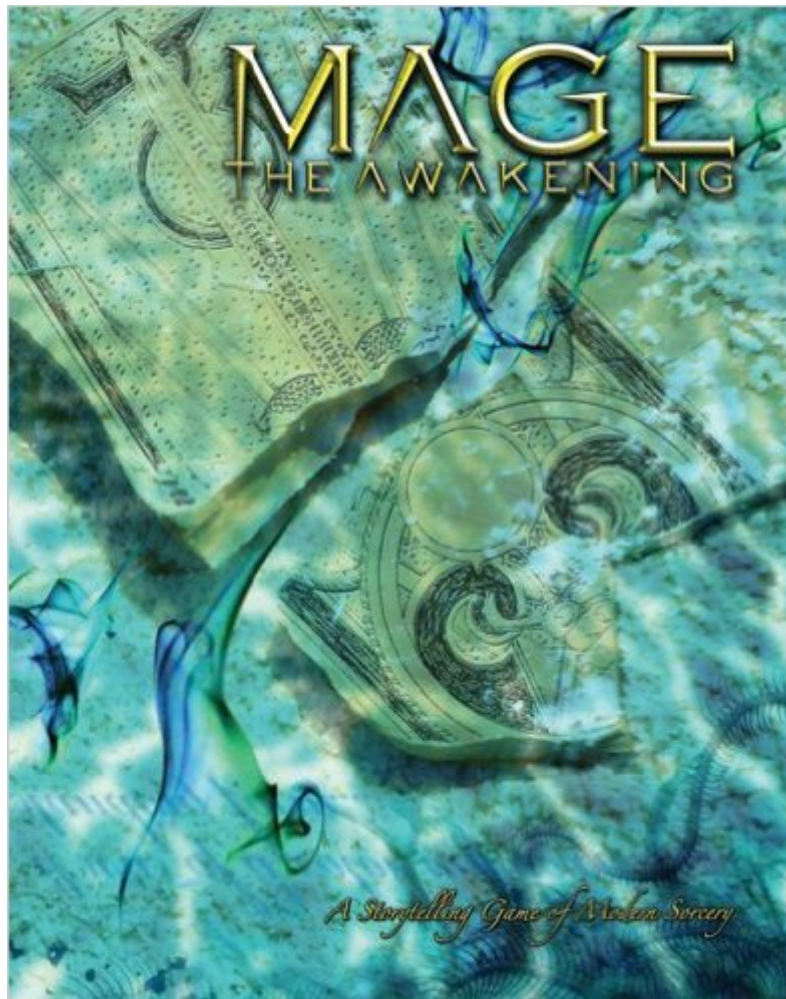


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Mage The Awakening (World Of Darkness (White Wolf Hardcover))



Synopsis

The Power to Remake the World In an age long gone, mortals dethroned the gods and seized the heavens for their own. And for it, they were flung down into the world of clay, their minds clouded by ignorance. Only a bare few remember their birthright - the power of magic. If they cannot claim the heavens, they will make their own kingdoms on Earth. A Storytelling Game of Modern Sorcery * Provides everything you need to tell your own stories in the occult world of the Awakened, including details of the various orders and paths of magic, and many secrets of the World of Darkness. Requires the World of Darkness rulebook for play. *Presents the most comprehensive and freeform magic system ever achieved in gaming, allowing characters to cast nearly any spell imaginable. * Features Boston as a fully fleshed-out, ready-to-play setting. * Features artwork by the acclaimed Michael Kaluta.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've run Mage: the Ascension in all three of the previous editions. I've tweaked the rules for it, including once having a huge booklet of house rules (which, ironically, were almost the exact same changes between 1st and 2nd edition.) First, I'm a big fan of the New World of Darkness mechanics. They are cleaner, run much faster, and cause a lot less bickering with my players. Once we played for a bit, people got it. I had to fight to prove to people that Mage: The Ascension was a playable game - but I did it. Then came the book "Ascension," which ended the mage line, and I honestly thought it was awful. This also made it so that Awakening was going to be a tough sell for me. The

more I heard about Mage: The Awakening, the less and less I looked forward to it. But I had one on pre-order, so having already paid for it, I figured I'd give it a read when it arrived. I've had the book for over six months now. I've been running it almost that entire time. My players range from heavy rules-lawyers types to people who hate looking into rulebooks and at most just want to know how many dice to roll so they can get this mechanics thing over with and back to the role-playing. They all seem to like the new mage. As do I. Some complaints I've heard: 1) Mage: The Awakening doesn't have Technomancers. Tell that to the guy in my game who has been doing magic using his PDA, laptop, and various devices he's built. 2) This is like D&D magic. Except that D&D magic doesn't let you improvise - and my players after only a few weeks were making up effects that weren't listed in the rote sections of the mage book. 3) There are no antagonists. Except for the Seers of the Throne, the Binders, the Scelesti, and the Liches. Oh, and whatever other threats the Storyteller thinks up. 4) Magic is all westernized. Maybe. Then again, that's a stylistic choice. Who is to say that a mage can't use Asian, African, Middle Eastern, Australian, or Native American style trappings in his workings? 5) Atlantis. Yeah, maybe a legitimate beef. Though not one that is insurmountable - it just takes a half-minute of creativity to get through that. What does the new mage offer? 1) Better Paradox. Finally, Paradox is dangerous the moment you start doing something big and vulgar. 2) Clearer rules. How much 'Mana' (quintessence) you can spend. How paradox works. What rites do. How to resist magic. Sure, I never had problems with this when I ran the old mage, but this puts it in clear black and white so I don't have to debate every frickin' time. 3) More limited mages. I had no problem with mages being flexible, but when you have one player who is developing a character, and another who is buying up their spheres as high as possible, the first guy felt held back and useless as guy #2 did everything magical in the game. Now, that's no longer the case. No one mage can do everything and expect to last long. I appreciate that as both a player and a storyteller. 4) More interesting antagonists. The Seers of the Throne are just like you. They just have different goals. Their magic is the same, they view magic the same way, and it truly is just a philosophical difference between you and them. Overall, the book is laid out well, edited fairly well for a White Wolf release, and with the exceptions of the gold specks on every page, easy to read. As I've found out, you can't judge the game just by reading it - you have to play it to see what it truly is capable of. And having done that, it really isn't that much different from the old mage.

My fellow gamers, I've noticed, are often hidebound, conservative to a fault, and resistant to any change. Many reviewers of the new World of Darkness games reject these new ones out of hand for not being the old versions. Paradoxically, when material is similar to the old system, it's not

"retained," it's "regurgitated" as if it's some kind of cheat that the company didn't change that, too. This is the same knee-jerk reactions that I have seen in every game system that undergoes a major revision, whether it turns out to ultimately be for the better or not. Speaking as a 21-year gaming vet, and as a World of Darkness player since Vampire's first edition, I am completely satisfied with the new system and the new versions of the core games. Here is what I like about Mage, in particular.

1. Paradox makes sense. Sure, the old system was wide open, with paradigm, collective belief, who was and wasn't a 'witness' for purposes of paradox, but it was a real pain for a Storyteller at times. Not only that, but I always felt the original explanation for Paradox to be pretty lacking -- this time, as a side effect of the breaking of the world, it has an adequate explanation.
2. The paths and orders combine interestingly. Your character's political leanings now have an expression, and like everything else we humans are involved in, there are certainly factions within factions. Oddly, I find the new Mage most reminiscent of the old Vampire, with its byzantine Camarilla and its politics.
3. New antagonists. Frankly, the Technocracy always bugged me. It never worked as well as I liked to have the Technocracy as the over-arching, world-girdling, undefeatable conspiracy. Simply put, the Technocracy was simply too strong to ever be a truly defeatable enemy. On top of that, the Marauders were cartoonish, comic-book versions of 'madness', bearing about as much semblance to real mental illness as The Joker. And on top of THAT, the Nephandi (yes, they're still around... kind of) were just wretched, never believable as some kind of 'seductive' force with this irresistible allure that kept drawing in mages -- they were so obviously, cartoonishly evil that no mage with an ounce of awareness could have fallen into their clutches. This time around, you have the rather interesting Seers of the Throne, good old fashioned power-mongers; the Banishers, mages who are driven by fear and self-hatred to destroy what they are; and better, more plausible versions of both the Marauders and the Nephandi.
4. Rotes mean something. Rotes were little more than 'suggestions', with not a lot that would make them actually easier to use. Now, there's actually a game effect for something you've practiced, perfected, and done dozens of times before. I know, part of the appeal for the old Mage was that free-form system. It IS still there, but it's neither as wild nor woolly as before. For this Storyteller, it will be much easier to get along with it.
5. "Conflict" is what you make it, this time. There's no forced, product-driven, pre-made conflict that so many people seem to miss so badly. (Paradoxically, many people who profess to miss the old continuity complain that White Wolf scrapped the old continuity to make people buy more products. If that wasn't the purpose of the old continuity, what was?) Begging your pardon, but I like being provided a skeleton to flesh out, rather than a fully-formed body that only needs to be switched on. It requires more effort on the part of the Storyteller to make it go -- and that's how it should be.
6. Despite what

all the disgruntled people seem to be saying, this system is not remotely like D&D. I don't know where you people are getting this. It's still flexible and imaginative, and frankly the Atlantean spin on the story is much cooler than I was expecting. If you're a new player, or even an old player wondering about the new system, don't listen to the disgruntled fanboys. Give it a go, you won't be sorry.

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