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1. INTRODUCTION

WHAT THIS BOOK IS

Previous **M&M Superlink** products have touched on methods for representing martial arts, but there has not yet been anything that really sets such fighting techniques apart as anything other than a special effect—nothing more than a bunch of feats and the like strung together to give just a hint of what a fighting style could be. **Metahuman Martial Arts** seeks to build upon the foundation these other products have laid down by presenting you with a set of new options, rules, and variations that will the martial arts to reach their potential within your game.

In order to make this separation from what has been done before clear, it only made sense to change how the fighting arts have been portrayed to date by presenting them in a way that made them stand up on their own two legs (so to speak.) This means adding some new approaches to game mechanics not utilized in the second edition of the **M&M Superlink** rules. These methods include applying feat prerequisites and, in some cases, otherwise forming a branching progression of abilities intended to enforce the sense of study and practice you'd expect of learning martial arts rather than the "jump in wherever" feel one gets from the bare bones approach of representing martial arts seen elsewhere.

This new format's unique identity is further solidified by the addition of more complex combat options, such as hit location rules and critical hit effects that go beyond mere increased damage, such as strikes capable of disabling opponents, in whole or in part. Although such rules will make combat more complex, they largely remain fluid, highly adaptable, and easy to learn, thus straying true to the overall design principles of the core **M&M Superlink** rules. And, as always, if you don't like the new rules you may simply ignore them.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS NOT

As should be obvious from its name, **Metahuman Martial Arts** is a sourcebook intended for use in the super-hero genre. Considering **M&M Superlink's** "toolkit" nature, it is entirely possible (even encouraged) to use this product in other genres as well, but one needs to keep in mind that the primary driving thought behind this book's development was to suit a very specific genre.

By no means should this work be taken as an attempt at providing a historically accurate resource on martial arts in general. It is meant to be nothing more than a tool for bringing more interesting martial arts rules into your game and, as such, liberties have been taken in the name of consistency to the core rules and in the name of fun. This is why the closest things you'll find to a history of martial arts within this work are some of the brief descriptions accompanying each fighting style. This book has no intention of going into each style's background in detail, nor will it outline the origins and history of martial arts in general. If you want to learn about martial arts in the real world there are countless books written on the subject, but you won't find such information here. **Metahuman Martial Arts** is all about entertainment!



RUNNING A MARTIAL ARTS GAME

HEROIC LUCHADOR

Nothing more than a wrestler—a great one, to be sure, but a wrestler none the less—the Heroic Luchador fought to entertain the masses, for money and fame, none of which ever truly seemed to satisfy him. It has always felt like there is a greater calling waiting for him—a destiny ready to sweep him up in its embrace and wash him away into history, but until that day comes he'll continue flying off the top rope to keep the masses roaring his name.

A showman by nature and necessity, a Heroic Luchador lives and acts bigger than life, taking on a boisterous, loud persona that belies any of his human frailties and weaknesses. This can, unfortunately, lead to unnecessary combat, as the character is not the sort to back down easily, nor does he much see the need to keep things low key. Sure, some people may say he is overcome by his own sense of self-worth, boastful pride, and inflated bravado, but that's only natural from someone as incredibly impressive as the Heroic Luchador, right?

USING WHAT YOU HAVE ...

A character of great physical fitness, the Heroic Luchador can both dish out and take punishment, or deftly get out of the way if he so chooses. His penchant for drama and always making a display of himself can be distracting and misleading to opponents, creating openings for his allies, but his options outside of a fight are severely limited to all but the most creative players due to a limited range of skills and feats that aren't combat oriented. The character should make the most of his showy attacks, attempting to intimidate foes and keep them off guard by remaining unpredictable.

... AND GETTING BETTER

A master of lucha libre, the Heroic Luchador may wish to expand his repertoire by pursuing another high-flying fighting style that also emphasizes mobility, agility, and acrobatics, building on the character's existing abilities, or perhaps a fighting style that fills in the gaps in his current training would be better, such as one that focuses on precision or ranged combat. It is also probably a good idea to purchase some feats and skills that will round the character out somewhat,

although working with what's already there remains a good idea, possibly by adding Taunt and other feats that likewise build upon his personality.

PLAYING THE CHARACTER

Here are some suggestions on how to incorporate a Heroic Luchador player character into your game.

THE SUPERS LEAGUE

In a world of metahumans, it is only natural that sports centered around their preternatural abilities would arise. One such sport is a metahuman wrestling league, and despite a lack of any super-powers of his own, the Heroic Luchador has decided that this venue is his next step towards worldwide fame and recognition. As such, the character pits himself against beings with extraordinary abilities, almost certainly getting himself swept up in all manner of other adventures that swirl about metahumans.



4. NEW & EXPANDED RULES

Because martial arts so obviously revolve around combat, a sourcebook on such material wouldn't be complete without some new and expanded rules. The rules presented in this chapter should be considered optional, to be added as the Gamemaster desires, but the players should be informed before hand so they can take full advantage of them and know what to expect.

CHALLENGES

Challenges reflect a capable character's ability to perform some tasks with superior panache and efficiency. They allow characters to achieve greater results by making already difficult checks harder.

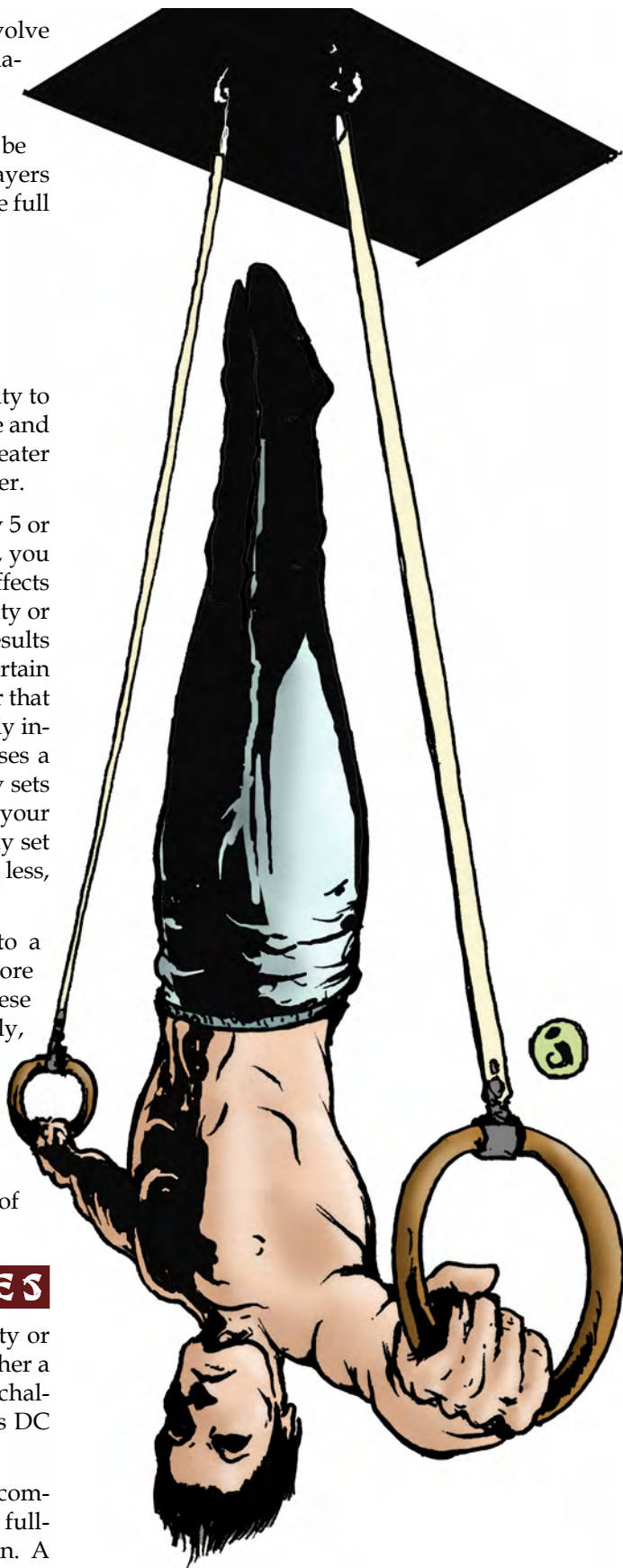
To take a challenge, increase a check's DC by 5 or suffer a -5 penalty to the check result. In return, you gain an extra benefit in addition to the normal effects of a successful check. If you fail due to the penalty or increased DC, however, you suffer the normal results of failure. Note that, if failing by more than a certain margin imposes a particular outcome, you suffer that outcome as normal if you fail to meet your newly increased DC. For example, a character who misses a Disable Device check by 10 or more accidentally sets off the device. If the standard Difficulty is 20 and your challenge increases it to 25, then you accidentally set off the device with a skill check result of 15 or less, instead of the usual 10 or less.

You can apply more than one challenge to a check. In some cases, you can take a challenge more than once to gain its benefits multiple times. These are noted in the challenge descriptions. Generally, challenges allow you to gain added benefits when you face a relatively low DC and have a high modifier. You can also use challenges to attempt heroic actions, even when faced with a high DC. In these cases, spending a HeroP can help ensure success with all the added benefits of the successful challenge.

STANDARD CHALLENGES

The following challenges apply to any ability or skill check. The Gamemaster has final say whether a challenge applies to a specific situation. Each challenge imposes either a +5 modifier to a check's DC or a -5 penalty to the check result.

- **Fast Task:** You reduce the time needed to complete the check. If the check is normally a full-round action, it becomes a standard action. A



5. ART OF THE FIGHT

The primary purpose of this work is to provide you with new combat options, and how could any such product be considered complete without a variety of fighting styles to add some martial flavor to your game? To that end, this chapter includes a wide range of combat maneuvers and fighting styles that will make martial arts a unique and fresh aspect of your game.

ACQUIRING A FIGHTING STYLE

Just about anyone may learn a fighting style. Doing so merely requires the character express an interest and then begin purchasing its various components (skills, feats, combat maneuvers, etc.) The amount of these components the character purchases (and to what degree) will indicate how well-practiced the character is in that fighting style, with further definition of skill available through incentives such as the Initiate, Student and Master Style feats (pgs 80-81.) If the fighting style includes maneuvers deemed inappropriate to the game's level of realism, only those components deemed appropriate need to be used and considered for meeting the style's requirements.

Of course, it is possible for characters to purchase the equivalent of basic and advanced combat maneuvers on their own, as separate powers not related to martial arts. However, if the Gamemaster wishes to uphold the sense that martial arts are something that must be studied with discipline and devotion, he must create a perceptual divide between common super-powers and power-like martial arts maneuvers by emphasizing the value of conceptual differences and by making the most of the new rules presented in this work. Never lose sight of the fact that new fighting style maneuvers gained with experience are explained away as the result of practice and study, whereas learning metahuman super-powers that perform in the exact same manner require a far

different explanation, such as radiation exposure or continuing natural mutation. If this emphasis is not maintained, the various fighting styles lose their distinctiveness and are reduced to nothing more than a descriptor, like "magic," "mutation," or "psychic."

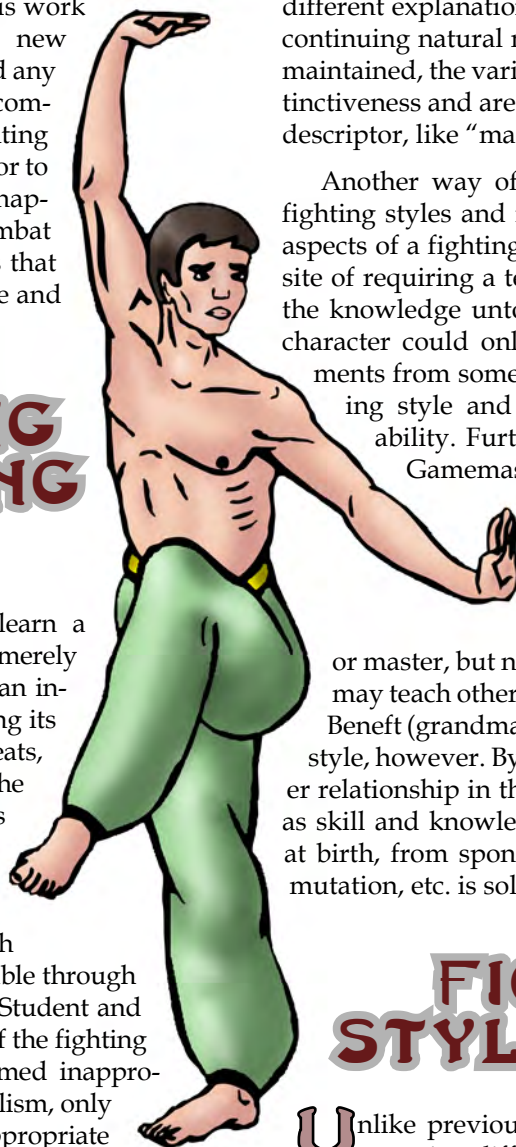
Another way of widening the divide between fighting styles and normal powers is place all new aspects of a fighting style under the meta-prerequisite of requiring a teacher from that style to impart the knowledge unto the character. This means the character could only learn new fighting style elements from someone who knows the same fighting style and already possesses the desired ability. Further adhering to this theme, the Gamemaster may also require the teacher be one degree higher than the character in his level of knowledge in the fighting style. For example, an initiate may learn from a student or master, but not from another initiate. Masters may teach other masters that have also taken the Benefit (grandmaster) feat in their shared fighting style, however. By maintaining this student-teacher relationship in the game, the idea of martial arts as skill and knowledge rather than abilities gained at birth, from spontaneous happenstance, through mutation, etc. is solidified in everyone's mind.

FIGHTING STYLE BASICS

Unlike previous rules and guidelines for representing different martial arts fighting styles within the parameters of the **M&M Superlink** rules, **Metahuman Martial Arts** has taken the concept further by adding new, power-like maneuvers, unique combat stances, and more, allowing the fighting styles to become much more than has presented in other publications. What follows is an entirely new way of looking at fighting styles within the **M&M Superlink** framework.

UNARMED VS. WEAPON STYLES

Some fighting styles focus on unarmed combat, others with wielding a particular weapon or weapons, while most incorporate both. The distinction between unarmed and weapon fighting styles is largely one of flavor and description, though.



NINJA CLAN LEADER

A deadly warrior of silence and shadow, the Ninja Clan Leader has received exceptional training in stealth, murder, and espionage. So skilled at subterfuge is the Ninja Clan Leader that most of his targets don't even realize he is nearby, waiting to kill them, until it's too late. Those that do somehow get wise to this canny killer's presence do so with little hope of bettering the assassin in close-quarters or at range.

As leader of a ninja clan, this deadliest of shadow warriors will have a bevy of deadly, stealthy minions to follow his commands, likely requiring the Gamemaster add the Minion feat at the appropriate amount of ranks to the game statistics provided here.

VARIATIONS AND CAPERS

The Ninja Clan Leader is actually a ghost who continues to act on his clan's behalf, or perhaps his entire clan is likewise comprised of specters. The character is a demon or is possessed by such a creature, granting him exceptional abilities that combine supernatural powers with superior combat training. Minion feats from **Better Mousetrap** will emphasize the Ninja Clan's Leader's ability to command and inspire his clan members.

THE SUN RISING IN DARKNESS

Some power within the Japanese government (or a Japanese super-villain) has tasked the Ninja Clan Leader and his minions with carrying out an agenda to elevate this once-great power back to its former glory. As such, the Ninja Clan Leader will have his assassins conduct politically- and economically-motivated murder, blackmail, extortion, and the like around the world in such a manner as to increase their employer's influence. If steps aren't taken to counter these maneuverings, the unscrupulous power behind the clan will have their way and gain a foothold in the world's workings.

THE HUNT

For several months, heroes the world over have been disappearing, never to be heard from again,

and the player characters are next on the list.

Somehow, somewhere, they are rendered unconscious and when they awake they find themselves facing an Asian man who informs them they've been captured and taken to a remote location where they are to be hunted by teams of ninjas, each of which is sponsored,

