



Hivers IV

STARS
WITHOUT NUMBER
COMPATIBLE

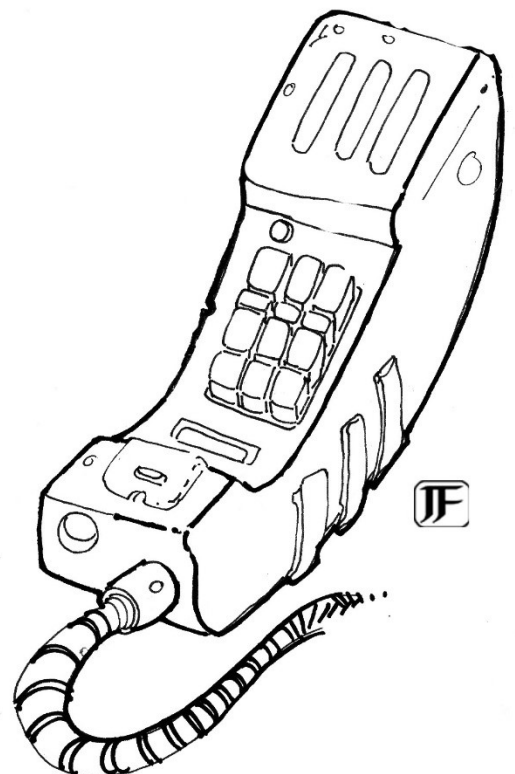
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Introduction

If this adventure follows on from Hivers I, II & III then you will be familiar with the Hivers and how their ship exploded in the upper atmosphere at the end of the first episode and how there have been many different infestations.

If you have not played Hivers I, here is a synopsis.

What the average person understands is this:

The world upon which you stand has been suffering a global famine. When things got desperate a massive food convoy was arranged to import food. As the convoy approached the planet it was attacked and destroyed. Most people blame pirates for the attack, some spacers say it was aliens. One freighter survived the attack but was crippled and the crew sucked out into the vacuum of space. A rescue mission was sent out and the freighter brought back to the orbital station even as it was brought to the planet's orbital station parts of the ship were breaking up and burning up in the planet's atmosphere. The spacers that rescued the freighter were a team of off-worlders and the freighter's cargo of thousands of tons of protein powder were sorely needed.

Since then there have been other blows to the planet's food supplies. With each of these the amount of civil unrest has increased. Some people blame off worlders for causing the famine, to push up food prices. The same conspiracy theories hold that the supply convoy was destroyed in a rivalry between rich agricultural worlds who want to have exclusive rights to sell food here. There have been repeated incidents of off worlders saying the wrong thing and it sparking out bursts of violence. Anything that could be construed as off worlders getting more than a fair share or getting food they are not entitled to does not go down well with the population.

As a GM what you need to know is that the convoy was attacked by an intelligent alien

species called the Hivers, a mutant insectoid species. The freighter was left as a lure to invite the planet to bring it into orbit. Once there, part of the alien craft that was locked on to the freighter detached and headed to the planet. It exploded in the upper atmosphere scattering Hiver eggs across much of the planet surface.

Part of the unique nature of Hivers is that they can change their body form and function from workers who can build nests and feed developing pupa to a queen who can lay thousands of eggs or into a soldier who can fight and fly. This ability means that a single surviving Hiver can establish an entire colony. This has happened at least twice that the authorities are aware of. In the polar regions several research bases were wiped out in Hiver attacks and the residents carried off as food. More recently there was an infestation right here in the capital city, down in the service tunnels and sewers.

The characters liaison with the authorities was called Lt. Bessie Powall, a naval officer. If this is a continuation, then Lt. Bessie Powall can be used to make contact with the characters again. The navy would prefer this as it keeps the circle of people 'in the know' about the aliens smaller.

If this is a new group of characters then anything that brings the characters in contact with the authorities, anything from a speeding ticket or irregular paperwork to gunfights and barroom brawls will put the characters on the authority's radar and bring a visit from Bessie. This has been standard practice right across the Hivers series so some characters may be familiar with the process of press ganging in new 'volunteers'.

Bessie is your plot hook, mentor and enabler for these adventures. She is a competent naval officer and former fighter pilot.

The Hiver series of adventures can be played out on any world that you don't mind inflicting a global famine and an alien

invasion upon. In that sense it is setting neutral.

Scene I: Urban Decay

The team of characters are assembled, if they know Lt. Powall (Bessie) she will welcome them back and impress upon them that they are trying to keep the existence of hostile aliens under wraps and that they need the characters help again.

If the characters are new, she will explain she can make whatever trouble they are in 'just go away' if the characters are willing to do some work for the government. She will then go on and explain that given the ongoing food crisis the government does not want to cause any panic or anxiety. A previous group of off-worlders were instrumental in bring some hostile aliens to the world and now they are trying to get the situation under control.

The current situation is that there have been several infestations, in this city and in others. Other teams have been assembled to address the ongoing problem.

The most recent incident brought to light an attempt by the aliens to send a signal. At first scientists thought the signal was aimed out into space, possibly to an unknown force hidden further out in the solar system. An analysis of the frequencies used suggest that the signal was designed to bounce of the atmosphere and be picked up by listeners on the planet's surface. Given the power of the broadcast signal it definitely would have been detectable anywhere on the planet's surface.

Government strategists are suggesting that it may have been a rallying call. The logic does along the lines of the Hiver aliens seed a great many hives on the planet's surface. Some thrive and some struggle. They all attempt to establish a communications center and the first to do so broadcasts their rallying call around the planet. If could then follow that the Hivers will attempt to converge on this location.

That is all conjecture but if it is true then it would mean that the millions of innocent people living here are in imminent danger and there is nowhere to evacuate them to.

The best-case scenario is that the broadcast signal was destroyed soon enough to prevent that from unfolding and should another signal be detected here or in another population center then that area could be cleared and then airstrikes employed to take it down.

Since the broadcasting beacon was destroyed there have been no sightings of Hivers in the city until two days ago.

Law enforcement were called to a fabrication plant on the edge of the city. Reports said it was an unregistered food market. The officers own patrol drone captured video of the officers being attacked from all sides by Hivers and dragged inside the building.

Local intelligence suggests that at times there could be a hundred or more people in and around these buildings. Peak times would be for the illegal markets but many homeless people have been staying there hoping to be either first in the queues for food or to pick up a day's cash in hand work loading and unloading black market food.

The facility is made up of a collection of buildings, a livestock auction, an abattoir and that sort of thing.

The civic leaders will not authorize airstrikes as long as there is a chance there are innocent citizens in the facility.

No one is naive enough to think the city can survive without the black-market food imports. That means that the police are reluctant to move against the smugglers or be seen to move against the smugglers. There is a chance that the Hivers on film may have been an isolated group.

The mission is, get into the facility, locate and extract any living people. Once the

civilians are clear a military strike can be called in.

If there are no Hivers present then get out and leave the facility intact.

Lt. Powall's superiors have authorized an off the books mission to investigate. They wish to use off-worlders so there is no trace back to known employees of the government, nor do they want to put civilian lives at risk.

The characters will be provided with all suitable resources to complete this mission. Full blueprints for the buildings within the facility are available.

Scene 2: View From A Bridge

There is a natural vantage point where a road transport bridge gives a view of most of the facility. The range is approximately 500m. The compound is surrounded by a wire mesh fence and is quite open. It was designed to accept heavy goods vehicles carrying livestock. It has ample open space for twenty or more vehicles to be parked and unload. More open space was designated for movable metal holding pens used for containing livestock once unloaded.

The largest building was the livestock auction. It contains pens at one end, an auction arena in the middle with bleachers on either side and then a public end at the other for buyers to meet and conduct business.

The other large building is the abattoir. This is on the other side of all the loading and unloading bays. It is not particularly big at about 8m long and of brick construction.

Behind the abattoir are a row of smoke houses used for preparing smoked and dried meats.

Access is via a wide road designed to carry heavy goods vehicles two abreast and blocked by a double gate of chain-link fencing with a small hut for a security

officer. The hut has windows on every side and was more of a shelter for checking paperwork and somewhere to shelter from poor weather than anything else. It is now obviously empty.

The entire compound appears devoid of life. It was mothballed when it was abandoned about 12 months ago but has been brought back into use by the black marketeers five or six months ago. It has not deteriorated much or at all in that time.

There used to be a hefty padlock on the front gates but that is long gone. Now the gates stand closed but unlocked.

From this higher vantage point it could be seen that there are open skylights, if the characters are using telescopes or binoculars. This would give them means of access as an alternative to the front doors. Lt. Powall is willing to facilitate any route of entry to drones dropping the characters on to the roof to using heavy trucks to ram through the front gates.

The only caveat would be that the security forces cannot be seen to be acting against the black marketeers so any drop off or evac from the roof would have to be by night. Using heavy vehicles would be using civilian vehicles requisitioned for the purpose.

Your players may have questions so here are some facts that will hopefully enable you to answer them.

There are no lights being used in the facility at any time.

No one or nothing comes or goes via the open skylights

No vehicles approach or leave the facility

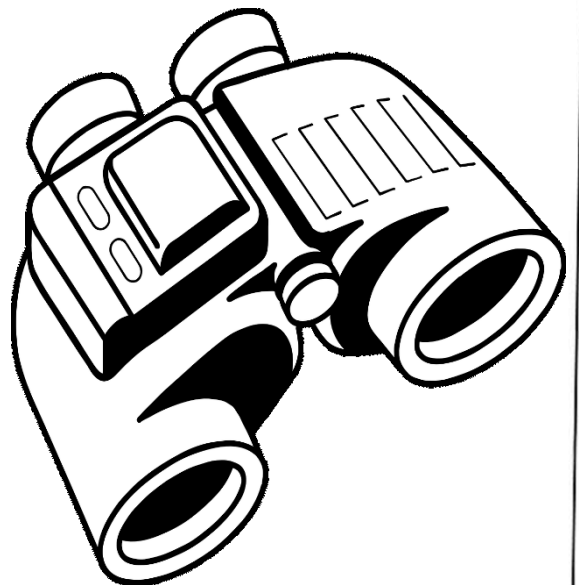
There are no parked vehicles left here.

Using infrared or sound detection, such as parabolic microphones, will pick up movement inside (the hivers are active in the buildings, they just are not using any technology).

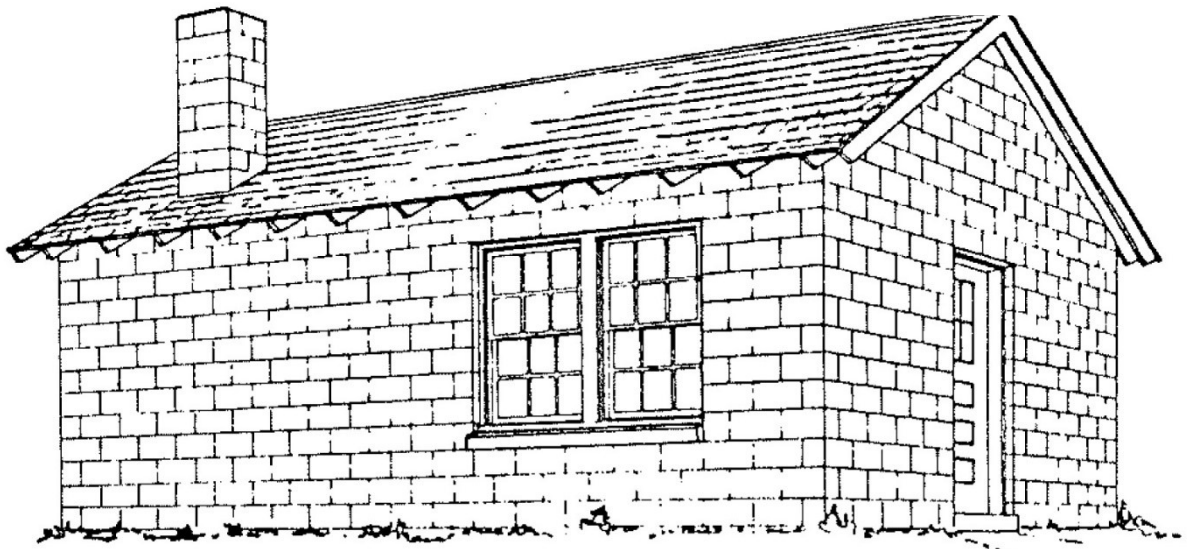
This scene should be played out to give your player characters a chance to plan. Lt Powall will have driven them to the bridge in an unmarked SUV and she will have a big old military radio (plenty of range) to get answers to the characters questions.

She should be played as competent, efficient, loyal but not overly concerned about the welfare of a gang of black marketeers.

How the characters choose to proceed is entirely up to them. Each location is presented with the assumption that they did not smash through the front gates, all guns blazing. The characters may play the scenes in any order.



Scene 3: Abattoir



The abattoir is a simple building. Its surroundings are set up for the efficient unloading and corralling of live animals and then the loading of carcasses for distribution. Behind this building are a row of identical smokehouses where more specialized meat products used to be prepared and preserved.

The windows are boarded up on the inside, this was done by the black marketeers to prevent prying eyes from seeing them at work. The lock on the end door has been forced and the door is only held closed by the splinters of wood binding against the door and frame.

There are still plenty of carcasses hanging from hooks, but they are green with mold and putrefaction. More than one has fallen to the floor and is alive with maggots.

All the tools in here are functional. They run off of compressed air and there is a working compressor. Although the compressor is not working it still holds a full tank of pressurized air from the last time it was used. This means that there are power saws on most of the tables that are ready to be used. They are just tethered by air lines to an overhead air pipe. The refrigerator is working, it has been connected to an illegal mains electrical supply. The rendering kettle is cold. It was turned off when the

place was mothballed and has not been used since.

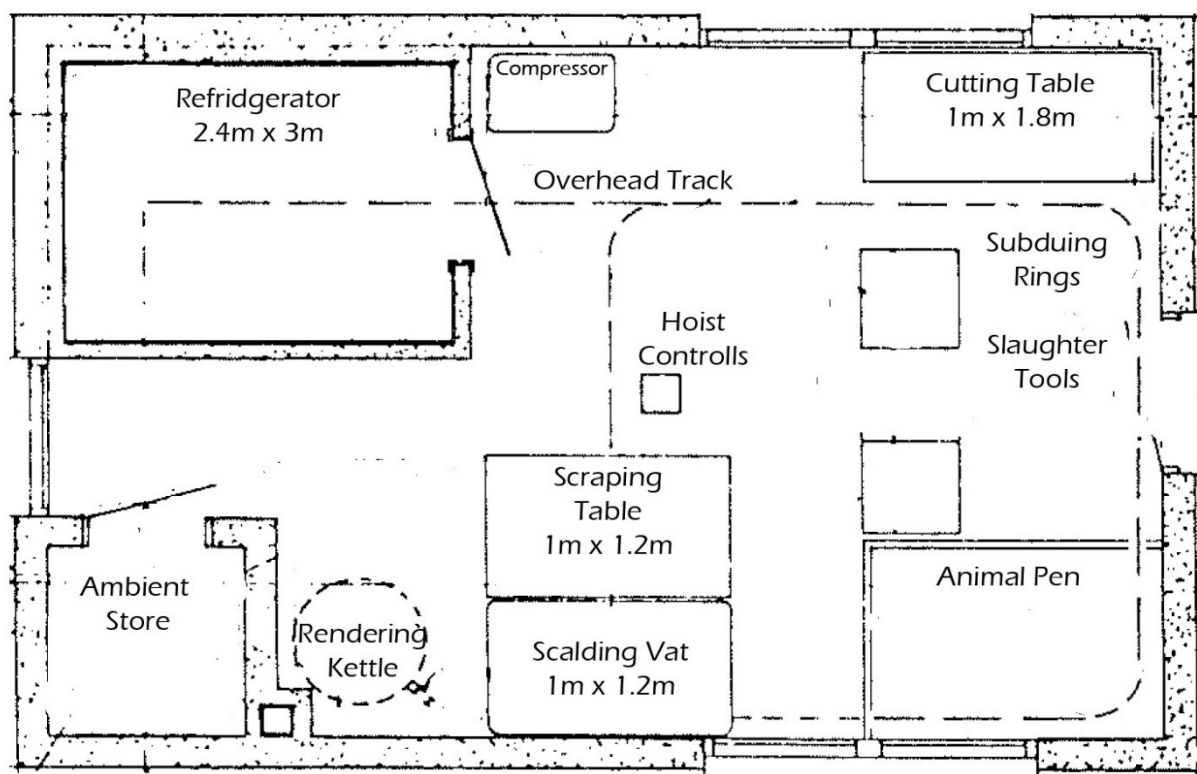
There are plenty of opportunities for improvised weapons here. There are knives of all sizes and some manual saws such as bone saws, and plenty of meat hooks. In addition, there are chainmail gauntlets used by the butchers and leather aprons.

A Gruesome Discovery

When the Hivers attacked this place there was a gang of black marketeers on the site. They could not escape and there were few places to hide. Those that survived hid in the Refrigerator and wedged the door shut to prevent the Hivers from opening it from the outside. Before anyone could remove their improvised lock they had succumbed to the cold and lack of fresh air.

Anyone opening the refrigerator door will have to struggle against the wedges on the inside (they are made from small pieces of frozen meat and jammed under the door). What they will discover are the bodies of eight adults, seven huddled together but frozen solid and quite dead. The last is curled up by the door where he was trying to get the wedged meat out but with fingers that had lost their strength and feeling through cold.

This discovery should be played for as much horror as you can milk from it.



This is a building that the Hivers avoid. They only eat living beings; they need to inject enzymes into them while alive and then they keep them alive for as long as possible. All the meat hanging in the abattoir is no use to them and the cold of the refrigerator is something they avoid. They do not function well when cold.

Having said that, the Hivers have no other aversion to the place apart from the fact that it holds nothing of value to them. If they chase anyone in here there is nothing to stop them from entering and exacting their revenge or grabbing them for food. It is simply not their favorite place.

This building makes an ideal first staging post as it is not patrolled and as all the windows are boarded up anyone hiding here will be hard to spot.

Scene 4: The Sales Room

The sales room is a large galvanized steel constructed shed or barn. The front of the building is comprised of a small office, communal areas and toilets. The middle is a small arena and auctioneers booth and the back is holding pens for the different

auction lots of animals. The middle section with the arena is flanked by bleachers where buyers could see the animals being sold.

More importantly it is the Hivers main hive. Imagine all of what I have described but encased in thick layer of translucent amber wax.

The sloping ceiling of the sheds pitched roof is lined with bodies encased in more wax with only small perforations to allow breathing. None of the bodies are obviously conscious and although most are from the local population, there are some obvious off-worlders amongst them.

GM: If you have had a player drop out of the game you can have their body in amongst these, if that is possible, to add a more personal connection.

The rear of the shed has been cleared and piled high with earth and rubble. In the center is a hole or shaft going down below the building. From it can be heard echoes of insectoid chittering.

There is no obvious way down into the hole, in terms of steps or ladders. Looking

down without lights or image intensifiers will reveal very little than a hole that has been dug by hand into the ground. Five or six meters down there is a cross tunnel. That second tunnel is in darkness.

(if the characters take note of the direction, the tunnel opens in the direction of the bulk of the city)

Rescuing the people stuck to the ceiling will be extremely difficult. They have been injected with an enzyme that is slowly digesting them from the inside. It is liquifying muscle. When it eventually reaches their heart, it will kill them. That is on top of the logistical problems of trying to rescue people stuck to the ceiling.

The tunnels have been dug by 'hand' The hivers excavated them manually, using workers. They are not dead straight. They run straight until they hit an outcropping of bedrock or other solid stone obstruction. At that point the tunnels turn aside until they find a way around the obstruction then they carry on as straight as they can towards their goal.

The sound if Hivers working carries down the tunnels a long way. It will become rapidly apparent that the tunnels are running for the city. They are sloping very gently downwards to a depth of 40m.

The Hivers have picked up the vibrations of the city metro system. They have been tunneling steadily towards the closest tunnel.

It is important to emphasize the dark and the claustrophobic conditions.

For each 100m there is a chance of there being a Hiver Worker. (for every 100m roll 2d6 and on a 12 there are 1d6 workers approaching).

The tunnel is 4km long and reaches into the city. As the characters approach the end, they will notice a significant buildup of heat. In the last 200m they will even encounter dead hivers, they died from heat

exposure. Just as they do not like to be too cold, they suffer from overheating as well.

In the last 100m the tunnel widens out significantly. The floor is largely flat, but the walls widen out from tunnel to chamber approximately 60m wide and 20m tall. In the center is a queen Hiver, the walls to the left are thick with ten thousand eggs. The walls to right is a mass of pupation cells.

The very far end of this chamber is the concrete tube that holds the metro tunnel. It has been completely excavated and it runs across the chamber. Stood on the top of this concrete tube is a group of winged Hivers. As the characters approach there is a rushing noise and from the way the Hivers move it will be obvious that air is rushing out of an unseen breach in top of the tunnel. 10 seconds later the air goes from rushing out of the tunnel to being sucked in. At that point the winged Hivers jump into the breach and are sucked down into the tunnel.

Pupating Hivers

There are more Hivers getting ready to break out of their pupation cells. It will take a full minute to emerge, unfurl their wings and be ready to combat the characters. There will be a sufficient number to challenge the characters, given their skills, numbers and equipment. If the characters flee back down the tunnel they will be chased all the way.

If they stand and fight it will be a tough battle with an uncertain outcome.

They could follow the Hivers that went into the train tunnel. They will have time as the Hivers emerging from the pupation cells will take a minute to unfurl and dry out.

These scenes can be very cinematic If your characters are heavily armed or with automatic weapons, but it should slowly become apparent that the Hivers are emerging faster than the characters can dispose of them. If the characters have decided to flee then they have a minute head start on the first wave of chasers, but

the Hivers will soon be on the characters tail.

If the characters stand and fight the same scenario applies, for the first minute the characters will be able to kill dozens of Hivers but soon the rate at which they are emerging and becoming active will exceed the rate at which the characters can kill them.

If the characters get out of this then they will likely play out scene five or six.

Scene 5: A Frantic Retreat

It the characters retreat from the underground chamber They should be kept under constant pressure from behind.

They will need to negotiate the tunnel from the egg chamber, all the way back to the vertical tunnel in the auction shed. Depending on how the characters made the descent this could be a fast or slow climb with Hivers trying to claw them back down into the tunnel.

The best time for the characters to turn and fight is probably when the Hivers are still in the hole, but the characters have made it out. Firing down into a mass of contained bodies.

If the Hivers get out, then the soldier Hivers can use their wings to attack from above as well as on the ground.

If the characters do not stand and fight the best place to make a stand is from the abattoir, solid walls, boarded up windows and limited access points.

Fleeing into the open areas of the loading and unloading bays will invite attacks from the Hivers from the air.

If you want to help out the characters, Lt. Powall may have arranged snipers to be in position around the facility. These can pick off individual Hivers. It is a GM call if the snipers exist. Lt. Powall is organized and is perfectly capable of having back up plans in place!

The point of scene 5 is to put the characters under pressure with multiple combats, in the confined spaces of the auction shed, the open spaces of the loading bay and the 'backs against the wall' situation in the abattoir.

Other set plays can include allowing the characters a vehicle and having the Hivers attacking from the air trying to rip the roof off the building or landing on the front and attacking through any windshield.

In the auction shed there is a lot of dry old animal bedding, the atmosphere is dry and dusty, and the shed is also made of metal sheets. Stray bullets will cause sparks, and these can start a fire. The fire could help or hinder the characters. The area most likely to burn is the rear of the shed. There is plenty of running water at the front in the restrooms.

In the abattoir, there is a hazard of a compressor under pressure. A stray bullet into that will cause a shrapnel explosion.

These set plays are there to try and stop this scene turning into a predictable, drawn out cycle of roll to attack, roll damage and repeat.

The characters can at the end of this scene inform Lt. Powall of the Hivers in the metro system and turn the problem over to her.

Or, they can try and solve the problem themselves.

Scene 6: The Metro



The Hivers on top of the metro tunnel use the vacuum caused by the train passing to suck them into the tunnel. They are on a scouting mission.

The Hivers plan is to derail a metro train at high speed and then swoop down and pull out all the bodies of the wounded. They need a bulk food supply for the tens of thousands of eggs. To build their army they need food.

The force that entered the tunnel is made up of as many Hiver soldiers as there are player characters plus the same number of drones. Drones have the same ability to produce and shape chitin as workers, but they have wings and look very much like soldiers.

The set up is a typical subway metro system with electrical trains running off of a 'live rail' that provides power.

There are warning signs at regular intervals telling you not to touch the third rail, which is bright red. There are regular lights built into the walls and a meter-wide walkway on either side of the tracks. This is intended for service personnel and for evacuating trains in the case of a power failure.

Place the following action in which ever direction the characters decide to investigate.

The Hivers are attempting to construct a ramp or low barrier out of chitin across the track. At the scene there are a couple of blackened and burned out husks of former Hivers that got too close to the live rail.

The Hivers are ready to spring their trap. The characters will arrive just in time, the clock will be ticking, and a train is on the tracks and approaching.

The approaching train should be a narrative event. The characters will feel an increase in air pressure as the train compresses the air in front of it.

Next the tracks will start to hum and vibrate.

The final warning will be the lights in the front of the train approaching.

The only option for the characters is to take out the Hivers. The soldiers will immediately move to attack, providing protection for the drones to finish fixing the obstruction in place.

The drones are chewing at the chitin to soften it and then pressing it into place. As it hardens it fixes into place.

The soldiers will move to attack as soon as they are aware of the characters approach.

Once the battle is engaged it becomes a fight against time. The Hivers on one side setting their trap and the approaching train on the other.

If the characters do not engage or the Hivers win then the result will be the train wreck and the Hivers harvesting the bodies for food.

If the characters can clear the trap so that the train passes safely, they will have defeated the Hivers immediate plans.

The Hivers have no thought for their own safety or survival. They know that without a massive food supply the eggs cannot be hatched and matured.

The chitin blockage will burn and lose its integrity. The easiest way to burn the stuff is to bring it into contact with the live rail.

The Hiver have no ranged attacks so must close to hand to hand range.

Concluding Hivers

This is intended to be the last Hivers adventure that I will write but it doesn't have to be the last adventure for your group.

I have intentionally left the ending vague. If the characters can stop the train wreck they will have foiled the Hivers plan. There will be perfectly normal emergency exits and even stations they will be able to escape from without having to go through the emerging army of Hivers.

Once they report back to Lt. Powall the people in the auction shed can be rescued, although they will not survive, and the Hiver army taken out by special forces. Your player may enjoy being part of that force and getting to play with Battledress and heavy weapons.

Was that the last threat from the Hivers? Will the planet ever be free of them? You can always bring them back. Their plans will always be about storing enough living food to feed and army.

If the characters didn't save the day it is no fault of their own. The plans were intentionally well advanced. Once the Hiver army emerges into the city, erupting from every metro station you will have an entirely different set of scenarios to run.

Maybe the Hivers will set up a new hive, one at the top of the biggest skyscraper building in the city?

But for now, this is...

The End.

NPC Roster

Bessie Powall

Naval Officer

Class and Style Str **Dex** **Con** **Int** **Wis** **Cha** **HP** **Atk.** **Bon.**

Expert (Nimble) 10 (+0) 14 (+1) 12 (+0) 11 (+0) 9 (+0) 7 (-1) 4 +0

Skills: Administer-0, Talk-0,
Connect-0, Perform-0

Focus: Specialist/Sneak
Assassin



Hivers

Hiver Worker

Basic Animal Features: *Insect*,

Body Plan: Humanoid

Skin Novelty: Exoskeleton

Main Weapon: Claws

Size: Calf-sized

Predator: Hunts in kin-group packs

Beast Type	HD	AC	Atk.	Dmg.	Move	ML	Skills	Saves
Large Pack Hunter	2	14	+2	1d6	15m	9	+1	14+

Hiver Soldier

Basic Animal Features: *Insect*,

Body Plan: Humanoid

Limb Novelty: Wings

Skin Novelty: Exoskeleton

Main Weapon: Claws

Size: Calf-sized

Predator: Hunts in kin-group packs

Beast Type	HD	AC	Atk.	Dmg.	Move	ML	Skills	Saves
Large Pack Hunter	2	14	+2	1d6	15m	9	+1	14+

Hiver Drone

Basic Animal Features: *Insect*,

Body Plan: Humanoid

Skin Novelty: Exoskeleton

Main Weapon: Claws

Size: Calf-sized

Predator: Hunts in kin-group packs

Beast Type	HD	AC	Atk.	Dmg.	Move	ML	Skills	Saves
Small Pack Hunter	1	13	+1	1d4	15m	8	+1	15+

Hiver Queen

Basic Animal Features: *Insect*,

Body Plan: Bulbous

Skin Novelty: Exoskeleton

Main Weapon: none

Size: greater than Elephant-sized

Prey: Breeds at tremendous rates

Beast Type	HD	AC	Atk.	Dmg.	Move	ML	Skills	Saves
Terrifying Apex Predator	8	16	-	-	20m	9	+2	11+