

# RIDE THE LIGHTNING

LIFE IS SHORT, BUT THE RAIL IS LONG

## THE PREMISE

A high-octane steampunk race for survival aboard a battle train. Think Snowpiercer meets Miéville's The Iron Council.

- MOOD: Fast-paced action, deadly PC grinder, dungeon crawler.
- TONE: R-rated, grimdark sense of humor
- SETTING: A climate apocalypse, everyone lives on battle trains.
- GENRE: Low-scifi steampunk with a hint of Bioshock.
- THEMES: Fatalism, Objectivism vs. honor and duty, rebirth.

## THE SETTING

RtL is an OSR+ adventure inspired by Worldbuild with Us:

- Ep 1: [It's Always Trains](#)
- Ep 2: [Ride the Lightning](#)

The world is metal and lightning. Ever since THE STORM blackened the earth, you took to the rails. The rails cross seas of salt, plains of fire, and black mountains.

They surge with the Storm's rage. You know life on the rail and the rail only inside the belly of the world's last great powers: the BATTLE TRAINS. Aged and strong, the battle trains ferry humanity to the future.

Forged in the aftermath of OUR LAST GREAT MISTAKE, they are our only defense against the violence of the Storm.

# THE BATTLE TRAINS

The remnants of humanity persist on battle trains. The world outside is a barren wasteland, scoured by an act of god called the Storm, the result of ecological disaster.

The Storm is sentient. It seethes with disdain for your survival.

Each battle train is powered by a hydrocore that draws its power from The Storm's endless lightning strikes, which charge the rails. But water is scarce and the biscuits hang high—what little water you carry on your battle train is a sacred quantity, used as both a weapon and a recycled resource that gives life to its passengers.

Your train is your tribe.

There are others out there who want to take it.

RIDE HIGHBALL OR DIE.

# PREPARING FOR THE ONE-SHOT

For this one-shot, you'll be dropped into the world without a session zero. You will start with nothing to lose but everything to gain.

Nobody cares about where you came from. You will probably die. The only thing that's certain is that you will RIDE THE LIGHTNING.

1. Select an ARCHETYPE. Use the description to build a character on [osrplus.com](https://osrplus.com). Don't choose any armor or weapons, and your race must be Human. You start with 0 supplies and 0 gold, unless your archetype says otherwise. You start with 1 fate point, (unless you are a Daredevil, in which case you start with 2.)
2. The character builder's first question is: "Your journey begins with a name. What will you make of yours?" *This journey begins without a name.* Put whatever you want in there, but that is not your name. You don't have a name until you speak it in game.

3. It's okay if you die. We'll just roll up another character and put you back in the action. Death on the rail is glory.
4. When your character is introduced, you will roll for a person, place, thing, or group. The result of the roll defines you. You may declare a single supply related to the thing you roll *once* during the session.
5. There is no magic in RIDE THE LIGHTNING. Any spells you choose must be rationalized as technology, or a scientific effect of your interaction with the Storm. If you are a spellcaster, decide what is the source of your "magic" and how it is physically *on* or *in* your person.

## **FUN FACTS**

- Most believe the Storm is the result of humanity's hubris. We tried to save the environment, but our geoengineering fucked us. The Storm is sentient, and its electric nervous system populates the darkened skies.
- There are giant, mutated monsters in the barren wilds. Are they the consequence of ecological disaster, or creatures uplifted by the Storm's rage?
- Each battle train has a devastating weapon of mass destruction affixed to its locomotive. These weapons are forgotten technologies originally designed to prevent ecological collapse, that are now used to fight other trains and ensure the survival of their passengers.
  - The exterior of all battle trains are electrified, thanks to the power they draw from the rails.

- Battle trains can change terrain modes, from siege to cruising to stealth, for example.
- The center of every train contains its hydrocore, which is surrounded by a biodome of precious flora and fauna. The passenger cars attached on either end from this center are where most passengers dwell.
- There are train stations in the mountains, where passengers trade and board. Life in the mountains is inhospitable. No one survives long there.