

# MONSTERS, CREATURES, and BEASTS

ISSUE 1, PART 1 | DRILLERS FROM THE UNDERWORLD

## o. TO START

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### Who's to blame

Text, illustrations, and layout by  
Thomas Novosel.

### The Indie Hack

The Indie Hack is a fantasy rpg with some interesting qualities which make it different than the traditional “us against the goblin horde” type game. So here are some words from the creator of the game to pitch it to you:

“The Indie Hack (TIH) is a minimalist fantasy roleplaying game that takes old-school gaming and gives it an indie-game edge: you still get heroes, magic, traps, and monsters but the players get more control over the richness of the story and the mysteries of the setting. The characters are ruled not by abstract ideas of goodness and order, but by Masters (who they must try to impress) and Goddesses (who they need to appease or face death, or worse). At just 28 pages, The Indie Hack is a light-weight way to shift your dungeon-delving paradigm.”

For additional information on The Indie Hack, or if you are interested in purchasing it in print or PDF, visit:  
[www.scablandspress.com](http://www.scablandspress.com).

### Thank You!

I would like to take this bit of space to thank all of my supporters over on Patreon, without your encouragement the internet would be d100+10 percent less interesting of a place:

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[www.patreon.com/thomasnovosel](http://www.patreon.com/thomasnovosel)

## 1.

# DRILLERS FROM THE UNDERWORLD

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With their pale skin and silver hair, these golden eyed under-dwellers attack! When you are exploring and looking for treasure you may be unfortunate enough to have the ground shake and split apart as the copper colored machines rise up spinning and throwing dirt and stone about. With a whoosh as the cabins depressurize, the hatches explode off and out the drillers come to clear the area so that they may begin their work.

One shouts expletives in your direction as another comes in and tears apart the armor you wear with a quick grab and rip with a mechanical arm. They rush about taking what they see so that you have nothing, making it even easier to overpower you. Whether they subdue you or kill you, is determined by if their scientist wants anything to do with you, and depending on the amount of blood that the grunts crave today. Either way, you are not in a good spot when they arrive.

### ***Who are they?***

The drillers are sometimes referenced in explorer's journals as "machine dwarves", as they have a similar stock and stature to dwarves, but have a rigidity to their movements similar to the machines that they augment their bodies with.

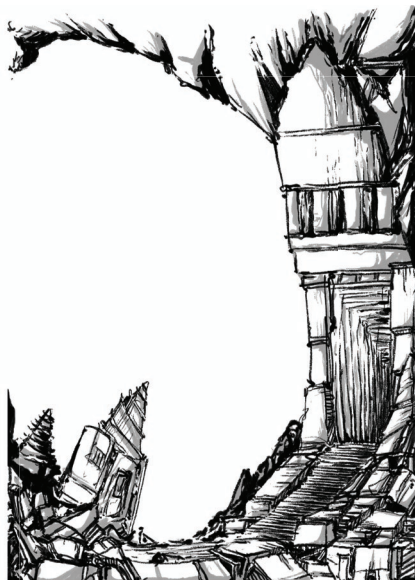
A drilling party specifically is a unit under the guidance of the war and exploration board, granted the technology needed to burrow up from the underworld into subsurface areas so that they may study the buried ruins of surface civilizations. With this information in the hands of the various military officials below, there is hope that the inverted silver city can colonize large swathes of the surface.

### ***Why do they come here?***

The drill team is specifically looking for answers to any or all of the following:

1. What is the most advanced technology that the surface can produce?
2. What type of defenses does the surface use to secure their cities?
3. What types of long range weaponry does the surface possess?
4. What does the surface know of the machine dwarves?
5. What does the surface know of the Inverted Silver City?

All of this information is important in establishing a plan for invasion or justifying further expeditions to understand the capabilities and wealth



of any surface civilization. Of course, the machine dwarves cannot go directly to the surface, so they must go to the ruins and then estimate where the surface is in technological development.

### ***Lore: Machine Dwarves of Inverted Silver City***

This is what information can be found on the surface concerning the machine dwarves and their inverted silvery city:

- They have similar anatomy to the dwarves we know, except that they seem to be part machine and an advanced type of metal magic (as far as our best mages can tell from examining the remains of one from 100 years ago)
- According to several accounts, mostly explorers, they ambush sites and steal cultural artifacts. Usually things like pots, pans, silverware, one time a book, and at one point some pieces of armor.
- Not much is known about the drills, except that they are definitely advanced beyond our understanding of mechanics and tools. Some scholars have argued that the machines are actually living metal bound together with the spirits of burrowing animals.
- A small statue was found nearby a drill site, it seemed like a pointed city, sharp like a bundle of nails. All of the buildings appeared to be upside down. But it could be that the statue itself was being held upside down.

### **The Drills**

Each drill can comfortably seat 2 machine dwarves, but 4 can be squeezed in if needed. The drills themselves have very few moving parts exposed on the outside, if someone were to go inside they would see a small control panel consisting solely of levers and a few meters (for measuring external pressure, internal pressure, remaining fuel, etc). There would also be two seats with harnesses, and a hidden compartment can be discovered underneath the floor between the seats, it will be held shut and require a special tool to break free (each member of the drilling party has one). In the compartment there is a small, but heavy weighing block pistol, it is highly inefficient and was constructed to scare those at a distance, and kill those at 0 range, also there is a small booklet concerning what a team should do if they are discovered, and that there will be only a limited amount of time before the drill seals itself shut and begins to burrow down again. If it cannot burrow downward to escape, it will release a corrosive acid which eats and destroys the vehicle in its entirety.

### ***Block Pistol***

Two-Handed

Range: close

Jammed (/3)

- Can also be used One-handed but use your lowest stat.
- Details can be spent to create a deafening bang which reverberates through the air making it impossible for anyone to hear anything for the rest of the scene.

### ***When they appear...***

When a drill party appears, the ground shakes and separates as the drill surfaces. As described before, the hatch will explode off, potentially throwing whoever is in its path against a wall or injuring them as it is thrown at high speed. The machine dwarves will quickly rush out of the machines and begin to engage with anyone who spotted them or is in the immediate area (and can be seen). As the details of their mission must be kept secret (overhearing their conversations will be useless, as they speak a dialect of old common which seems mixed with fungus speech.

### ***Riding the Drills to Inverted Silver City***

If anyone were to attempt to just hop into the drills hoping that it would take them directly to the city, they may be disappointed to learn that the drill must be steered, even in auto escape mode. Without steering it will just drill directly downward until it runs out of fuel. But, there is the possibility of coaxing a overdirt scientist into driving the drill back to the city. The scientist may agree, but only because he thinks live specimens would be good for studying.

## **Mechano Warriors**

### ***Bouncer Mechano (CL 1)***

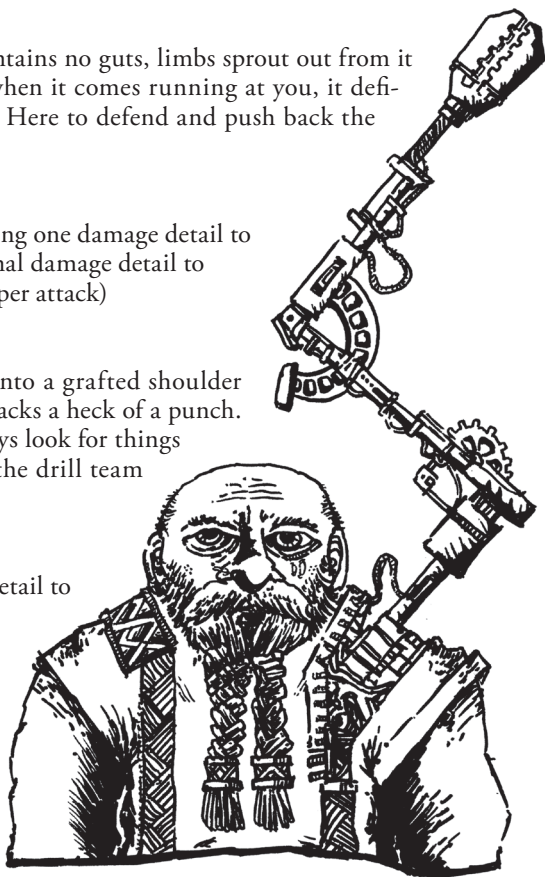
A big round metal chest that contains no guts, limbs sprout out from it when it is ready to attack and when it comes running at you, it definitely will knock someone over. Here to defend and push back the interlopers.

- Fallen (/5)
- Metal Chest, Caved (/4)
- Wrecking Ball (Close, by adding one damage detail to Metal Chest, add one additional damage detail to target, can only be used once per attack)

### ***Reacher Mechano (CL 0)***

A large metal arm is attached onto a grafted shoulder apparatus, it can reach far and packs a heck of a punch. Great for crowd control these guys look for things that are out of reach to defend the drill team with.

- Fallen (/4)
- Heavy Weapon
- Arms Reach (Close, spend a detail to hold a target just outside close range, 1 detail must be spent to escape)
- Mechanized third arm (worth 3 jingle)



## Grunts and Lugs

### **Grunt** (CL -1)

Going about, mindless in their task to scour for the artifacts they have been programmed for. The side of their head is missing and replaced with a small machine which moves up and down against the brain. Do what they say. Do what they say. Listen to the captain.

- Fallen (/3)
- Small Knife (Hand Weapon)
- Brain Sedation and Obedience Machine (incomprehensible tech, worth 1 jingle if removed successfully)

### **Lug** (CL -1 to 0)

Muscle, made of meat, a machine dwarf built to work. The head machine is burrowed into the base of the neck,. This guy was made to move heavy things. Do what they say. Do what they say. Listen to the captain.

- Fallen (/4)
- Fists (as Heavy Weapon, “Cracked Rib” as damage detail)
- Punch like a Maul (Close, add an additional damage detail to all attacks made with fists when the target is cornered)



## Overdirt Scientists

### ***Military Scientist*** (CL 0)

Pushing the goggles up to his brow he knew what he had to do, this had to be studied but it could not live in captivity without being a nuisance. Let it bleed before I open it up.

- Fallen (/3)
- Combat Vest; as Chainmail, Punctured (/4)
- Electric Stick, spend damage details to apply the scene detail stunned

### ***Cultural Scientist*** (CL -1)

Digging through your pockets she looks down at you, slightly interested look and then he pulls out a clump of your hair. This surely should show some evidence of what the surface currently is like, trace amounts of materials and what not.

- Fallen (/2)
- Curious for Culture
- Carrying a Genetic Mapping Decoder (worth 0 jingle, it's inconceivable and alien in complexity)

## Expedition Captain

### ***Expedition Captain*** (CL 1-2)

With a stern look he surveys the area before he gives the order. Clear it, take it, clean up the mess. Then with a wizz and a grh his face unhinges to reveal a small close range mounted hand crossbow.

- Fallen (/4)
- Hidden Skull Crossbow, Jammed (/2)
- Small Mission Pouch (containing: small silver relic, family crest handwraps, lighter, and a small vial containing fetid flesh)

## **A1.**

### **FURTHER ADVENTURES**

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#### **1. Revolution?**

As the dust clears and the torches are lit once again, it can be seen that everyone who emerged from the drills has perished, but one drill remains sealed shut. Its door is rusted shut, once pried open it is discovered that a few dwarves lay there, covered in cobwebs and long dead. They have no mechanical alterations and actually boast a more copper skin tone. Were these revolutionaries? Why did there drill come up with these ones? What was there mission? Why would they originally have come to the surface?

#### **2. Invasion?**

The expedition team has been slain, the captain takes his last breath before he falls to the ground. A slight grinding of gears can be heard, his skin folds apart revealing an all mechanical inner body, deep inside underneath it all is a small creature the size of a hand. It seems to have been controlling this warrior like a puppet all along. What is this creature? Is this a soft invasion of a race further below the machine dwarves? Could this threaten our world? Did they bring the augmentation technology to the inverted silver city?



## A2.

### HEART OF THE INDIGO HORDE



Your bloodline is gone, your clan forced to the surface to have their skin burn in the harsh sun of the overdirt. The machine dwarves captured your ancestors long ago, using them for their experiments. But who are you? Are you all that remains? Maybe not, but you are the last with the heart of the indigo horde.

#### Questions

(answer 2)

- ☐ What were the last words of your closest sibling?
- ☐ How will the indigo horde return?
- ☐ Where is the resting place of your people?
- ☐ What do you fear in your blood?

#### Class Attributes

Tough (-1), Precise (+1), Clever (0),

#### Natural Aptitudes

(choose 2)

- ☐ Endurance
- ☐ Stealth
- ☐ Empathy

#### Positive Details

- **From the Underworld** (Proficient with all thrown weapons; Hand Weapons; and Reinforced Leather armor or lighter)
- **Between the Eyes** (Skill: Test Precise, details can be spent one-to-one to incapacitate living human targets, add the negative detail "Out Cold")
- **Breath of the Worm** (Spell: Test Clever, details spent to summon the image of a indigo spiked worm, which will act as additional armor. Dissipated (/2))



## A3. QUICK REFERENCE

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