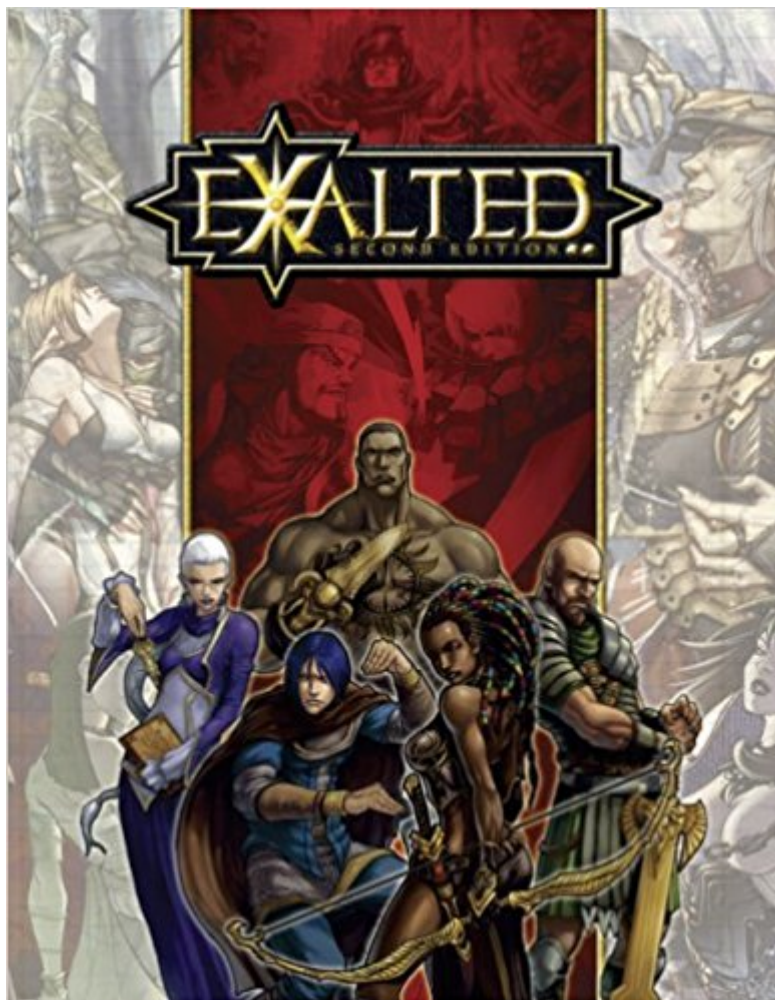


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Exalted, Second Edition



Synopsis

Do not believe what the scientists tell you. The natural history we know is a lie, a falsehood sold to us by wicked old men who would make the world a dull gray prison and protect us from the dangers inherent to freedom. They would have you believe our planet to be a lonely starship, hurtling through the void of space, barren of magic and in need of a stern hand upon the rudder. Close your mind to their deception. The time before our time was not a time of senseless natural struggle and reptilian rage, but a time of myth and sorcery. It was a time of legend, when heroes walked Creation and wielded the very power of the gods. It was a time before the world was bent, a time before the magic of Creation lessened, a time before the souls of men became the stunted, withered things they are today. This is the story of that time. THIS IS THE STORY OF THE EXALTED.

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Customer Reviews

I started playing Exalted shortly after Second Edition was released. After several games with many different Exalt types, I feel I'm ready to give it a just review. First, this book is beautiful. High production values really show, and the art in this book is amazing. Overall, Exalted is an amazing product, and I have a hard time enjoying other games simply because I love the setting and concepts I've grown used to. As an RPG, Exalted is at its strongest in detailing its setting and in driving home the main theme of the line: Epic heroism. As the introduction says, in most games, you're lucky to have a starting character with a rusty sword and a pot helm, and a handful of large rats might be too much for you to handle. In Exalted, even starting characters are "bad asses." As a result, you can't help but feel cool in designing and playing characters. At least until you start rolling for combat. If Exalted has a weakness it's the innate clunky-ness of its system. By itself, the rules

are complex. When you add in the fact that every character possesses abilities that rewrite those rules, you can imagine how quickly things can become overwhelming. If you're running this game, expect to spend a lot of time looking up rules. A lack of useful headings, contrast, and logical organization make that task harder. If you're also using recent errata (available for free), many of these rules have been corrected or rewritten. This is great, since many of these flaws make the game less fun at higher levels of play, but it does make it even harder for a new player to learn the ropes. Several of my players gave up trying to keep up with it. With Third Edition coming as early as December (2012), most new players are probably going to be better off waiting. Still, there's a lot to be said about what Second Edition offers. If you have the patience to learn and a GM who's willing and able to change rules that aren't working for your group, I'd highly suggest trying it out.

If you're tired of the archtypical Fantasy RPG, if you like Anime and Manga, and want to be able to destroy armies single-handedly, then Exalted is for you. Unlike other RPGs where you begin barely able to hold your own against an angry goblin, in Exalted you begin as the holder of a shard of godly power known as a Solar Exalt and can wipe out ordinary troops without breaking a sweat. There are five different kinds of Exalted; Solars, Lunars (Wild, shape-changing exalted), Sidereals (Fate-meddling hidden manipulators that others have a hard time remembering), Dragon-Blooded or Terrestrial (Weakest of the Exalts, but their numbers more than make up for it and they don't like the other types of Exalted) and the Abyssals, who are nasty, evil Solar Exalted created by the Deathlords, who in turn are servants of the Neverborn. The last four Exalted types are fully detailed in their own Manuals of Exalted Power. Unbelievable stunts such as running up the sides of buildings, martial arts that defy human ability and spells able to annihilate cities are the norm in Exalted. Although it deals (as do all White Wolf products) with mature themes, it's not hard to do a game with younger players, as long as the Storyteller is careful about it. Exalted has a rich background that gives almost limitless possibilities with stories, and this Second Edition streamlines the combat, charms and spell rules so battles go by a bit faster. And if you played 1st Edition, the supplements are still just as valid and converting stats of NPCs aren't going to be major headaches. All in all, Exalted is a welcome break from the typical hack-and-slash dungeon crawl style RPG and recommended for fans of that genre as well as those who enjoy something different.

In addition to having the most original and most cohesive setting of any storytelling game, ExaltedThe key to understanding the setting is that it remixes countless histories, mythologies and storytelling styles from our world, from Journey to the West to anime to actual historical processes

like the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Opium Wars. In Exalted, nothing in the setting is arbitrary, unlike many fantasy settings- everything has a history, even if its a history of happenstance. Time and space themselves were imposed on the world by the primordials, who also defined virtues. While borrowing ceaselessly from countless reference material, what makes Exalted an original setting is how it combines such disparate elements by working out cause and effect and fate, interrelations, social and cultural dimensions, and material culture. All histories in Exalted are perspectival and subjective. For me, these elements make it the best and most original fantasy setting since Middle Earth.

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