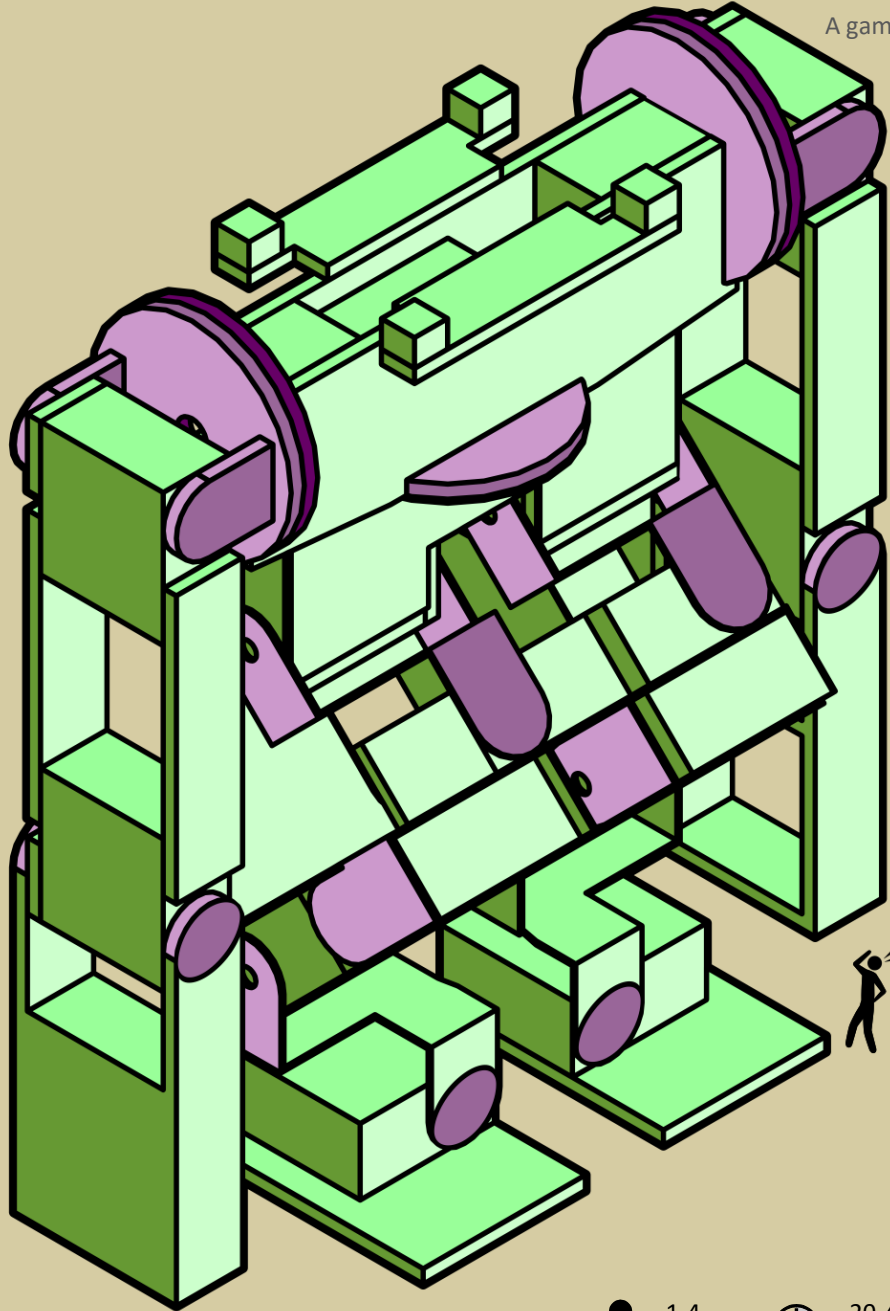


Deep Into and Back Out of the Belly of a Huge
Mechanical Beast

A game by Ben Morayta



v1.7e



1-4
players



20-40
min



ages
10+

Deep Into and Back Out of the Belly of a Huge Mechanical Beast

The creature was all humanity hoped for: a self-improving sentient robot, with the capacity to build itself new modules to solve the needs of the population. It was an endless source of admiration and advancement of people's lives.

That is, until it started to go out of control. At this point no human had a detailed plan on how to fix it, or even shut it off. Due to the organic growth it had had, the original blueprints were useless, and nobody had thought of keeping logs outside of the machine's system. There was no guide whatsoever on how it was structured now.

Your team, as designers of the core system, must dive into the bowels of the beast, find its control room, activate the off switch, and then escape before it collapses around you while self-disassembling.

Within the bowels of the Beast, as you explore, you'll find people that are still inside, inhabiting a few of the modules of the giant robot. Trying to convince them to follow you is useless: All their life is in there, and they won't listen to reason unless the catastrophe is imminent. You hope that you'll be able to talk some sense into them on your way out, so you continue your journey to find the Control Room. After that, it will be easier to show them the very real danger they're facing and convince them to get out of the collapsing machine.

To aid in your quest you can send your reliable android to tinker with the gears and rooms, should you get stuck, or to rescue a stranded person. You can also activate the gears yourself to create a path amongst the chaos.

Contents

- 72 room cards
- Meeples (4 Engineers and Android + 4 extra engineers in each player's color for the Competitive mode)
- 20 People tokens

Goal and Overview

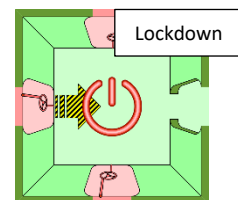
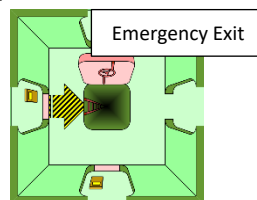
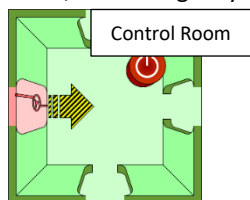
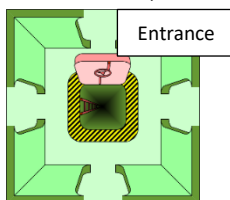
You play as an exploration party of engineers who, together with your android helper, must explore the belly of a giant robot to find its control room, deactivate it, and then escape the collapsing beast.

During the first part of the game, the maze will grow as you explore, until you find the off switch. The rest of the game the rooms are collapsing around you, and you must quickly make your way to the exit before the robot locks down, trapping you forever within its bowels. You can change the layout of the rooms using the gears you find within, to help you find an exit.

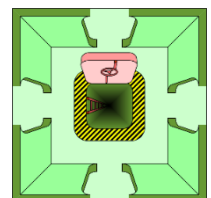
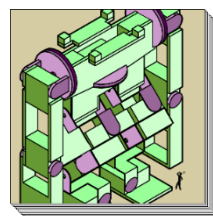
You win by getting everyone, including your trusted android and all the people you find within, out of the beast.

Setup

- Find the Entrance, the Control room, the Emergency Exit, and the Lockdown room and set them aside temporarily.



- Stack the deck:
 - Shuffle the deck and set aside 14 cards.
 - Divide the rest of the deck in 4 stacks approximately the same size (do not count them).
 - Shuffle the Control Room with 7 of the cards you set aside. Shuffle the Lockdown with the other 7.
 - Stack the deck top to bottom as follows: ¼ deck, Control Room stack, ¼ deck, Emergency Exit card, ¼ deck, Lockdown stack, last ¼ deck.
 - To increase the difficulty, see *Difficulty Levels* later in the rules.
- Place the Entrance with the open hatch face up at the center of the table.
- Place on top of the entrance:
 - 1 engineer meeple *per player*, and
 - The android meeple (only 1, regardless of player count).
- Place the supply of *People* markers close by, so all players can reach them.



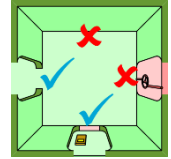
Player's Turn

Each turn, you may move your engineer *or* the android any number of rooms (see *Movement*). Then you may perform *one* of two actions: Either explore a room (see *Exploration*) or activate a gear (see *Gear Activation*).

You can move one meeple and do an action with another (i.e. move the engineer, then explore with the android), but you can't move both nor do an action with both in the same turn. Neither moving nor the action are mandatory.

Movement

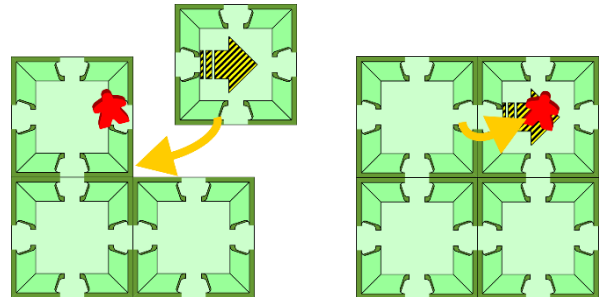
- You can move along any number of rooms that are *already explored* in a single movement.
 - You must always use open doorways or *glass doors* (depending on the difficulty level) to go from one room to the next. You cannot cross through walls or *locked doors*.
 - You cannot move through a doorway if there is an adjacent wall or locked door on the next room.
- On the starting difficulty level, you *can* walk through glass doors, since they're unlocked (see *Difficulty Levels*).



Exploration

To explore, place a meeple at an open doorway. Then:

- Draw a room from the deck and place it adjacent to your meeple, with the arrow pointing away from the doorway you're crossing.
- Move the meeple to the center of this new room.
- You cannot reveal a room without exploring it; the meeple *must* move into the room.
- A locked door entering the room indicates that the robot detected your presence and shut it right after your meeple entered. You can't go back the way you came, nor can any other meeple follow through the same doorway. You'll have to find an alternative way out.



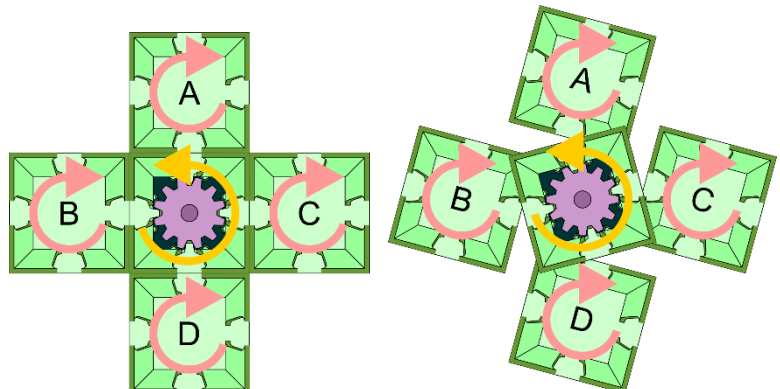
Exploring a Room with People

- Every room with a *red door*, except for the Control Room and the Lockdown, contains people.
- When exploring a room with people in it, place a *People* marker from the supply onto it, and then move your meeple as usual to the new room.
- People* markers don't leave the room on which they appeared until it collapses.
- NOTE:** Unless playing a *Semi-Co-Op Variant*, don't add any more *People* markers after the Control room is activated.

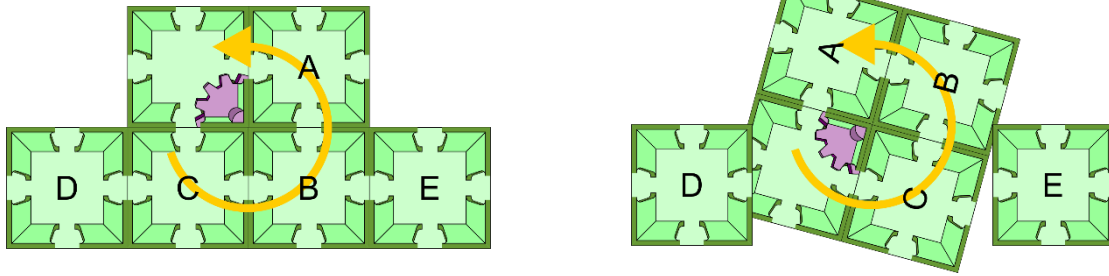
Gear Activation

To activate a gear, lay a meeple on its side, on top of the gear being activated.

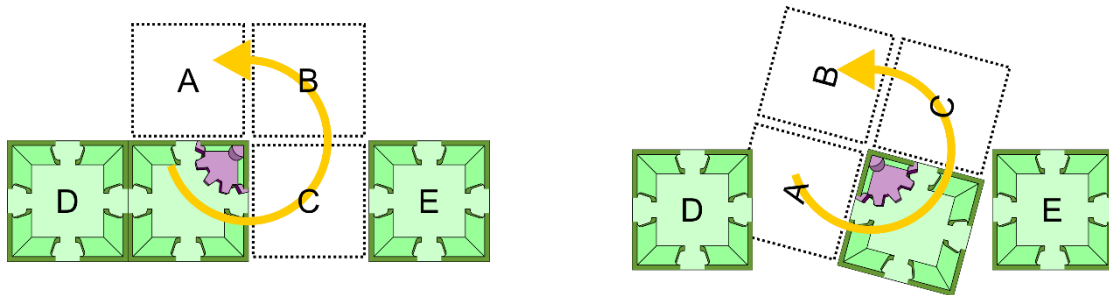
- Both the android and all engineers can activate gears.
- You can activate a gear as many consecutive times as needed in a single turn. However, a meeple can't use the same gear in the next turn, until it has moved out of the room and spent a turn elsewhere, or until after it activated another gear in the same room.
- If a room that contains a meeple or a people marker is moved by the effects of a gear or another room collapsing (see *Collapsing*), it makes no difference whatsoever in the room movement, nor do the meeples or markers in it suffer any effects.
- A gear in the center of the chamber can turn that room clock- or counter-clockwise. This action will turn the 4 orthogonal rooms the opposite way. You can activate this gear even when not all 4 orthogonal rooms are present, simply ignoring those spaces.



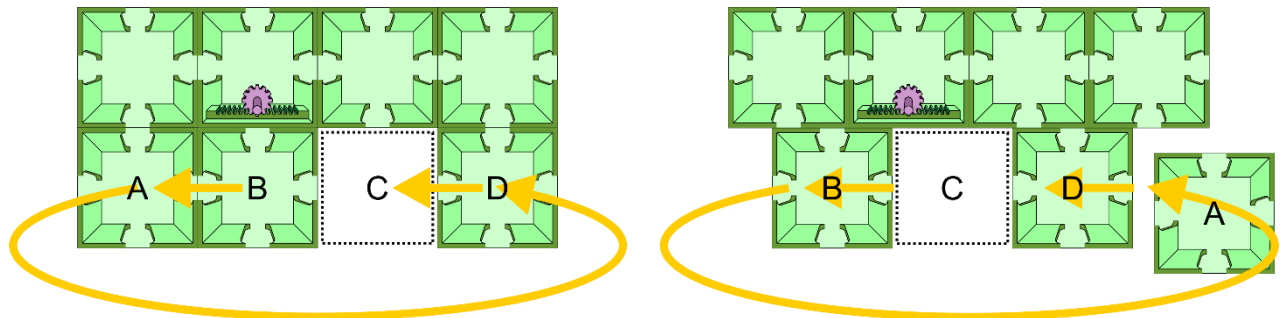
- A gear in the corner of a chamber can turn that room, along with the other 3 rooms that touch the corner, clock- or counter-clockwise, pivoting on the corner with the gear.



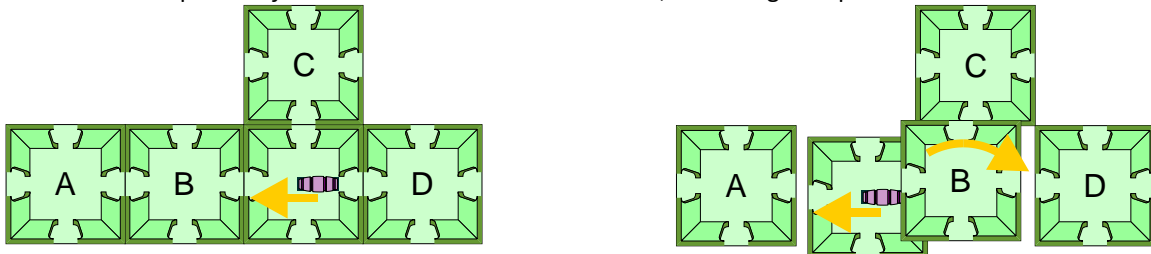
- You can activate this gear even when not all 4 corners are present, simply keeping the empty spaces as if they were rooms.



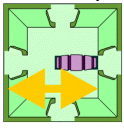
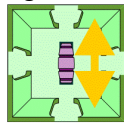
- A gear on one edge of a chamber can move **the adjacent row** of rooms along the wall. Move the rooms in a single direction one position. If a room is moved past the *farthest* room of any other row, it must be placed on the opposite end, at the position of the *farthest* room on that end.



- A *linear gear standing* in the center of a chamber can move **that room** along its direction. Move the current room in either direction one position, then the next room in the opposite direction to the space this room occupied. The room *can* move past the *farthest* room of the row or column, and along unexplored rooms.



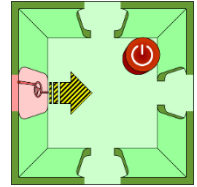
- The room can only move horizontally or vertically, always parallel to the gear's direction:

Horizontal (along the row)  or Vertical (along the column) . If these rooms are rotated 90°, they would move instead along the column or along the row, respectively.

Control Room

Eventually a meeple will discover the Control room, which contains the off switch. This switch, however, is a biometric sensor, so the android *will not activate it*, an engineer meeple must get to the Control room and do it.

As soon as an engineer *enters the room* the switch is off, and the mechanical beast will begin collapsing (see *Collapsing*), including the Control room itself.



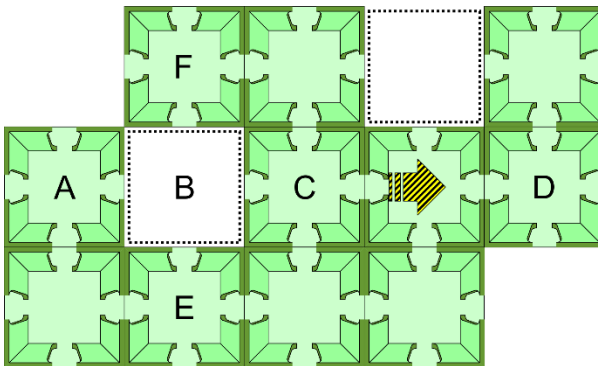
Collapsing

A room will collapse every time a meeple (engineer or android) leaves it empty, after the off switch was activated.

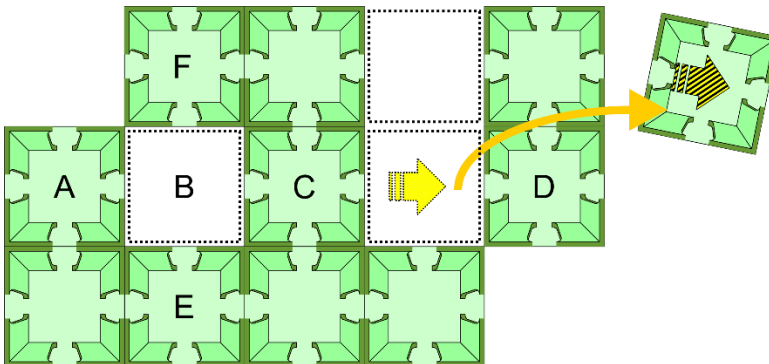
- A room will not collapse as long as there's one or more meeples in it.
- The Entrance room will never collapse, even if empty, but it *can* shift its position when affected by a gear or by another room collapsing.

To collapse a room:

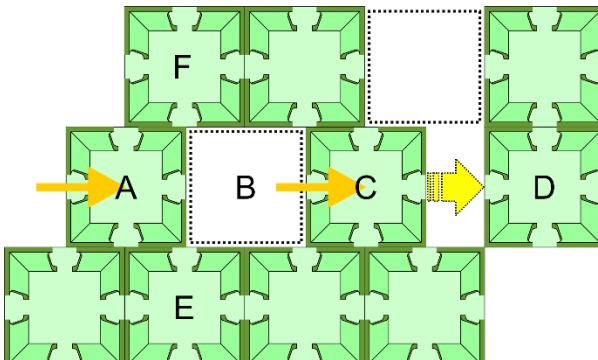
- Take note of the direction of the arrow in the collapsing room.



- Remove the room and take it out of the game.



- Starting with the room next to the start of the arrow, slide *every room* on that side **of the same row** one position, in the direction of the arrow, as if they were filling the *hole* left by the removed room.
 - All rooms on that side of the row shift, including unexplored ones (blank spaces also move *one position*).



A meeple can move through any number of rooms as part of a single movement. Only the room on which the meeple *started* the turn will collapse.

- This includes if *the same meeple* takes an exploration action *after moving*. The room in which the meeple started will collapse, but the room from which you explored will not. However, if you move one meeple and explore with another, each of them will cause collapsing. Likewise, if you explore without moving first, that room will collapse.
- Collapsing happens *right after moving and/or exploring*, before a gear can be activated.

Whenever a room with a *People* marker in it collapses:

- Take the token into your hand. This indicates that *you're* rescuing those people by guiding them to the exit.
- **NOTE:** Unless playing a *Semi-Co-Op Variant*, *don't* add any more *People* markers after the Control room is activated.

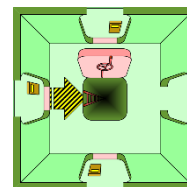
As rooms collapse, doorways will shift, leaving different options for movement. Some paths will open up, others will close.

- If after a collapse, a doorway doesn't have a room next to it, this is considered an *unexplored* room, and can be explored as a later action.

Emergency Exit

The Emergency Exit has the same purpose as the Entrance room. It allows any meeple to exit the beast.

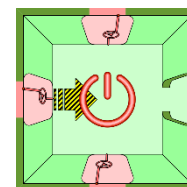
- Meeples on it are safe, including the meeple that discovered it.
- Meeples can move in and out of the Emergency Exit room. The room will not collapse as long as there's at least one meeple in it. However, if the room is ever empty (i.e. if all meeples leave the room), it *will* collapse in the direction of the arrow, and this exit will be lost.



Lockdown

As you keep exploring, it's only a matter of time before you explore into the Lockdown room.

- Unexplored rooms become *locked* at this point, and the exploring action is *no longer allowed*.
- Gears can still be activated, and all rooms will keep collapsing as before, including this one.
- Unless you have a way to manipulate this room so the only open doorway allows the meeple to escape, it will remain trapped. If this is an engineer, it will immediately **end the game**.



End of Game

The game ends when either all meeples are safe, or an engineer is trapped without any possibilities of escape.

When all meeples are safe on the Entrance or Emergency Exit rooms, the mechanical beast has been turned off, all of your expedition party escaped safely, and you **win the game**.

If all engineers are safe, but the android is trapped with no possible escape, you **win the game**, but have lost millions of dollars, and, most importantly, an AI that was a good friend of yours and you had just started to know better. It leaves behind a toaster wife that will never be the same again.

If one or more engineers are trapped without options (including inside the lockdown room), or if *any* of the *People* markers are still inside the Beast, you **lose the game**. There's no price that's worth a human life. Not even a meeple's.

If you get trapped even before you find the switch to turn the mechanical beast off, not only do you **lose the game**, but the entirety of humanity is lost, too!

Semi-Co-Op Variant

In a semi-co-operative game, you *continue* to place *People* tokens, *even after the Beast starts collapsing*.

Players can choose to go back into the Beast after reaching the *Entrance* or *Emergency Exit*, to take a chance to discover and rescue more people, but if they get trapped, **all players lose the game**.

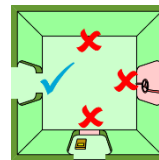
If you have the highest number of *People* tokens in your hand at the end, you **win the game**. In case of a tie, the player that left the Beast first **is the winner**.

Difficulty Levels

To increase difficulty, change the way you stack the deck on setup:

- For a **normal mode**, return the Emergency Exit to the box, and after setting aside 14 cards, divide the deck into 3 piles, then stack them: 1/3 deck, Control Room shuffled with 7 cards, 1/3 deck, Lockdown shuffled with the other 7 cards, last 1/3 deck.

- For the **hard mode**, all doors are locked, and they behave the same. You cannot walk through them, nor use those doorways from an adjacent room. The setup is the same as in the normal mode.
- For an **extreme mode**, stack the cards according to the original instructions, *including the emergency exit*, but start with the Entrance room placed with the *closed hatch* face up. In this level, you must escape through the Emergency Exit when you find it. As in the hard mode, all doors are locked and cannot be used.



MECHANICAL BEAST

BEN MORAYTA

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CREDITS

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...And everybody else that has been so supportive and enthusiast about this game!!

Competitive Variant

For the competitive game, each player starts with *two engineer meeples* in the same color. The android is *not* in play, you can return it to the box.

Goal

The goal is to be the first player to escape the beast with the most engineers.

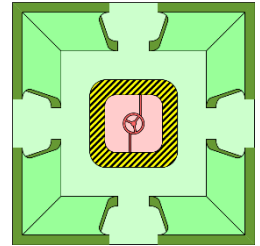
Setup

Take out the Entrance, Control room, Emergency Exit and Lockdown room off the deck. Divide it into three stacks and pile top to bottom: $\frac{1}{3}$ deck, Control room, Emergency Exit, $\frac{2}{3}$ deck, Lockdown.

Place two engineers per player on the Entrance room with the closed hatch face up. This means that every meeple must escape through the Emergency Exit, whenever it is discovered.

The game proceeds with the same rules as the cooperative version for Movement, Exploration, Gear Activation and Collapsing after the off switch is triggered (See the main rules).

You can still only move *one meeple* and perform *one action* in your turn. You choose which of your two engineers to move, if any. The action can be performed by the engineer that moved, or by the other one.



Difficulty

Depending on if players want to play a hard game or an easy one, glass doors can be locked or unlocked, respectively.

Control Room

After a player discovers the Control room, the player *to his/her right* (previous player, in turn order) must immediately take the Emergency Exit from the pile (which is the next room, as stacked in the setup). Place it according to these rules:

- It must touch at least one side *or* one corner of another room on the table, and
- It must *not touch* any sides or corners of a room where there's a meeple of the player who places it, and
- It must be *three rooms or less* (explored or unexplored, accessible or not) away from the Control room, unless it's impossible due to the restrictions above. If so, it must be placed as close as possible.
- The player can decide freely the orientation of the room.

After placing the exit, the game continues with the player *to the left* of the one that discovered the Control room. In a 2-player game, this would be the same player that placed the exit on the table.

As with the cooperative game, the mechanical beast will begin collapsing using the same rules stated before.

Emergency Exit

The first meeple to arrive to the Emergency Exit is laid down at the center of the room. When other meeples arrive, they will be placed, also laying down, *on top of the first*, and so on.

If a meeple leaves the room for any reason, it loses its place in line, and when it returns it will be placed at the top of the pile.

End of Game

The game ends when every engineer is trapped without possibilities of escape. In this case, **all players lose the game**.

Likewise, if the Emergency Exit room collapses, **everybody loses**.

If you get both your engineers onto the Emergency Exit room, the game also ends, and **you win the game**.

If every engineer in the beast is trapped, except for the ones in the Emergency Exit room, the player whose meeple is at the bottom of the pile **wins the game**.

