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Mage Chroniclers Guide*NOP



Synopsis

Mages can do almost anything. Their capacity to create, transform, preserve and destroy is almost limited only by their imagination. What happens when that limiter is removed? What, ultimately, can a Mage chronicle be if it goes further and stranger than ever before? The answers lie within.

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Customer Reviews

The "superhero" campaign was my favorite part! :D

One of the good but apparently often daunting features of *Mage the Awakening* is its variety, both in terms of character abilities and available story types. This book is intended in part to help gamers get a handle on that variety. It is also to expand the variety of stories you can tell, or the way you tell them. That brings up what to some may be the most important point of this review: this is not a book of just more rules, or the "system fix" that resurrects *Mage the Ascension* for its fanatics, or a guide to adapting *Mage* mechanics to non-White Wolf game lines. This is a book about telling stories using the *Awakening* rules and, to a varied extent, the setting. There are a few things that I want to deal with separately from the chapter overview. First, at one point they list the core axioms of the game, the ones they never vary from. The one I wanted to highlight was: *Belief Does Not Define Reality*. In *Awakening*, mages can change reality, but they have to earn the experience to learn how first. Dealing with that process is a considerable, though usually implicit part of this book. Second, *Atlantis*. So much angst has been wasted on this topic. The writers acknowledge that and then, quite rightly, ignore it. Outside the *Chronicles* chapter, *Atlantis* gets about three or four combined

pages. Most of that is examining how the amount of knowledge retained from Atlantis determines how codified Awakened magic is. Less knowledge for instance means more difficulty with improvised magic and fewer roles. The extent of knowledge of Atlantis with number three, the Supernal World. All magic, or whatever a setting variant may call it, comes from the Supernal World. Whether it is treated as metaphor or literal truth, the writers explicitly assume that the Supernal World will be treated by gamers as if the source of magic matters. Chapters 1 and 2 are about telling different types of stories. Chapter 1 goes through various standard genres, such as Pulp, Noir and such. They are good summaries but quite short. It also deals with various topics or settings such as what would happen if there was no Veil and everyone knew about magic, or what the World of Darkness would be like if Supernal pockets existed inside it, for a high fantasy setting. The settings are generally very good but the writers make some odd assumptions. For instance, the Veil-less setting has a section on the reactions of the Mage Orders, and for some reason it assumes that all their secrets are laid bare. The Guardians and Mysterium keep secrets from other mages, so I don't see why the assumption was made. Chapter 2 takes all the features of Mage and renames them for two different styles: Weird Science or as Psychic Powers. The mechanics remain mostly the same. There are also a number of smaller descriptions of variant styles, some even for use by mortal occultist games. Chapters 3 and 4 are all about characters, first from the player perspective and then the Storyteller. Chapter 3 takes the character creation process, breaks it down, and analyses it step by step and by section. There is practical advice for building your character, both at creation and with experience. Then it goes through the Paths and the Orders and provides advice on how to change them. The Order section deals with the memory of Atlantis as mentioned earlier and then goes into many completely different styles of mage society. The Path section mainly deals with the idea of using different combinations of Ruling Arcana, and how to justify it in the story. There are many variations: adding further Supernal Realms, or expanding the Arcana available from the current Realms, or having one Supernal World where the player and possibly the character actively choose their Ruling Arcana during character creation or even during the game. It ends with a section on Magical Styles, which are (to me) about codifying and adding some bonuses to however the player keeps straight what his mage can do. Chapter 4 starts off with the Tier system. Given how much hype some players seem to have about tier systems, I must point out that it is essentially formalising levels of play that people are already using. The Tier system used here is about the scope of gameplay. Tier two is the default. Tier one is a very personal setting, where the mages mostly interact with each other and immediate associates. White Wolf calls it the soap opera Tier. Tier three is sort of the endgame setting: whatever the PCs are dealing with has the capacity to

change the entire world in one go, for good or evil. After that is some storytelling advice on dealing with the capacity of mages to collect information and on dealing with highly experienced characters. After that comes about eighty pages of Mage chronicle outlines by a variety of White Wolf writers. They cover a wide range. There are chronicles that are just a bit different from the base setting. There is a chronicle about a magical war, in which the players have two sets of characters, the war planners and disposable mages for the front lines. There are chronicles that focus on a specific element of the game, like Legacies. There are some way out chronicles that provide big (and sinister) variations of the setting. I found almost all of the chronicles to have interesting ideas. White Wolf describe their books as toolkits. This book is more of a tool guide, describing new ways to use the tools provided by previous Mage books. The third and fourth chapters should be useful to anyone using Mage. The second chapter is for people who want to try a very different style of story with the same mechanics. The first chapter is mostly useful for varying the genre, but personally I think it also useful for a non-expert in literature genres to refine exactly what genre or genres he uses as standard. Overall, it looks to be a potentially very useful book, depending on how much you want to vary from the default Mage.

This book is a part of the White Wolf relaunch of the World of Darkness. The original Mage, Vampire, and Werewolf were written based on the same basic system but were not intended to work together. With the Relaunch of the World of Darkness they are intended to work together. The old Mage was a great concept, but suffered from a lack of usable rules. If you took the "Storytelling" part of the Storytelling System seriously, it was not a big deal. If you, or your players, were attached to playing a game with consistent rules the old Mage was not going to work. This reboot fixes all of that. The concept and world building has changed a little, but an old player will recognize the setting. The rules for how to interact with powers are consistent and consistent across the other books in the relaunch. For people without any prior experience with Mage: This is not like D&D, it is a point buy system, rather than class based. The game takes a lot of preparation to run but lends itself fantastically to Role Playing heavy games of intrigue.

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