

THROUGH THE BREACH

COLD FRONT

A ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE FOR THROUGH THE BREACH

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TAROT TIE-INS

CREC 2♠: “You will be bold when it is needed most” could refer to the Fated stepping up and helping to save the passengers when Mr. Beecham asks for their help.

ALAC 1♣: “With a book in one hand and death in the other” could refer to the primary antagonist of this adventure, who wields his Grimoire and deadly plan with equal skill.

PROLOGUE

The Fated are among a small group of people embarking on the maiden voyage of a brand new passenger train. All is not well, however, and they will also experience danger and mystery as a mythical creature hunts the passengers. This adventure is set in the late autumn to early winter, but a Fatemaster can easily adapt it to another season with minimal effort.

The adventure begins with the Fated waiting on a train station platform in Malifaux City, along with nearly 30-some other people. Some of the gathered are to be the first passengers on the Vigilance, a new luxury train making its first trip to Ridley.





The Fated might simply be traveling to Ridley for their own reasons and decide to take the newer, fancier train, or they might have been invited by Harold Beecham, the train's slightly eccentric owner. Beecham has been on a philanthropic bender for some time now, and he might want to honor the Fated for past heroic deeds, or maybe they received invitations meant for someone else and decided to investigate. Read the following text:

A light dusting of snow has settled over the train station as the gathered crowd awaits the arrival of a new luxury train making its first trip to the northern boomtown of Ridley. The interest of the crowd spikes as the tell-tale plume of smoke announces the arrival of an impressive metal colossus with the name "Vigilance" emblazoned on its side in bright red. After the train hisses to a halt, an almost comically short man exits the front dining car, one hand in his tweed jacket pocket, the other holding a pocket watch that has been polished to a shine. The man is flanked by two much larger men, obviously bodyguards of some sort.

He holds up his free hand to silence the crowd and speaks. "I'd like to thank y'all for coming to the first of what will undoubtedly be many trips of the Beecham Luxury Travel Liners. I, Harold R. Beecham, will be personally joining you on this inaugural run to ensure that your travel experience lives up to the quality of the Beecham name!"

As the crowd around you responds with some polite applause, a cold gust of wind blows through the station, forcing people to pull their coats just a little tighter around them.

SCENE 1: ALL ABOARD

Since the entirety of this adventure happens aboard the Vigilance, it's important that the players have time to interact with the Fatemaster characters that will be joining them. They have roughly twenty minutes to stow their luggage and find their seats on the train, which should give them ample time to talk with some of their fellow passengers.

The Fated should encounter each of the following scenes before the train pulls out of the station, either separately or as a group:

- Mr. Beecham is playing to the crowd and seems visibly happy with the turnout. His two bodyguards are a constant presence, and they scan the crowd and stare down random people who seem like they might cause a problem for their employer.
- The Fated see a tall man with peppered blond hair hugging a collection of people who don't share his enthusiasm. As he reaches the last of them, an old woman who seems to be the matriarch of the family, she hands him a wrapped present, which he accepts with a wide grin and a nod of appreciation.
- The blond man is Marcus Gilby, a ranch hand who is returning home after helping the family he is bidding farewell to with their harvest. They bought him a ticket on the Vigilance as a means of thanking him for all his hard work this past year.
- A dark-haired woman has her arm around the shoulders of a drunken man and is trying to maneuver him onto a bench. Both are wearing overalls that mark them as laborers. "Just try to stay sober when I'm gone," she's telling the man. "It's bad enough that you're too soused to swing a pick. You don't need to be messing up yer reputation in the city any further."
- The woman is Victoria Summers, a M&SU member who is heading to Ridley to receive a much deserved promotion. She's looking forward to it, but her excitement has been somewhat dampened by pragmatism and the realization that the promotion is going to result in her having to crack down on her miner friends for their poor habits (mostly drinking).



- A luxurious carriage pulls up next to the station, and the coachman hops down to help a gorgeous young woman in an expensive dress step out of the vehicle. She gives the gathered crowd an aloof glance, holds a kerchief over her nose as if to block the smell, and then glides gracefully into the train.
- This spoiled young woman is Clarisse Devonshire, an heiress to the Devonshire fortune back on Earth. Clarise is “gracing this train with her presence” at the request of her father, a close friend of Mr. Beecham.
- The Fated see a few beleaguered servants dragging an impressive amount of matching luggage to the back of the train. One of the men meets the gaze of a Fated and gives her a long-suffering smile. “Miss Devonshire prolly would’ve packed the washroom sink if Master Devonshire would have let ‘er,” he laments with a soft chuckle.
- This is a reference to Clarisse Devonshire, who is described above.
- A gaunt young man dressed in a threadbare suit approaches Mr. Beecham and pulls him aside, where he opens a ledger and makes a couple of hand gestures. Mr. Beecham nods, dismissing the man’s words without much thought before returning to playing the crowd. The young man sighs, snaps the ledger closed, and hops aboard the train.
- This thin fellow is Arlan Devlin, one of Mr. Beecham’s bookkeepers. He’s a bit socially awkward and isn’t comfortable in social situations, but he has a keen mind for numbers. Mr. Beecham has been underpaying Devlin for some time, however, and last winter Arlan was barely able to afford enough food and firewood to keep himself fed and warm. One particularly cold night, he nearly froze to death in his sleep, but he heard the call of December in his dreams. Arlan pledged his service to the Tyrant on that day and has been working on a plan to get his revenge on Mr. Beecham ever since.

The Fatemaster should feel free to add any additional characters from her campaign as she sees fit; this can be a great time for the Fated to bump into characters that they’ve encountered in the past or might run across in the future.

All in all, the Vigilance will make her maiden journey to Ridley with approximately 50 passengers and around a dozen assorted staff members, including Mr. Beecham. The train is eight cars long and consists of (in order of front to back) the Engine, Fuel Car, a Kitchen car, the Castor and Pollux Dining cars, two passenger cars (one for wealthy travelers and one for the more “common” passengers), and the caboose, which also serves as storage for luggage. The cars have a fairly uniform design, consisting of dark mahogany paneling on the bottom halves of the walls, evenly spaced gaslights, muted green wallpaper above the wood paneling, and matching green carpet.

Once the train pulls out of the station, the Fated can walk the train at their leisure, opening up opportunities to converse with the other passengers. Clarisse spends her time in the Castor dining hall, constantly flanked by a retinue of admirers, and will only carry on a conversation with people who look like they have money. Arlan moves throughout the train during its journey, his ledger constantly tucked beneath one arm. He’ll speak with the Fated if necessary, but doesn’t seem interested in idle chit chat. Mr. Beecham generally remains in the wealthy passenger car, schmoozing his rich guests, while Marcus stays in the common passenger car, watching out the window as the scenery rolls past.





SCENE 2: COLD AS ICE

About fifteen minutes into the train ride, Marcus excuses himself from any conversation he might be in with the Fated and heads to the back of the train. He had been intending to wait to open the present given to him by the rancher family until he got home, but his curiosity has gotten the better of him.

When he arrives in the caboose, he comes across Arlan, who has summoned a winter spirit known as a Cailleach to help him ruin Mr. Beecham's attempt at becoming a rail baron. Arlan sends the Cailleach after Marcus to silence him, and it freezes the ranch hand solid. Arlan then commands the Cailleach to "kill the engineer and murder Harold Beecham" and returns to his seat on the train. He isn't sure whether or not the Cailleach will be able to accomplish its goal, but even if it fails, the scandal of people being murdered on the train's maiden run should be enough bad press to ruin his employer financially. If it succeeds, Arlan plans to leap off the train to safety, but he can't resist hanging around long enough to watch Beecham get torn apart.

Five minutes later, Mr. Beecham learns of Marcus' murder from one of his staff who had gone back to the caboose to have a cigarette and a few sips from her flask. Mr. Beecham, in turn, goes directly to Arlan and asks the man to quietly bring the Fated back to speak with him, either because of their reputation or just because they seem like the most capable sort of people for figuring out what's going on and stopping it.

Read the following text, making adjustments as necessary if Arlan has already introduced himself to the Fated:

A gaunt man dressed in a threadbare suit approaches your group. "I'm sorry for interrupting," he says, "but I'm Arlan Devlin, one of Mr. Beecham's bookkeepers. I was wondering if you'd be willing to accompany me to the caboose? There is a minor issue with some of your luggage having come open, and we don't want to intrude by repacking it ourselves."

If the Fated are skeptical of Arlan – which seems likely, if they did not bring any luggage with them onto the train – they can attempt TN 10 Scrutiny Challenges. On a success, the Fated will realize that he's lying. If pressed, he'll reveal that an incident has arisen and that Mr. Beecham wishes to speak with them. If they achieve a Margin of Success of this Challenge, they'll also detect a faint hint of amusement in his voice.

If the Fated refuse to help, Arlan urges them to reconsider, but it's just a formality; he's not going to go out of his way to convince the Fated to uncover his plan. In this case, skip right to Scene 3: Murder on the Rails (pg. 41).

Assuming the Fated agree to help, Arlan leads them to the caboose. There they find the now-deceased Marcus Gilby, whose entire body is coated in a thick sheet of ice. One of the caboose's windows is shattered and cold air is blowing into the car, making it quite chilly. Mr. Beecham is present, along with one of his bodyguards, but he looks queasy and is standing as far away from the frozen corpse as possible.

Read the following text once the Fated have had a moment to take in the scene:

Mr. Beecham motions for you to step into the caboose. "Thank you, Arlan, that should be enough for now." Once the bookkeeper has left, Mr. Beecham's composure – what was left of it – starts to crack.

"Thank you all for coming," he says, shaking your hands. "As you can see, I think it's safe to say that this poor man did not die from natural causes." Mr. Beecham glances down at the body, pales a bit, then looks back to you. "Needless to say, this matter will have to be kept quiet, but I need to know who – or what – could have done this. Please, you're the only people on this train that can help save the good name of Beecham Luxury Travel Liners! You will be compensated for your time and effort, of course."



Searching the caboose for clues is handled with an Ongoing Challenge:

---[ONGOING CHALLENGE]---

SEARCHING FOR CLUES

Skills Allowed: Doctor, Notice, Sorcery

Target Number: 10

Duration: 1 minute

Success Requirement: 6

Failure Requirement: 3

At the end of each Duration, the Fated learn one Clue from the list below for each Success they achieved. If the Fated successfully complete the Ongoing Challenge, they learn the Breakthrough, which should give them a solid push in the right direction. If they critically fail the Ongoing Challenge, however, then they learn the Red Herring, which is likely to pull them well off course.

CLUES (IN NO SPECIFIC ORDER):

- * There is no normal way that Marcus could have been covered in this much frost in so short a time frame. He must have been frozen by supernatural means.
- * There isn't any shattered glass around the window, so it must have been broken from the inside.
- * There are lash marks all over Marcus' body, as if he were hit by sharp debris being blown by a strong wind. There are too many marks for it to have been something blown in through the shattered window.
- * Marcus has a panicked look on his face, as if he saw something terrible before his death.
- * The Fated find a cufflink on the floor, where it rolled behind a suitcase. It's cool to the touch, despite being far from the corpse. (The cufflink belongs to Arlan; it came loose from his suit while he was making an arcane gesture needed to summon the Cailleach. If they confront him about it, he isn't surprised that it fell off; he's been running all over the train performing errands for Mr. Beecham.)

Breakthrough

- * There are a few smudged chalk marks on the ground in a roughly circular pattern a few feet from the corpse. Mr. Beecham insists that they were not there when the train pulled into Malifaux station, and a TN 10 Mathematics Challenge reveals that they seem to draw upon numerology and mathematical equations to tap into arcane power. (Arlan used the chalk drawings to help him summon the Cailleach.)

Red Herring

- * The Fated notice a bit of deep red lipstick on the collar of Marcus' shirt. (This lipstick belongs to the daughter of the rancher he had been working for over the summer; her goodbye that morning at the ranch was much more passionate than the polite thank you she gave him at the train station. Coincidentally, Clarisse Devonshire is wearing the same shade of lipstick.)

---[ONGOING CHALLENGE]---

Once the Fated have investigated the scene of the crime, they should have some time to speak with the other passengers and try to work out who might be guilty. If the Fated think to search Marcus' luggage, they find that the package given to him by the ranchers is still intact: it's a bottle of decent-quality booze.

If the Fated found the chalk drawings, they can attempt a TN 10 Notice Challenge when they're next speaking with Arlan. On a success, they notice some telltale chalk smudges on his pants from where he unwittingly dusted off his hands after summoning the Cailleach. A search of his person reveals the stick of chalk in his jacket pocket. See the Confronting Arlan section on page 42 for more information.

If the Fated instead found the lipstick, a TN 8 Notice Challenge when they're speaking with Clarisse allows them to recognize her lipstick as being the same shade as the lipstick on Marcus' collar. If they confront her about the crime, she acts insulted that



they would even dare to suggest that she might be responsible for a crime. If it comes down to combat, use the Vapid Socialite stat block (*Fatemaster's Almanac*, pg. 134) to represent Clarisse Devonshire.

If the Fated speak with Victoria Summers, she complains about how cold the train has been; it started off perfectly fine, but about fifteen minutes into the trips, she started feeling repeated drafts of cold air. If the Fated need a bit more of a push – or if you want to add a bit of tension to the end of the scene – Victoria will scream in surprise as she glances out the window and sees the grinning visage of the Cailleach staring back at her. It quickly flies away, but the shriek draws the attention of the other passengers as she starts stammering about “wind monsters outside the train.”

The Fated can attempt TN 9 Leadership Challenge to get the other passengers to head back to their seats and forget about Victoria's outburst, or a TN 11 Convince Challenge to convince her that she was just imagining the creature. If the Fated do not deal with the crowd's growing panic (or take actions that fuel it), then when they receive the Crowd Condition in *The Cailleach Attacks* (pg. 43), the value of that Condition is increased by +2.

SCENE 3: MURDER ON THE RAILS

Once the Fated have had time to speak with the other passengers and confront either Arlan or Clarisse about Marcus' death, the Cailleach howls in rage. Read the following text, adjusting as appropriate if the Fated refused the request for help and aren't present in the caboose (in which case Mr. Beecham is hurrying past the Fated in whatever car they are in when the Cailleach howls):

An ear-piercing howl cuts through the constant clatter of the train's wheels, and the caboose shudders as the train rocks back and forth on its rails. "Alright, nothing to worry about," Mr. Beecham says, his smile looking more and more forced by the moment. "It just seems that a murderous someone or something who can freeze people has been let loose on the train, and the engineer has inexplicably decided to pick up speed when we're just approaching the most treacherous part of our travels. This is still manageable, still manageable..."

If the Fated haven't already agreed to help Mr. Beecham, he'll ask them again, this time in person, for their assistance. If they refuse, then the train will eventually be derailed, as the Cailleach is able to kill the engineer and leave the train's controls frozen in an accelerate position. Just as Mr. Beecham reaches the next car, the Cailleach returns from its attack on the engineer and rips through the top of their train car to attack Mr. Beecham. See *The Cailleach Attacks* on page 43 for more information.

If the Fated agree to help him (or are already helping them), he asks them to split into two groups: one group to tell the engineer to reduce his speed and one to find the person responsible for all this chaos using the evidence they gathered from the corpse (if they searched it; if not, he sends the group back to examine the corpse for any clues that might help catch whoever or whatever is responsible).



THE ENGINEER

Any Fated who check on the engineer will find him in the Engine, swinging a shovel at a creature that seems composed of ice and snow. The controls are frosted with ice, which has locked them into the “accelerate” position. The snow creature is the Cailleach (pg. @@), and as the Fated arrive at the Engine, it turns, howls in rage, and lunges at the Fated. Once it has been reduced to half its wounds or lower, however, the Cailleach howls and dissipates into the wind, reforming above the train and tearing off the top of the train car containing Mr. Beecham. See The Cailleach Attacks (pg. 43) for more information.

The engineer can take three attacks from the Cailleach before he’s killed and frozen solid. Fortunately for him, it prefers to attack the Fated if they’re present.

Once the Cailleach has been defeated, the Fated can attempt a TN 12 Labor Challenge to pull the frozen control out of the accelerate position, despite the ice holding it in place. Alternatively, a TN 10 Engineering Challenge will allow the Fated to access the secondary controls and slow the train’s acceleration down to a normal level. If the Fated achieve a Margin of Failure on this check, then they can make no further attempts to stop the train; either the lever has become brittle and breaks off as they tug on it, or the secondary controls lock up on them.

Without the intervention of the Fated, the train will just continue to gather speed until it eventually derails as it hits a sharp curve. See Runaway Train on page @@ for more details.

CONFRONTING ARLAN

If the Fated confront Arlan about being involved in the murder, he feigns innocence until the Cailleach attacks, but a TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge is able to see through his lies. If the Fated call his bluff, or when the Cailleach starts tearing apart the train, he laughs and claims that, “The Cailleach has had plenty of time to reach full strength... now Beecham will pay for how he treated me!” He then blasts the Fated with ice magic.

If Arlan reveals himself when the Cailleach launches its attack, this means that the Fated will either have a tough fight against two powerful enemies, as they’ll have to deal with both Arlan and the Cailleach, or they’ll have to split their attention between defending themselves from Arlan and driving off the winter spirit.

If the Fated split into two groups as Mr. Beecham suggested, however, this means that they can engage Arlan and the Cailleach separately... though with only a portion of their full strength.

If Arlan defeats the Fated or is reduced to 0 Wounds or lower without being killed or knocked unconscious, he opens the door of the train and laughs as the icy wind tugs at his hair. He shouts, “December will have his due! This train and all of Beecham’s sychophants are on their way to an icy grave!” and then leaps off the train and out of the adventure, no doubt to appear in a future adventure as a recurring adversary for the Fated (and especially Mr. Beecham, if he survives the Cailleach’s attacks).



THE CAILLEACH ATTACKS

After the Cailleach has dealt with the Engineer (or been driven off by the Fated), it exacts Arlan's revenge on Mr. Beecham. Read the following to any Fated in the same train car as Mr. Beecham:

Suddenly, there's a horrific screeching sound as something peels back the top of the train car like the lid of a sardine can. Icy wind and snow blasts down into the car, forcing you to shield your eyes, but you can barely make out the form of a hulking snow-demon floating in the cold wind overhead. It grins down at Mr. Beecham and reaches toward him with long, grasping claws...

If Mr. Beecham is in any of the cars other than the caboose, engine, or fuel car when this happens, then the other passengers in the train car scream in horror and try to escape in a blind panic, making it difficult for the Fated to line up a clear shot or concentrate on spellcasting. During the resulting fight, treat each of the Fated as having the following Condition: "Crowd +6: When this character declares an Action, reduce the final duel total of that Action by the value of this Condition." A Fated may spend 1 AP to lower the value of the Crowd Condition on every Fated in the battle by 1, which represents their attempts to shout at the crowd, herd them out of the way, or otherwise bring them under control.

The Cailleach initially focuses on Mr. Beecham and will kill him and freeze him solid in three attacks. If the Fatemaster wishes, Mr. Beecham's bodyguards can come to his defense to give the Fated a bit more time to deal with the crowd; each bodyguard can withstand two attacks from the winter spirit before freezing solid.

If the Fated attack it, however (even if they miss), the creature will turn its attention to them out of self-preservation, only turning back to Mr. Beecham once the attacking character has been killed or knocked unconscious.

Stats for the Cailleach can be found on page 44. If the Fated already encountered the Cailleach at the Engine, it retains any damage it suffered during that battle.

RUNAWAY TRAIN

If the Fated did not save the engineer or reduce the train's acceleration, then the Fated are in for a surprise, even if they defeat the Cailleach. Mr. Beecham will look out the window and begin to panic as he notes that the train is "going too fast to stay on the rails when it hits Rattlesnake Curve."

If Arlan has not yet revealed himself as the mastermind of the plan, he does so at this point, taunting Mr. Beecham that, "It's time you learned some humility, you old fool! December take the lot of you!" He then leaps from the train as described in the Confronting Arlan section (pg. 42).

If the Fated suggest trying to slow the train, he'll state that it's too late now, and that they'll have to jump to safety. There's just enough time to round up the passengers and have them leap from the train before it derails with a great grinding of metal against metal and a terrific crash. The Fated can attempt TN 10 Acrobatics Challenges to land with a few bumps and bruises, but those who fail suffer 2/3/5 damage from the fall. Most of the passengers survive the fall, unless they had been previously damaged by the Cailleach.

Anyone who remains on the train (such as Clarisse Devonshire and a few other stubborn passengers) suffers 8/12/16 damage as the train derails, the cars slam into each other, one after another, and then the whole shattered mess rolls down Rattlesnake Hill to the bottom of a gully. Anyone who survives the wreck is sure to have plenty of scars to mark the disaster. If a character is killed by this derailment, it may be worth allowing the character to survive if she takes a rank in the Augmented Pursuit (from *Into the Steam*) for her next pursuit; help arrives in time for the character to be rushed to Ridley and given pneumatic replacements that saves her life.



EPILOGUE

If the Cailleach kills Mr. Beecham, it disappears into the sky, floating upwards and allowing the train to carry the Fated away from it at high speeds.

If the train derails, Mr. Beecham is effectively ruined. The resulting lawsuits from the survivors and the families of those killed in the crash drives him (or his estate, if he perished) into bankruptcy. He'll be in no position to reward the Fated, though they will still have his gratitude if they saved his life.

Even if the train is saved, Mr. Beecham is in for some hard times. His rail line is seen as cursed by the general populace of Malifaux City and Ridley alike, and unless someone is able to quickly repair the train cars and engine and do something extraordinary to show that the train is perfectly safe

– which might well be the focus of a future adventure – then Mr. Beecham (or his estate, if he perished) is forced to sell the train to Condor Rails to recoup his losses. The Vigilance is repaired, repainted, given a new name, and put into service on a less-important rail line.

On the plus side, if Mr. Beecham survives the encounter with his train intact, he offers the Fated the best reward he can muster, given his impending business problems. This amounts to a total of 20 scrip, which the Fated can divide between them as they see fit. If Arlan escaped and the Fated seem like the sort who would be interested, he'll also offer them a bounty of 20 scrip if they can find Arlan and “bring the deluded boy some necessary justice.”

THE CAILLEACH

Enforcer (7), Spirit

<i>Might</i> 3	<i>Grace</i> 4	<i>Speed</i> 3	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -5	<i>Intellect</i> -2	<i>Cunning</i> -2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 5 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 6	<i>Height</i> 3	<i>Initiative</i> 5 (12)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 7	<i>Wounds</i> 7	

Skills: Navigation 2, Notice 2, Pugilism 1, Toughness 2.

Frozen Heart: This character is immune to Horror Duels and Paralyzed.

Incorporeal: This character ignores, and is ignored by, other characters and terrain during any movement. Reduce all damage this character suffers from Ranged and Close Combat attacks by half.

(1) Frozen Talons (Pugilism)

AV: 4 (11) ===== Rg: \mathcal{H} 3 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage and gains Slow.

ARLAN DEVLIN

Enforcer (7), Living

<i>Might</i> -1	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> 3	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (11)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (11)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

Skills: Appraise 1, Barter 1, Bureaucracy 2, Deceive 1, Literacy 2, Mathematics 3, Notice 2, Prestidigitation 1, Scrutiny 2, Sorcery 2, Toughness 1, Wilderness 1.

Frozen Heart: This character is immune to Horror Duels and Paralyzed.

Grimoire (Ledger): Arlan's Grimoire is his ledger; as a character reads it, the temperature gradually lowers as ice forms on the pages, creating intricate magical runes. It contains the Elemental Strike and Conjuring Magia, as well as the Blast, Ice, and Increased Damage Immuto.

(1) Winter's Chill (Sorcery + Intellect)

AV: 5 (12) ===== Rg: \mathcal{H} 1 ===== Resist: **Df**
Target suffers 2/3/4 damage and gains Slow. If the target is already Slow, it instead gains Paralyzed.