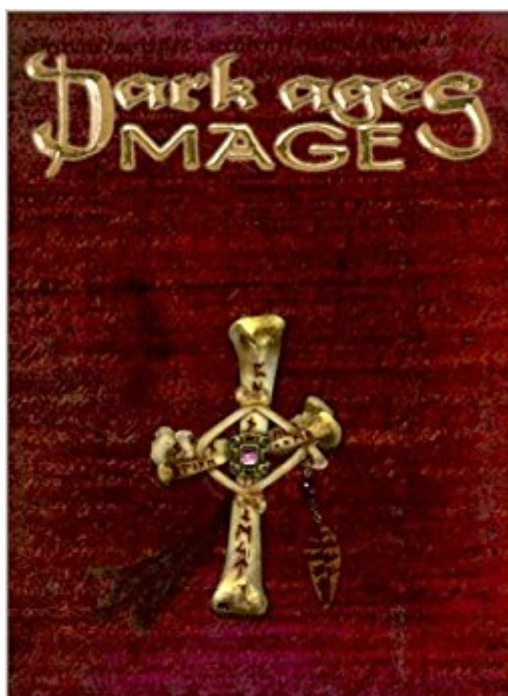


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Dark Ages Mage (Vampire: The Dark Ages)



Synopsis

An Age of Terrifying Mysteries It is a world lit by torch-fires and ruled by superstitions. It is a time before the birth of reason and before humanity's dominion over the world. This dark age is an epoch for castles, nobles, priests and wizards. Treading in the shadows of the world, consorting with demons and monsters, these magicians, holy men, philosophers and pagans wield unfathomable magic in a world veiled in mystery. **An Age of Unparalleled Magic** Before the Technocracy existed a Mythic Age when magic ruled and science was but a dream unborn. In these times mortal men and women cower amid great wars and supernatural mysteries. Only wizards walk unafraid in the revenant-haunted and wolf-infested night. Included in this supplement are all the game systems and rules necessary to build mages for the Dark Ages setting. Hardcover. This book assumes use of Dark Ages: Vampire. You do not need Mage: The Ascension to make use of this book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

per my son

I must admit, I was waiting impatiently for this book more than even the new Dark Ages: Vampire that preceded it (and is necessary in order to make full use of Dark Ages: Mage). I love Mage: The Ascension, especially it's new incarnation in the Revised Edition of that game. This game however is not Mage: The Ascension. The similarities are obvious and yes, it is the World of Darkness set

back into the Dark Medieval, but the truth of the matter is that this is not the same game as its predecessors, Mage: The Ascension or Mage: The Sorcerer's Crusade. There is no War for Reality, there is no competition. There is only magic. The opening chapter on medieval superstition gives a blanket feel of ambiguity to everything in the age and I think this is where the real strength of this game shines. This book is not intended for first-time roleplayers. This book is advanced in every respect of the word. As a Storyteller for Dark Ages, having the rules to create and use Mage NPC's in my chronicles is outstanding and the rules for their creation, advancement, societies, everything... is right here. However, I was disappointed by the fact that although this game (and although it requires the use of Dark Ages: Vampire to use it, it -is- a separate and distinct game unto itself if allowed) has rules to actually play Mages, I can't say it's that easy. But then again, it obviously isn't supposed to be simple, after all these are willworkers, people whose expectations charge reality and force it to change. It's just not cut and dry. The character creation is easy. The rules for advancement, simple enough. Unfortunately, it's the ambiguity of each of the pillars that catches me off guard, because, although we are playing these mages and their mindset is critical to their play, having the levels of power measured by interpretation is asking for complications. However, I believe now, after having re-read this book two times + since purchasing it, that it is SUPPOSED to be ambiguous and inexact, facilitating the person to person interpretation that was the rule of the day. After all, if someone easily adhere to exacting rules in the Dark Medieval, they were not Mages. Mages break the rules in every way, shape, and fashion and don't apologize for it; rather they take their success to mean that are due even more power. Enter hubris. All in all, this is a great book and more visually stunning than I first imagined it would be. The spine, once again, is not attached to the book itself, but I'm beginning to suspect it's not supposed to. I gave this game 4 stars (instead of 3) because of the innate potential of such a game and the Dark Ages line. However, if you're a die hard fan of the Sphere system, I heartily recommend The Sorcerer's Crusade instead. This game is darker, more brutal, and more ambiguous. These can be good things in the hands of the right people, but not for everyone.

As a fan of Mage: The Ascension, I bought this book hoping to get some more insight into the DA magical societies. This, of course, was in the book, but it also flips everything on its head. While the magic system is similar, the 9 spheres have been done away with in favor of a 4 pillar system which is more tailored to each society. This, I actually like for the setting. On the other hand they trampled all over one of the most interesting groups of the age, The Order of Hermes. While they are still depicted as powerful, and organized, their house system is nearly ignored. (check out Ars Magica

for more Order of Hermes data) Also, the book tries to promote interfellowship cabals, which is absolutely absurd in an era where most mages would sooner kill a rival mage than work with him for the most part. Mage: The Sorcerer's Crusade makes it very clear that such cabals almost NEVER happened until the uniting of the Traditions, and the writers expect us to believe they already worked together happy and together 2-300 years previous? Please...Not to say the book is bad, because for the most part it is rather good. For Storytelling material it is bad, but as setting information and rules it is excellent. Oh, on a final note, I only gave it 3 stars because White Wolf decided not to put any rules in it outside of magic rules simply to sell more copies of Dark Ages: Vampire. It deserves 4 in its own right.

Dark Ages Mage, or DAMage, is not a game for everyone. And before I get started, I want to make sure everyone knows: you need to have the Dark Ages Vampire core book to play it. DAMage is not for me. Why? I'm a fan of the Mage: The Ascension game line, and my thoughts start from there. Your mileage may vary. The game defines magic separately for each group. It defines four "pillars" for each group, each with five ranks. These serve (supposedly) to measure what a Mage can and cannot do. Like any good game mechanic? A lot of people didn't like the ambiguity inherent in M:tA's description of spheres. If that's you, avoid DAMage like the plague-- DAMage mechanics for Magic are described totally from the in-character point-of-view of the individual paradigm. As a way to understand what each kind of magic can really do, or settle disputes about whether a given Mage has the right knowledge to attempt a casting, they're completely unplayable. They are, however, creative, even sometimes inspiring. If they were presented as magical theory, rather than a game mechanic, they'd be alright. They'll also be good for selling supplements. The pillars demand exhaustive lists of "rites," concrete definitions of individual powers, to be playable, and STs and players will find themselves obliged to go buy the "tradition book" for all the groups they intend to portray. Another thing that bugged people about Mage: The Ascension, was that the sphere system seems "homogenous." That is, the progression in various abilities is pretty arbitrary, and if it's seen as universal among all kinds of will-workers, it intrudes on the in-character integrity of that paradigm. I think that's a reasonable objection-- the Mage line's approach to Magic is its own scenario, and though people claim you can do "any kind" of magic with it, that's not entirely true. And, I think this helps us see why DAMage was developed along these lines. People wanted each paradigm to make sense "unto itself." Unfortunately, they chose to carry baggage from M:tA over. (Why? In an attempt to sell copy to Mage players.) Wary of alienating Mage players, they retained an analog to a "sphere system," and gave lip-service to the "dynamic" quality of magic as

found in Mage. And the result is something that is a glorified freestyle role-playing of magic, based on flavor text, or, with the eventual publication of massive rote lists, will really boil down to spell lists. What people don't realize is that M:tA's sphere system was *born* out of a desire for a playable compromise between the reliable klunkiness of spell-lists, and the flexibility, but potential twinkery, of free-form role-play. It's imperfect, but, taken as what it is, it's also superb. DAMage could have used M:tA's finely-tuned compromise. Instead it tried to reinvent the wheel, moving in both directions, failing to do either justice. DAMage could have been Mage: the Ascension with really cool, useful material on Rping in the Dark Ages setting. And by the way. The presentation of the setting is rather lackluster, in DAMage. Possibly this is because they expect you go out and pay more money for Dark Ages Vampire. But if you're an Order of Hermes fan, for example, prepare to be disappointed. (Moreover, personally, my mind boggles at the authors' encouragement to send Muslim sorcerers off with their Christian cabalmates to kill Muslims in the Crusades.) Alternatives better than DAMage include Mage: the Sorcerer's Crusade, Mage: the Ascension, or Sorcerer, each already in White Wolf mechanics, and adaptable to the Dark Ages setting (DAMage expects you to have other books too!) If you're a vampire player, particularly, I would think Sorcerer would be the way to go. There're also Ars Magica and D&D. And GURPS puts out great supplements, including on the Middle Ages. Which, if you want setting and flavor, are far superior.

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