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# SUPERLINE HIT THE BEACH!



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## SUPERLINE

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# ULTIMATE POWER PREVIEW

BY STEVE KENSON

The *Ultimate Power* sourcebook, slated for release later this summer, is the comprehensive guide to powers in *Mutants & Masterminds*. Among other things, *Ultimate Power* presents some options for expanding the power rules to handling particular situations as well as a number of different tricks or power stunts you can do with powers. Here we look at the countering contests option along with a couple power stunts.

## OPTION: COUNTERING CONTESTS

Countering normally has no effect beyond negating an incoming effect. However, the GM may optionally wish to apply the following optional system for handling situations where two combatants are contesting against each other, with the loser of the contest the target for the opponent's effect:

The defending character counters normally. However, if the countering effect is one that could potentially affect the attacker (e.g., Blast, Fatigue, etc.), then the attacker *also* gets an opportunity to counter. If it fails, the attacker is hit by the defender's countering effect, which works normally. If the attacker's counter succeeds, then it goes back to the defender, who may counter again, and so forth. Each full exchange of countering attempts (one on each side) takes a round, and the contestants can only take free actions and reactions while so engaged. The first contestant to fail two countering attempts in a row loses.

**Example:** *Dr. Stratos blasts Bolt with a lightning bolt. The young hero uses his own Blast power to counter it (since it's also lightning). The GM rolls a Blast power check for Dr. Stratos, getting a 5 for a total of (5 + rank 13) 18. Bolt's player rolls a power check for him as well, getting an 11 for a total of (8 + 11) 19, success! The two lightning bolts meet in mid-air in a crackling ball of energy that pushes back toward Stratos. The villain sneers and pushes back, and both sides make power checks again. This time Dr. Stratos beats Bolt easily, a total of 27 versus 12, and the ball lightning presses very close to the young hero. Gritting his teeth, Bolt pours it on. The GM rolls another power check for Dr. Stratos: a result of 25! Bolt's player needs to roll a 17 in order to even tie! The roll is only a 15, not enough, so Bolt's player spends a hero point to re-roll, he gets an 8, which becomes an 18 for a total of 26. The energy shifts back toward Dr. Stratos. In the final contest, Bolt manages to win again and the ball of lightning strikes the surprised villain for his full +13 Blast damage!*

**Escalating Contests:** An optional add-on to the countering contest system is to increase the final rank of the successful effect by +1 for each full round of the contest, reflecting the slow build-up of power over that time, so the final effect is more powerful than it would otherwise have been. In the previous example, Dr. Stratos would not only have taken +13 damage from the effect of the initial Blast, but an additional +2 for the two rounds of the countering contest for +15 damage. This makes losing a countering contest more likely to become a "knockout punch" to end a fight, although some foes will still

be kicking. If the contesting effects are the same, use the higher-ranked one as the base rank, plus the modifier. If they're two different effects, use the winner's effect, plus the modifier for the contest. The GM can set an upper limit on the bonus, as desired.

## ELONGATION POWER STUNT: ALL TIED UP

In the comic books, a fast enough character attempting to evade a grappling attempt by an elongating opponent will sometimes trick the attacker into tying himself up into knots!

A character who successfully avoids the melee attack to start a grapple from an elongated character, or escapes from a grapple with such a character, can make an Acrobatics or Bluff check at a -5 penalty as a standard action against the result of the elongated character's Sense Motive check. If the tricking character wins, the elongated foe is entangled. If the tricking character wins by 5 or more, the elongated foe is bound and helpless. Getting out of being all tied up requires a full-round Escape Artist check by the victim, with a DC equal to the original Acrobatics or Bluff check (including the -5 modifier). The normal Elongation bonus to Escape Artist checks applies to this check.

At the GM's discretion, a tricking character taking a full-round action on the attempt may add the rank of any relevant movement effect—particularly Flight or Speed—to the skill check, representing the ability of a faster character to get the victim all turned around more easily. As with all forms of tricking in combat, this variant grants a +1 bonus to the victim's Sense Motive check per time it is attempted in the same encounter.

**Example:** While fighting the Meta-Grue, Johnny Rocket tries to distract the alien supersoldier and trick him by running at super-speed around him. He takes a full-round action and Johnny's player makes a Bluff skill check (+8 Bluff bonus, +10 for Super-Speed, -5 for the maneuver), getting a result of 24. The GM makes a Sense Motive check for the Meta-Grue (+11 bonus) and gets a 20. Since the Meta-Grue failed the check, he's entangled. If his check result had been 1 less (enough to fail by 5) he would have been bound and helpless. As it is, the alien warrior has to take an action to disentangle his limbs before coming after Johnny in a rage.

## SUPER-STRENGTH POWER STUNT: COAL INTO DIAMONDS

It's not a common use of Super-Strength, but some characters in the comics can use their tremendous strength to duplicate the effects of eons of geological heat and pressure to squeeze ordinary lumps of carbon (like coal) into raw or even perfect diamonds!

This is actually no less realistic than most superpowers, but the GM may still want to limit it to light-hearted Silver Age style games, and should use the same guidelines as other Transform effects when it comes to characters with the ability to manufacture limitless wealth.

Generally, this stunt isn't one characters acquire with power points, but something they do occasionally as extra effort. In fact, the GM may wish to require this, saying characters cannot buy this as a feat, but can only perform it using extra effort.

# BEACH BLANKET BEATDOWN

BY MICHAEL HAMMES

## SUMMARY

It's a beautiful day to go to the beach, even in the minds of recurring supervillains. Of course the reason the Coven is going to the beach has nothing to do with catching rays, rather with the fact that there will be tons of people to terrorize. For their day of havoc at the beach the Coven has gone through the trouble of summoning one of the all-time classic sea monsters, the Kraken, to gleefully unleash on the unsuspecting beachgoers; if they're lucky, maybe they can even bury a few heroes in the sand . . .

## SET-UP

While it is assumed that the heroes' city has its own beach or one nearby, if it doesn't then this adventure simply takes place at the closest beach that the people of the city frequent.. .

It is the first day of summer vacation and people have been crowding onto the beach since the early morning; by the afternoon the place is jam-packed. Parents are lounging under large sun umbrellas while their kids tumble in the surf, teenagers are busy playing beach volleyball and soccer, surfers and windsurfers are sharing the waves with jetskiers, etc., when suddenly a massive shadow appears in the water.

The shadow glides swiftly toward the beach, its passing wake causing surfers to fall from their boards and jetskis to launch into the air.

The shadow continues to grow in size, rising further to the surface as the water becomes shallower until, with a mighty spray, the nightmarish caricature of a squid rises glistening to the surface.

As tentacles as thick as redwoods begin to thrashing about and a maw able to swallow a school bus opens, the people on the beach run away in heedless panic.

## NOT YOU AGAIN . . .

While the Summary assumes that the heroes have an extensive previous history with the Coven ("The Witching Hour", **Superline #1**; "Sore Loser", **Superline #2**; "Hells' Belles", **Superline #4**), this is not necessary for the GM to make use of this adventure. While having the Coven summon the Kraken is a nice way to provide continuity, there is any number of other reasons why a sea monster might suddenly show up on the beach:

- Any other magical villain that the heroes have encountered previously could have summoned the Kraken.
- Someone's been dumping toxic waste nearby and the Kraken is the result.
- The Kraken is a genetic experiment; it could be from a supervillain, it could be from the government.
- The Kraken is an extradimensional horror; a horror from beyond space and time so to speak.

## HEROES' DAY OFF

Although the heroes may hear of this emergency while somewhere else, ideally at least some of them should be on the beach so that they can get involved right away. Depending on how they are normally seen in public (i.e. secret identity), the heroes may find themselves without ready access to vital tools (i.e. battlesuit, devices, vehicles, etc.), which only adds to the fun.

If there are heroes at the beach the GM may wish to give some hint of what is coming rather than simply having the creature suddenly shoot out of the water. For example, with a successful Notice check (DC 15 or thereabouts), a hero might notice that a surfer that he or she thought had been out on the horizon a moment ago isn't there anymore (the surfer's been pulled under by the Kraken). Naturally, this might induce the hero to search the horizon, seeing nothing at first until suddenly another surfer (or windsurfer, kayaker, waverider, etc.) disappears. Then another, and another, and another; the Kraken is plucking people from the water as if it were picking cherries.

## ADVENTURE

The adventure begins when the heroes respond to the emergency at the beach. Although the adventure concerns itself chiefly with the heroes' battle with the Kraken, there are other things to consider.

To begin with, having a massive stampede of people causes all manner of problems. In their haste to get away from the horror people trample over each other, families are separated, people have heart attacks, etc.

Out on the beach road cars are busy smashing into each other as people back their heedlessly cars into traffic and others try to force their vehicle through.

As a result of this chaos, the GM should present heroes with a number of distractions not only before they deal with the Kraken but also while they are fighting it. Appropriate distractions include:

- Someone falls down and is about to be crushed by the crowd or advancing Kraken.
- A non-swimmer is knocked into the water from a pier.
- Someone was buried in the sand by their friends and now they can't get out as the Kraken makes its way onto the beach.
- A bunch of people are trying to crowd through a beach entrance (i.e. a gate, narrow wall opening, etc.); people are being crushed and others fighting, none of which is getting anyone anywhere.
- A tanker truck with hazardous chemicals turns on its side and begins to spill its contents.
- In a hurry to get away someone drives into a power pole knocking it down and now live wires are jumping and crackling on the ground.

## CREATURE TACTICS

The Kraken's tactics are pretty simple: destroy everything it can get its hands, er, tentacles on. Basically, it fights just like the cephalopods described in this issue's "Terrors of the Deep" article, with the added ability of being able to swallow heroes whole as set forth in the Kraken's description.

Since this is a summoned creature it doesn't retreat or surrender when it is hurt as a normal cephalopod would; it fights to the "death", dissolving into a giant puddle of goo or simply disappearing (yawn!) once it has been defeated.

- A multiple car collision not only leaves plenty of injured but also sees a car on fire and about to blow up; did I mention that it's also blocking traffic in all directions?
- Emergency personnel and their vehicles (i.e. firefighters, medics, police) trying to get to the scene find their way blocked by car wrecks, masses of people, etc.

In addition to these hazards caused by the panicking crowd there are other potential problems caused by the massive Kraken aside from its attacks on the heroes:

- The Kraken's constantly flailing tentacles down power lines, tear up and throw palm trees, lifeguard stands, and cars, crush the roofs of beachfront houses, tear down hotel balconies, break pier supports, throw up large quantities of sand and debris, etc. Note that these are not actual attacks, but rather random acts caused by the Kraken's movements; while the Kraken cannot hit a hero on purpose in this manner, nothing says a flying beach house can't catch the hero accidentally.
- The creature's massive bulk crushes cars, knocks over power poles, flattens cars, collapses piers, breaks the sides of tall hotels causing them to collapse, etc. Again, these are not purposeful attacks but merely the effects of such a massive creature moving about, a fact that is little consolation to those caught in a collapsing building.

## The Beach

The GM is free to shape the beach anyway he or she wants it; the GM is essentially populating the battlefield with things to destroy, get in the heroes' way, be the cause for distractions, and also as weapons; the GM should make some notes about what is on the beach and nearby prior to the adventure.

## SUMMONING AND BANISHING THE CREATURE

Since the Kraken was summoned using a ritual, clever heroes might figure that it can also be banished by performing another ritual. Whether this is in fact the case is up to the GM. The Kraken was summoned by the Coven using a ritual based on the following power:

- **Summon (Kraken) 7** (Extras: Duration – Continuous, Fanatical, Heroic)

This ritual has a point cost of 35, a Design Check and Construction Check DC of 45 (50 if jury-rigged), takes 182 hours to design and 350 minutes (almost 6 hours) to perform without taking 20; the summoning of the Kraken by the Coven is considered a plot device.

The GM can lower the cost of the ritual by removing the Continuous and Fanatical extras, reducing the cost to 28 (for one extra removed) and 21 (for both extras removed).

A further reduction in cost (7 points) can be achieved by reducing the duration to Concentration. The advantage to doing this, aside from the cost savings, is that it removes the Coven from active participation in the adventure since they, or at least one of them, must concentrate on the creature to maintain it.

Most popular beaches have attracted a sizable population nearby so there are houses, hotels, businesses, etc. to use for cover, crush, get parts from, etc.

Some beaches have marinas or even ports nearby and where there are ports there are ships. Most of those will be small private vessels (i.e. sailing ships and power boats, perfect for throwing) but there may





actually be a commercial port nearby with much larger vessels such as freighters, tankers, cruise ships, and perhaps even navy warships.

Piers are a common sight on many beaches, often featuring buildings and attractions of various kinds (i.e. restaurants, amusement parks with arcades, roller coasters, and Ferris wheels, tourist information booths, etc.), although they may have nothing more than a bait shop and some fishermen.

## ***The Coven***

As if battling the creature among thousands of fleeing people and crumbling infrastructure wasn't challenge enough, the GM can also have one or more members of the Coven can also be in the area.

Note that this is not a requirement; the Coven never have to make an appearance if their presence would make the adventure too lengthy or if it would simply overwhelm the heroes. The reason why they aren't there? They expended too much energy in summoning the Kraken, have to maintain

their concentration in a safe location to maintain the summoning, or are out committing other crimes (the Kraken is simply a distraction).

If the Coven is present they may act in a number of ways. In one case they can simply hang back and watch the creature go to work attacking the weakened heroes once the Kraken has failed. Alternately the Coven can be involved right from the start, flying in the Kraken's wake and battling the heroes at its side (this makes it possible for the heroes to spot the flying Coven before they notice the Kraken allowing it to surprise the heroes).

If this approach is too straightforward the Coven can toy with the heroes while the creature rampages. Some suggestions:

- A hidden Ilsa can use Mental Blast to stun heroes and make them easy prey for the creature. She can also use Animate Objects to have a hero trying to throw a car or other object be attacked by his or her impromptu weapon.

- Elsa can use Illusion to create small duplicates of the Kraken. She can also use Shapeshift to make herself appear as a citizen in need of rescue to draw a hero close to the Kraken. If she's really mean she can try Possession on a bystander or hero and simply walk them into the Kraken's maw or tentacles or under its advancing bulk.
- Elsa can get a hero to follow her into the Kraken's maw and then turn Insubstantial in order to pass safely through while the hero gets caught. She can also push heroes into the Kraken using Telepathy or employ Mind Control to force them to get within the creature's range.

Should things still be too easy for the heroes the GM can always throw in a few more minions (i.e. demon warriors, undead, mockmen, etc.).

## FOLLOW-UP

Once the Kraken is defeated it dissolves into the aforementioned blob of slime (disappearing is just too boring). Naturally there will be plenty of clean up to deal with (i.e. injured bystanders, wrecked cars, destroyed buildings, etc.) before the day is done.

Should the heroes fail to stop the Kraken at the beach the creature continues its rampage, heading along the coast, up the river, or perhaps even on land into the heroes' city until it is finally stopped.

If the Coven has not made an appearance then the heroes should be able to infer or snoop out the fact that they had their hand in it. What they do then is up to the heroes.

**Rewards:** Throughout the adventure the heroes should be awarded hero points according to the guidelines in the *M&M* rulebook; the GM should also give the heroes one hero point each for every member of the Coven that becomes involved in the adventure.

Upon successfully completing the adventure the heroes should be awarded power points according to the following guidelines:

- 3 power points if the heroes had to face both the creature and Coven and were clearly overmatched; they were only able to defeat the threat by coming up with a clever plan, gathering resources beyond those readily available to them, etc.
- 2 power points if the heroes were evenly matched with the creature and the Coven or had significant help from other sources (i.e. the military, other heroes, etc.).
- 1 power point if the heroes overmatched the creature and the Coven or had to face only the creature but not the Coven.

Additional rewards beyond these are up to the GM.

## SUPPORTING CAST

### *The Kraken*

Whether this is the true monster of legend or just a name attempting to encompass something beyond the comprehension of mortals is irrelevant. All that matters is that it is a massive cephalopod-like horror with damage on its mind.

The GM can use either the Kraken statistics from the *M&M* rulebook, or the statistics for the Colossal or Awesome Cephalopod from the "Terrors of the Deep" article in this issue depending on what he or she feels will be the most appropriate challenge for the heroes (the summoning assumes the Colossal cephalopod).

To simulate the giant maw and its ability to swallow heroes the GM may wish to add **Snare** (Extras: Engulf) with the Snare ranks equaling the Kraken's damage bonus.

Obviously, if the GM has the Kraken able to go on land for extended periods of time the GM should ignore any drawbacks having to do with water immersion.

# THE COVEN

**Quote:** "A triple pox be upon ye!"

**First Appearance:** Superline #1.

The following are the cleaned up and slightly improved statistics for the Coven.

## Alsa the Crone

**Power Level:** 13 (215 points)

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 18

**Skills:** Concentration 10 (+13), Craft (artistic) 8 (+11), Intimidate 8 (+12), Knowledge (arcane lore) 14 (+17), Notice 5 (+8), Sneak 5 (+7), Sense Motive 10 (+13)

**Feats:** Artificer, Elusive Target, Fearless, Fearsome Presence 8, Minions 8 (fanatical), Ritualist, Startle

**Powers:**

**Blast 13** (eldritch blast)

**Force Field 13**

**Magic 13 (Mind Control;** *Power Feats: Alternate Powers -* **Flight 3** [50 MPH] and **Insubstantial 4** [incorporeal], **Invisibility 8** [all visual senses] and **Confuse 9** [*Extras: Area – burst*], **Telepathy 13**)

**Super-Senses 8** (communication link [Elsa, and Ilsa, mental], darkvision, magical awareness [accurate, extended, radius])

**Combat:** Attack +13, Damage +1 (unarmed), +13 (eldritch blast), Defense +10, Initiative +2

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +17 (+4 without Force Field), Fortitude +8, Reflex +6, Will +10

**Totals:** Abilities 34 + Skills 15 + Feats 29 + Powers 76 + Combat 46 + Saves 15 = 215

## Elsa the Hag

**Power Level:** 12 (200 points)

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 16

**Skills:** Concentration 10 (+14), Craft (artistic) 9 (+13), Intimidate 8 (+11), Knowledge (arcane lore) 14 (+18), Notice 10 (+14), Sense Motive 9 (+13)

**Feats:** Artificer, Assessment, Improved Initiative, Master Plan, Minions 8 (fanatical), Ritualist, Startle

**Powers:**

**Force Field 12**

**Illusion 12** (visual and auditory; *Flaws: Phantasms*)

**Magic 12 (Paralyze;** *Power Feats: Alternate Powers –* **ESP 8** [visual and auditory], **Flight 3** [50 MPH] and **Power Control 10, Possession 6, Shapeshift 3**)

**Super-Senses 8** (communication link [Elsa and Ilsa, mental], darkvision, magical awareness [accurate, extended, radius])

**Combat:** Attack +12, Damage +1 (unarmed), Defense +10, Initiative +7

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +14 (+2 without Force Field), Fortitude +4, Reflex +5, Will +14

**Totals:** Abilities 34 + Skills 15 + Feats 22 + Powers 71 + Combat 44 + Saves 14 = 200

## Ilsa the Harridan

**Power Level:** 11 (183 points)

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 20, Cha 16

**Skills:** Bluff 12 (+15), Concentration 10 (+15), Craft (artistic) 8 (+10), Knowledge (arcane lore) 12 (+14), Notice 10 (+15), Sense Motive 8 (+13)

**Feats:** Artificer, Minions 8 (fanatical), Ritualist, Startle, Taunt

**Powers:**

**Force Field 11**

**Magic 11 (Telekinesis;** *Power Feats: Alternate Powers –* **Animate Objects 7, Comprehend 11** [read, speak and understand all languages, speak to and understand all animals, plants, machines, and objects], **Flight 3** [50 MPH] and **Obscure 8** [visual senses])

**Mental Blast 5**

**Super-Senses 8** (communication link [Alsa, and Elsa, mental], darkvision, magical awareness [accurate, extended, radius])

## SUPERLINE #6

**Combat:** Attack +11, Damage +1  
(unarmed), Defense +8, Initiative +2

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +14 (+3  
without Force Field), Fortitude +4, Reflex  
+4, Will +15

**Totals:** Abilities 32 + Skills 15 + Feats 20  
+ Powers 64 + Combat 38 + Saves 13 = 182





# TERRORS OF THE DEEP

BY MICHAEL HAMMES

## PREVIEW POWER MODIFIER

The cephalopods' *Obscure* (ink cloud) power in this article use the *Independent* extra, an extra that will be appearing in the upcoming *Ultimate Power*. The extra's text has been included in this article for your convenience.

### ***Independent***

### ***+0 Modifier***

Applied to a sustained effect, this modifier makes its duration independent of the user and based instead on the number of power points in the effect. The effect occurs normally and then fades at a rate of 1 power point of effectiveness per round until it is gone. While it lasts, it requires no attention or maintenance from the user, like a continuous duration effect, although it can still be countered or nullified (also like a continuous effect). Essentially, this is a combination of the *Duration* (continuous) and *Fades* modifiers. If an effect is not sustained, modify its duration before applying this modifier.

*Independent* is useful for effects like *Create Object* (for objects that fade or melt away), *Environmental Control* (for changes to the environment that slowly return to normal), or *Obscure* (for obscured areas that slowly shrink and disappear, like the effects of a smoke or gas grenade). The *Slow Fade* power feat can modify the rate at which the *Independent* effect fades, and the *Total Fade* modifier can keep it at full strength until its duration runs out, although the GM should approve any increases in the fade duration as best suits the effect and the series.

## INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that roughly 70% of the world's surface is covered by water. From tiny streams and ponds to mighty rivers and oceans, water shapes the Earth like no other force. And yet, perhaps because we ourselves are land creatures, comparatively few superhero adventures feature creatures from watery environs. Well, this article hopes to correct some of that by giving you statistics for various versions of sharks and cephalopods to throw at the heroes.

## SHARKS

Sharks hold a special place in the human psyche; we are both fascinated

and scared by what is often seen as the ultimate predator of the sea. As a result, their inclusion in a superhero game is a no-brainer. Here I present several sizes of sharks to chomp on the heroes, from the small to the truly monstrous.

Note that in reality sharks are considered to be largely misunderstood, a victim of their fierce appearance. Actual shark attacks on humans are rare and almost always the result of mistaken identity (i.e. surfer for seal) or of unusual circumstances (i.e. the sinking of the *USS Indianapolis*).

Given this knowledge, while it is certainly possible that a shark might attempt to attack a hero on its own, in most cases they attack because a villain is controlling

## GANGING UP UNDERWATER

The rules for ganging up on p. 161-162 of the *M&M* rulebook assume land-bound combat between land-bound opponents. That is, they assume a two-dimensional environment wherein the combatants are able to take up positions only next to the hero, not on top or below.

Underwater or in any environment where movement in three dimensions is possible, such as in space or in the air, it is possible for attackers to come at an opponent not only from the front, back, or sides, but from the top or bottom. As a result, when engaging in combat underwater up to **ten** Medium and/or Small attackers can gang up on an individual Medium target. Although theoretically there could be more since the attackers could come from such areas as front-top, back-bottom, etc., thereby effectively creating a sphere of up to 26 attackers around the target (9 from the various directions on top and bottom and 8 surrounding the target on the same plane), this can get a bit overwhelming and the GM is suggested to limit the attackers to 10 (which is a nice round number).

the shark. Sharks make great minions for aquatic villains and can also be used as mounts for hostile underwater races. Why hostile? Because we all know that friendly underwater races don't ride sharks, they ride giant sea horses, dolphins, or even whales.

## FEEDING FRENZY!

One of the documented real-world behaviors of sharks is the feeding frenzy. This behavior occurs when a group of sharks compete over a large amount of prey, say a school of fish. The result is that in their hurry to get their share, the sharks bite and thresh about indiscriminately, often injuring and even killing other sharks (and anything else in the immediate vicinity including people) in the process.

There are a couple of ways to simulate this behavior in *M&M*. The first is to simply have a random number of sharks attack a hero caught in a feeding frenzy (i.e. d20 divided by 4 or 5 and round down) and roll for each individually; in effect, the hero is subject to a number of individual attacks. The problem with this method is that it suggests a purposeful attack by the sharks, a desire to pick the hero out as target rather than the hero simply being in the wrong area at the wrong time.

More accurate perhaps of the chaos found in the feeding frenzy is to have the sharks use the aid action. Simply determine how many sharks are swimming around the hero using the same method as before but rather than having each shark make an individual attack, the GM picks one as the leader and has the others roll as the helper.

Which method to use is up to the GM. The difference between the two really comes down to chance to hit versus number of hits. That is, in the first method, assuming that an individual shark can actually hit the hero, the hero may be hit more than once. The second method on the other hand ensures that the hero is hit only once but that the likelihood of that hit is much greater.

Naturally, whether any shark bite does damage is a matter of the heroes' level of protection and it is possible for a hero with sufficient protection (i.e. Force Field, Protection, etc.) to escape unharmed from a feeding frenzy if a single shark cannot cause enough damage; although it is tempting, logically sharks in a feeding frenzy cannot coordinate their attacks to make use of the combined attack action in order to increase their damage.



### Small Shark

These are sharks from 2 to 4 feet in length. They are either immature specimens of larger shark species or small, coastal sharks such as the spiny dogfish. Alone they don't present much of a threat to anyone but they can be dangerous in numbers, especially when frenzied.

**Power Level:** 4 (39 points)

**Minion Level:** 3

**Abilities:** Str +1 (12), Dex +4 (18), Con +1 (12), Int -5 (1), Wis +1 (12), Cha -4 (2)

**Skills:** Notice 8 (+9), Swim 8 (+11)

**Powers** (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent):

**Shrinking 4**

**Protection 2**

**Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty)

**Swimming 2** (5 MPH)

**Super-Senses 3** (low-light vision, scent, track [scent])

**Combat:** Attack +7 (size included), Grapple +6 (size included), Damage +2 (bite), Defense +6 (size included), Knockback +0, Initiative +4

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +3, Fortitude +6, Reflex +9, Will +3

**Drawbacks:** Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

**Totals:** Abilities -3 + Skills 4 + Feats 0 + Powers 12 + Combat 22 + Saves 12 - Drawbacks 8 = 39

### Medium Shark

These are sharks from 4 to 8 feet in length. Mature sharks in this size include the angel, nurse, leopard, and black tip reef sharks.

**Power Level:** 6 (49 points)

**Minion Level:** 4

**Abilities:** Str +3 (16), Dex +3 (16), Con +2 (14), Int -5 (1), Wis +1 (12), Cha -4 (2)

**Skills:** Notice 8 (+9), Swim 8 (+11)

**Powers** (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent):

**Protection 3**

**Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty)

**Swimming 2** (5 MPH)

**Super-Senses 3** (low-light vision, scent, track [scent])

**Combat:** Attack +8, Grapple +11, Damage +4 (bite), Defense +7, Knockback -2, Initiative +3

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +5, Fortitude +7, Reflex +8, Will +3

**Drawbacks:** Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

**Totals:** Abilities 1 + Skills 4 + Feats 0 + Powers 10 + Combat 30 + Saves 12 - Drawbacks 8 = 49

### Large Shark

These are sharks from 8 to 16 feet in length. Mature sharks in this size include the blue, bull, hammerhead, lemon, mako,

tiger, and great white sharks. Although one set of statistics is given, the GM may wish to add from 1 to 3 additional ranks of growth to distinguish among the various species, assuming that the listed statistics cover the 8 to 10 feet size range (i.e. lemon shark) while 3 additional ranks of growth cover the 14 to 16 feet length (i.e. great white).

**Power Level:** 8 (58 points)

**Minion Level:** 4

**Abilities:** Str +7 (24), Dex +2 (14), Con +4 (18), Int -5 (1), Wis +1 (12), Cha -4 (2)

**Skills:** Notice 8 (+9), Swim 8 (+11)

**Powers** (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent):

**Growth 4**

**Protection 4**

**Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty)

**Swimming 2** (5 MPH)

**Super-Senses 3** (low-light vision, scent, track [scent])

**Combat:** Attack +7 (size included), Grapple +18 (size included), Damage +8 (bite), Defense +7 (size included), Knockback -9, Initiative +2

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +8, Fortitude +9, Reflex +7, Will +3

**Drawbacks:** Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

**Totals:** Abilities -1 + Skills 4 + Feats 0 + Powers 19 + Combat 32 + Saves 12 - Drawbacks 8 = 58

## Huge Shark

These are sharks from 16 to 32 feet in length. The only known living predatory shark that can reach this size is the great white shark, and this is extremely rare. Still, if there are superheroes, why not really big great whites?

**Power Level:** 10 (67 points)

**Minion Level:** 5

**Abilities:** Str +11 (32), Dex +1 (12), Con +6 (22), Int -5 (1), Wis +1 (12), Cha -4 (2)

**Skills:** Notice 8 (+9), Swim 8 (+11)

**Powers** (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent):

**Growth 8**

**Protection 5**

**Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty)

**Swimming 2** (5 MPH)

**Super-Senses 3** (low-light vision, scent, track [scent])

**Combat:** Attack +6 (size included), Grapple +25 (size included), Damage +12 (bite), Defense +7 (size included), Knockback -13, Initiative +1

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +11, Fortitude +11, Reflex +6, Will +3

**Drawbacks:** Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

**Totals:** Abilities -3 + Skills 4 + Feats 0 + Powers 28 + Combat 34 + Saves 12 - Drawbacks 8 = 67

## Gargantuan Shark

These are sharks from 32 to 64 feet in length. No predatory shark has ever been proven to reach this size; only the basking and whale sharks reach this size and they are harmless krill eaters. As a result, the only likely occurrence of a predatory shark of this size would be through accident (i.e. mutation), genetic engineering, or bringing back (perhaps it never went away) the Megalodon.

Megalodon was a giant prehistoric shark presumed to be the ancestor of the great white. How giant is anyone's guess, although by extrapolating from fossilized Megalodon teeth it is estimated that it was somewhere in the range of 40 to 65 feet. Although none exist anymore, that's certainly no reason not to throw one at the heroes.

**Power Level:** 12 (75 points)

**Minion Level:** 5

**Abilities:** Str +15 (40), Dex +0 (10), Con +8 (26), Int -5 (1), Wis +1 (12), Cha -4 (2)

**Skills:** Notice 8 (+9), Swim 8 (+11)

**Powers** (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent):

**Growth 12**

**Protection 6**

**Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty)

**Swimming 2** (5 MPH)

**Super-Senses 3** (low-light vision, scent, track [scent])



## EIGHT (OR TEN) IS ENOUGH

Although they can only make one attack with their tentacles per round, the GM should remember that the Additional Limbs of a cephalopod endow it with the Improved Grapple feat. Thus it is entirely possible for a cephalopod to grapple a hero one round with one tentacle and, if successful, continue to grapple with the first hero while using a different tentacle to grab another hero; if things go really bad for the heroes, after a few rounds all of them can be caught in various tentacles of a cephalopod! Given this emphasis on grappling, prior to using a giant cephalopod, the GM should make sure he or she is familiar with the grappling rules and options on p. 156-157 of the *M&M* rulebook.

And just how many heroes can a cephalopod have in its tentacles at one time? According to the *M&M* rulebook “. . . a larger character can grapple . . . double the number of opponents the character can grapple at once per size category the attacker is larger than the defenders”. So, for example, a Gargantuan cephalopod could grapple up to 8 Medium-sized heroes (or 4 Large or 2 Huge),

**Combat:** Attack +4 (size included), Grapple +35 (size included), Damage +16 (bite), Defense +6 (size included), Knockback -19, Initiative +0

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +14, Fortitude +13, Reflex +5, Will +3

**Drawbacks:** Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

**Totals:** Abilities -5 + Skills 4 + Feats 0 + Powers 36 + Combat 36 + Saves 12 – Drawbacks 8 = 75

### Colossal Shark

Okay, now we're just getting ridiculous, but then again, if we can have an outsized great white, why not an outsized Megalodon? Besides, no one knows how big Megalodon really got, so who is to say that it couldn't have been from 64 to 128 feet in length?

**Power Level:** 14 (84 points)

**Minion Level:** 6

**Abilities:** Str +19 (48), Dex -1 (8), Con +10 (30), Int -5 (1), Wis +1 (12), Cha -4 (2)

**Skills:** Notice 8 (+9), Swim 8 (+11)

**Powers** (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent):

**Growth 16**

**Protection 7**

**Strike 1** (*Power Feats*: Mighty)

**Swimming 2** (5 MPH)

**Super-Senses 3** (low-light vision, scent, track [scent])

**Combat:** Attack +0 (size included), Grapple +35 (size included), Damage +20 (bite), Defense +3 (size included), Knockback -24, Initiative -1

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +17, Fortitude +13, Reflex +5, Will +3

**Drawbacks:** Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

**Totals:** Abilities -7 + Skills 4 + Feats 0 + Powers 45 + Combat 38 + Saves 12 – Drawbacks 8 = 84

## CEPHALOPODS

Yep, we're talking squids and octopuses here. While sharks may be seen as perfect killing machines, cephalopods with their alien appearance of bulbous eye, parrot beak, and sucker-covered tentacles are the stuff of nightmares. As such, they of course make fine terrors of the deep and opponents for heroes.

In reality encounters with giant cephalopods are extremely rare as they usually hunt only in deep waters. And, given that this is a superhero game, it is only natural that we ignore these facts.

As with sharks, cephalopods are not likely to attack heroes on their own (unless

they are guarding the treasure of a sunken wreck, naturally), but rather serve as minions of aquatic villains.

## Medium Cephalopod

These are octopuses and squids from 4 to 8 feet in length, which would represent the very largest specimens of real-life octopuses likely to be encountered with any kind of frequency. Although not particularly dangerous to a hero, their grappling ability can make them a tremendous nuisance as they can potentially keep a hero occupied (pinned) for a long time.

**Power Level:** 6 (64 points)

**Minion Level:** 5

**Abilities:** Str +3 (16), Dex +5 (21), Con +0 (10), Int -4 (2), Wis +1 (12), Cha -4 (2)

**Skills:** Notice 8 (+9), Swim 12 (+15)

**Feats:** Diehard, Improved Grab, Improved Pin

**Powers** (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent except Concealment and Obscure which are Innate only):

**Additional Limbs 4** (8 or 10)

**Concealment 2** (chameleon camouflage, visual; *Flaws*: Blending, Passive)

**Obscure 2** (ink cloud, visual, 10 ft. radius; *Extras*: Independent; *Flaws*: Limited - sight only, Limited - underwater only)

**Protection 5**

**Swimming 3** (10 MPH)

**Super-Senses 1** (low-light vision)]

**Combat:** Attack +9, Grapple +12, Damage +3 (tentacle and beak), Defense +7, Knockback -2, Initiative +5

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +5, Fortitude +5, Reflex +10, Will +5

**Drawbacks:** Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

**Totals:** Abilities 3 + Skills 5 + Feats 3 + Powers 15 + Combat 32 + Saves 14 - Drawbacks 8 = 64

## Large Cephalopod

These are octopuses and squids from 8 to 16 feet in length, which would in real life represent an unusually large specimen.

**Power Level:** 8 (73 points)

**Minion Level:** 5

**Abilities:** Str +7 (24), Dex +4 (19), Con +2 (14), Int -4 (2), Wis +1 (12), Cha -4 (2)

**Skills:** Notice 8 (+9), Swim 12 (+15)

**Feats:** Diehard, Improved Grab, Improved Pin

**Powers** (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent except Concealment and Obscure which are Innate only):

**Additional Limbs 4** (8 or 10)

**Concealment 2** (chameleon camouflage, visual; *Flaws*: Blending, Passive)

**Growth 4**

**Obscure 3** (ink cloud, visual, 25 ft. radius; *Extras*: Independent; *Flaws*: Limited - sight only, Limited - underwater only)

**Protection 7**

**Swimming 3** (10 MPH)

**Super-Senses 1** (low-light vision)]

**Combat:** Attack +8 (size included), Grapple +19 (size included), Damage +7 (tentacle and beak), Defense +6 (size included), Knockback -8 (size included), Initiative +4

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +9, Fortitude +7, Reflex +9, Will +5

**Drawbacks:** Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

**Totals:** Abilities 1 + Skills 5 + Feats 3 + Powers 25 + Combat 32 + Saves 14 - Drawbacks 8 = 73

## Huge Cephalopod

These are octopuses and squids from 16 to 32 feet in length.

**Power Level:** 10 (80 points)

**Minion Level:** 6

**Abilities:** Str +11 (32), Dex +3 (17), Con +4 (18), Int -4 (2), Wis +1 (12), Cha -4 (2)

**Skills:** Notice 8 (+9), Swim 12 (+15)

**Feats:** Diehard, Improved Grab, Improved Pin

**Powers** (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent except Concealment and Obscure which are Innate only):

**Additional Limbs 4** (8 or 10)

## SUPERLINE #6

**Concealment 2** (chameleon camouflage, visual; *Flaws*: Blending, Passive)

### **Growth 8**

**Obscure 4** (ink cloud, visual, 50 ft. radius; *Extras*: Independent; *Flaws*: Limited - sight only, Limited - underwater only)

### **Protection 9**

### **Swimming 3** (10 MPH)

### **Super-Senses 1** (low-light vision)]

**Combat**: Attack +7 (size included), Grapple +26 (size included), Damage +11 (tentacle and beak), Defense +5 (size included), Knockback -15 (size included), Initiative +3

**Saving Throws**: Toughness +13, Fortitude +9, Reflex +8, Will +5

**Drawbacks**: Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

**Totals**: Abilities -1 + Skills 5 + Feats 3 + Powers 35 + Combat 32 + Saves 14 - Drawbacks 8 = 80

## **Gargantuan Cephalopod**

These are octopuses and squids from 32 to 64 feet in length and represent the largest squid ever confirmed.

**Power Level**: 12 (88 points)

**Minion Level**: 6

**Abilities**: Str +15 (40), Dex +2 (15), Con +6 (22), Int -4 (2), Wis +1 (12), Cha -4 (2)

**Skills**: Notice 8 (+9), Swim 12 (+15)

**Feats**: Diehard, Improved Grab, Improved Pin

**Powers** (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent except Concealment and Obscure which are Innate only):

**Additional Limbs 4** (8 or 10)

**Concealment 2** (chameleon camouflage, visual; *Flaws*: Blending, Passive)

### **Growth 12**

**Obscure 5** (ink cloud, visual, 100 ft. radius; *Extras*: Independent; *Flaws*: Limited - sight only, Limited - underwater only)

### **Protection 11**

### **Swimming 3** (10 MPH)

### **Super-Senses 1** (low-light vision)]

**Combat**: Attack +5 (size included), Grapple +32 (size included), Damage +15 (tentacle and beak), Defense +3 (size included), Knockback -20 (size included), Initiative +2

**Saving Throws**: Toughness +17, Fortitude +11, Reflex +7, Will +5

**Drawbacks**: Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

**Totals**: Abilities -3 + Skills 5 + Feats 3 + Powers 45 + Combat 32 + Saves 14 - Drawbacks 8 = 88

## **Colossal Cephalopod**

These are octopuses and squids from 64 to 128 feet in length and represent the largest theoretical squid sizes based on sucker marks found on sperm whales. So yes, they could be out there in real life.

**Power Level**: 14 (95 points)

**Minion Level**: 7

**Abilities**: Str +19 (48), Dex +1 (13), Con +8 (26), Int -4 (2), Wis +1 (12), Cha -4 (2)

**Skills**: Notice 8 (+9), Swim 12 (+15)

**Feats**: Diehard, Improved Grab, Improved Pin

**Powers** (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent except Concealment and Obscure which are Innate only):

**Additional Limbs 4** (8 or 10)

**Concealment 2** (chameleon camouflage, visual; *Flaws*: Blending, Passive)

### **Growth 16**

**Obscure 6** (ink cloud, visual, 250 ft. radius; *Extras*: Independent; *Flaws*: Limited - sight only, Limited - underwater only)

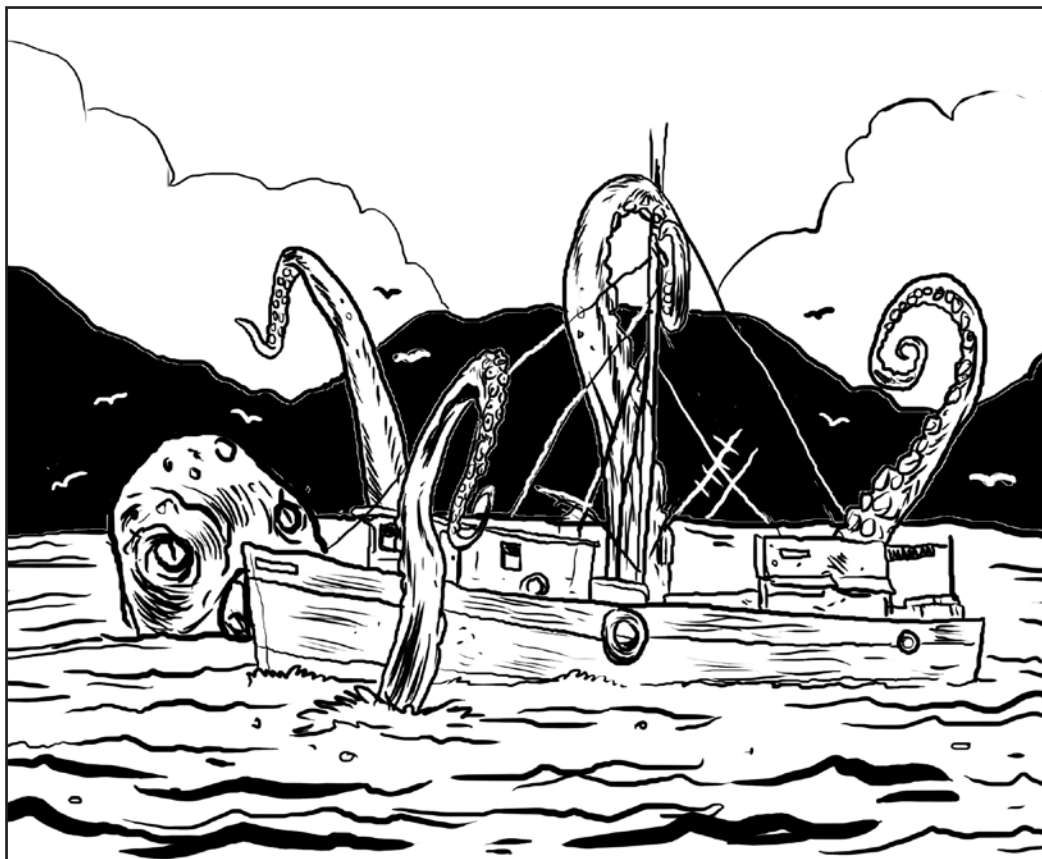
### **Protection 13**

### **Swimming 3** (10 MPH)

### **Super-Senses 1** (low-light vision)]

**Combat**: Attack +1 (size included), Grapple +36 (size included), Damage +19 (tentacle and beak), Defense -1 (size included), Knockback -26 (size included), Initiative +1

**Saving Throws**: Toughness +21, Fortitude +13, Reflex +6, Will +5



**Drawbacks:** Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

**Totals:** Abilities -5 + Skills 5 + Feats 3 + Powers 54 + Combat 32 + Saves 14 - Drawbacks 8 = 95

## Awesome Cephalopod

These are octopuses and squids from 128 to 256 feet in length and represent creatures of myth and legend such as the Kraken (although, depending on the legend, the Kraken could be several miles long and might not actually be a squid or octopus).

**Power Level:** 16 (102 points)

**Minion Level:** 8

**Abilities:** Str +23 (56), Dex +0 (11), Con +10 (30), Int -4 (2), Wis +1 (12), Cha -4 (2)

**Skills:** Notice 8 (+9), Swim 12 (+15)

**Feats:** Diehard, Improved Grab, Improved Pin

**Powers** (all *Power Feats*: Innate; *Flaws*: Permanent except Concealment and Obscure which are Innate only):

**Additional Limbs** 4 (8 or 10)

**Concealment** 2 (chameleon camouflage, visual; *Flaws*: Blending, Passive)

**Growth** 20

**Obscure** 7 (ink cloud, visual, 500 ft. radius; *Extras*: Independent; *Flaws*: Limited - sight only, Limited - underwater only)

**Protection** 15

**Swimming** 3 (10 MPH)

**Super-Senses** 1 (low-light vision)]

**Combat:** Attack -3 (size included), Grapple +40 (size included), Damage +23 (tentacle and beak), Defense -5 (size included), Knockback -32 (size included), Initiative +0

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +25, Fortitude +15, Reflex +5, Will +5

**Drawbacks:** Disability (mute, very common, moderate, 4 points), Disability (no hands, very common, moderate, 4 points)

**Totals:** Abilities -7 + Skills 5 + Feats 3 + Powers 63 + Combat 32 + Saves 14 - Drawbacks 8 = 102



## THE FIGHTING CEPHALOPODS

Although sharks are certainly frightening, I personally find cephalopods to not only be more chilling but also to be more versatile as minions. Why? Well, let's take a look:

- **Drowning** – When grabbing any sort of prey an octopus or squid's first instinct is to pull the prey down as deep into the water as it can. That means that if an octopus snatches a hero from a ship or the air it will pull the hero into the water. This is naturally a double-whammy for any hero that can't breathe underwater as not only will the hero suffer in the cephalopod's tentacles but will also drown unless the hero can find some way to get back to the surface.
- **Camouflage** – Octopuses are known to adapt their coloration to that of their environment as well as their moods. As a result they make great ambushers, lying in wait outside a villain's lair to strike out at unwary heroes. On an interesting note, an octopus' coloration also varies with its mood, from bright red (angry) to white (frightened); the heroes know they are putting the beating on a cephalopod when it suddenly turns pale.
- **Toxic** – The blue-ringed octopus is a very toxic cephalopod that instead of using ink delivers a poisonous (paralytic) bite with its beak. So, why not give the same thing to a cephalopod minion? A Drain Constitution or Paralyze linked attack would make an (un)pleasant surprise for the heroes. And who says that the cephalopod has to transmit the toxin via bite? Perhaps it is covered in a toxic slime (Aura extra)?
- **Ink** – Although it is a defense mechanism that leaves the cephalopod just as blinded as any other creature, this doesn't have to be the case. Give the cephalopod blindsight or some other sense that is not affected by the ink and allow it to use the ink as an offensive tool; the cephalopod creates an ink cloud and then strikes at the heroes from the cover provided by it. Also, the GM can use the Slow Fade power feat to extend the duration of the ink cloud to make it just that much more challenging.
- **Area Attack** – A cephalopod of at least Gargantuan size gets an area attack against the standard Medium-sized hero. This means that even if the actual attack to grab a hero fails, the fact that a massive tentacle is flailing about may still get the hero. Colossal and Awesome cephalopods would be capable of striking multiple heroes (if they are close enough together) just by flailing their tentacles about as they get a 10 ft. and 15 ft. area attack respectively.

# NEW HEADQUARTERS FEATURES II

BY PHILIP REED & MICHAEL HAMMES

In *Superline #4* we presented eight new headquarters features that expanded upon the features available on p. 146-147 of the *M&M* rules. Due to popular demand, in the following article we present four more features for your headquarters/hideouts.

## **Escape System**

The headquarters has a means to rapidly evacuate the headquarters in case of emergency. This could be anything from escape pods to lifeboats to inflatable slides to a secret tunnel. Escape systems such as escape pods are designed only to remove the passengers from the immediate danger; they are not vehicles as they without guidance or propulsion systems beyond those necessary to make good their escape. Escape pods usually send out distress signals so that their occupants can be picked up.

## **Sealed Environment**

The headquarters or a feature thereof is or can be hermetically sealed and physically isolated from the external environment. Blast doors and fire doors are common components of an environment that is capable of being sealed in an emergency while an airlock would be used in an area that is always sealed.

A sealed environment is most common for a laboratory (to keep dust from delicate components and hold back problems with experiments) or infirmary (to maintain sterility and prevent the spread of contagious diseases). A sealed environment costs 1 equipment point for each area sealed.

Note that the entire headquarters can be considered a single area for this purpose. However, sealing the entire headquarters without sealing individual high-risk areas,

while it would prevent anything from entering or leaving the headquarters, would not prevent something from spreading within the headquarters. Most sealed environments provide life support. Note that this feature is considered standard for isolated headquarters such as those in space or underwater, but individual features within the headquarters that are to be sealed off still cost 1 equipment point in addition to the cost of the feature.

## **State-Of-The-Art**

A feature of the headquarters is of a superior level of technology compared to that available for the standard feature. The feature could be from the future, an alien device, or just a high-tech prototype. A state-of-the-art feature provides a +4 bonus to appropriate skill checks made while using the feature. For example, a state-of-the-art library might have a limited AI that assists with research, adding the +4 bonus to appropriate Knowledge checks while a state-of-the-art infirmary would have all the latest and best medical tools, providing the +4 bonus to appropriate Medicine checks. State-of-the-art adds 1 equipment point to the cost of the standard feature.

## **Self-Destruct System**

A self-destruct system is an autonomous system that, once activated, destroys the entire headquarters. A self-destruct system uses an explosive attack effect with a rank equal to the headquarters' Toughness. A self-destruct system usually has a countdown sequence to allow time for evacuation to cancel the self-destruct. A self-destruct system can be deactivated (or activated) without the proper access with a successful Disable Device check (DC 20). Each additional feature increases the DC by +5.

# HUNTED!

BY MICHAEL HAMMES

## SUMMARY

In this adventure the heroes find themselves on a beautiful tropical island. But this is no vacation resort, this is the hunting ground of an alien hunter intent on testing himself against the ultimate prey that the heroes' world has to offer: the heroes themselves!

## BACKGROUND

A Jataron, a member of an alien species that travels the galaxy in search of challenging prey to add to their collections, has come to the heroes' world looking for prey. After spending some time secretly exploring the heroes' world (i.e. watching news broadcasts, searching for a suitable hunting ground, etc.) he has decided both upon his prey and where he will hunt. His prey: the heroes. His hunting ground: an isolated tropical island.

## SET-UP

It is up to the GM to decide how the heroes arrive on or are brought to the island. The easiest is to employ GM Fiat to simply place the heroes on the island. Here are some possibilities:

- The cloaked Jataron ship captures the heroes while they are out on a mission, relaxing, etc., using a powerful stun/tractor beam that renders the heroes unconscious and allows the Jataron to place them aboard and transport them to the island (like the beam from "Abducted" in **Superline #1**)
- The Jataron ship possesses teleportation technology and simply teleports the heroes to the island against their will. While Teleport

normally allows a Reflex save, since this is GM Fiat the heroes don't get one or are assumed to have failed (i.e. distracted, sleeping, etc.).

- The Jataron ambushes the heroes, capturing the surprised heroes by using Drain/Paralyze/Snare/Stun technology that renders the heroes helpless before they have a chance to do anything. Once captured, the heroes are sedated and brought aboard the Jataron ship for transport to the island. Again, although the heroes would normally have a chance to resist the attacks and sedation, because this is GM Fiat the heroes don't get to this time.
- The uncloaked Jataron ship attacks the heroes' city in an effort to bait the heroes and get them to follow the ship to the island. As a result, no matter what the heroes do, they will not be able to stop the Jataron ship from reaching the island.

In accordance with the suggestions in the **M&M** rulebook, the GM should remember to award each hero a hero point for this use of GM Fiat to take some of the sting out of being maneuvered onto the island in this fashion.

One other thing to remember is that no matter what method is used to get the heroes to the island the heroes should not get a glimpse of the Jataron in order to preserve some of the mystery of this adventure.

## ADVENTURE

The adventure begins with the heroes standing on the beach. It doesn't actually matter whether the heroes are together or

separated, either individually or in small teams; the GM can make that determination based on how easy he or she feels it will be to run the heroes separately (and whether the players will have fun ambling about in the jungle while others deal with the threat).

## The Hunting Ground

The island the Jataron has chosen is an uninhabited tropical island far from the shipping lanes; the exact location is not important for the purposes of this adventure, the GM can place it wherever desired (the Caribbean and seas around Australia are good locations).

The island is roughly circular with a diameter of some eight miles. A thin strip of white, sandy beach rises from the sparkling blue sea and encircles the island's edge, ending at a thick wall of jungle that covers the remainder of the island.

Like almost all other isolated tropical islands, the island sits on the remains of an ancient volcano. As a result the elevation rises the further inland one goes topping out at 2,500 feet at the island's center, the top of the extinct volcano. That's not to say that the change in elevation is smooth. Ridges, draws, cliffs, and smaller peaks dot the island, breaking up the topography and making it anything but an easy journey to get anywhere on the island. In addition, small streams and rivers, occasionally tumbling over cliffs as waterfalls and coalescing in ponds and pools, originate from the various peaks and break up the monotony of the vegetation as they head to the sea.

## Movement On The Island

As has already been mentioned, the island features a number of obstacles to movement. A thick tropical forest (okay, jungle) covers the entire island except the beach, the heavy undergrowth, hanging vines, and root beds combining to hamper any and all movement (i.e. jumping, flying, levitating, etc.) under its canopy equally. Making things more challenging, at least for land-bound movement, are steep and

often sudden changes in elevation such as ridges and slopes. Finally the nighttime darkness under the canopy is severe further impeding movement to those that cannot see in the dark, land-bound or not. The different conditions and their effect on movement are summarized in the following table:

Condition	Movement Penalty
Jungle	x1/2
Steep Elevation	x1/2
Nighttime	x1/2

Note that all conditions are cumulative so that a hero flying or otherwise moving under the canopy has his or her movement reduced to one-half, a hero walking through the jungle and up a steep slope has his or her movement reduced to one-quarter, and so on; the maximum movement penalty is for land-bound movement up a slope in the darkness, which reduces the movement rate to one-eighth.

## Light Conditions

Even in the brightest daylight the area beneath the jungle canopy is filled with shadows. These light conditions combined with the thick vegetation (i.e. leaves, vines, grass, etc.) make it very difficult to see other people as reflected in the table below:

Distance	Concealment
within 20 feet	concealment (sight, 20% miss chance, Stealth check possible)
beyond 20 feet	total concealment (sight, 50% miss chance, Stealth check possible) or concealment (other visual sense, 20% miss chance, Stealth check)



At night, of course, sight concealment is total at all distances unless a light source or other means of vision are available, and even then the concealment conditions in the table above are in effect.

### Cover

The thick growth of trees and other vegetation as well as changes in elevation mean that cover, including total cover, is almost never far from anyone.

### Navigation

Navigation under the jungle canopy is quite difficult, adding +2 to the DC for any Survival checks to navigate.

### Trapped!

Undoubtedly one of the first things the heroes will wish to do is to get their bearings by exploring their surroundings. While they are certainly free to do that, heroes that intend to use their movement powers (i.e. Burrowing, Flight, Leaping, Spatial Control, Speed, Super-Speed, Super-Movement (dimensional, temporal), Swimming, Teleport, et. al.) to explore the island or leave are in for a rude surprise.

The Jataron, realizing that unfettered access to movement powers would allow the heroes to leave the island at any time, has limited the heroes' movement powers. How did he do this? Why with a plot device of course! Here is a trio of ideas the GM can pick from:

- **Capture Web** – an invisible dome-like force field generated by the cloaked Jataron ship surrounds the island a short distance from the beach and prevents any and all movement beyond it. The force field extends from the edge of the beach to ten feet above the top of the canopy and below ground. While the heroes can move normally on the island, including using their movement powers, they cannot penetrate the capture web. Any attempt to do so ends up with the hero instantly stopped as if running into a brick wall

(the GM may wish to have the hero suffer damage accordingly). The only way to bring down the capture web is for the heroes to deactivate it from aboard the Jataron ship.

- **Damping Field** – much like the invisible force field this dampening field is generated aboard the Jataron ship and can only be turned off there. Unlike the capture web, the damping field is not a hard barrier. Instead, while under the influence of the damping field (which miles beyond the island in all directions) the heroes' movement powers are subject to a Nullify effect; i.e. flying heroes are grounded, speedsters are limited to normal walking/running speeds, teleporters can't teleport, etc. The GM may carefully wish to consider the limitations this places on some of the heroes (i.e. a Paragon is still very effective but a Speedster is severely handicapped) and how it will impact the fun the players will have. While some players will be up to the challenge of playing their hero without movement powers, others won't; if the GM feels that a player will not enjoy the game then one of the other two options should probably be used.
- **Nanites** – during transport to the island the heroes are injected with nanites. These nanites affect the heroes with Nauseate, causing them to suffer more and more pain the further they try to get from the island. Any hero stepping into the surf or flying above the canopy or burrowing underground, etc. is sickened. Getting into waist-deep water or flying 50 feet above the canopy makes the hero nauseated. If the hero insists on continuing then once the hero is in water over the hero's head or reaches an altitude of 100 feet above the canopy the hero is rendered helpless by the pain (and is potentially in danger of drowning or

falling to the ground). Again, because this is a plot device, the heroes do not get the usual Fortitude saves against the Nauseate effect (although the GM might allow them to overcome it for a brief time through the use of a hero point). Naturally, the technology to remove the nanites is available only on the Jataron ship. Teleporters find that any attempt to use long-distance Teleport or to Teleport past the beach, above the canopy, or below ground renders them helpless. The same goes for dimensional or time travelers; any attempt to use those powers instantly renders them helpless.

Again, the whole point of whichever plot device the GM chooses is to ensure that the heroes cannot leave the island before the conclusion of the hunt; in no way should the heroes be able to leave the island before they defeat the Jataron.

In addition, a further plot device (or another facet of the same) prevents all communication (i.e. mental, radio, etc.) both from leaving or reaching the island as well as between the heroes themselves; the heroes are completely isolated.

## ***The Hunt***

The GM may begin the actual hunt at anytime after placing the heroes on the beach. A particularly appropriate time is shortly after the heroes realize that they are trapped on an island and wonder to what purpose.

As the heroes are speculating the air will suddenly be split by the Jataron's war cry. As the Jataron's bloodlust echoes through the jungle the heroes should have no problem figuring out that something is coming for them.

The actual conduct of the hunt is simple: the Jataron hunts down the heroes until either he or the heroes are defeated (i.e. incapacitated or killed depending on the style of the campaign).

## **JATARON TACTICS**

The GM should take the time to become thoroughly familiar with the Jataron's capabilities and the terrain's effects prior to running the hunt since these two factors will contribute the most to how difficult the Jataron will be to deal with.

The Jataron's basic tactics are as follows:

- Navigate the island using his helmet's built-in topographical map; the Jataron is never lost and can quickly ascertain the shortest distance to specific point as well as the most likely place for heroes to move (i.e. through draws rather than over ridges, along mapped game trails, etc.). Although he can't actually move faster than the heroes, the Jataron knows where he's going.
- Use his Notice and Survival skills, his Track feat, and the helmet's visual and tracking capabilities to locate and follow the heroes.
- Use his Stealth and Climb skills, light-warping matrix, and terrain to remain hidden from the heroes at all times.
- Determine the strengths and weaknesses of the heroes both from having studied the heroes (i.e. monitoring news broadcasts) and using his Assessment feat.
- Prepare an ambush for the heroes using his Master Plan feat. The goal of the ambush is to quickly eliminate either a lone hero or a specific hero within a group. This ambush usually takes the form of a sudden shot or two from his wrist blaster at an unsuspecting hero.
- Avoid getting bogged down in extended combats; if the target of the ambush cannot be quickly eliminated (i.e. within 3 rounds) the Jataron retreats and regroups to try again at a time and place of his choosing.

Throughout the course of the hunt the heroes should be constantly looking over their shoulder wondering when and where the next strike will come from; if they aren't, something's wrong.

## Dirty Tricks

If the GM wishes to give the Jataron a greater edge in dealing with the heroes he can do the following:

- **Tracking Devices** – the Jataron has implanted tracking devices in each of the heroes. These small (pill-size or smaller) devices can be almost anywhere: the stomach, under the skin, at the top of the nasal passage, etc. They give off a steady signal that the Jataron can pick up on his helmet and use to locate each of the heroes relative to his position and on his helmet's topographical map. How the heroes can locate and remove these devices is up to the GM.
- **Booby Traps** – the Jataron has emplaced booby traps all over the island (i.e. on game trails, in draws, etc.) see the **Booby Traps** article in this issue.
- **Exploiting Drawbacks** – if a specific hero has a known vulnerability or weakness (i.e. one that was in evidence in a news report or comes to the surface during the hunt), the GM should feel free to give the Jataron hunter a device to exploit that weakness.
- **Closing Loopholes** – if the heroes have too easy a time detecting/locating the Jataron (i.e. because of particular Super-Senses) simply alter the hunter's equipment to mask his presence from those senses. The same is true for heroes that have too easy a time hiding from the Jataron; simply expand the detection capabilities of Jataron's mask by adding the appropriate Super-Senses.

- **Language Barrier** – the Jataron does not speak the heroes' language, a fact that they may be able to use to their advantage. The GM can simply add **Comprehend 2** (speak and understand all languages) to the Jataron's helmet to eliminate this.
- **There Are More Of Them?** – if the heroes have a surprisingly easy time dealing with the Jataron, the GM can send in further Jataron hunters. The rationale behind this can be that they've been being hunted by multiple hunters to begin with, or that the initial hunter had won the right to conduct the hunt privately but now that he's been defeated the others intend to complete the job.

## THE JATARON SHIP

The hunter has his cloaked ship (**Concealment 4** [all visual senses; *Power Feats*: Close Range]) sitting in the vegetation of the extinct crater of the volcano. The specifics of the ship are not important. It's just big enough to hold the PCs, have a trophy room, some spartan living quarters, a cockpit, and engines; as with the means of limiting the heroes' movement, the Jataron ship is a plot device that represents in one way or another the culmination of the hunt.

Any heroes the Jataron manages to capture or kill and carry the hero off will be aboard the ship (or at least the remains will be). The ship is also the home of whatever plot device is keeping the heroes from leaving the island as well as the place to get rid of the implanted tracking devices (if the GM used them).

The Jataron will not use the ship to hunt the heroes; that would go against the spirit of the hunt. In fact, he has hidden the ship in the crater precisely because he expects the heroes to figure out that it is located there and head toward it.

Assuming that the heroes haven't had too easy a time dealing with the Jataron and finding his ship the GM shouldn't place

anymore obstacles (i.e. traps, complicated locks, etc.) in their way; the heroes can simply go on board, recover their fellow heroes and/or their remains, stop the plot device keeping them trapped, and go on their merry way.

## Final Encounter

At some point the heroes, or hero if the Jataron has been very successful, should have a final battle with the Jataron. This will take place when the heroes reach the Jataron ship or if there is only one hero remaining. In true comic fashion, this final combat should be as macho as possible, with the Jataron revealing itself and fighting hand-to-hand against these worthy foes. That's not to say that the Jataron will stand stupidly on the ground if a hero takes to the air and begins blasting at the hunter from a distance. Rather the Jataron will remove as many advantages as he has over the heroes in order to make it as even a fight as possible, adding them back in if it turns out he has inadvertently given the heroes an advantage. During the final encounter the Jataron fights to the end, giving no quarter and expecting none.

## It Ain't Over Yet

Depending on the style of the campaign, one of the following will happen with the defeat of the Jataron hunter:

- **Four Color** – After the heroes defeat the hunter he acknowledges their superiority, returns to his ship, releases any heroes he has captured, and leaves.
- **Grim and Gritty** – If the heroes incapacitate the hunter he commits suicide as soon as possible (i.e. by stabbing himself with his blade, biting on a poison tooth, triggering a massive brain hemorrhage, whatever is appropriate). Upon the death of the hunter (whether suicide or killed by the heroes outright) his ship enters a self-destruct sequence that, upon completion, blows off the top of the volcano (treat as a **Blast 20** [Extras:

Area – Explosion]). The explosion causes the volcano to erupt and lava to eventually cover the entire island.

## Follow-Up

Whether the heroes have seen the last of the Jataron is up to the GM. While they may indeed have bested this particular Jataron, this does not mean that others will not try their luck against these obviously worthy foes. For that matter, there's nothing saying that this particular hunter won't be back after he's had some time to better prepare himself.

## Rewards

Throughout the adventure the heroes should be awarded hero points according to the guidelines in the main rulebook. Upon successful completion of the adventure the heroes should be awarded 1 power point each.

## THE JATARON

The Jataron are a fierce-looking bipedal humanoid alien species of notable size and physical prowess. The average Jataron stands 7 feet tall or taller and carries some 600 lbs. on a well-proportioned and muscled frame. As their appearance would suggest, Jataron are quite strong. Despite their obvious size and strength, Jataron are anything but lumbering. They are in fact surprisingly agile, capable of acrobatic feats that rival those of well-trained gymnasts.

Jataron society is a loose organization of clans that support themselves by hiring out their services to other species; in short, they make their living as mercenaries, hiring out individually, in small units, or even as entire clans. As a result, Jataron can be found all over the galaxy serving as bodyguards, shock troops, scouts, assassins, bounty hunters, and in any other occupation they deem a worthy challenge.

Advancement among the Jataron is strictly through merit; a Jataron must



prove himself constantly worthy of not only promotion, but also of maintaining his present position.

The Jataron hunter in this adventure is a typical of an experienced Jataron, one that has fulfilled more than his share of contracts: a highly skilled and savvy combatant looking to rise in his clan by continuing to prove himself against worthy foes.

## Stat Block

**Power Level: 11** (227 points)

**Abilities:** Str +9 (29), Dex +3 (17), Con +6 (23), Int +2 (15), Wis +2 (15), Cha +2 (15)

**Skills:** Acrobatics 10 (+13), Climb 10 (+15), Concentration 8 (+10), Craft (electronic) 6 (+8), Craft (mechanical) 6 (+8), Escape Artist 8 (+11), Intimidate 12 (+14), Knowledge (life sciences) 6 (+8), Medicine 8 (+10), Notice 14 (+16), Pilot 6 (+9), Search 6 (+8), Stealth 12 (+15), Sense Motive 8 (+10), Survival 12 (+14), Swim 8 (+13)

**Feats:** Accurate Attack, All-Out Attack, Assessment, Diehard, Endurance, Evasion 2, Fearless, Fearsome Presence 10, Improved Aim, Improved Initiative, Master Plan, Move-By Action, Power Attack, Startle, Track, Uncanny Dodge (olfactory)

**Powers:**

**Density 2** (provides +4 Strength,

**Protection 1** [*Extras:* Impervious]; *Power Feats:* Innate; *Extras:* Permanent)

**Growth 2** (provides +4 Strength, +2 Constitution; *Power Feats:* Innate; *Extras:* Permanent)

**Super-Senses 2** (low-light vision, scent; *Power Feats:* Innate; *Extras:* Permanent)

**Devices:**

**Device 2** (light-warping matrix; hard to lose); **Concealment 4** (all visual senses; *Power Feats:* Close Range)

**Device 4** (wrist blaster; hard to lose); **Blast 12** (*Power Feats:* Alternate Powers – **Strike 1** [extendable blades; *Power Feats:* Mighty])

**Device 3** (helmet; hard to lose):

**Immunity 7** (dazzle effects, suffocation), **Super-Senses 7** (direction sense, distance sense, extended vision [x10], infravision, track [infravision], ultra-hearing, ultravision)

**Combat:** Attack +10, Grapple +19, Damage +9 (unarmed), +10 (wrist blades), +12 (wrist blaster), Defense +15, Knockback -4, Initiative +7

**Saving Throws:** Toughness +7, Fortitude +14, Reflex +11, Will +10

**Totals:** Abilities 44 + Skills 35 + Feats 26 + Powers 48 + Combat 50 + Saves 24 = 227

## VARIANTS

Here are some variant ideas for using both the Jataron and the isolated tropical island in an alternate manner:

- The Jataron have decided to hunt in the heroes' city instead of on the isolated island. They might target the heroes directly, target villains, or begin by hunting "weaker" prey (i.e. ordinary people such as street criminals, police officers, and other individuals of an aggressive nature and/or carrying weapons).
- There is more to the hunt than just a hunt; the Jataron are testing the ability of the heroes' world to defend itself prior to a planned Jataron or other alien invasion.
- Rather than being involved in the hunt themselves, another alien species or perhaps the master(s) of the robots from "Abducted" in **Superline #1** have abducted both the heroes and the Jataron and taken them to the island to fight it out with the winners (and their world) going free.
- The island isn't an actual island, but rather a holographic arena on the Jataron (or someone else's) ship. Alternately, the island is a whole other dimension, one where

intergalactic species are brought to settle their differences through combat.

- It's an intergalactic game show with fabulous prizes awaiting the winners!
- A supervillain maroons or traps the heroes on the island via a force field. This can be meant as a

permanent punishment or as a short-term way of keeping them out of the supervillain's hair while the supervillain completes his or her master plan. Cut off from the outside, the heroes will have to figure out a way off the island (and perhaps battle some of the villain's creations such as giant insects, robots, etc.)..



# TRAPS

BY MICHAEL HAMMES

Although frequent and planned for in many other RPGs, especially fantasy ones, traps don't get much attention in **M&M**. Which is a shame really since the **M&M** system makes creating traps, much like creating devices and equipment, really easy and one would think that the supervillain of the day would want some around the headquarters or as a nasty surprise for heroes sticking their nose into places it doesn't belong. So, having said that, let's look at some aspects of designing traps.

## EFFECT

Although in real life many traps would produce an attack effect through the use of the Blast power (i.e. anti-personnel, anti-tank mines, traps, rigged weapons, etc.) or the Strike power (i.e. deadfall, punji sticks, etc.), in a superhero game almost anything is possible; the only effective limit is the trap designer's imagination. Let's take a look at some of the possibilities

- **Alteration** – a trap with this effect alters the target physically in some way. Transform could turn the target into a toad or a stone statue while Shrinking could reduce the target to a miniscule size.
- **Attack** – this is undoubtedly the most obvious effect for a trap. It includes the aforementioned Blast and Strike powers as well as the various Energy Control powers (i.e. Cosmic, Hellfire, Kinetic, etc.), Nauseate, Paralyze, Snare, et al. Attack effects usually cause direct injury to the target.
- **Defense** – although other powers may be used in traps with some experimentation, the most obvious

power in this category is Force Field, one used to trap others.

- **General** – perhaps the most interesting and varied effect for traps: Animate Objects and Summon creates instant foes, Create Objects can bring cages into being or drop anvils on the target, Element Control (air, earth, water), Gravity Control, Magnetic Control, and Telekinesis can strike, move, and hold the target, Environmental Control (cold, distraction, hamper movement, heat) and Weather Control can make things uncomfortable and difficult, and finally Magic can do just about anything.
- **Mental** – messing with a target's mind is handy if the object is not to kill but to delay or drive off; Confuse, Emotion Control (despair and fear) and Mind Control (implant a suggestion to leave, surrender, etc.) can all be used to accomplish this.
- **Movement** – surprisingly, traps with this effect can have a variety of interesting effects. Dimensional Pocket can be used to capture a target. Spatial Control, Super Movement (dimensional movement), and Teleport can remove the target to some other location. Time Control can be used to slow down the target and Super Movement (temporal movement) can put the target at some other point in time.
- **Sensory** – limiting access to, or fooling, the senses is a good way to frustrate and handicap targets. Appropriate powers include Darkness Control, Dazzle, Illusion, and Obscure.

## THE TRIGGERED POWER FEAT

It is an open question as to whether a trigger for something like a deadfall (Strike power) or a mine (Blast power) would require the Triggered power feat.

The Triggered power feat allows someone to “set” a power with an instant duration to activate under particular circumstances; it would appear to be the very definition of a trigger for something like a deadfall or a mine.

However, another interpretation would be that it applies to a power directly rather than to a device or piece of equipment which would have the cost of the trigger built into the fact that it is equipment or a device. For example, a villain with Electrical Control and the Triggered power feat might be able to use her power to directly charge up the air in such a manner that the static electricity produced by the next person into the room causes an explosive Blast to go off, but someone just buying a mine is by definition purchasing an item that has the trigger already built in because it is a mine.

What this essentially boils down to is a question of cost; does the GM want to make the creator of the trap pay specifically for the trigger or is the trigger assumed to be part of the item to begin with? I’ve included the Triggered power feat in the sample traps based on where I felt they made sense but you are free to include or excluded that based on your own ideas.

- **Trait** – a trap of this sort usually weakens the target in some way, although if it is powerful enough, it may kill or otherwise incapacitate the target. The most obvious power for this sort of trap is Drain, which can be used for anything from poison gas to radiation to a “stupid” ray. Nullify (*Extras: Duration*) is also appropriate.

Note that the listed powers aren’t the only ones that can be used in traps, rather just the more obvious ones. Furthermore, in some cases other powers, power feats, and/or power modifiers (especially the Affects Others extra) may be required to make the powers work in traps.

## TRIGGERING MECHANISM

Traps don’t go off unless something makes them go off. The following are some potential triggering mechanisms:

- **Object** – the trap is triggered when an individual handles an object. For example, the pin can be pulled from a grenade and an object (i.e. a rock,

cash box, etc.) placed on the safety lever (or “spoon”). When the object is picked up or moved, the safety lever pops off and the grenade is activated. Or a computer can be trapped so that when it is turned on, the electrical current sets off the trap inside.

- **Pressure** – the trap is triggered when enough pressure is applied to it. This is usually in the form of stepping on a pressure plate or rod with a certain amount of force (i.e. 10 to 20 pounds). Another form of pressure trigger is a tilt-rod. A tilt-rod, as the name suggests, is a rod that when tilted past a certain point triggers the fuse. Tilt rods usually only require a pound or two of force to activate.
- **Remote** – rather than relying on a passive system that is triggered by the target, a remotely activated trap is triggered by its operator. The most common types of remote triggers are an electrical wire hooked to a firing device or a radio remote that sends a specific frequency signal to a receiver.



- **Sensor** – the trap is triggered when a sensor is activated. Types of sensors include magnetic (i.e. ones that are triggered by the metal in vehicles), light beam (triggered when the beam is broken; effectively an electronic tripwire), photovoltaic (triggered by the presence of light), acoustic (triggered by sound vibrations), and seismic (triggered by ground vibrations).
- **Time** – the trap is triggered at a specific time or after a specific time interval by a clockwork mechanism or electronic timer.
- **Tripwire** – the trap is triggered when a connecting wire is pulled. As the name suggests, a tripwire is usually run from the trap to a fixed point (i.e. a tree) at about mid-shin height; it is triggered when someone “trips” over the wire. A tripwire trap can also be used as a tether; rather than tripping over the wire, the trap is activated when someone pulls on the trap itself. Usually this requires the trap to be placed inside an object that someone will want to pick up. Finally, a tripwire can also be rigged to activate when tension is released rather than increased (i.e. when the tripwire is cut by someone too smart to fall for that old trick) or both.

Obviously these are the most common triggers, but others are undoubtedly possible. Note that whether the trap’s designer has to spend points on the trigger is largely a judgment call by the GM. For example, a grenade that is rigged to a tripwire or placed between a door and its jamb certainly doesn’t. However a trap that relies on an infrared sensor should probably have Super-Senses (infrared) added into its cost.

## MAKING A TRAP

Making a trap from scratch rather than simply setting up a mine or grenade usually requires a Craft check of some kind. The GM will have to decide which sort of Craft check is appropriate, and may in fact require the designer(s) to be proficient in more than a single Craft in order to build the trap.

For example:

- A log deadfall might be a Craft (structural) check.
- Attaching a timer to some plastic explosive might be a Craft (electronic) or Craft (mechanical) check.
- Making the explosive from stuff bought at the local store would require a Craft (chemical) check.
- Rigging a crossbow to fire when the door is opened may require a Craft (mechanical) check.

The Craft skill write-up in the *M&M* rulebook suggests a DC of 15 for crafting an electronic timer, detonator, or tripwire, but ultimately the DC is up to the GM. Note that when making unique or complex traps (i.e. an atomic scrambler) the GM may wish to use the Inventing rules found on p. 132 of the *M&M* rulebook.

Note that the Craft skill write-up does have specific rules for dealing with demolitions including explosives, detonators, and disarming of the same, which can also be used for building traps based on explosives and includes a handy rule for making it more difficult to disarm the explosives: the disarm DC becomes the Craft check DC. It also includes a penalty for failing the Craft check to work with explosives, triggering the explosives if the check is failed by 5 or more; this can, at the GM’s option, be extended to all other traps.

## FINDING TRAPS

Finding a trap is an application of the Search skill. The suggested DC is 20, but the GM should feel free to increase or decrease the DC based on circumstances (i.e. light, vegetation, purpose) or even use the rules for finding a concealed object, making the DC of the Search check for the trap a function of the Stealth or Slight of Hand check of the individual setting the trap. I would suggest that the Craft (mechanical) or Craft (structural) skill check can be used to determine the Search DC if the trap is built into the environment (i.e. a trick floor, guillotine, trick door, etc.) rather than placed there (i.e. a mine buried in the road).

## DISARMING TRAPS

Disarming a trap falls under the Disable Device skill (or the Craft skill). What exactly the DC is for disarming any particular trap is up to the GM and the *M&M* rulebook provides some examples. On p. 9 of the *M&M* rulebook a DC of 15 is given for disarming an explosive device and on p. 45 the DC for disarming explosives is 10 unless the individual crafting the explosives has set the DC higher; in other words, the DC is up to the GM; some guidance can also be found in the various DCs listed in the Disable Device skill.

Note that on p. 47 of the *M&M* rulebook it states that if the Disable Device check fails by 4 or less then the individual attempting to disarm the trap can try again; if it fails by 5 or more, the trap is set off.

The GM may wish to change the margin for error to increase or decrease the danger that is faced when attempting to disable (or perhaps even build) a trap; this can be done either on a blanket or case-by-case basis. I would suggest that in general the cushion of safety should be allowed to stay, but it might be interesting to remove it (any failure means the trap goes off) for particularly fiendish or difficult ("no margin for error") devices.

## TRAP EXAMPLES

Here are some example traps along with their costs and disable device DCs; whether the traps are equipment or devices is up to the GM.

### Anti-Personnel Mine

Your standard "toe popper" or "Bouncing Betty" triggered by handling an object, pressure, or tripwire.

**Blast 5** (*Extras*: Area [Explosion]; *Power Feats*: Triggered [pressure plate])

Cost: 16

*Disable Device DC*: 10 to 15 to remove the triggering mechanism and render the mine safe for transport; such mines are easy to disarm, if you know how.

### Anti-Tank Mine

Same idea as an anti-personnel mine except that it is designed to be used against vehicles.

**Blast 10** (*Power Feats*: Triggered [pressure plate]; *Extras*: Area [Explosion]; *Flaws*: Limited – pressure plate requires 300 lbs. or more of pressure to activate)

Cost: 21

*Disable Device DC*: 10 to 15 to remove the triggering mechanism and render the mine safe for transport; such mines are easy to disarm, if you know how.

### The Gorgon's Bust

Legend has it that Hephaestus created this bronze sculpture from the actual face of Medusa for Athena and that it was placed in a niche in her treasury at Delphi; the bust features the upper chest, shoulders, and head of a beautiful woman with snakes instead of hair cascading down to her shoulders. It is said to turn to stone anyone that looks directly at its face.

**Transform 10** (flesh to stone; *Power Feats*: Triggered [when someone gazes at the bust's face]; *Extras*: Range [perception], Duration [continuous]; *Flaws*: Sense-Dependent [must gaze upon bust's face])

Cost: 41

*Disable Device* DC: N/A; trap can be avoided by not looking directly (i.e. with mirror or keeping the eyes closed) at the bust.

## Log Deadfall

This trap consists of a tree trunk tied to two ropes or vines and suspended above the ground. The log is held in place by a peg connected to a tripwire. When the tripwire is tripped, the peg is pulled and the log released to swing down on the individual (or individuals) in the path of the log.

Note that anyone subjected to the trap gets a Reflex save (DC 10 + the trap's damage).

**Strike 6** (*Power Feats*: Homing [return swing], Triggered [tripwire]; *Extras*: Area [line]; *Flaws*: Limited - 10 feet/rank))

Cost: 8

*Disable Device* DC: N/A; can be avoided by spotting tripwire and stepping over or, if trap is found, getting everyone out of the way and triggering the tripwire from a safe distance or place.

## Hidden Machine Gun

This trap consists of a machine gun hidden behind a panel in a wall. The trap is triggered whenever someone triggers the trap's infravision sensor. The machine gun does not fire at a specific target, but rather sends a hail of bullets through the area the sensor covers.

**Blast 6** (*Power Feats*: Triggered [tripping infravision sensor]; **Super-Senses 1** (infravision)); *Extras*: Area [line])

Cost: 20

*Disable Device* DC: 16; if the sensor is spotted, it can be covered up by a thick piece of cloth or plastic at room temperature or less. An alternative way to disable the trap is to keep the panel from opening.

## Grenade On The Door

A field-expedient trap, a grenade has its safety pin removed and is balanced

spoon down on the top of a doorway that is slightly ajar; when the doorway is opened, the grenade drops into the lap of the person entering. The example grenade is a fragmentation grenade, but a smoke, flash-bang, or tear gas grenade work well to disorient and warn of approaching enemies.

**Blast 5** (*Extras*: Area [Explosion])

Cost: 15

*Disable Device* DC: 10; simply keep the grenade from falling and then throw it to some safe place unless you can find something to act as a safety pin, or close the door and have the grenade blow up behind it.

## Globber

This small disk is pressure detonated. When someone steps on it, the globber releases a spray of slime that quickly hardens into super-strength glue and sticks the victim to the floor.

The listed globber is a small example; add the Area (burst) extra to affect more than one individual and the Contagious extra to make rescue of the targets very difficult (the glue doesn't harden). Attach the globber to a ceiling and include a sensor (i.e. infravision, darkvision, radar, etc.) to have it go off the moment it detects something moving underneath it.

**Snare 5** (*Power Feats*: Triggered [pressure plate]; *Flaws*: Entangle)

Cost: 6

*Disable Device* DC: 15; the best thing is to avoid the thing entirely, but it can be disarmed by carefully removing the detonator.

## Gas Nozzle

This tiny gas nozzle is hidden behind an equally small panel just above the keypad to a high security area; failure to enter the proper keycode (*Disable Device* DC of 30) not only sets off an alarm in the security center but also causes the nozzle to pop out and spray the area. The example gas is a very nasty, but short-lived, nerve gas that

paralyzes the nervous system of the person operating the keypad.

Note that the nerve gas fires once only; if it were capable of firing repeatedly (i.e. each time someone punched in the incorrect keycode) the Triggered power would require the Duration 3 [continuous] modifier.

A more interesting version could bring down blast doors to seal off the area in front of the keypad and flood the whole area (the Area [Cloud] extra).

**Drain Dexterity 10** (paralysis nerve gas; *Power Feats*: Slow Fade 5 [1 hour], Triggered [incorrect keycode]; *Extras*: Poison)

Cost: 16

*Disable Device* DC: 20; if the panel is located it can be kept from moving by locking it in place using glue or jamming something into it or the panel can be opened and the nozzle plugged.

### ***Pit with Punji Sticks***

A 10' deep pit filled with punji sticks on the bottom and covered with a flimsy latticework of local vegetation. Add a disease to simulate possible infection from the trap.

**Strike 4** (fall plus punji sticks; *Power Feats*: Triggered [stepping on latticework])

Cost: 5

*Disable Device*: N/A; once spotted the pit can be avoided by going around it.



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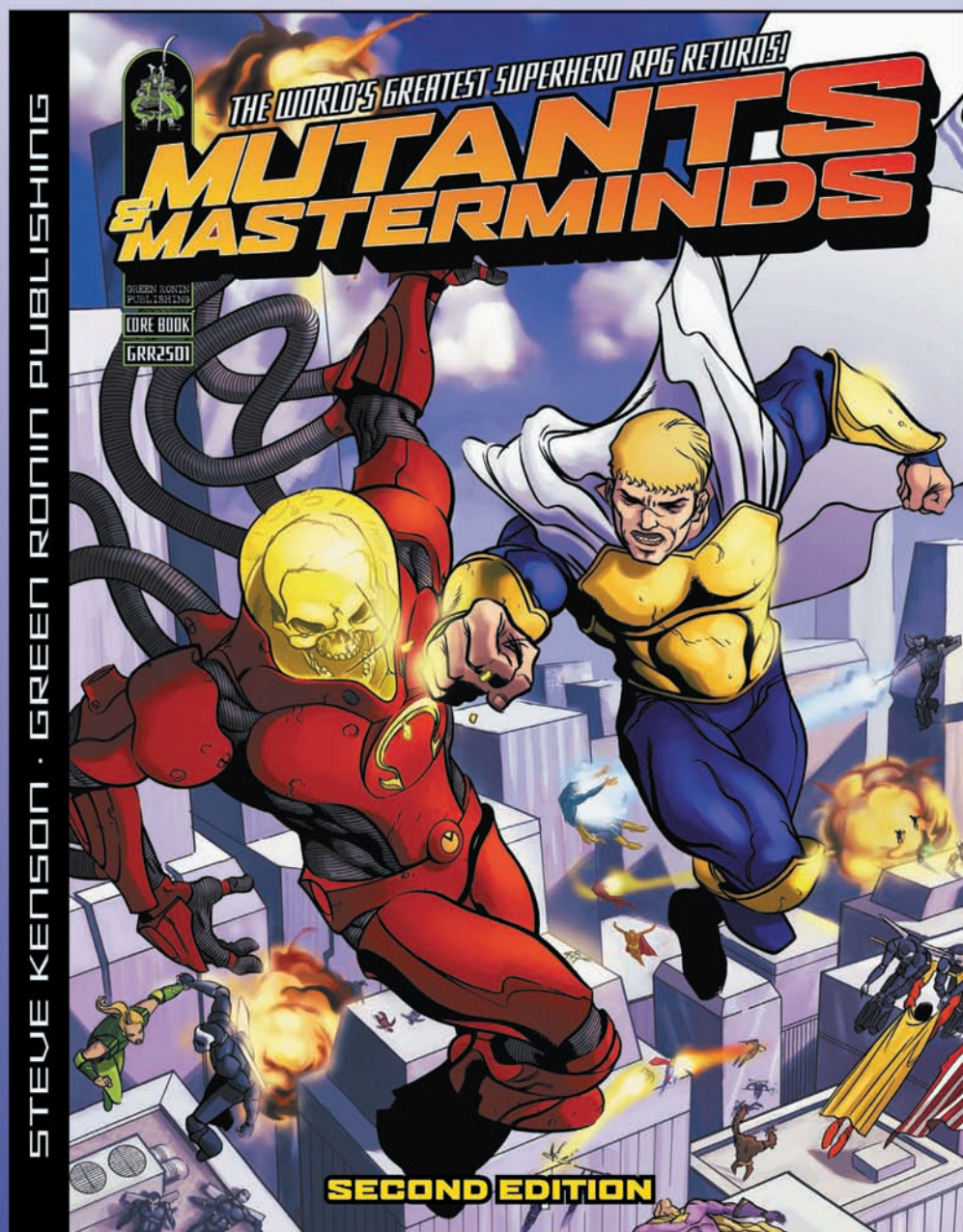
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