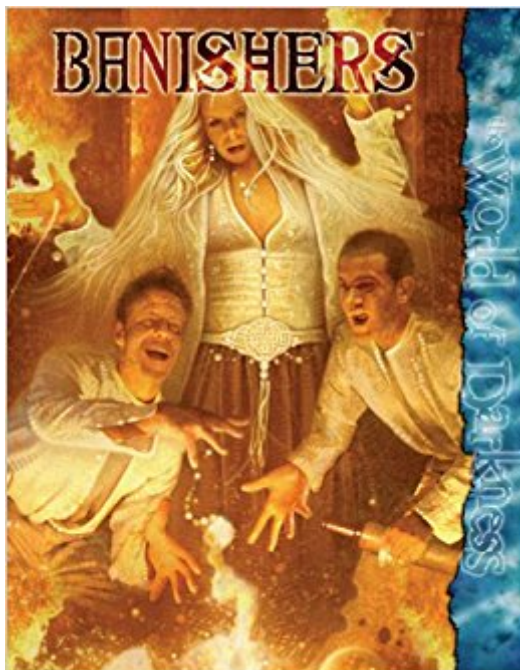


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Mage Banishers *OP (Mage The Awakening)



Synopsis

Character Book for Mage: The Awakening

Book Information

Series: Mage the Awakening

Hardcover: 160 pages

Publisher: White Wolf Publishing (February 20, 2008)

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Customer Reviews

The first thing any prospective purchaser needs to be aware is that this is an antagonists book. This is important because it is not necessary that this be the case: Banisher's have a compelling hook that can make for good play, at least on paper. The character who is tainted by the darkness but will fight against it until he is the only taint that remains before ending himself has all the elements necessary for fun tragedy. However, if that is what you're looking to do, this book will provide only the bare minimum of support, and while that may be a disappointment to some, it was the right choice for the book for two reasons. First, Mage has a historical issue of its antagonists being cooler than its protagonists, so that needs to be avoided in general. Even more: the 'Hunter' corebook will be out after this, and heroic Banishers would tread on that space of play pretty thoroughly. Second, and more importantly, the authors have a strong sense for a thematic core for the Banishers, and they embrace it. At heart, the banishers are broken, deeply and profoundly broken, and while there are a myriad of ways for this to be expressed, they share that central note. All of which comes back to the fact that this is an antagonists book, first and foremost. There is a bit of mechanical support for Banisher magic, but it's just a few new widgets, no great change from the baseline. There's also some new ancient history, but it's suspect and fuzzy. The heart of it really seems to be the array of

NPC Banishers for use in your game, and excepting the odd parody of Scientology, they all seem to step right out of different flavors of horror movie, often with a slasher or splatterpunk kind of feel. As with all WoD books, it's sprinkled with fiction and art. The fiction is better than average, the Art is a bit more uneven. All in all, this is a good book. Well executed, and tightly adhering to a specific vision for what the Banishers are in play, while leaving flexibility for what they are in cosmology and still giving enough tools to not totally abandon divergence. However, I think that same central strength of vision makes it something that is likely to be very useful or not useful at all in a given game. If you want to hit the horror notes with serial killer cannibalistic crazy Banishers then this book gives you all the tools you want. If your game is not as slanted towards horror, then there's less of use here.

Love it.

The Internet carries porn, so it should be banned. Video games are often violent, so they should all be banned. Computers are used for both, so they must be banned. The printed word can carry blasphemy, so all books must burn. Fire can burn people, too, and since it was the first technology, not only it but all advances beyond hunter-gathering must go. There are people who believe some or all of this, and some of them are willing to kill to enforce it. In the World of Darkness, Banishers know that magic can be used for evil, so it too must be totally destroyed, along with its practitioners. The book begins with a character given a choice: Awaken as a Banisher, or remain ignorant of depths of the World of Darkness. The introduction sets out the theme and mood of the book: "violent ignorance". It blends well with the first section of the first chapter, which explains the varying theories on the origins of Banishers, the competing ideas on their motives as it were. It starts with the sublime, that Banishers see far more of the nature of the world than most mages and it breaks their minds, down to the prosaic: they reject the structure of mage society for reasons that seem as petty as the elements they object too. That illustrates an element of justified mage paranoia: not all Banishers immediately become magic-powered serial killers, some stay in the Orders until the pressure of mage life becomes too much, and instead of just abandoning the politics of a city, they seek to destroy all the other mages. The second half of the first chapter and all of the second chapter is on the means Banishers have access to. They cover the mechanical elements of creating uniquely Banisher characters, from merits to spells and rites to Banisher magical equipment. It may seem odd that characters opposed to magical learning create rather a lot of rites. Most Banishers still don't have many rites, but a Banisher who survives to reach Mastery of an Arcanum then spends a lot of time making combat rites. The third chapter is on Banisher

suspects. A common complaint about White Wolf is that they don't do Monster Manual type stuff. There are nine different Banisher organisations in here, ranging from cults with global cell structures to unique and individual groups. The reasons for the many characters becoming Banishers and how they operate is widely varied. The fourth and last chapter is Storytelling, giving Banishers the opportunity to commit their crimes. The book as a whole is explicitly written mostly for Storytellers, but this chapter provides details on portraying Banisher characters that includes a section specifically on dealing with Banisher PCs. Finally, if you were expecting the Timori to appear in a specific form, you were right. They are what I consider the most diabolical of Left-Handed Legacies. This is a bleak book. Banishers are broken, and they want to crack the rest of the world to fit their shattered viewpoints. It's well written and really good reading, though. The only complaint I have is that the artwork actively detracts from the rest of the book. I should have taken a star off for that, but didn't, as I sincerely recommend everything else in this book to Mage gamers.

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