

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of Lynn W. Willis
(1941 – 2013)
Scholar, Mentor, Friend



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HORROR ON THE
ORIENT EXPRESS



PARIS • LAUSANNE • MILAN
VENICE • TRIESTE • BELGRADE
SOFIA • CONSTANTINOPLE

BOOK I

CAMPAIGN BOOK



Credits

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Special Thanks (1991): Michael Tice, Christian Lehmann, Darwin Bromley, William W. Workman, Jeffrey L. Simons and Anne Q. Merritt who have in unique and sometimes daring ways contributed to the success of *Horror on the Orient Express*.

We also want to give a sincere thanks to all of our Kickstarter backers. A full list of our amazing fans and backers can be found at the end of *Book 4*.

"The Orient Express name is a designation of the French Railways."

The evocation of the Simplon-Orient Express of 1923 and the contemporary fictionalized 'Orient Express' should not be confused with, and in no way refers to, the unrelated present-day Venice Simplon-Orient Express luxury service, nor should it be construed as representing that Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits has edited, contributed to, or is in any fashion responsible for this publication.

The cover painting is by Lee Gibbons, copyright ©1991 Lee Gibbons; all rights reserved. Mr. Gibbons' work depicts the Locomotive Beast hurtling towards Paris.

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This adventure pack is best used with the roleplaying game CALL OF CTHULHU, available separately.





INTRODUCTION

Horror on the Orient Express was originally published in 1991 under the careful editorial of Lynn Willis. The campaign went on to win Origins Awards for Best Roleplaying Adventure 1991, and Best Graphic Presentation of a Roleplaying Game, Adventure, or Supplement 1991, a fitting testimony to the skill with which Lynn guided the original boxed set.

This new edition has been made possible with the generous support of our backers on Kickstarter, all of whom are listed within. It has been a dream to ride this train again, and we hope that you enjoy the result. Thanks from all of us.

This 2013 edition adds many new scenarios to the original campaign. Principal plotting for the new elements was by Geoff Gillan with Mark Morrison and Oscar Rios, following the suggestions made by Charlie Krank during the Kickstarter campaign. The new scenarios have been written by Geoff Gillan, Penelope Love, Mike Mason, and Oscar Rios. In addition, original authors Phil Anderson and Russell Waters have returned to their Belgrade and Trieste scenarios respectively to add new details and scenes. Richard Watts was unable to join us again, but his friend Oscar Rios has revised his Sofia chapter for him. Christian Lehmann provided details of his home town of Poissy for the Paris chapter, and corrected our French spelling throughout.

Owners of the 1991 boxed set will see many differences here. The back stories of many characters have been changed, as has the history of the Sedefkar Simulacrum. New clues and background details have been added to the original scenarios. All of the material deserves careful re-reading.

New essays are included. Hans-Christian Vortisch has provided details on carrying guns across Europe, and we recommend his excellent work *Investigator Weapons, Volume One* from Sixtystone Press. Darren Watson has written on air routes of the period, and also unearthed new 1923 headlines and answered many historical questions. We thank Steve Kluskens for his research on Orient Express ticket prices, originally published in *The Unspeakable Oath 5*. Carl Ford has provided a selection of horror movies featuring trains. P.F. Jeffery revised his Continent of Horrors essay, and Matthew Pook updated 20 years of *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios.

Paul Fricker and Mike Mason are the authors of *Call of Cthulhu 7th edition*, and generously provided updates as the new rules evolved. At the eleventh hour they pitched in and helped convert many of the original game statistics, as did Geoff Gillan. The major playtests were conducted using 7th edition, and the games ran better for it.

The Traveler's Companion was written by Penelope Love (with some text from the 1991 edition), under the *nom de plume* of Patrick Jensen, who appears here as an NPC. This is a pastiche of a 1920s travel guide. It contains sentiments—such as an untroubled assumption of the superiority of everything British—that would not be expressed in such a manner today. The reader is asked to bear this in mind when they peruse this volume.

Mike Lay and Colin Dixon authored a useful critique of the 1991 campaign which informed many of the new editorial decisions. Mike joined the writing team and wrote alternate scenes for the Fenalik ambush, the London conclusion, and other parts. David Conyers contributed scenario material to add the events of David Witteveen's Mythos story "Perfect Skin" to the Constantinople chapter. All other scenario expansion and editorial is by Mark Morrison, informed by suggestions from our lead playtesters, Christian Were, Dean Scully, Andrew Symons, and Darren



Watson. Matt Nott and his group in London have also been invaluable. Justin Mansfield assisted with Latin translation.

Outside of this work, James Lowder has edited the fiction anthology *Madness on the Orient Express*, featuring many new Mythos tales aboard or around the train. Nick Marsh wrote the novel *The Express Diaries* based on Yog-Sothoth.com's audio playthrough of the 1991 campaign, featuring Paul Maclean and the Bradford Players. Their original investigators have been written up by Paul as playable characters, along with six investigators contributed by our Kickstarter backers.

Meghan McLean has provided art direction for this new edition, and designed the stunning deco layout (partially based upon the amazing layout by Stratelibri and Pegasus Press in their renditions). Steff Worthington produced the city maps, generously creating both keeper and player versions; his dedication to historical accuracy shines throughout. We are also indebted to Frank Heller and the team at Pegasus Spiele who provided many of the period photographs from their 2005 German edition *Horror im Orient-Express*.

Through all of this we have missed our friend and mentor Lynn Willis, who retired from active Chaosium service in 2008 and passed away in January 2013 during this production. The original idea for a *Call of Cthulhu* supplement set aboard the Orient Express was his. Much of his 1991 text endures here, a lasting testimony to his keen wit and sure eye. His train lives on. We hope that you and your players will enjoy the journey and raise a glass to his memory.

Mark Morrison
December 2013

ABOUT CALL OF CTHULHU 7TH EDITION

This edition of *Horror on the Orient Express* has been prepared for the new 7th edition of *Call of Cthulhu*, but is fully compatible with all previous editions. A complete guide for converting 7th edition to previous editions is included in the appendices.

The principal changes are that characteristics are now 5 times their previous value, thus a character with STR 16 now has STR 80. Some skills have been retired or combined. Skill rolls can have varying levels of difficulty, expressed as Easy (normal chance), Hard (half chance) and Extreme (one-fifth chance).

7th edition introduces two key new ways for players to change their fate: by pushing skill rolls, and spending Luck to change the outcome of the dice. Both of these rules are included in the appendices for consideration by keepers using earlier editions.



WHAT IS IN THIS BOX?

The *Horror on the Orient Express* campaign now includes an alternate ending, a scenario set in the gaslight era, an invictus scenario, a dark ages scenario, and a modern-day scenario. Additionally, a survival guide has been integrated into the campaign books.

- ▶ Book I: Campaign Book
- ▶ Book II: Through the Alps
- ▶ Book III: Italy and Beyond
- ▶ Book IV: Constantinople & Consequences
- ▶ Book V: Strangers on the Train
- ▶ The Traveler's Companion
- ▶ One Puzzle-Cut Simulacrum Sheet
- ▶ Color Fold-Out Orient Express Route Map
- ▶ Handouts Packet
- ▶ Four American Passports
- ▶ Two Vintage-Inspired Luggage Stickers
- ▶ Two Vintage-Inspired Postcards
- ▶ Orient Express Matchbox (Toothpicks)
- ▶ Sedefkar Simulacrum Scroll





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Chaosium would like to thank the following people for their help, without which this project would not have been possible.

We would like to thank Gokcen Ceylan, the best food-tour guide in Istanbul, for his help with research and his hospitality. If you ever find yourself in Istanbul, look Gokcen up at Istanbul Eats.

Suzan Toma from the Pera Palace Hotel in Istanbul provided invaluable information and images for the astounding hotel.

We also want to thank the Howard Philips Lovecraft Historical Society, specifically Andrew Leman for his impeccable handout and prop layout and design, including the train ticket, replica menus, place settings, and passports.

Essia Bouzamondo-Bernstein helped us tremendously with pesky French translations.

Michele Johnson created the postcards and luggage stickers that help make the gaming experience that much richer.

Alex Pearson provided us with a template for the amazing Orient Express replica tickets that were offered as rewards for our Kickstarter backers.

For the timetable for the Gaslight scenario, we want to thank Thomas Cook Group plc. for their kind permission to reproduce.

And let's not forget our wonderful fans and Kickstarter backers. With your support and contributions we have been able to make this amazing supplement, of which we are very proud. The full list of Kickstarter backers will be included in the full production version.

Photos for the *Strangers on the Train* book are in creative commons, and are from the Australian National Maritime Museum's William J Hall collection. The Hall collection provides an important pictorial record of recreational boating in Sydney Harbour, from the 1890s to the 1930s – from large racing and cruising yachts, to the many and varied skiffs jostling on the harbour, to the new phenomenon of motor boating in the early twentieth century. The collection also includes studio portraits and images of the many spectators and crowds who followed the sailing races.

The Paris Map on page 122 of Book 2 is in public domain.

The photo of the Alfa Romero is in public domain, and is from http://www.netcarshow.com/alfa_romeo/1922-rl/800x600/wallpaper_01.htm.

We want to thank Lynda Mills for the excellent Medallion of Ithaqua art.

Dean Engelhardt and Andrew Leman provided us with amazing handouts for this boxed set, as well as for supplemental items. Steff Worthington deserves a special thanks for his hard work creating many magnificent maps for this campaign.

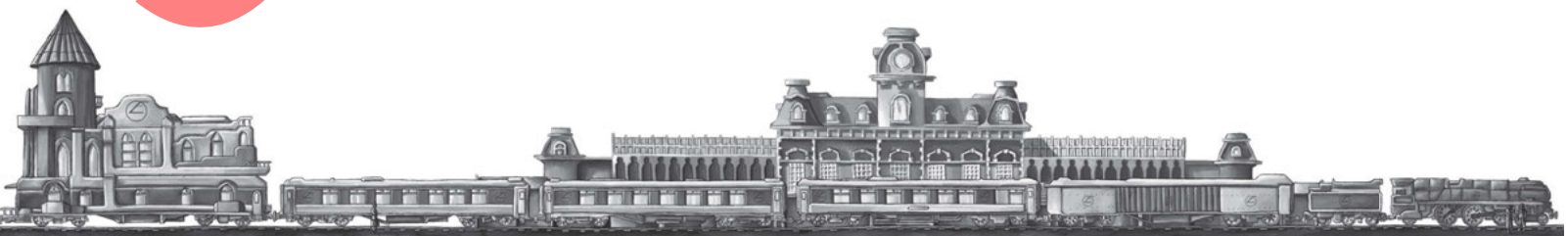
And we cannot thank our Kickstarter backers enough. You have all helped make this quite the ride, and we hope you enjoy your time on the Orient Express. A full list of backers is included in *Book 4*.





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Book 1

INTRODUCTION

The Orient Express

Being a brief summary of the service and its history, from Nagelmackers to the Simplon-Venice-Orient Express, with minor reference to the exigencies of role-playing.

by Geoff Gillan

THE NAME 'ORIENT EXPRESS' has become a byword for luxury in travel, yet before its inception in the late nineteenth century, *luxury* was not a word that leapt to the tongues of European train travelers. Long journeys or short, passengers endured hard bench seats, often for days at a time. In the United States, the passenger's lot improved thanks to George Pullman's invention of the Pullman coach at the end of the Civil War. The idea was rapidly accepted. In such coaches, albeit in no great comfort, passengers could sleep in bunk-like berths during over-night journeys.

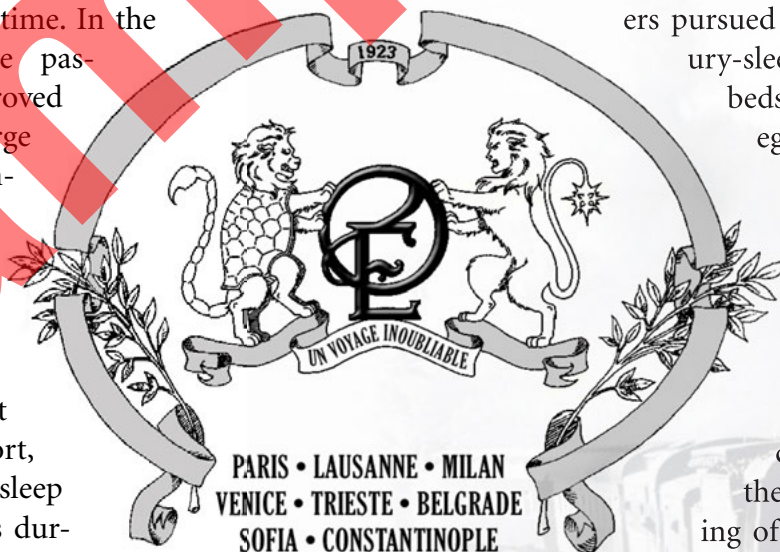
One Pullman passenger was a young Belgian engineer named Georges Nagelmackers. During a trip to the United States, he noted the Pullman cars and wondered

why Europeans could not obtain the same convenience in travel.

Nagelmackers returned to Belgium determined to offer exactly that. He was a trained engineer and his developments went further than Pullman's car. Nagelmackers pursued the idea of luxury-sleeping cars with beds, basins, and elegant surroundings. He formed the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits (CIWL) after much financial struggle, and the coming and going of many investors. Finally Europe had its

first company which solely constructed and operated sleeping cars.

Nagelmackers arranged to have his cars attached to many trains throughout Europe.





Georges Nagelmackers

When the concept of sleeping cars had taken hold, Nagelmackers began the construction of saloon cars, and then dining cars.

Passengers throughout Europe responded enthusiastically to this way of transport. Nagelmackers, ever inventive, pursued comfort and civility further. He decided to construct a train consisting of all his rolling stock—the dining car, saloons, sleeping cars—a palatial ho-

tel on wheels which would traverse Europe. He named this train the *Orient Express*.

In 1882, after much political maneuvering to allow the train to cross various international borders, the Orient Express made its first run. The service did not yet extend from London to Constantinople—no rail line existed beyond Bulgaria to link Turkey with its frontier. The train went to Varna on the Black Sea, where travelers continued to Constantinople by ship. The initial route passed through middle Europe: Strasbourg, Munich, Vienna, and on to Bucharest. In 1889, the completion of linking track allowed Orient Express service across Europe into Turkey, the gate of the Orient, and to its capital, Constantinople.

The service survived into the new century, braving even an outbreak of cholera in Turkey, when tickets had to be displayed for inspection in a white metal box filled with vinegar. Only the Great War much threatened the Orient Express. Before it, CIWL had acquired luxury hotels in serviced cities to support the travel and comfort of Orient Express users; once global conflict erupted, the company was forced to sell many properties to ensure survival in grim times.

October 4, 1883. The inaugural journey of the Orient Express.





The symbol of the CIWL throughout time.

In the year 1906, the Simplon Express began a new service through the newly-completed Simplon tunnel. This tunnel is still a wonder, an excavation of more than twelve miles through solid alpine granite. Linking Switzerland and Italy, the Simplon service ran from Calais to Milan, later to Venice.

The Simplon Express was intended to surpass the original Orient Express, for the route through southern Europe was shorter and with easier grades. However, pressure from the German and Austro-Hungarian governments kept the Simplon Express a minor service. These governments wished the Orient Express to remain north of the Alps, strengthening their European communications. But when the Great War began, Italy necessarily became the focus for the service.

During the hostilities, the Orient Express was replaced by various local expresses answering to their individual nations. No longer could a single service cross Europe, its passengers

needing no more than a travel permit to cross intervening frontiers.

After the defeat of Germany, Britain and France attempted to maintain their links with their eastern allies, with the new state of Yugoslavia, and with Italy and Romania. To do so, they did not wish to depend on transit through the newly-defeated Germanic states. So the Simplon Express, which had long languished because of politics, now was nominated by politics as the new direct Orient Express. In 1920, the Simplon-Orient Express was able to run uninterrupted through Milan, Venice, and Trieste to Constantinople. This route soon eclipsed the original Express in romance, mystery, and speed; for most it became synonymous with the name Orient Express.

Branch services still connected cities like Munich and Vienna, but the Simplon-Orient Express became the direct train. It set records during the 1920s for speed across the distance covered. New cars were finished

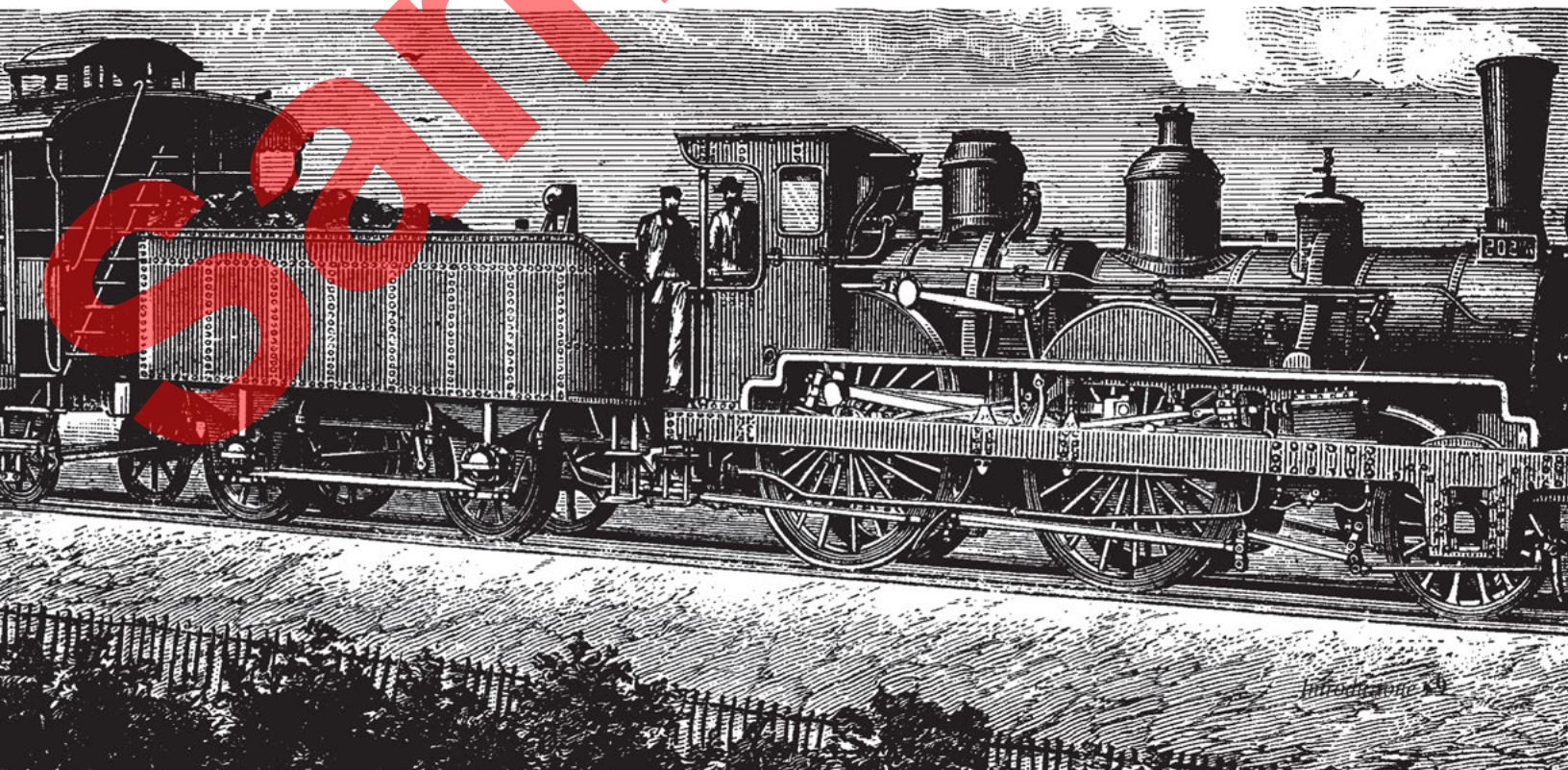




Illustration of CIWL cabins in 1900.

From left to right: toilet, dining car, sleeping car at night, main hall of a first class car, sleeping car during the day.

in the distinctive blue with gold trim, now made from steel and with even plusher decor. The Orient Express increased in reputation after snow halted the train 50 miles from Constantinople for five days. The single track made moving the cars impossible, but in the true spirit of the Orient Express, the service continued so smoothly that the passengers signed a document commending the staff after the train had been freed.

In 1930, the narrow-gauge Taurus Express began its inaugural run. This train ran from Istanbul across Turkey to points east and south of Aleppo, where passengers continued to Cairo or Baghdad by motor coach. Via motor launch across the Bosphorus, the new service met the Simplon-Orient Express in Istanbul. Passengers could move to and from Baghdad or London in just eight days. The Orient Express became even more indispensable.

Small local services had been added throughout the Middle East, starting in 1927. With various additional European routes already linked to the Simplon-Orient Express, it now became the spine of Europe.

Just before World War II, full rail service connected Cairo, Baghdad, and Tehran with





Europe. Until that war, the Orient Express was preeminent on the Continent.

As war spread, German occupying forces suppressed the services one by one, until the Simplon-Orient Express itself was stopped in 1942. The Germans attempted an ersatz Orient Express, a luxury train for the Nazi elite, but this was short-lived—too many sabotage attempts on it were made by partisans in the resistance movements.

Not until 1946 did the Simplon-Orient Express and its sister services renew operations for a full year, but only so far as Venice. Travel to Istanbul resumed in January of 1947.

The chill of the Cold War descended. Running through Communist countries, ordinary seat coaches of first, second, and third class had to be added. Eastern bloc officials became difficult to deal with, and gave the Simplon-Orient Express a turbulent, uncertain existence throughout the fifties and into the early sixties. When various countries shut their borders, the service was forced to reroute. Ian Fleming provides an account of the Cold War express in the climactic chapters of his James Bond novel *From Russia with Love*.

In the 1970s, services dwindled as airlines began to dominate transport on the Continent. The Simplon Orient-Express became the Simplon Express, and other services dropped the 'Orient' from their titles also, becoming local trains. After 1977, direct through-coaches no longer connected Paris with Istanbul and Athens. Recently, in 1982, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express has begun, reinstating the blue and gold cars and the luxurious rolling stock of the 1920s and 1930s. Once a year, the new Orient Express makes the complete journey to Constantinople. This nostalgic, exclusive



Inside the hall of a first-class car. Travel was comfortable and extravagant.

service seeks to recapture the feel of the Orient Express journeys of that time and has met with some success.

Society on the Simplon-Orient Express

To paraphrase E.H. Cookridge in his excellent book, *The Orient Express*, the kind of traveler aboard the train in the years between the World Wars attracts the sort of interest later reserved for movie idols and rock stars. That fashionable

elite is chronicled in countless newspapers and magazines; they are the doyens of the Jazz Age. Heiresses and decayed nobles, high-powered gangsters and millionaire philanthropists are the stuff of the





Non-Fiction Books

The Orient Express, by E.H. Cookridge. The best single book on the Orient Express, its history and services. Cookridge writes for buff and non-buff alike, so the book is always accessible for the general reader. Highly recommended.

The Orient Express, by Jean Des Cars and Jean-Paul Caracalla. A lavish pictorial history of the Orient Express. Sometimes the translation from the original French is clumsy, but the book is a visual delight. Plenty of maps, photos, and reprints of old posters. Worth tracking down.

The Great Railway Bazaar, by Paul Theroux. Not an Orient Express book as such, this details the author's adventures on contemporary services across Europe. Worth reading because no one better combines romance, discomfort, and the feeling of being thrown together with strangers on board an international service better than Theroux. Not essential, but recommended.



Simplon-Orient Express passenger list in its heyday.

Second-class carriages are introduced in the 1920s; late in the decade, third class is added. The contrast leads to even greater awareness of the luxury travelers could enjoy. Orient Express dining services continued to be perceived as the equivalent of first-class restaurants, with the same kind of impeccable formal service.

Monarchs are often passengers, and in many cases have special cars outfitted to be connected to the SOE and taken to special destinations.

Investigators lucky enough to be in first class aboard the Express meet not only the famous rulers and gentry of Europe, but also everyone ambitious enough or rich enough to pay for entry. American and Argentinean businessmen and every sort of foreign official or diplomat swell the train's ranks.

The proximity of the mighty brings with them those who feed on their vanity—hangers-on, almost-weres, and might-have-beens. Many parasitic companions are more snobbish than those whom they flatter.

Though the price is quite steep, respectable-looking folk with the price of a ticket can always ride on the Orient Express. 'Respectable' extends to appearance and comportment, not to function—passengers include paramours and would-be paramours of the super wealthy, gigolos and mistresses and 'actresses' on the way up or down, revolutionaries and autocrats, slave-owners, criminals, drug pushers, psychotics, spies, and assassins. At root, the Orient Express can be no more selective than is humanity.

Because of the multiple borders crossed and because of the relative ease with which this is done, the Orient Express services are havens for espionage agents of all nationalities—in fact the sole murder to have historically occurred on the service was of a British officer accused of spying.

Criminals aboard the trains encompass everything; the lone purse- and jewelry-snatchers who work the platforms to small, well-dressed groups of thieves who regularly travel the train,



Film References

Murder on the Orient Express (1974). Directed by Sidney Lumet; with Albert Finney, Lauren Bacall, Sean Connery and many others. Agatha Christie whodunit, long on talk and slow on pace, but well worth seeing for its splendid recreation of the Simplon-Orient Express in its heyday. Keepers will find it an invaluable tool.

Poirot: Murder on the Orient Express (2010). Directed by Philip Martin; with David Suchet. This recent television adaptation gives the familiar mystery a doomed and unsettling atmosphere, and is perfect viewing for players and keepers. The train is stylishly evoked. An accompanying documentary with David Suchet focuses on the modern service.

The Lady Vanishes (1938). Directed by Alfred Hitchcock; with Michael Redgrave. Hitchcock train thriller from the 1930s, one of the first films to use the Express as its background. It is never stated overtly that the train is the Orient Express, but be assured that not many luxury trains rattle through the Balkans. Its mid-thirties background is also within hailing distance of the average Cthulhu campaign, so it is worth seeing for a number of reasons, the best being that it is a delightful film.

From Russia With Love (1963). Directed by Terence Young. Stars Sean Connery, Lotte Lenya, Robert Shaw. Early James Bond entry with its climax taking place aboard the Orient Express. It also has plenty of looks at Istanbul. Keepers should see it just for the fight scene between Robert Shaw and Sean Connery, one of the cinema's all-time greats, and an excellent demonstration of what combat in a confined area like a railway compartment is like.



carefully assessing the wealth of would-be victims before striking.

IN THE 1890S

The Orient Express ran full-service throughout the 1890s. This was the first era of the service, in which it established itself in the public mind as the most famous train of all time.

This vital life-line ran the old route through Germany and Austria, to the north of the Alps. This service was called the Orient Express.

Coaches then were constructed of wood, but built with the same attention to detail and finish as their counterparts in the 1920s. Many Europeans were first experiencing sleeping cars and contemporary magazines and newspapers took great delight in lampooning the possibilities of so many people thrown together on one



Chaosium Fiction

Madness on the Orient Express, edited by James Lowder. This collection of short stories was commissioned to accompany the release of this campaign, and unleashes two-dozen all-new horrors on the Orient Express across all periods of its long history. Keepers may draw plenty of inspiration for strange events and peculiar passengers from the stories contained therein. Authors include Elaine Cunningham, Dennis Detwiler, Christopher Golden, Kenneth Hite, Robin D. Laws, Lisa Morton, Lucien Soulban, James L. Sutter, Monica Valentinelli and many others.

Cthulhu's Dark Cults, edited by David Conyers. This anthology contains stories based on the cults found in *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios. "Perfect Skin" by David Witteveen takes place as the Orient Express arrives in Constantinople in 1922, and concerns the Brothers of the Skin. The events and characters have been woven into the Constantinople chapter of this campaign, but the original story is well worth seeking out.

train and sharing small compartments. Later thriller writers exploited the close quarters for their sinister possibilities.

More details on the 1890s service are provided with the scenario "The Blood Red Fez".

THE ORIENT EXPRESS TODAY

First the Orient Express, then the Simplon-Orient Express, the newest luxury train is the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express. It has been rebuilt from original 1920s rolling stock and is in the distinctive blue and gold of the original Wagons-Lits cars. The train is an extravagant exercise in nostalgia, running regularly from London to Venice and back. Once each year the train makes the full trip from London to Istanbul. Passengers are expected to dine formally and the wearing of 1920s costumes is strongly encouraged.

The train now has a complete salon car including a full-size grand piano (a touch which has led to the ahistoric inclusion of such a car among the plans found in this supplement). None of the staff will divulge how they got the piano onto the train—it is a secret among the Company. The setting could be well used for modern adventurers needing to meet people of power in settings of almost complete luxury—a trip aboard the Venice Simplon-Orient-Ex-

press is worth savoring, no matter when and no matter who the passengers are. The history of Nagelmackers' great enterprise is by no means over.

A fictionalised, modern day Orient Express service is provided in the scenario "The Simulacrum Unbound".



RESOURCES FOR THE KEEPER

Simplon-Orient Express Operations

Describing such a train and its staff for the 1920s, the itinerary, what is not covered or attempted herein, and comparisons with the fictive train in this package.

THE ORIENT EXPRESS SERVICE was begun as, and in the 1920s continues to be, the ultimate in luxury travel. It rivals the greatest Cunard steamship for opulence and comfort. Passengers aboard this lavish train must remember they are riding with the elite of Europe.

The Simplon-Orient Express has no standard-seat coaches at all; every one of its passengers has an entire sleeping compartment, alone or possibly shared with one other. Its dining facilities are as elegant and its cuisine as mouth-watering as the greatest of Parisian restaurants, even if its menus are necessarily more limited.

The capability and aplomb of its staff is legendary throughout Europe: the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits hires only the best chefs, conductors, and managers.

The materials of this chapter are offered for the convenience and consideration of the keeper. Railway buffs should understand that what is truly spoken of here is the Simplon-Fantasy-Orient Express, emphasizing what is estimated to be significant in playing *Call of Cthulhu*. Experts have all of reality within which to be accurate; we have only these few pages within which to generate a useful summary.

