



CHAPTER 6: POWERS

Although some heroes and villains rely solely on their skills and advantages, most are set apart by their superhuman powers. **MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS** characters can lift tanks, fly through the air, throw lightning from their hands, shoot lasers from their eyes, or any number of other amazing things. This chapter describes these and many other powers and how you can create your own.

ACQUIRING POWERS

Players spend power points on various powers for their heroes, like acquiring skills or other traits. A power is made up of one or more **effects**, possibly with different **modifiers**, which increase or decrease the cost of the effects.

Effects can be used to create any number of different powers. A hero with the **Concealment** effect (see page 101) could use it to create a *power* called Blending, Blur, Cloak, Invisibility, Shadowmeld, or anything else appropriate to the character you wish to play. It's all a matter of how powerful the effect is and what modifiers have been placed on it to increase or decrease its performance. Another way to think of it is that this book is filled with effects, but your character sheet is filled with powers.

POWER COSTS

Power effects are acquired in ranks, like ranks for other traits. The more ranks an effect has, the greater its effect. Each effect of a power has a standard cost per rank.

MODIFIERS

Modifiers change how an effect works, making it more effective (an **extra**) or less effective (a **flaw**). Modifiers have ranks, just like other traits. Extras increase a power's cost while flaws decrease it. Some modifiers increase an effect's cost per rank, others apply an unchanging cost to the power's total; these are called **flat modifiers**. For more information see **Modifiers**, on page 135.

The final cost of a power is determined by base effect costs, modified by extras and flaws, multiplied by the power's rank, with flat modifiers applied to the total cost.

$$\text{POWER COST} = ((\text{BASE EFFECT COSTS} + \text{EXTRAS} - \text{FLAWS}) \times \text{RANK}) + \text{FLAT MODIFIERS}$$

POWER DESCRIPTORS

The rules in this chapter explain what the various powers *do*, that is, what their game effects are, but it is left up to the player and Gamemaster to apply **descriptors** to define exactly what a power *is* and what it looks (and sounds, and feels) like to observers beyond just a collection of game effects.

A power's descriptors are primarily for color. It's more interesting and clear to say a hero has a "Flame Blast" or "Lightning Bolt" power than a generic "Damage effect." "Flame" and "lightning" are descriptors for the Damage effect. Descriptors do have some impact on the game since some effects work only on or with effects of a particular descriptor.

A hero may be immune to fire and heat, for example, so any effect with the "fire" or "heat" descriptor doesn't affect that character. The different sense types (see page 124) are descriptors pertaining to sensory effects.

Generally speaking, a descriptor is part of what a power is called beyond its game system name. For example, a weather-controlling heroine has the following effects: Damage, Concealment, and Environment. Her Damage effect is the power to throw lightning bolts, so it has the descriptor "lightning." If a villain can absorb electricity, then his power works against the heroine's Damage (since lightning is electrical in nature). Concealment creates thick banks of fog, giving it the "fog" or "mist" descriptor. So if an opponent transforms into mist, with the ability to regenerate in clouds or fog, he can regenerate inside the heroine's Concealment area. Her Environment is the power to control the weather, giving it the descriptor "weather." If the heroine's power comes as a gift from the gods, it may also have the descriptor "divine" or "magical." On the other hand, if it comes from her mutant genetic structure, then it has the descriptor "mutant." A villain able to nullify mutant powers could potentially nullify all of the heroine's powers!

The number of power descriptors is virtually limitless. The players and Gamemaster should cooperate to apply the appropriate descriptors to characters' powers and use common sense when dealing with how the different descriptors interact. Just because one hero throws "lightning" and an opponent can absorb "electricity" doesn't mean the villain's absorption doesn't work because it's not the exact same descriptor. Lightning is a form of electricity. A certain amount of flexibility is built into descriptors, allowing them to cover the full range of possible powers. As in all things, the GM is the final arbitrator and should be consistent when ruling on whether or not a particular descriptor is appropriate and how all effects and descriptors interact in the series.

The powers in this chapter provide numerous examples of descriptors. Feel free to create your own as desired.

REQUIRED DESCRIPTORS

In some settings, the Gamemaster may *require* certain descriptors for all powers. Usually, a required descriptor reflects some common element of the series. For example, if all characters with powers are mutants, then all powers have the “mutant” descriptor by definition, unless the player comes up with a good explanation why they should not. If all superhumans are psychic mutants, then all powers have both the “psychic” and “mutant” descriptors. The GM sets the rules as far as what descriptors are required (or restricted) in the series. A character who breaks this guideline—say the one alien in a setting where all powers are otherwise mutant in origin—might have a Benefit (unusual origin) or face certain complications, possibly both.

NOTICING POWER EFFECTS

Effects with a duration of instant, concentration, or sustained must be noticeable in some way. For example, a Blast effect might have a visible beam or make a loud noise (ZAP!) or both. Some effects are quite obvious, such as Flight, Insubstantiality, Growth, or Shrinking. Effects with a continuous or permanent duration are not noticeable by default.

If an instant, concentration, or sustained effect’s base duration is changed using modifiers, the effect remains noticeable. A continuous or permanent effect made instant, concentration, or sustained also becomes noticeable. The Subtle modifier (see page 144) can make noticeable powers difficult or impossible to detect. Conversely, the Noticeable modifier (see page 148) makes a normally subtle effect noticeable.

EFFECT TYPES

Power effects fall into certain categories or **effect types**. Effects of the same type follow similar rules and provide descriptors for certain other effects. This section discusses the different effect types and the rules governing them.

ATTACK

Attack effects are used offensively in combat. They require an attack check and damage, hinder, or otherwise harm their target in some way. Attack effects require a standard action to use. Their duration is usually instant although their results—whether damage or some other hindrance—may linger until the target recovers. Attack effects *always* allow for a resistance check.

CONTROL

Control effects grant the user influence over something, from the environment to the ability to move objects or even create them out of thin air. Control effects require a standard action to initiate, but can then usually be sustained. Control effects used against unwilling targets usually require an attack check and allow a resistance check, the same for the

SAMPLE DESCRIPTORS

Allegiances: Anarchy, Balance, Chaos, Evil, Good, Justice, Law, Liberty, Tyranny

Elements: Air, Earth, Fire, Plant, Water, Weather

Energy: Acid, Chemical, Cold, Cosmic, Darkness, Electricity, Gravity, Heat, Kinetic, Light, Magnetic, Radiation, Sonic, Vibration

Phenomena: Colors, Dimensions, Dreams, Entropy, Ideas, Luck, Madness, Memes, Mind, Quantum Forces, Space, Thought, Time

Sources: Alien, Biological, Chi, Divine, Magic, Mystic, Mutant, Preternatural, Primal, Psionic, Psychic, Skill, Technology, Training

POWERS THAT AREN'T

“Powers” in **MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS** refer to all extraordinary traits other than abilities, skills, and advantages. Whether a character with powers is “superhuman” or not is largely a matter of opinion and the descriptors used. For example, there are lots of comic book characters with superhuman traits still considered “normal” humans. Their amazing effects come from talent, training, luck, self-discipline, devices, or some similar source, with appropriate descriptors. They’re still “powers” in game terms, but they don’t necessarily mean the character is something other than human.

Ultimately it’s up to the GM to decide if having certain effects makes a character something “other than human,” (and what, if anything, that means) depending on the nature of powers in the setting.

hazards they are capable of causing, such as creating intense cold or dropping a heavy object on someone.

DEFENSE

Defense effects protect in various ways, typically offering a bonus to resistance checks, or granting outright immunity to particular effects or conditions. Most defense effects work only on the user and are subtle and permanent, functioning at all times. Some are activated and sustained as a free action, meaning they can switch on or off, but can potentially leave the user unprotected.

GENERAL

General effects don’t fit into any other particular category. They’re not governed by any special rules other than those given in the effect’s description.

MOVEMENT

Movement effects allow characters to get around in various ways. Some provide a speed rank with a particular form of movement—such as ground, air, or water—while others offer different modes of movement, like walking on walls or slithering along the ground like a snake.

Although activating a movement effect is typically a free action, the character must still take a move action in order to actually move using the effect. So, for example, the action of the Flight effect is “free” and activating it grants the character a Flight speed rank equal to the effect rank. Moving that speed rank still requires a move action, however.

SENSORY

Sensory effects enhance or alter the senses. Some sensory effects improve the user’s senses while others grant entirely new senses or fool the senses in some way. Sensory effects are typically a free action to activate and sustain, or are permanent and always in effect.

SENSE TYPES

Senses in **MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS** are grouped into **sense types**, descriptors for how different sensory effects work. The sense types, and some of the senses included in them, are:

- **Visual:** normal sight, darkvision, infravision, low-light vision, microscopic vision, ultravision, X-Ray vision
- **Auditory:** normal hearing, sonar (accurate ultrasonic), ultrasonic hearing
- **Olfactory:** normal smell and taste, scent
- **Tactile:** normal touch, tremorsense
- **Radio:** radio, radar (accurate radio)
- **Mental:** mental awareness, Mind Reading, Precognition, Postcognition
- **Special:** This is the catchall for other sensory descriptors not given above, including unusual senses or exotic descriptors like cosmic, gravitic, magical, and so forth.

HOW POWERS WORK

Using powers is a fairly simple matter. Some power effects work automatically. Others—particularly those affecting other people—require some effort to use, like an attack check or a effect check. Powers affecting others allow resistance checks against their effects.

EFFECT CHECKS

In some cases, you may be required to make an **effect check** to determine how well an effect works. A power check is just like any other check: d20, plus the power’s rank, plus any applicable modifiers, against a difficulty class set by the Gamemaster. The results of various power checks are described in this chapter.

**EFFECT CHECK = D20 + RANK +
MODIFIERS VS. DIFFICULTY CLASS**

ROUTINE EFFECT CHECKS

Many power effects allow for routine checks involving their use, generally specified in the effect’s description (see **Routine Checks** in **The Basics** chapter).

OPPOSED EFFECT CHECKS

In some cases, usually when one effect is used directly against another, or against a particular trait like an ability or skill, an opposed check is called for (see **Opposed Checks** in **The Basics** chapter). If a contest is entirely a matter of whose power is greater, a comparison check (see page 14) is called for; the character with the higher power rank wins automatically.

EFFECT PARAMETERS

Each effect has certain **parameters** that describe the time needed to use the effect, the subject or target, the distance it works at, and so forth. The basic effect parameters are Action, Range, and Duration.

ACTION

Using or activating an effect requires a particular amount of time. See **Actions**, page 194, for details about the different types of actions. Modifiers may change the action needed to use an effect.

- **Standard:** Using the effect requires a standard action.
- **Move:** Using the effect requires a move action.
- **Free:** It requires a free action to use or activate the effect. Once an effect is activated or deactivated, it remains so until your next turn. As with all free actions, the GM may limit the total number of effects a hero can turn on or off in a turn.
- **Reaction:** It requires no action to use the effect. It operates automatically in response to something else, such as an attack.
- **None:** It requires no action to use the effect. It is always active.

POWER EFFECTS

NAME	TYPE	ACTION	RANGE	DURATION	RESISTANCE	COST
Affliction	Attack	Standard	Close	Instant	Fort. or Will	1 per rank
Alternate Form	<i>Varies</i>	<i>Varies</i>	<i>Varies</i>	<i>Varies</i>	—	<i>See description</i>
Blast	Attack	Standard	Ranged	Instant	Toughness	2 per rank
Burrowing	Movement	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	1 per rank
Communication	Sensory	Free	Rank	Sustained	—	4 per rank
Comprehend	Sensory	None	Personal	Permanent	—	2 per rank
Concealment	Sensory	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	2 per rank
Create	Control	Standard	Ranged	Sustained	—	2 per rank
Damage	Attack	Standard	Close	Instant	Toughness	1 per rank
Dazzle	Attack	Standard	Ranged	Instant	Fort. or Will	2 per rank
Deflect	Defense	Standard	Ranged	Instant	—	1 per rank
Duplication	Control	Standard	Close	Sustained	—	3 per rank
Element Control	Control	Standard	Perception	Sustained	Strength	2 per rank
Elongation	General	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	1 per rank
Energy Absorption	General	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	<i>See description</i>
Energy Aura	Attack	Reaction	Close	Instant	Toughness	4 per rank
Energy Control	Attack	Standard	Ranged	Instant	Toughness	2 per rank
Enhanced Trait	General	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	As base trait
Environment	Control	Standard	Rank	Sustained	—	1-2 per rank
Extra Limbs	General	None	Personal	Permanent	—	1 per rank
Feature	General	None	Personal	Permanent	—	1 per rank
Flight	Movement	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	2 per rank
Force Field	Defense	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	1 per rank
Growth	General	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	2 per rank
Healing	General	Standard	Close	Instant	—	2 per rank
Illusion	Control	Standard	Perception	Sustained	Awareness	1-5 per rank
Immortality	Defense	None	Personal	Permanent	—	2 per rank
Immunity	Defense	None	Personal	Permanent	—	1 per rank
Insubstantial	General	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	5 per rank
Invisibility	Sensory	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	4 or 8 points
Leaping	Movement	Free	Personal	Instant	—	1 per rank
Luck Control	Control	Reaction	Perception	Instant	—	3 per rank
Magic	Attack	Standard	Ranged	Instant	Toughness	2 per rank
Mental Blast	Attack	Standard	Perception	Instant	Will	4 per rank
Mimic	General	Move	Personal	Sustained	—	8 per rank
Mind Control	Attack	Standard	Perception	Instant	Will	4 per rank
Mind Reading	Sensory	Standard	Perception	Sustained	Will	2 per rank
Morph	General	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	5 per rank
Move Object	Control	Standard	Ranged	Sustained	Strength	2 per rank
Movement	Movement	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	2 per rank
Nullify	Attack	Standard	Ranged	Instant	Rank/Will	1 per rank
Power-Lifting	General	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	1 per rank
Protection	Defense	None	Personal	Permanent	—	1 per rank
Quickness	General	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	1 per rank
Regeneration	Defense	None	Personal	Permanent	—	1 per rank
Remote Sensing	Sensory	Free	Rank	Sustained	—	1-5 per rank

POWER EFFECTS

NAME	TYPE	ACTION	RANGE	DURATION	RESISTANCE	COST
Senses	Sensory	None	Personal	Permanent	—	1 per rank
Shapeshift	General	Move	Personal	Sustained	—	8 per rank
Shrinking	General	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	2 per rank
Sleep	Attack	Standard	Ranged	Instant	Fortitude	2 per rank
Snare	Attack	Standard	Ranged	Instant	Dodge	3 per rank
Speed	Movement	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	1 per rank
Strike	Attack	Standard	Close	Instant	Toughness	1 per rank
Suffocation	Attack	Standard	Ranged	Instant	Fortitude	4 per rank
Summon	Control	Standard	Close	Sustained	—	2 per rank
Super-Speed	See description	Free	Personal	See description	—	3 per rank
Swimming	Movement	Free	Personal	Sustained	—	1 per rank
Teleport	Movement	Move	Rank	Instant	—	2 per rank
Transform	Control	Standard	Close	Sustained	—	2-5 per rank
Variable	General	Standard	Personal	Sustained	—	7 per rank
Weaken	Attack	Standard	Close	Instant	Fort or Will	1 per rank

RANGE

Each effect has a default range, which may be changed by modifiers.

- **Personal:** The effect works only on you, the user.
- **Close:** The effect can target anyone or anything you touch. Touching an unwilling subject requires an unarmed attack check against the subject's Parry.
- **Ranged:** The effect works at a distance, limited by perception and path and requiring a ranged attack check against the subject's Dodge defense. A ranged effect has a short range of (rank x 25 feet), a medium range of (rank x 50 feet) and a long range of (rank x 100 feet). Ranged attack checks at medium range suffer a -2 circumstance penalty, while ranged attacks at long range suffer a -5 circumstance penalty. See the **Action & Adventure** chapter for details.
- **Perception:** The effect works on any target you can perceive with an accurate sense, without any need for an attack check. If you cannot accurately perceive the target, you cannot affect it.
- **Rank:** The effect's range or area of effect is determined by its rank, as given in its description.

DURATION

Each effect lasts for a particular amount of time, which may be changed by modifiers.

- **Instant:** When used, the effect occurs and ends in the same turn, although its results may linger.
- **Concentration:** You can keep a concentration effect going by taking a standard action each round to do

so. If you are incapable of taking the necessary action, or simply choose not to, the effect ends.

- **Sustained:** You can keep a sustained effect going by taking a free action each round to do so. If you are incapable of taking the necessary action, or simply choose not to, the effect ends.
- **Continuous:** The effect lasts as long as you wish, without any action required on your part. Once active, it stays that way until you choose to deactivate it (a free action).
- **Permanent:** The effect is always active and *cannot* be deactivated, even if you want to. A permanent effect cannot be improved using extra effort.

RESISTANCE CHECK

Effects targeting other characters allow a resistance check. The defense used and the difficulty class depend on the effect and its modifiers.

Willing characters can forgo their resistance check against an effect, if they wish. This includes characters who *think* they're receiving a beneficial effect, even if they're not! You can't forgo Toughness checks, but you may choose to discontinue the use of effects with a duration of Continuous or Sustained that grant a Toughness bonus in order to lower your resistance.

The Immunity effect allows characters to ignore certain effects altogether, removing the need for a resistance check.

COUNTERING EFFECTS

In some circumstances the effects of one power may *counter* another, negating it. Generally for two effects to counter

DAMAGE

A successful attack with a Damage effect requires the target to make a Toughness resistance check.

DAMAGE RESISTANCE CHECK

TOUGHNESS VS. [DAMAGE RANK + TS]

Success : The damage has no effect.

Failure (one degree): The target has a -1 circumstance penalty to further resistance checks against damage.

Failure (two degrees): The target is dazed until the end of their next turn and has a -1 circumstance penalty to further checks against damage.

Failure (three degrees): The target is staggered and has a -1 circumstance penalty to further checks against damage. If the target is staggered again (three degrees of failure on a Damage resistance check), apply the fourth degree of effect. The staggered condition remains until the target recovers (see **Recovery**, following).

Failure (four degrees): The target is incapacitated .

The circumstance penalties to Toughness checks are cumulative, so a target who fails three resistance checks against Damage, each with one degree of failure, has a total -3 penalty.

If an incapacitated target fails a resistance check against Damage, the target's condition shifts to dying. A dying target who fails a resistance check against Damage is dead.

STRENGTH AND DAMAGE

Strength provides a “built-in” Damage effect: the ability to hit things! You can apply effect modifiers to the Damage your Strength inflicts, making it Penetrating or even an Area effect! You can also have Alternate Effects for your Strength Damage; see the **Alternate Effect** modifier for details. Like other Damage effects, a character's Strength Damage is close range and instant duration by default.

If you choose, a Damage effect can be Strength-based—something like a melee weapon—allowing your Strength Damage to add to it. You add your Strength and Damage ranks together when determining the rank of the attack. Any modifiers applied to your Damage must also apply to your Strength rank if its bonus damage is to benefit from them. However, any decrease in your Strength reduces the amount you can add to your Damage, and negative Strength *subtracts* from your Damage! Likewise, anything that prevents you from exerting your Strength also stops you from using a Strength-based Damage effect. If you can't swing your fist, you can't swing a sword, either. On the other hand, a laser blade does the same damage whether you can exert your Strength with it or not.



EXAMPLE OF CONFLICT

The following is an example of the *M&M* rules in action during a conflict scene.

Three heroes: Princess, Rook, (see pages 50-53) and Ultramarine (a battlesuit wearer), tipped-off by one of Rook's contacts about smugglers unloading a shipment down at the docks late at night, have staked-out the vessel. Once they see the smugglers moving the goods, Rook signals it is time to move in and take them down!

ROUND 1

Gamemaster (GM): Okay, everyone, make an initiative check.

The players of Princess, Rook, and Ultramarine each roll the die, adding their character's initiative modifier and getting the following results: Ultramarine: 13, Rook: 11, Princess: 26!

The GM rolls one initiative check for the smugglers (with an initiative modifier of +0), getting a result of 11. Although Rook has the same result, he has a higher initiative modifier (+5) and so will go before the smugglers. The GM also rolls a secret initiative check result of 16 for something the players don't know yet...

GM: Okay, you get the "go" signal from Rook and leap into action! (Looking at the initiative count) Princess, what do you do?

Princess: I jump from the pier onto the deck of the ship as my move action, landing right in front of all the smugglers and say, "You guys want to just give up now and save yourselves a beating? Please feel free to say no." Then I give them a big smile.

GM: You want to try and intimidate them? That's a standard action. You want to make it a routine check?

Princess: No, I'll roll for it. *Princess' player rolls an Intimidation check with her bonus of +6. I got a 16 anyway, same as my routine check result!*

The GM compares Princess' result to the smugglers' Will defense, which is 12. Her check succeeded with one degree. The smugglers are impaired (-2 on their checks) until the end of Princess' next turn.

GM: The smugglers look shocked at your sudden appearance and hesitate, clearly shaken. Ultramarine, it's your turn.

Ultramarine: Like shooting fish in a barrel... I surge up out of the water on the other side of the ship and fly up to the deck (*move action*) then level the arm with my netline primed at the smugglers, my voice amplified by the speakers in my suit. "Or you can call it quits right now."

GM: You going for the Intimidation check, too?

Ultramarine: No, I think I'd rather ready an attack with my netline, if any of the smugglers decide to get stupid, then wait to see what happens. That's a standard action, right?

GM: Right. Okay, you draw a bead on one of the smugglers as they're glancing from you to Princess and back, deciding what to do. Rook?

Rook: Okay, let's end this quick. I glide down towards the deck, toss a flash bomb in the midst of the smugglers, and land on the opposite side from Ultramarine, so the three of us are in a triangle formation ahead of the smugglers.

Normally, a character wouldn't be able to move, attack, and then move again as Rook does here, but he has the Move-by Action advantage, which allows him to split his movement in the round before and after his standard action.

GM: Okay. *The GM rolls Dodge resistance checks for the smugglers caught in Rook's flash bomb burst: 20, 3, 8, and 19. With DC 13, two succeed and two fail. The successful Dodge checks make their Fortitude resistance checks against DC 11, while the failed checks resist DC 13 again: 12 and 2, plus 12 and 11. If the second two smugglers had made their initial resistance checks, they would have been successful, as it is, three of the thugs fail and only one successfully resists.*

A burst of light goes off amidst four of the eight smugglers on deck, causing them to throw up their hands to try and ward off the flash. One seems to be quick enough, but the other three aren't. Two are blinking, trying to clear their eyes (*they're vision impaired and at -2*), one is stumbling about (with resistance 2, he's completely blinded).

The smugglers go for their guns...

Ultramarine: I fire my netline at the nearest one!

GM: Okay. That shifts you to just after Rook but before the smugglers in the initiative order. Make your attack check.

Ultramarine: *Rolls a 9, with a +10 attack bonus. I got a 19.*

GM: *Knowing that well exceeds the smuggler's Dodge defense of 12, rolls a Dodge resistance check, getting an 17, minus the impaired penalty from Princess' intimidation for a 15 vs. DC 20. Two degrees of failure. The smuggler is defenseless and immobilized.*

Your netline shoots out with a chuff of compressed air and wraps around the smuggler before he can even get his gun drawn. He's wrapped up and completely unable to move.

EXAMPLE OF CONFLICT

Now the remaining smugglers get to go. They draw their guns and shoot at you!

The GM rolls attack checks against the heroes. Two smugglers shoot at Ultramarine and three shoot at Princess, but they both have Impervious Toughness 8. Since the smugglers' guns can't hurt them, the GM does not bother rolling the attack checks. The remaining two shoot at Rook, but one is impaired and the other blind, so they both miss by a mile.

Rook, you easily avoid the clumsy shots, especially from the guys dazzled by the flash bomb. Princess, Ultramarine, a couple of stray shots ricochet off of you harmlessly.

ROUND 2

That brings us back to the top of the order. Princess?

Princess: I'm going to punch-out one of the smugglers! "Hey, watch the couture, boys!"

GM: Roll an unarmed attack check.

Princess: Rolls, gets a natural 20. A critical hit!

GM: Glances at Princess' Strength of 12, and the +5 critical hit DC modifier, making the Toughness resistance DC (15 + 12 + 5) or 32. No way the smuggler can succeed.

Wow! You send the guy flying right off the deck and into the drink! Sploosh!

Then, suddenly...

The GM rolls an attack check against Princess, getting a 15 result. Normally this would miss her Dodge defense of 18, but this is a surprise attack, so Princess is vulnerable and her Dodge is halved to 4, rather than 8, making the DC a 14.

...a steel mesh net launches out of the doorway of the control cabin of the ship. Princess, give me a Dodge resistance check.

Princess: Rolls a 6 for a total of 14. Um... 14?

GM: Compares it against the DC of 19. Two degrees of failure.

...the net wraps around you tightly, leaving you immobilized and defenseless, Princess.

From out of the control cabin lumbers a massive armored figure in red and silver, one arm ending in a lobster-like servo-claw.

Ultramarine: Trawler!

GM: In Trawler's voice. Who did you think was running this operation, heroes? Now back off!

Ultramarine: Is it my turn?

GM: No. It would be, but you delayed until after Rook, remember? Rook, it's your turn, then Ultramarine and the smugglers.

Rook: I don't think my weapons will do much against Trawler's armor. Can I help Princess get free from the net?

GM: Your throwing talons might help cut through it.

Rook: Okay, I'll do that.

GM: Since the net is immobile, do you want to roll or make a routine check?

Rook: If I roll, I get a damage bonus, right? *The GM nods.* Okay, I'll roll for it. *Rolls the die, gets a 10.* Ha, same as a routine check anyway! That's a result of 25.

GM: Compares Rook's attack against DC 10, a definite hit and an automatic critical for +5 damage. The GM checks the net's Toughness of 9 against DC 25 (15 + 5 for the talons + 5 for the critical), generating a 23 result.

Your talons cut some of the strands of the net holding Princess. Ultramarine, it's your turn now.

Ultramarine: Good, I'm going after Trawler! I fire a laser at her. We'll see whose armor can take it!

Ultramarine's player rolls an attack check with her laser, getting an 11 with a +10 bonus for a 21 result. That beats Trawler's Dodge DC of 16, so the GM rolls a Toughness resistance check. The laser is rank 10, for a Damage resistance DC of 25. Trawler has Toughness 10 and the GM rolls a 9. That's a 19 total, two degrees of failure vs. DC 25. Trawler suffers both a -1 to Toughness checks and a dazed condition.

GM: Your blue-green laser lances out and hits Trawler's armor plating. There's a hissing sound as the beam cuts a swath along the armor, leaving a melted scar. Trawler staggers back, clearly dazed by the blast...

The heroes have Trawler and her smugglers on the ropes, but will Princess get free in time to help? Can Rook mop up the smugglers quickly enough so Ultramarine can take out Trawler? And what kind of contraband are the smugglers moving that a "salvage operator" like Trawler is involved? As the conflict continues, the heroes will find out!