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Heroes Unlimited RPG



Synopsis

Book by Siembieda, Kevin

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I played an earlier version of this game back in high school, and recently picked up this iteration. It's an RPG devoted to straight-up superhero gaming. For comic geeks, the genre it simulates is best described as "Bronze Age" or 1980's style heroics: you're not going to find rules here for, say, Vertigo-style oddness or heavy discussions about the nature of superhero storytelling; this is pretty much a comic book world straight out of 1986 or so; mutant powers are real, but so are high-tech exoskeletons and bionics decades ahead of contemporary technology, and aliens, occult powers, and psionics exist in the shadows. This is old-school style gaming of a kind which has largely fallen into disfavor (unless you're into straight up D&D and its kin); you roll up character stats for strength, agility, and the like using six-sided dice and randomly select a superhero power category for gaming. Unlike every other superhero game I know, Heroes Unlimited essentially uses a class-based system for characters. Most superhero games basically work by having one design a character concept, buy powers and skills from a huge, slightly generic list, then put it all together. Here, one randomly rolls or selects a power category, and that completely dictates what kind of superhero one is going to play. Mutants, for instance, receive superpowers from a power list which includes genre standards like super strength and extra-healing to weirder ones like Super-Tentacles and Spinning around at high speeds. Psionics pick abilities from a completely different set of super talents which covers the mind-over-matter genre (and unlike superpowers, which can be used

at will, psi-powers run off inner strength and can be temporarily depleted.).

Heroes Unlimited has had two other iterations prior to this new massive tome. With each, there were merits and flaws, but Palladium answered the heeding call of his fans and finally brought out the big guns. We tend to refer to it as HU2nd.

The Good - fairly realistic and detailed combat systems - percentile dice for skill checks - Level based rules allowing for characters to progress within. - rules that basically allow for the creation of most well-known characters, especially with the inclusion of Ninjas and Superspies, After the Bomb, Nightbane and maybe even Beyond the Supernatural. You need no other books; this one covers everything. - Easily create new alien races and the drop of a few percentile dice.

The Bad - The mechanics are not complicated, but they are counter intuitive and each core book presents the rules in a different light; there is no flat-out identical system for any of Palladium Books productions - no 'by the book' cross-classing of characters. - no meta-plot; just fly around and create your corner of the super variety. - the level-based system creates an impossibility unbalancing system. Try a Physical Training class against a most any Alien character.

The 'WTF?' - the super powers are presented with no distinction other than a very loose guideline into minor and majors - each power duplicates with level ups; I throw a 5th level fireball. Bad guy throws a 5th level fire ball. Whoever gets hit is taking the same damage. - any deviations with hero levels and villain levels present very skewed and sometimes impossible encounters. A group of 5th level mutants 'may' be able to take on three level 8 bad guys.

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