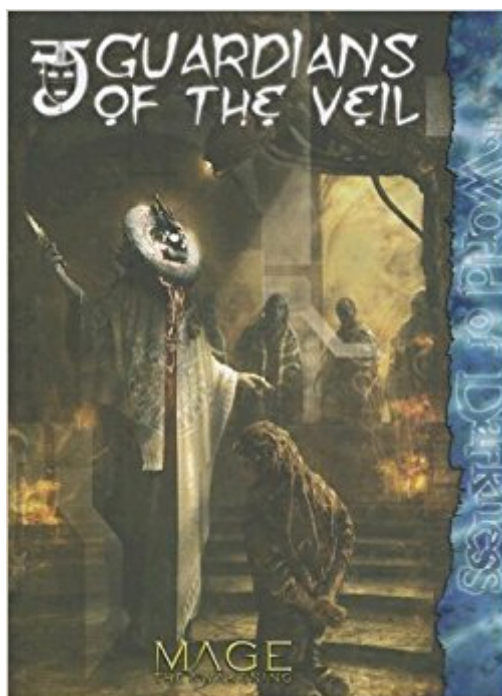


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Mage Guardians Of The Veil*OP (Mage The Awakening)



Synopsis

"Who are we? Don't ask for secrets if you cannot keep them. Do you wish to take this step? Good. We are the secret police of the Awakened, charged with our task by the kings of lost Atlantis. We watch and judge the Gifted for any sign of malpractice of their Art, for we knew of old that the Abyssal taint of miscast spells risks the very universe. To remain pure, magic must be kept secret - and we make sure it stays that way." -- Coatlicue, famulus Susceptor of the order Guardians of the Veil

is a 224 page hardcover supplement for Mage: The Awakening. This book includes:

- * The history, culture and society of the spies of old Atlantis
- * Factions within the order, the three Veils of initiation and the 49 Masques worn to change identities
- * New spells, enchanted items and Legacies

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Following White-Wolf's popular "splat book" style, this is the first in a series of books for the new Mage: the Awakening game examining the Orders which modern Mages divide themselves. And what a start! From the first previews I saw, the Guardians of the Veil fascinated me. This book does much to clear up misconceptions on them, and makes them alot more playable. The Guardians of the Veil are the secret police, spies and assassins of Mage society. This is both true and completely false. As the book goes on to show, the Guardians of the Veil do what must be done to protect magic. Duties that nobody else would take upon themselves. The first chapter explores their history, from taking up the role of the fallen Visus Draconis after the collapse of Atlantis to the Mystery Cults

of antiquity and the political (and economic) intrigues of today. It also gives a very interesting look at Guardian influence and flavor in different regions.... The Catholic Church's Opus Dei, Voudon cults in West Africa, media moghuls in the US, Gnostic heresies, Taoist and Buddhist sects in Asia, Shi'ite mystics in the Middle East, Hindu devotees to Shiva and similar groups all serve as cover/initiation for Guardians. The second chapter is even better, explaining the belief, purpose and structure of the Guardians of the Veil. WHY they do what they do. In this chapter we get information on the Order's laws and objectives, their use of parables and koans, optional systems for gaining Wisdom, titles and duties (based on Status rating), Path roles (with five sample concepts per Path), relations with others, and a whole lot of information on spying, both mundane (the Cold War, cryptography, etc) and supernatural. We also finally get a system for the 49 Masques, archetypal roles that the Guardians of the Veils use in their magic. Each Masque can be bought as a Merit which the Mage can master, gaining particular benefits and drawbacks as a result, as well as providing a supernatural disguise by fulfilling the archetype. The third chapter gives a very detailed look at Guardian recruitment and indoctrination, through the Gray Veil, the Crimson Veil and finally the Black Veil. We also are presented with information about rank, relations (and relationships) within the Order, information on why the Guardians generally don't recruit from inside intelligence agencies anymore, and a very good look at Labyrinths, the secret societies the Guardians create to attract potential initiates (and to weed out the unworthy). The next chapter looks at the Factions and Legacies of the Guardians. All five factions are given write ups: the Faceless (subtle assassins who suppress their ego), the Inheritors (who cover up secrets other Mages aren't meant to see), the Messianics (religious zealots who want to install a righteous leader), the Ordeal Keepers (who perfect their minds and bodies through intense rites) and the Prophets (who gather and collect information) along with a sub-Faction for each of them. The Legacies presented are pretty interesting too. My favorite are the Eleventh Question, a GotV specific Legacy of genius detectives and investigators (think Sherlock Holmes, Monk or Detective Goren from Law and Order: CI), but we also get the Bearers of the Eternal Voice (Mastigos who are masters at manipulating others through their lies) and the Votaries of the Ordained (Moros who protect people and places of great destiny). There's also a Left-Handed Legacy, the Austere, a corrupted Legacy that fuses their body with strange Atlantean technology. This leads to the chapter on magic, which explains the mudras and tools used by the Guardians, common applications of magic for spying (and preventing others from spying on you), and the Guardians' rote specialties (Investigation, Stealth, Subterfuge) are all examined, and we are presented with about a dozen pages of new Rotes, along with Artifacts and magically enhanced items. The book finally closes with a number of sample Guardian of the Veil

NPCs the Storyteller can throw into a game as allies, antagonists or whatever. A hand full of them are given names, backgrounds, details and full statistics, while others are simple concepts the Storyteller can elaborate on such as "the assassin", "the conspiracy nut", "the investigative journalist" and "the police negotiator". All in all, this is a wonderful book, especially if you plan on playing a Guardian of the Veil, or are running a game which features the Order prominently. I'm slightly biased, since the Guardians were already my favorite Order to begin with, but for those who want to understand more about the Mage: the Awakening setting, this is an essential buy. Especially if you have difficulty getting behind the GotV mentality, and tend to portray them as "a bunch of spies and assassins". This book clears up a lot of the misconceptions, while adding depth and interest to the most secretive of the Orders.

When I got the MAGE AWAKENING core book, I found it uninspiring. At the core of that feeling was a vagueness about what being a Mage was about. Vampires hunt for blood and amass power, Werewolves fight unruly spirits, but what do Mages do? Go to work, study some spells, go to Consilia once a month? Might as well be the Rotary Club! Then I picked up GUARDIANS OF THE VEIL, and then I saw that Mages do have a job, a purpose. And that is to protect magic by shielding it from the eyes of Sleepers (who draw in the Abyss through their Disbelief) and unworthy mages (who push the Supernal further away with vulgar spells and Paradox). Sometimes you even have to break a few eggs, and always constant vigilance! GUARDIANS OF THE VEIL was what I needed to shape what I perceived as the formlessness of Mage into something dynamic. I think that GUARDIANS OF THE VEIL will open up new ways of approaching MAGE once you've read it. GUARDIANS begins with the beginning - Atlantis. The Guardians' account of things is presented as historical fact (which helps the players get into the mindset of factional dogma), and that account is that after the fall of Atlantis magic became more difficult. Paradoxes pushed the supernal away, making the link between mage and the higher realms ever more tenuous. The secret history of the Guardians is spelled out, with a minimum of placing the protagonists at the center of every historical event. The order developed a culture of secrecy, to protect the mysteries of magic from being debased by disbelievers. To accomplish these aims, it is sometimes necessary to subvert even other magical orders. There is quite a bit of information on finding magical students and thwarting others (the Labyrinth, initiation into the order (the Veils), positions of authority within the order (Cultor and Epopot), and order discipline. Guardian dogma is explained, with different Factions holding to different interpretations and how they relate to other mages. New legacies and rites are described, as well as specific mudras. Sample items and artifacts are listed, as well as sample

NPCs. Two bits in the book caught my attention as particularly original. The "Masques" are merits bought by a Guardian that allow him to take on a persona, sort of a Platonic form. He plays a part so well that he represents that form, gaining some play modifiers for acting his part. There is one for every combination of virtue and vice (representing abstract personality stereotypes). The idea of becoming a mask you wear intrigues me. Also, this is a secretive, conspiracy minded group. A lot of the ordeals and secrets are explained, but parables are sprinkled throughout the text. They make a point to the wise, but I can't figure out most of them and no explanation is given. I guess I wouldn't think much of an order's secret wisdom if I could get the point right away - very clever in my mind. GUARDIANS OF THE VEIL is a great book for both protagonists and antagonists. It gives an idea of what mages do with their time and how the mysteries of the ancient world affect mages today.

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