

# Reality Deviants Book Club: Arthur Machen



## **Adam:**

Hello, Mage fans & welcome to Mage the Podcast. Today we're bringing you another episode of Reality Deviants Book Club. This is the show for people who believe that reality is probably the best bet – but why take chances? If our mood doesn't change, we'll look at recommended media in Mage books to see if they are worth a look. I'm your host Adam & I'm joined again by Pooka. Pooka, are you feeling up to it?

## **Pooka:**

I mean, my instrument is coffee, my practice is gumption, and my paradigm is let's do it. So I guess when in doubt, I have the riff Rote, Mind 1, Time 1. So we'll see what I can do.

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### **Adam:**

That is quotable. I'm sure I'm going to hear that again from another Mage fan. If you're looking for thoughtful, intelligent commentary on books recommended by Mage authors... you need to keep looking. If you're ready to hear us talk smack about a book, you found the right place. If you're ok with rants and hot takes, you're ready for us. Mage the Podcast's legal team states "Opinions expressed on Reality Deviant Book Club really do not express the views of Mage the Podcast. In fact, you probably shouldn't listen to these guys at all." Now I feel like a bad boy. That's just perfect for today's author.

It's been a while since our last book club episode. My responsibilities have taken up so much of my time. Nah! Actually, I lost the key to the liquor cabinet but I found it again so we're bringing you another episode! In a past episode we discussed weird fiction - what it is & where it came from. If you missed it, look for our May 10th, 2025 episode *The King in Yellow*. Today we're going to lay on some more weirdness.

Arthur Machen was a Welsh author who wrote fiction from 1888 to 1936. He grew up in southeastern Wales but lived in London for a while to get paying work as a writer. His real last name was Jones. Makes me think of Terry Jones from Monty Pythons Flying Circus, another Welshman. What is it with eccentric Welshman named Jones? His stories *The White People* & *The Great God Pan* are recommended in *Book of Secrets*, a Mage20 book.

Machen was admired by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle & William Butler Yeats. He was friends with GK Chesterton. The 2 of them hung out together & were in the same book discussion club. GK Chesterton had little to say about Machen's fiction but publicly praised his nonfiction writing. Robert E. Howard, Clark Ashton Smith & HP Lovecraft read him. Stephen King admired his work. Lovecraft praised Machen's fiction in his essays on weird fiction. Getting a little closer to Mage, Machen was a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn where his code name was Avallaunius (man from Avalon). For those listeners with English as a 2nd language, Avalon is a reference to the King Arthur stories which hold a special place in the hearts of many Welsh people.

While alive, his fiction attracted criticism from both orthodox Christians & secular atheists. *Great God Pan* was his first & one of his most famous horror stories. It created outrage which made Machen one of the icons of the fin de siècle Bohemians. He is still excoriated by feminists today

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making him a bad boy in multiple eras. Not many authors can manage that. I tip my hat to the master.

Weird fiction fans consider his best stories to be *The Great God Pan* & *The White People*. An aside here. *The White People* does not mean caucasian people. It means people whose complexion is so pale it looks unhealthy. It was meant to be frightening but today it sounds very different. The general public considers his most popular story to be *The Bowmen*. Most of his fiction is in the public domain now. I read *The Best Weird Fiction & Ghost Stories of Arthur Machen* by Old Style Tales. It offers 13 stories that span from 1890 to 1917. When I read something that is more than 100 years old, I want some explanation. At least a good introduction. Old Style Tales gives me that. In *The Red Hand* the main character tells a friend he will gather information by drinking “4 ale”. I had no idea what that was. A footnote explained 4 ale is cheap ale sold for 4 pence. The main character meant he was going to hang out in pubs in the poor parts of town & ask questions. A good editor can really help you out when the story is 130 years old & from the other side of the Atlantic.

Machen’s weird fiction is known for subtlety. A lot of the action occurs off-camera. Supernatural forces are rarely confronted directly. Machen’s thoughts on the changes society was going through — coming out of the Industrial Revolution & going into World War I connect well to themes emphasized in the early editions of *Mage*. Rather than explain that now, I’m going to let those points come out as we address our standard questions.

A little trivia here. Alfred Hitchcock’s 1963 movie *The Birds* was based on the 1952 short story of the same name by Daphne du Maurier. du Maurier’s story was based on Machen’s story *The Terror* from 1916.

Pooka, do you have any thoughts to share on Arthur Machen or his stories before we address the questions?

### **Pooka:**

I have to say, I didn't know that about Daphne de Maria's *The Birds*, but that's pretty interesting. And I didn't really know much about Arthur Machen before jumping into this, but overall the tales

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gave me a similar sense to those Chambers stories we read about in the *King in Yellow*. So like those, I would say these read to me like a product of their time.

There's a delicate horror, and a horror of veiled illusions written by a well-read middle-class Victorian. To your point about 4 ale, distance from that time period and mindset can lead to confusion around social or cultural references. And there were a number of points when I had to just roll with the narrative a little bit.

Relating to the *Golden Dawn* beyond being admired by Yeats. So I didn't have an annotated edition to read from, but I noted from his biography on Wikipedia that he was also a close friend of Arthur Waite, co-creator of the Rider Waite Smith tarot that's become the standard.

So maybe unlike Chambers, I don't know if Chambers shared this proclivity, it seems like Machen had more robust connections with those circles and more appreciation for mysticism. I do think that comes through in the stories a little bit. The uncanny vibes come from encounters with the ancient and forgotten as much as anything else.

And sometimes it strikes me as a little bit quaint to hear what scandalized people in different eras, because obviously reading this now, something like the *Great God Pan* would probably get PG-13 rating at best.

For the record also, my read on the *White People* is that it refers to the fae or creatures like summoned by an apparent cult or cult-like group of people such as the nurse in the story who seem to be keepers of these ancient secrets. And apparently that one was inspirational for Lovecraft, maybe in the wrong ways.

But not being a particular aficionado of horror, I don't have many points of comparison for whether this is considered an overall good example of it. I have my own guiding lights for the genre.

So anything gothic horror from the 1890s is immediately going to be measured against the turn of the screw by Henry James for me. Therefore, I was largely paying attention to the ideas themselves and the writing quality rather than any feeling of the, i guess, context for what was actually horrific or uncanny in this because a lot of that surely went over my head. I would recommend for anyone who delves into reading these, remember the context in which these stories appeared if you're

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looking to be truly deeply unsettled by them or understand why they had that effect on others. I wish I could give past me that advice, but you know.

### **Adam:**

I wanted to share this Arthur Machen quote to kick off our discussion. “There are sacraments of evil as well as of good about us, and we live and move to my belief in an unknown world, a place where there are caves and shadows and dwellers in twilight. It is possible that man may sometimes return on the track of evolution, and it is my belief that an awful lore is not yet dead.” End quote. Is that a good description of the World of Darkness or what? Now, the questions.

Pooka, what did you like about Machen’s fiction?

### **Pooka:**

He certainly had a thorough imagination, but... I think what I like most is the open-endedness because the incidents that are encountered and discussed within these stories are often outside of human ken. So there's no clear explanation, just a report of what's happened, sometimes with connections made to other incidents, but without a solid unifying theory, though occasionally a character attempts to create one. And that is a good technique for the uncanny, because if you refuse to let something be defined, it becomes uncomfortable for the reader, especially the Victorian reader, who wants or even needs to define and sort things.

The notion of making the strange familiar and vice versa is a central principle of that kind of horror, and Machen measures it out reasonably well. When there's a really vibrantly described scene at the end of *The Great God Pan*, where you do see the action on camera, so to speak, the tension has built up to that moment, so it feels like we've earned it, although the protagonists only kind of get to that point by accident. The stories do give that vibe of ordinary humans rubbing their brains up against the unknowable and suffering the consequences.

And to relate back to that quote you read, the notion of a hidden world and secret lore is one that comes through strongly here. I did love in *The White People*, we get this succession of folk tales almost because it feels like something a nurse would tell her young charge as she initiated her into folk magic. So like they make wax dolls together, they do pagan dances in secret hollows. There's a strong sorcerer vibe to it in World of Darkness terms to me, with the idea of we do these things

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without really knowing how or why they work, but we keep doing them. And we know at some level we have to keep doing them. When that lore is no longer passed on, does it simply vanish or is there some consequence like when you forget to keep a fey oath? For the time in which this was written specifically, there was this separation between the academic study of folklore and the maintenance of tradition, and tension arises between them that I see coming through here.

That is to me very World of Darkness. You have those in the know and those who aren't. I imagine that Machen's upbringing in Wales, surrounded by the ruins that find their way into his work and the stories of King Arthur in his area, all of that must have informed his perspective on what scraps of disconnected knowledge a community might retain. The learned men of his stories try, and often fail, sometimes miserably, to put those scraps together into a coherent whole.

So, yeah, I dug that.

### **Adam:**

I had never read Machen before prepping for this episode but I like his writing. His prose is good, his character dialogue appeals to me. He was skilled in referring obliquely to the frightening deeds of his villains. It got his stories past the censorship of his times but, more importantly, it allows readers to paint terrible pictures in their own minds. JRR Tolkien has been praised for the same technique. The unnamed things in Mordor were scarier than the ones that took center stage.

Machen made the mystery of the supernatural world rich & intriguing. Here's a bit from *The Great God Pan*. "and those who are wise know that all symbols are symbols of something, not of nothing." A very Mage statement! But it goes on. "It was, indeed, an exquisite symbol beneath which men long ago veiled their knowledge of the most awful, most secret forces which lie at the heart of all things; forces before which the souls of men must wither and die and blacken, as their bodies blacken under the electric current. Such forces cannot be named, cannot be spoken, cannot be imagined except under a veil and a symbol, a symbol to the most of us appearing a quaint, poetic fancy, to some a foolish tale."

Finally, I like seeing examples of characters passing from level 1 of the World of Darkness to level 2. I'll explain. I see 4 levels of awareness in the World of Darkness. These are broad categories, not tight definitions. Level 1 is Sleepers. Ordinary people living ordinary lives. Level 2 is clever mortals. People who hunt monsters or get involved in the occult. This would be members of the

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Arcanum, vampire hunters, Society of Leopold, hedge wizards, etc. Level 3 is vampires, werewolves, mages, changelings, like that. Level 4 is Oracles, Technocracy's Control members, elder vampires, umbrood lords, so on. Machen's stories give us characters that become aware of the supernatural for the first time & start looking into it. We see their reactions, their methods, their expectations. This is good material for a ST to use when handling NPCs like contacts, allies & many of the NPCs that show up in your game. When a mage asks a contact for information on Mayan curses for the 2nd time, the contact may get curious & stumble onto the scene when the player confronts the villain. Good scenes can come from that kind of thing. Machen might help you lean into that.

Let's lean into the 2nd question. Pooka, where did the stories fall short for you?

### **Pooka:**

Well, I confess, I think I had a harder time with the writing a style than you did. I just couldn't get into it as easily. And I know that it is typical of the era and the author's background, but the dialogue in particular just often didn't do it for me, especially in *The White People*, where you had this quite dry discourse between two scholarly types as the frame story around this wall of text without paragraph breaks, in my edition at least,

And it felt a little bit like Molly Bloom's chapter at the end of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, but with none of the romance. And that school of writing, maybe like you say, maybe driven by the Victorian and post-Victorian censorship. It's like the author lays down dots and the reader must connect them, but doing so requires having a clear sense of what the picture is likely to be.

So yeah, for me, I think the horror lies in implication and lack of explanation more than an actual description or illusion. So it was a little too oblique for my taste. And although I appreciated the stylistic variety between the stories, for the most part, they didn't hit a stride that I could get into.

Probably the one which fell smoothest in the moment was the *Great God Pan*. And even that suffered from a somewhat arcane structure, like we kind of jump from scene to scene without much connection.

The other thing that kind of rankled me as I read related to that bifurcation of folklore piece that I mentioned. This Victorian ethos where the good and righteous is set against the foul and decadent,

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which naturally here has more than a few ties with Orientalism. I think like the Arabian Nights gets named dropped a couple of times as a corruptive text. So what I often associate more with Puritan writing is that link between purity and civilization, urbanization, the masculine, etc., while impurity ties into pagan superstition with wilderness and the feminine.

And I feel like I shouldn't ding these stories too hard for this because it is an established tradition in the literature. Machen was just writing what a lot of other people were writing. But I guess I was hoping for something a little more nuanced because he was writing near the end of Romanticism before the transition into Modernism.

And it felt like you got almost the worst of both worlds at times. His work doesn't step away from naturalism into mysticism enough to feel truly fantastic to me while retaining symbolism that isn't especially novel.

And his experiments with writing style, it's just ways that didn't fully land for me. But I give him props for trying. Okay.

### **Adam:**

I was a little disappointed to see supernatural forces as primarily evil - the ones that were interested in humanity, anyways. For example in *The Novel of the Black Seal* the dark, cosmic forces rearranged professor Gregg's office decorations to send a clear message: fire your interior decorator. No, wait. Your entire world order is about to change. I think that was it. In *The World of Darkness*, supernatural forces are both good & evil. Removing the supernatural can increase safety but also drains vitality from the world. Machen made one exception. *The Great Return* was a story of supernatural occurrences in Wales that brought peace & healing. That was a heart-warming tale that I enjoyed.

The people in Machen's stories cannot use supernatural power. The best they can do to fight evil is with clean living & a properly ordered society. Then supernatural evil has little opportunity to cause trouble. This is another difference from *The World of Darkness*.

Finally, this is probably a good spot to look at the upper class in Machen's fiction. There are a number of minor nobility characters with wealth & other privileges. I don't think Machen was trying to make any particular statement about the upper classes. I got the impression it was more

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about plausibility. At the start of the 20th century in Britain, upper class people had the time to follow current events by reading the newspapers & the time to investigate. They could take a few days off to travel, follow clues & cover their own expenses. The common classes had to work 6 days a week or they wouldn't have dinner. Helen Vaughn preys on upper class men in *The Great God Pan* but again, I don't think this is hinting at the depravity of the upper class. They were the people who had the time to attend Helen's decadent entertainments. The common people didn't have the money to be epicureans & certainly didn't have the time to spend entire evenings at fancy dinners.

Next question. Pooka, did these stories give you any ideas for your Mage games?

### **Pooka:**

I mean, your comment on the interior decorator makes me think I want to introduce the Nephandus of mid-century modern or something. But yeah, aside from that, zooming in on the *Great God Pan* as his, I guess, best known or best loved story. So, the opening really goes to show how amoral Etherites can be. You've got this mad scientist character. Essentially, he's got a young ward who he's groomed for a lobotomy in order to prove a pet theory. You could, I guess, make him a Progenitor if that makes more sense. And then the character of Helen, who comes up later in the story, she could be a nephandus, a marauder, a Verbena. But for all of the griping that I've done on this podcast about Victorian Mage and how it harps on its themes more than I really feel is necessary, this story actually makes an excellent framework for that setting because you have the stuffy hermetics, that's how I see the the protagonists in the story. I guess they could be Technocratic Union. And they discuss with increasing urgency how their number appear to have their lives ruined one by one by this mysterious woman who they can't even comprehend, let alone figure out how exactly to stop.

They get lucky, but that to me ties into Victorian Mage's, I don't know, ethos of tearing down those established traditions. There's also a lot to do with place in these stories. Characters wander around isolated glades or mysterious holy wells or ancient unidentifiable ruins, and they're overtaken by emotions and premonitions and whatnot. And sometimes there are mysterious beings who creep around those places. So I could see myself running a game inspired by these stories where some group of hedge magicians who don't really know anything about the Umbra or spirits find a Shallowing in one of those places. And they're desperately trying to put together what they do know into something that can help them cope. Because fundamentally, these stories also point

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out the human cost, which is something I like to foreground in my Mage games. People go mad, children die, magic is not hazard-free, and that's easier to get across in a game where the player characters have less direct control or insight into it, kind of like Call of Cthulhu to an extent.

As a sidebar, there is an NPC in the Bizarre Tales and Unusual Characters book for Victorian Mage who has gone mad from summoning otherworldly beings from a place called the White Hill in Wales. And I wonder if there was any inspiration from these stories. So I'd like to go back and look at that.

Lastly, I think you want to talk about The Bowmen later, but that is a perfect example of an Entropy 5 Time 5 effect. Tell a story about something that's happened so well that it becomes retroactively true. Like who needs Everett volumes? That's how you get alternate universes.

### **Adam:**

That's very clever. I'm going to remember that.

Something that stuck with me was the Black Heaven, an object from the story The Red Hand. It would make a great plot element. It's a black stone tablet 4 inches tall by 2 & a half inches wide. Finely etched whorls represent stars in a pattern with strange carving like cuneiform. I want to write a story around that.

A number of Machen's tales give us examples of low-powered investigations. People without Sphere magic like acolytes or Contacts finding ways to find out just what's going on. The Great God Pan especially has methods of sleuthing you can play out with players using acolyte characters in a troupe-style game or techniques used by Allies & Contacts that get them into trouble. Mage players can then go rescue them. The Pulp stories for The Shadow & Doc Savage often use the technique of sending out helpers to investigate a number of clues at the same time. When someone doesn't report back fast enough, see if the helper is in trouble. Machen's stories can help you with the details of what the Contacts were trying before they got into trouble.

Pooka, did these stories give you any insights into the world of Mage?

### **Pooka:**

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A couple, but is the Black Heaven a cell phone? Four inches tall by two and a half wide. That sounds like a cell phone to me, smartphone.

Yeah, World of Mage. So something I wrote in my notes was Apollonian versus Dionysian, which is a binary I don't love, but it felt useful for thinking about these stories.

And I don't know that we get a clear division along those lines in the game, maybe closed paradigm versus open or high ritualists versus more instinctive mages. But it makes me consider, for example, the differences between the Traditions, Akashic and Ecstatic, Etherite and Dream Speaker, Hermetic and Verbena.

The Technocracy, maybe has largely stamped out the more instinctive tendencies, but even they have some divisions between the more methodical types and the more reactive ones. So iteration X versus Syndicate or Void Engineer, maybe.

I'm not really sure what to do with that line of thought, except in a narrative sense, create some kind of justification for alignments or rivalries between groups within the Traditions or across the battle lines of the Ascension War.

Another piece is I'm torn between deciding whether this is more relevant to hedge magic or mythic threads. But basically, it's this idea for all of the Order of Reason slash Technocratic Union slash modern Technocracy's ongoing attempts to suppress old lore, bits of it creep through in stories that circulate, in rhymes whose meanings are forgotten, and in old volumes hidden in the back of desks.

The irony is that the academic tools that the Technocracy espouses are useful for uncovering the roots and purposes of those scraps which survive. And as we know from playing Mage, whether or not they're effective is partially or largely a matter of convincing some number of people that they are, along with what you're trying to do with them.

So the nurse who teaches her charge to summon fairies or find a husband or whatever it is they're doing with wax dolls, it seems to work. The question I guess becomes, what slips under the radar of consensus? Or how narrow a field of consensus can you create in which you can tug those threads?

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I think Machen was actually pretty conscious of this as he wrote, since it's the kind of thing you see in mystery traditions and occult orders like the ones he participated in. I imagine that that may have had some influence on the development of the game setting. Maybe. Perhaps.

### **Adam:**

I did get some of the insight I've been after. When I started this book club series, I wanted to get a clearer idea of the concepts Stewart Wieck had in mind when he started Mage. The editor for my Machen collection explained at the turn of the century in Britain quote "Spirituality, religion, intuition, emotion, sensuality, premonition, expressiveness, and awe were traits that the intellectual establishment reviled as womanly, backwards, and uncivilized." End quote. This is the Technocracy that the early editions of Mage was talking about. However, this is not the Technocracy that Revised Edition was talking about.

Machen believed humanity had a sort of vestigial evil lurking in the back of men's minds. Traditional culture, religion & customs kept it at bay but the upheaval of society that the Industrial Revolution & the educated elite brought removed the protections. The Traditions of 1st Edition didn't want every part of society to return to the past but there were some elements of the past worth preserving. When Revised Edition stated the Traditions want to turn back the clock, it was a gross oversimplification.

What we rarely see is a recognition that mage society, as depicted in the first 2 editions, was a necessity to keep mages out of trouble. They couldn't talk freely with the unAwakened & got too narrow minded with only their own faction. Establishing social bonds with other awakened allowed mages to avoid the unhealthy pull of supernatural temptations. Machen was aware of the same need to avoid isolation.

Did Machen's fiction inspire you to try something new in your Mage games, Pooka?

### **Pooka:**

I keep circling back to hedge magic, so I suppose it inspires me to try something deeper with that. Conceptually, the Great God Pan as an umbrood stalking at the edges of hermetic Chantries also has some appeal, but I'd probably change the nature of how he's summoned and how he engages with the fleshly world. Playing off The Bowmen and adding a dash of the King in Yellow, if I were

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doing a longer running Chronicle, I might subtly introduce a story into the mix that the player characters, contacts or allies mentioned reading or hearing about, then slowly have the content of that story retroactively feed into and alter the backstory of the Chronicle. It's the kind of thing which would have to unfold over multiple sessions and then ultimately raises the question, what if the players learn how to do this?

Sort of a pop literature retcon wrote. And I keep saying I want to find more avenues to explore for a Victorian game, so this does lead me to think about trying that as a backdrop for ideas like that. Dare I say, this is a variation on street level, heavy quotes, for that setting, which suits me at least.

How about you?

### **Adam:**

2 of Machen's stories were about an evil force scheming to use a young woman to give birth to them in the physical world. That way they don't have to use the spirit Gift Embody & burn power to have a brief time on Earth. It would work around the issue & give them their own physical body for as long as they like. As a ST I hadn't thought of this. I was thinking of Shallowings & manipulating human cults to have rituals making their crossover easier but a custom-made physical body? There's an idea. There are several classic horror movies where something evil pretends to be a regular child. The movie's protagonist says "We've got to do something about that child!" While the other characters are saying "Buddy, you're crazy."

This is probably a good point to mention a number of critics have accused Machen of having a negative attitude towards women in his fiction. After reading a number of his stories & the editor's commentary, I'm inclined to agree with the editor's view that Machen wasn't pushing a negative view of women or of sexual freedom. Helen Vaughn, the villain in *The Great God Pan*, does have many romantic partners &, because of her money, a degree of independence that was rare for turn of the century women. But that isn't what makes her the villain. Those critical of Machen don't mention Helen's many crimes & her severe disconnection from the social fabric that was a common part of people's lives at that time. Being a secretive loner enabled her to carry out her crimes &, it appears, made her so miserable that she surrendered to her unhappy end at the climax. I think the points Machen was making were, first, being a part of the regular social

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network helped people stay out of danger. Second, women & young people would be the first to suffer when people aren't taking care of each other & protecting their communities.

So, Pooka. Does Machen's fiction belong on the Mage recommended reading list?

### **Pooka:**

Well, as you know, I'm pretty open about those readings and think you can justify almost anything on the Mage list, but I think I'd be very selective about which stories to include and in which contexts. It's early right now, so I'm hard-pressed to say, yes, this one for this kind of game, but I'll say yes for now and leave it there. And maybe by the time this goes out, I'll have a clear sense of which specific works would be good for which editions or types of Chronicle.

What I will quickly put out there, from the perspective of these are good stories for highlighting the limits of amateur mage knowledge, I would pair this with Revised Edition Sorcerer because the down-to-earth take on hedge magicians in that book, it's my favorite one of the bunch for doing that.

If I could port that book and its sensibilities into Victorian Mage, particularly, I would say Machen on the reading list could work for that. It could work for low-powered mages proper, but I think even like an Arete 1 or 2 mage would have had their eyes too opened to the nature of the universe to be drawn along the way the characters in these stories are. And I do think these stories work best with that little bit of knowledge is power, but you don't have the knowledge you need.

### **Adam:**

For its inspiration for good World of Darkness stories & for its treatment of Mage concepts, I say it belongs on the reading list. Although Machen's views on society's troubles apply better to 1st Edition than Mage 20, there is one story that lines up with paradigm discussions very well.

The Bowmen was published in The Evening News on Sep. 29th, 1914 as fiction. It was based on rumors heard from the British retreat from Mons, Belgium in August. Like many weird fiction stories of the time, it was written to sound like a true account. It starts out as a fake news report. It was far more popular than expected. It was often reprinted as The Angels of Mons. Conspiracy theorists accused Machen of publishing it to discredit soldiers' accounts of divine intervention.

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Others accused Machen of being part of a conspiracy to cover up British defeats in World War I. Machen was both amused & annoyed by the runaway success of the story. After the story was published, there were claims that bodies of dead German soldiers were found with arrow wounds in them. Machen claimed he considered adding that detail to his story but considered it “over the top”. The Bowmen drew a strong connection to the Battle of Agincourt which stirred both British patriotism & sense of history.

It is easy to draw parallels between this & the story of Czar Vargo in the first Sons of Ether Tradition book. A major event occurs during wartime. It is reported differently. People remember it differently. People aren't sure if they should trust their memories or the official report & that is hard because the official report is in doubt. I enjoyed having another example of introducing manipulation of the Consensus into my games. And this example carries weight because it really happened. Did spirits of Britain's past warriors aid Britain's soldiers in their hour of need? Pooka & I have the inside scoop but it would be irresponsible of us to just blurt it out in a podcast. You'll have to determine the truth in your own games.

Speaking of the truth. Listeners, do you want to hear the truth about the global banking conspiracy? I'm ready to... Pooka's texting me. What is...? Well, listeners. We've come to the end of another Reality Deviants Book Club. If you suspect the Great God Pan is trying to get a foothold in your neighborhood, Machen's stories might give you the hints you need. If this episode has brought your whole outlook on life into question, join the club. For our next episode, we go back to the movies to discuss Dark City. Sounds like a cheery place.

Until then, don't forget to mention Reality Deviants Book Club in your conversations. You won't get any odd looks. This episode is a part of Mage the Podcast. Well, until they get serious about quality control. If you would like to tell us how wrong we are, send an email to [magethepodcast@gmail.com](mailto:magethepodcast@gmail.com). You can subscribe to Mage the Podcast on iTunes, Google Play, TuneIn & other aggregators. If you liked the show, & don't worry about what others think, you can leave a review online. Those reviews help other people find the show in their searches &, as the folks downstairs say, there's always room for one more. You can follow us on social media. We'll put Mastodon & BlueSky links in the show notes. We're on the Web at [MageThePodcast.com](http://MageThePodcast.com). We're on YouTube. There's a link in the show notes but just search for “mage the podcast” & you'll find us there. If you would like to become an executive producer for this podcast a link in the show notes will help you do that. No one would blame you for Reality Deviants Bookclub.

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Thanks, everyone, for listening. Until next time, Truth Until Paradox, baby!