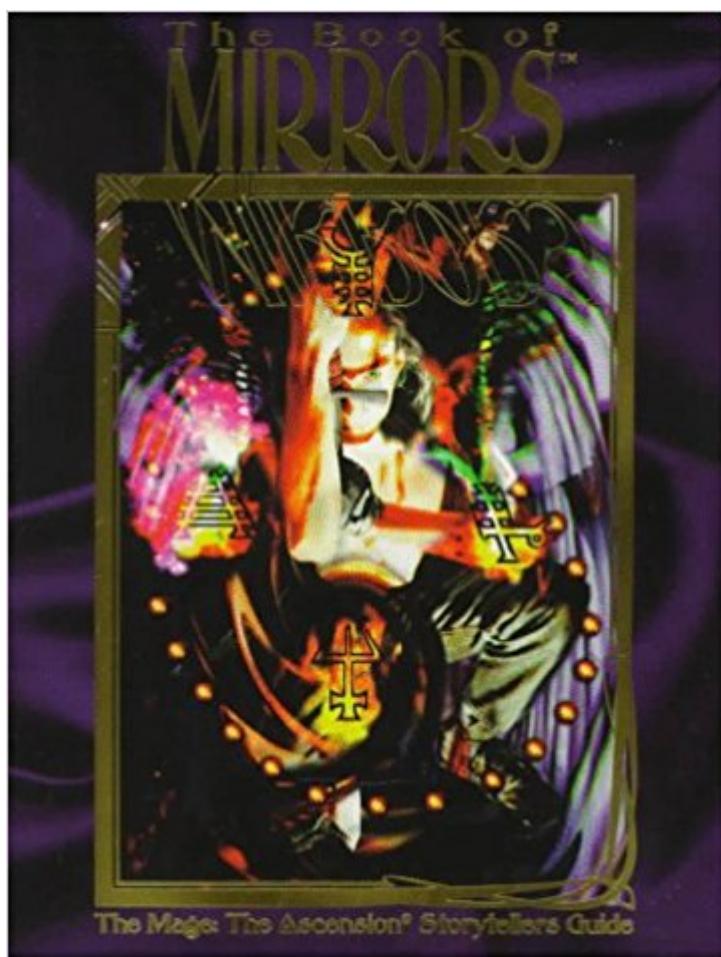


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# **Book Of Mirrors Mage Storyteller Gd \*OP (Mage - The Ascension)**



## **Synopsis**

Intriguing as it may be, Mage offers the would-be Storyteller a host of challenges. Fortunately, help is now at hand. This essential yet informal tome includes Storytelling advice, a developer's F.A.Q., secrets of the Ascension War, and many other enlightening goodies, like... A step-by-step chronicle history; A comprehensive index to Mage books, rules and magicks; Systems and suggestions for animals, shapeshifting, alternate settings and more.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

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This is a pretty unique Mage book in that it drops all of the double speak ('some say'/'it is rumoured'). It speaks directly to the Storyteller giving you relatively plain language advice for running games and coming up with plots and chronicles. Chapter 1 supposedly covers how to run an entire chronicle, but this is not quite true. It gives lots of practical advice about dealing with difficult players and situations, managing the development and destinies of characters, story continuity and

creating a good atmosphere. It's all good, but a bit of a grab bag and I can't say there was all that much that was revelatory. Chapter 2 gives a FAQ, answering curly questions about paradox, the magick system and consensual reality. Its actually quite a fascinating read but pretty skewed toward the paradigm/philosophy of Mage. More mundane questions, like streamlining the combat system or balancing characters with different Arete, are nowhere to be found. I initially thought Chapter 3 would be waste: 40 pages talking about the 3 'evil' factions. But in fact it was the best part of the book. Dropping the uncertainty and speaking plainly about the tactics, approaches and motivations of the 'evil' factions was incredibly helpful. This chapter brimmed with more story ideas than probably any other Mage book. Nehpandi double agent in a Tradition? The NWO erasing a Mage's identity and then framing them, leaving them to face the police alone? A Marauder cabal who never actually realise they work together? Good stuff. The next chapter provided heaps of animal templates and ideas for using animals, sleepers and Spirits. It was pretty interesting, if a little out of place. Then there was a relatively short chapter about alternate settings, that rushed through myriad ideas about historical and alternate milieu. Perhaps a more detailed presentation of a single idea (like Victorian steampunk) would have been better. Finally there was 10 pages of 'essays' by various interesting people. Nicely written, but not that useful (the essays in BoS are probably better). (There is, at the end, an attempt to create an index of rotes and other rules across various Mage books. Obviously such things go out of date quickly, and the system of using initials for each book confuses the hell out of me. I doubt I would ever use the Indexes, but it was a nice try.) Overall, this is as good as a Storytellers Handbook could probably be. It is absolutely loaded with practical ideas and helpful perspectives and insights. I was very impressed overall and I think it would be useful in any iteration of Mage.

This is one of White Wolf's better offerings within the Mage arena. While it doesn't have as many rules clarifications as I would like, it does give a strong showing for the whys and hows of running a good Chronicle, from the ground-up, including different styles and other methodologies. One of the nice touches that's found within is the 'FAQ', a synopsis of questions similar to a Usenet FAQ, with most of the answers that many might ask found within. Also useful are the many indices found at the back of the book-- it's often that /I/ can't remember where to find something, I think that's a nice help, White Wolf has had problems with indices in the past.

All those rotes, flaws, and merits you've been looking for in the main book are here, plus a more detailed description of the worlds, enemies, allies, and others. This book gives you more of a feel for

the Neo-Gothic setting of the game, and a better idea of the way magic(k) works, though it doesn't deal as much with the mindsets of the Tradition willworkers. Overall, not truly necessary, but useful.

While it contains useful, thought-provoking material, and quite a few laughs, the FAQs that most people rave about are ill-thought out and sometimes self-contradictory. Also, the section regarding gender issues and roleplaying is rabidly sexist, which is somewhat surprising coming from a company that is so selfconsciously egalitarian. There is an index of all the mage books, items, rotes, etc, up until the publication of the BoMirrors, and a basic sphere effects cheat-sheet, but the latter is inaccurate.

The Book of Mirrors has several good laughs and quite a bit of thought-provoking material in it. It also has fairly thorough indices on most of the information in Mage books published to that point. None of it, however, is necessary for any clear-thinking Mage player who owns the main rule book. To boot, some of the FAQs are self-contradictory. The "cheat-sheet" at the back of the book, "Common Magickal Effects," is simply inaccurate, and D. McKinney's article on gender and roleplaying is sexist and insensitive.

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