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# Marvel Heroic Roleplay Basic Game

# Synopsis

Book Details:Format: PaperbackPublication Date: 4/17/2012Pages: 128

## Book Information

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Margaret Weis Productions (April 17, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1936685167

ISBN-13: 978-1936685165

Product Dimensions:  8.5 x 0.8 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review:    4.1 out of 5 stars       47 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #482,606 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)   #49 inÃ Â Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Gaming > Other Role-Playing Games   #12860 inÃ Â Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Graphic Novels

## Customer Reviews

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I was not a huge fan of the original Cortex system. I read it cover to cover but barely considered attempting getting it to the table.This game - an instance of what has since been called Cortex Plus, alongside titles like Smallville and Leverage - changed Cortex in a few big ways. It was also my revelation of what I'll refer to as "narrative descriptor systems". This loose grouping which can include diverse mechanics from the PbtA Dungeon World, the Yahtzee-like pooling and dice manipulation/reroll mechanics of Cortex Plus, or the vaguely FUDGE-derived Fate Core (or baby bro Fate Accelerated Edition), all have one thing in common: the focus is not on simulation of physics or Vancian magic, though there may be subsystems for that.The focus of narrative descriptor games is twofold: shared narrative control and a sort of "object oriented" gaming.Shared narrative control means players can influence outcomes before (and sometimes even after) the roll/draw/bid/resolution mechanic for that system. Influence is never absolute, in the hands of the GM or the newly-empowered players. But by some means of give and take - fate points, sacrificing something of personal importance to gain the upper hand in a given situation - and the subsystems that revolve around the central narrative-manioulation mechanics, a story unfolds in ways neither the players nor the GM could ever fully anticipate, which can be a source of great joy, pain and

wonder depending on the nature of the system, the setting, and most importantly the players.The OO nature of these games arises from what I generically refer to as descriptors. The term could probably use a better name, and it certainly exceeds the boundaries of including "only adjectives", though vague, frequently non-numeric adjectival properties such as "incredibly fast" or "smarter than the average genius" are the simplest way of exemplifying how descriptors can work, each applicable descriptor in a character/scene/object's possession adding more dice/points/leverage for manipulating outcomes, or indeed manipulating the nature of scenes themselves.It all works differently depending on the specific system at hand, but MHR/Cortex Plus gives you additional dice of various sizes for every power/resource/ally/whatever the character has, as well as bonus dice granted for going up against opposition that has already suffered damage/attrition/some similar manifestation of "partial loss" that may be initially viewed as a simple analog for hit points in a more traditional environment, but which is more subtle, flexible and mechanically interesting than I've ever felt a simple shrinking life bar was.Anyway I unabashedly came to this as a lifelong Marvel fan (though these days I'm really more of an Image fanboy, truth be told) and the game captures the spirit of comics so much more fluidly, viscerally, and with a sense of all-important immediacy I've rarely felt in games. The book has its flaws: the sections could probably be reorganized better or concepts introduced in brief rather than in full when their interrelatedness made the ordering more arbitrary. It's sometimes hard to find rules when first starting out, and really there are essentially NO character creation rules to speak of, beyond a largish smattering of powers, gear, and heroic ideas to inspire you to smash things till it clicks. One of the cool dice pool dials for characters in MHR is whether your hero works better solo, on a full team or a sidekick/buddy situation. The GM can take advantage of this through manipulating the narrative in such a way as to split up and reunite members of the team, leading to parallel solo/group side missions which is an excellent built in inspiration for cool cross-cutting visuals, with story coming to a climax or resolution at these key moments where bonuses and penalties happen as a result of your character's affinity for the situation she's in. It can be pretty epic.And as weird as it sounds coming from a board gaming rules lawyer, that's how comics have always worked: character abilities have been revealed and changed over time to suit the needs of plot, authors or voyeurs, and grander story arcs can only be planned so far in advance, especially when involving large crossovers. I mean, the term retcon originated from comics so far as I'm aware, and if you just let yourself play fast and loose, with enough wonder and empathy for your heroes, you can make this work.Plus, most folks really just wanted to pop some claws and go to town on some supervillains, which this facilitates in spades: there are dozens of heroes statted in the core book, and still more in the Civil War supplement. If you love Marvel,

telling stories and are not afraid of eschewing tradition in favor of innovative fun, you owe it to yourself to check this book out while you can still obtain a copy. Marvel canceled the license to MWP, so there will not be another edition.If you are interested in checking out Cortex Plus as a whole, and don't mind not having a fixed setting, tinkering with the rules as a loose toolkit rather than a rigid, inflexible structure check out the Cortex Plus Hacker's Guide, which does not utilize any license properties and I hope never goes out of print/digital availability.Excelsior!

If you're a hardcore fan of pen and paper role playing games that has very detailed rules from hand to hand combat to underwater environment rules, and tons upon tons of stat crunching calculation, then you'll really hate this game. You're better off playing the D20 system or the new Shadowrun rules with all the other fans who like to play an RPG like a yu-gi-oh card game.Still reading this? Good. If you're a fan of storytelling in your games, these are the perfect rules. The downside is that there isn't much guidance on creating your own superhero. The upside...there isn't much guidance on creating your own superhero. This is a very rules light game where they focus more on character and less on stats. If you want to create a superhero, then create it the right way. You're not going to be randomly creating a hero who controls plant and shoots cold beams from his/her eyes. You need to think of limitations, distinctions, qualities that make a good character and less the level of your power set. Sure you can be the guy who creates the perfect hero with no weaknesses, but there's no point in doing that in any game. You're here to create great stories. Try and name a great Marvel storyline where there is absolutely no conflict; physical, mental, emotional or otherwise.As the Watcher (aka the DM), you're here to make an interesting adventure for the players. Remember, this is an RPG, not a table top game where you're here to bury the player. The idea is to create an adventure that's memorable. It's not a miniature battle game. The rules are also simple enough to teach other people who aren't that well versed in role playing games. Games like Shadowrun and D&D tend to not lend itself to be readily teachable to newbies. They have a rule for every little thing. A good DM will try to cut through some of these rules, but when you play a session with a combination of veteran and newbie players, most of the time you'll be chatting about all the rules that slow the game down. Veterans want to plan their ultimate attack and do every check known to man. Meanwhile, the newbs have a glazed over look on their face and eventually lose interest.The Cortex rules cut through a lot of this nonsense. It's not about discussing the aerial combat rules and saving throws. The players will be discussing action, and then rolling to see if they succeed. The game is easy to learn, and easy to teach. It brings back the role playing in RPG.

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