 150 gp ACCESS CONDITION: Secure stolen recordings intact RECIPIENT: Party total
Evidence award OWNER: Railway investigators QUANTITY: 75 gp ACCESS CONDITION: Submit a coherent evidence package RECIPIENT: Party total
Arlo's repayment OWNER: Arlo Reed, then contractual recipient QUANTITY: 50 gp ACCESS CONDITION: Cancel slot 4's sale RECIPIENT: Not party treasure
Suri's prior sale payment OWNER: Suri QUANTITY: 50 gp, already paid ACCESS CONDITION: Existing transaction RECIPIENT: Not party treasure
Leda's prior sale payment OWNER: Leda QUANTITY: 50 gp, already paid ACCESS CONDITION: Existing transaction RECIPIENT: Not party treasure
Dask's illicit offer OWNER: Dask

QUANTITY: 150 gp

ACCESS CONDITION: Deliver the complete case and abandon immediate recovery

RECIPIENT: Alternative party payment

The **standard maximum earned reward** is 275 gp for the party: 200 gp railway compensation, including the 50 gp advance, plus 75 gp for evidence.

The railway has 200 gp aboard. The evidence award is paid at a public office within three days of submission from the railway's investigation fund. Hett can issue a signed claim; he cannot pay that additional 75 gp from the already committed strongbox.

Partial compensation

The advance is retained for reasonable effort.

Once the investigation establishes the three stolen recordings, Hett discloses the allocation: each stolen recording secured intact beyond Dask's unilateral reach earns **50 gp of the remaining balance**:

- Slot 1 secured: 50 gp.
- Slot 2 secured: 50 gp.
- Slot 3 secured: 50 gp.

Restoring a recovered recording with its donor's consent counts as securing it. Destroying it does not earn that slot's completion payment, even if the donor later approves the destruction; the contract specifically pays for intact recovery. Hett can explain this before a destruction decision.

This accounting yields **50-200 gp** in railway compensation, plus the independent evidence award if earned.

If the party takes Dask's 150 gp offer and deliberately delivers all six recordings, the railway demands its 50 gp advance back. Returning it leaves **150 gp net** from the illicit agreement. Keeping both leaves 200 gp in hand but a documented 50 gp debt and no earned railway completion reward. This is an alternative outcome, not an additional clean reward.

Recoverable equipment

Nera's mundane equipment has the following ordinary listed values: leather armor 10 gp, rapier 25 gp, dagger 2 gp, thieves' tools 25 gp, forgery kit 15 gp. Total listed value is **77 gp**. If legally released and sold undamaged at half value, it yields **38 gp, 5 sp**.

Her purse contains **20 gp**. These possessions remain hers unless lawful seizure, a settlement, or the circumstances of defeat establish another disposition. They are not promised reward money.

The porters are railway property and contain no saleable gems. Their plating and mechanisms are not free treasure. The guards' equipment belongs to the terminal. Dask's 150

gp offer remains in his locked cash drawer in private-terminal T3 until paid. At the public station or stopped train he can offer only payment after an actual trip to obtain it, never produce that money on the spot; stealing it is a separate act and does not also count as receiving his contractual payment.

The recording case, routing tag, extraction instrument, and cradle have the ownership and release limits given in their item entries. None grants the party an unrestricted memory-theft business as an incidental reward.

Accomplishment rewards

Award the same progress for obtaining surrender, exposing the scheme, redirecting the porters, or preventing delivery as for defeating the relevant opponents.

For milestone campaigns, this adventure is one significant accomplishment toward the next level. If it completes an existing advancement arc, reaching level 7 is appropriate; otherwise, record the milestone without forcing an immediate level.

Useful nonmonetary outcomes

Hett can grant each character **one future ordinary Nightline passenger journey**, including a berth, valid for one year. It has no cash redemption and does not include freight transport.

Mara can repair or bind one ordinary book for each character without charge. This is a personal thank-you, not a magic item.

Ben becomes a reliable contact for freight schedules and inspection practice. Tessa can provide a careful written account. Suri offers professional introductions, while retaining control over her own recording.

Resolution Paths

All three stolen memories recovered; choices respected

Mara chooses whether to restore slot 1; her default is yes. Ben wants slot 2 restored so he can testify and recover confidence in his work. Tessa wants slot 3 restored after being told it contains the theft interval rather than her unrelated private writing.

Arlo repays 50 gp and requests restoration of slot 4. Suri takes slot 6 sealed. Slot 5 follows Leda's valid agreement or enters a documented hold while she is contacted.

People: The three victims regain access if they choose restoration. Iona remains with Mara. Nera may be detained or a cooperating witness.

Factions: Hett acknowledges the railway's lapse. Dask faces the strength of the evidence actually obtained.

Possessions: Record each restored vial as inert. Suri holds her sealed vial. The cradle remains railway property.

Danger: No memory is inevitably stolen again. Any later threat must arise from a new choice or unresolved actor.

Payment: Up to 275 gp under the ledger.

The family recording recovered; other cargo lost

Mara may recover recognition of Iona while Ben and Tessa retain their gaps.

People: A personal success does not require claiming that everyone was saved. Ben may need the party's evidence to protect his job. Tessa can testify about her written note even without the missing experience.

Factions: Hett pays the advance plus 50 gp for slot 1. The evidence award remains possible.

Possessions: The escaping case contains only the slots actually left in it.

Follow-up: Dask's vault house becomes an optional recovery objective. Mara's restored recording remains restored regardless of whether the party pursues the others.

Cargo secured, but a donor refuses restoration

A donor can choose to keep a recovered recording sealed. Mara could do so if she wants time, though this is not her default. Suri explicitly does.

People: Their relationships develop through present choices. Refusal is not a failed saving throw or a problem for the party to override.

Factions: Railway custody can end with a documented return to the donor.

Possessions: The sealed recording belongs in the chosen holder's care.

Payment: Intact recovery still qualifies for the stolen-slot completion payment.

Follow-up: Future restoration is possible wherever the intact recording and a functioning cradle are available.

Public diversion or emergency stop

The party prevents Dask from obtaining immediate possession.

People: Railway responders take statements. Nera's treatment depends on surrender, evidence, and the party's promises.

Factions: The railway must confront its procedures. Dask may remain unproven as a knowing buyer if his office agreement was never obtained.

Possessions: The case is sealed under a named custodian, with separate instructions for each donor.

Danger: A custody dispute remains, but the stopped or diverted train is a real victory. Dask cannot simply reclaim

the cargo because the adventure needs a villain.

Payment: Secured stolen recordings qualify for completion payments.

Negotiated separation at the terminal

Dask relinquishes slots 1-3 while pursuing lawful claims over the others.

People: Victims recover their property. Nera may escape under agreed terms or testify in return for leniency.

Factions: Dask's broader wrongdoing may remain hidden if the party accepts a quiet settlement.

Possessions: Arlo can cancel slot 4 before delivery. Suri can reclaim slot 6 under her clause. Slot 5 may lawfully pass to Dask if no contrary instruction or hold applies.

Danger: Dask remains a collector with limits imposed by the settlement. Do not imply that a lawful transfer of slot 5 is secretly the same as stealing Mara's recording.

Payment: Railway recovery and evidence rewards depend on actual conditions met.

A recording is destroyed

Identify the exact slot and who made the decision.

People: The donor's missing experience remains inaccessible. If destruction was consensual, describe the chosen consequence without declaring it secretly wrong. If imposed, the responsible characters must answer for violating that person's agency.

Factions: Evidence may still support prosecution. The railway withholds that slot's 50 gp completion payment.

Possessions: The broken or erased vial is inert. It cannot later be restored through the ordinary cradle.

Follow-up: Relationships and compensation remain playable. Extraordinary recovery is a separate undertaking, never an automatic promise.

Dask obtains the case

The wagon departs with its recorded contents. Nera receives her payment if she remains useful to him; if she has lost his trust, she may instead seek protection and offer evidence.

People: The victims keep their gaps. Mara and Iona can rebuild trust with support; their future is not reduced to a failed objective.

Factions: Hett can still report the crime. Dask's position depends on whether the party preserved proof.

Possessions: The case reaches the vault house unless intercepted.

Payment: The railway advance remains only for reasonable efforts. Deliberately helping Dask invokes the alternative payment terms.

Follow-up: A public complaint, negotiated return, warrant, or later recovery mission are possible. None is treated as already selected.

Return Visits and State Ledger

Use this ledger at every transition and at the end of play.

ELEMENT	RECORD
Travel	Filled boxes; threshold eight or ten; moving or stopped
Route	Private terminal, public platform, or stopped location
Case	Location, holder, latch state, hit points
Slot 1	Holder; intact, restored, or destroyed; Mara's choice
Slot 2	Holder; intact, restored, or destroyed; Ben's choice
Slot 3	Holder; intact, restored, or destroyed; Tessa's choice
Slot 4	Holder; Arlo's cancellation and repayment status
Slot 5	Holder; Leda contacted or pending; contract status
Slot 6	Holder; Suri's stated instruction
Nera	Location, hit points, equipment, surrender terms
P1	Location, hit points, current order, override status
P2	Location, hit points, current order, override status
Hett	Evidence seen; authority granted; payment issued
Dask	Evidence exposed; money paid; detained, present, or escaped
Guards	Present, withdrawn, surrendered, or driving
Cradle	Location, condition, current operation
Documents	Originals and copies; current holders
Money	Advance, completion payments, evidence claim, private bargains

Return-visit cues

Back to C1: Ask what Mara now knows and whether Iona is present. Use a quiet scene of care or recognition appropriate to that state. Do not repeat the opening crisis.

Back to C2: Track empty berths, opened locks, and passenger relocation. A searched room yields no fresh commission letter unless the original was overlooked.

Back to C3: Omi works with the records still present. If the cradle was removed, its empty mounting holes replace it.

Restoration takes real time and uses one slot at a time.

Back to C4: The rack's vacancy, damage, and porter state tell the story. A defeated P1 remains defeated.

Back to C5: The cage may be empty, occupied, open, or locked. Its hatch cannot be used from outside to retrieve an item in a different carriage.

Back to C6: Ada remembers the route decision. Controls remain damaged or repaired as established.

Back to the terminal: Departed people stay departed until they have a reason and time to return. The road, office, and witnesses remain available.

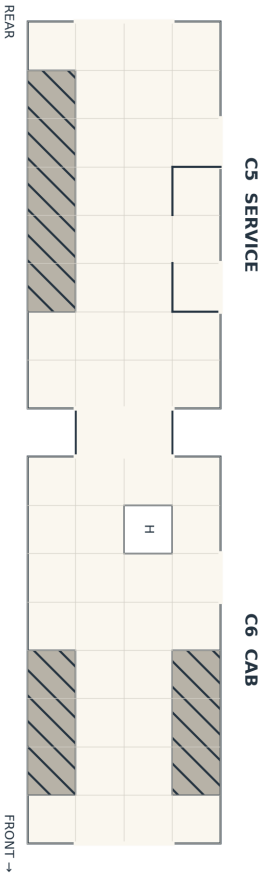
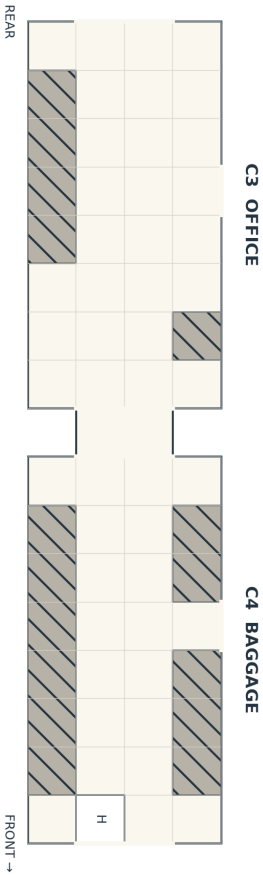
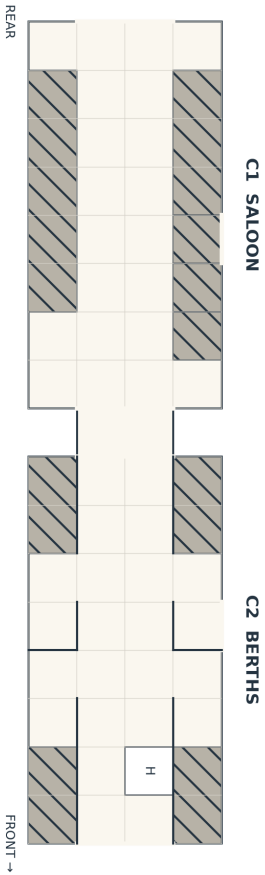
Player Map Sheets

Share the appropriate sheet only when the party knows its layout. Cover unexplored rooms when needed. These sheets omit DM positions and hidden mechanics.

The Midnight Memory Express

THE MIDNIGHT MEMORY EXPRESS

Carriage plans | PLAYER MAP - reveal compartments as explored



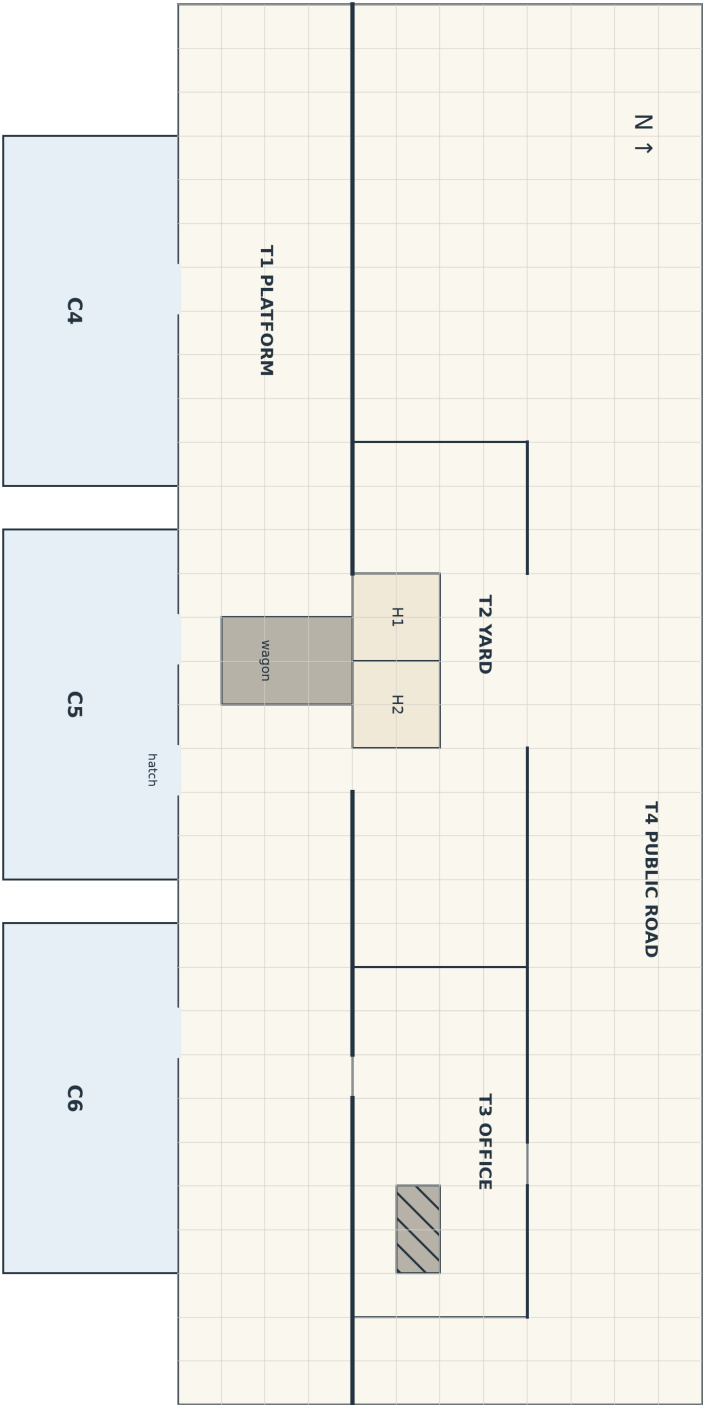
GRID: 5 FEET | NORTH UP | H: ROOF HATCH, +10 FT | Panels continue C1 → C2 → C3 → C4 → C5 → C6.
Each inter-car gangway is 5 ft long and 10 ft wide. Roof gaps are 5 ft; gangway roofs are not stable walking surfaces.
Solid racks and benches block squares; saloon seating is difficult terrain. Compartments and barred enclosure have ordinary doors.
Passenger doors open north; during travel they open onto moving ground. No exterior catwalk is present.

Map key: use the keyed location descriptions on the following pages.

The Midnight Memory Express

THE MIDNIGHT MEMORY EXPRESS

Terminal plan | PLAYER MAP - visible transfer yard



GRID: 5 FEET. Horses occupy full 10 x 10 ft spaces; their 20 ft harness span fits the north gate.
Train coordinates shift +10 ft east when docked. C5 loading hatch: x 215–220. Clear loading strip: y 20–25.
Four-foot railings border the platform north edge except at the yard opening and office door.
Doors and gate are ordinary visible access points; rear carriages continue west.

Map key: use the keyed location descriptions on the following pages.

Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.

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