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Mage: Ascension (2004)



Synopsis

The World of Darkness role playing games take the reader into worlds and realities where magic is not dead and not even the dead are dead. Mage is the 3rd game in the Storyteller Series. ' --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

yes, I gave it five stars, and I will get to the why. But I do believe, like other reviewers, that this game might not suit everybody, and it is certainly not easy to either explain nor play without running into some quite peculiar pitfalls. I started out with RPGs when I was 12. I have read, played and "directed" at least 10 different RPG systems. Fantasy, star wars, star trek, marvel superheroes (anyone who thinks I was waaay too deep into it is absolutely RIGHT, I was positively addicted). I even wrote a short monthly column on RPGs for an "alternative culture" magazine for a while. So when my best friend and companion in roleplaying introduced me to White Wolf games (with a copy of Mage as a birthday present), I was openly distrustful. (Mages with computers? you gotta be kidding me!). However, I overcame my first impression and read it, read it and re-read it. I was hooked! What was going on with this game was REAL MAGIC! All the other RPGs I have played and directed have the same problem: magic is a static thing, confined to the stereotypes which are known by all: wizened old men, reading out of musty old books, recipes including bat dung and frog eyes. Interminable list of spells, some of them useless, some inaccessible until the characters were incredibly powerful already, and the eternal problem of mages being weak and useless once their spells were spent. Mage: the Ascension is my favorite RPG (out of, like I've mentioned, many others

I've met and struggled with for a while). But, it's not for everyone. It's not a game you can throw at the players out of the blue. It's a challenging game for the Storyteller.

Let me start my review by saying that I view all White Wolf games (at least the 5 main games) as being equal. That's right, I'm not going to promote one book over another. The beauty of all White Wolf games is the "Golden Rule:" The game is up to the storyteller and players. If you don't like an idea, change it or ignore it completely. This works quite well with small groups if you feel comfortable with table top or LARP. However, when you get to larger groups (esp. roleplaying online) it's more difficult to decide on which rules are practical and which ones aren't. This edition of Mage **does** have a slight problem with clear definition of rules and systems, and I've yet to see any of White Wolf's books completely cover the systems as they pertain to other games (for example, can a hedge wizard be discovered as such using the gift "Scent of the Trueform?"). As with all of White Wolf games, I think this is a game best played with a small group of close friends. Now a little more about White Wolf and specifically Mage. I don't know how many have noticed this, but all of these games probably seem like they're shaped after Myths or other real-world beliefs (no matter how obscure). The reasoning for this: They are! Take a look through the bibliography of a White Wolf book and marvel at the resources. This is one area where I would promote Mage above the other books (although I said I wouldn't) because in reading through this you get a small glimpse at the beliefs of so many other cultures. What's even scarier - notice how people of different cultures seem like they live in "another world?" If you really think about it, the Mage concept isn't hard to follow at all. We see this in everyday life. We believe things to be one way, and that's true for us.

Here's a review that isn't tainted by grudges about the game from internet messageboards or Usenet and isn't inaccurate. In other words, a refreshing change from the other three reviews. Ascension is pretty uneven, but it is certainly comprehensive. Contrary to what the first review here says, it includes stuff from the very first supplements of the game. I had to look at my old books to understand everything, and this might be a problem. Sometimes the writers just breeze through things that must be 9 or 10 years old. I didn't get it all the first time I read it. Unlike the other end of the world books it has five scenarios. The first one is excellent and has something to do with nearly **everything** in the game. I liked the Tenth Sphere being a mystery that bound all the Spheres together. It also talks about what Ascension might be, but it's still a big adventure. It looks like it might take a year or more to run on its own and brings back some old characters from the very first Mage books ever published. Every time I've read it it adds some new revelation. I **think** the

point that it makes in the end is that everything mages struggle for *is* Ascension, and that the struggle is *supposed* to be there. It's all predestined for humanity to Ascend, so it can divide itself and learn to Ascend again, etc, etc. I didn't like the other four adventures as much. The "Technocracy wins" scenario is a loose plan of what could happen if the Technocracy reacts to an emergency by wiping out magic. Two short scenarios are about an asteroid hitting the earth, which is weird and cool (you can talk to the spirits of the planets to try and solve it "diplomatically"!?), and one about aliens stealing magic, which is . . . kind of lame.

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