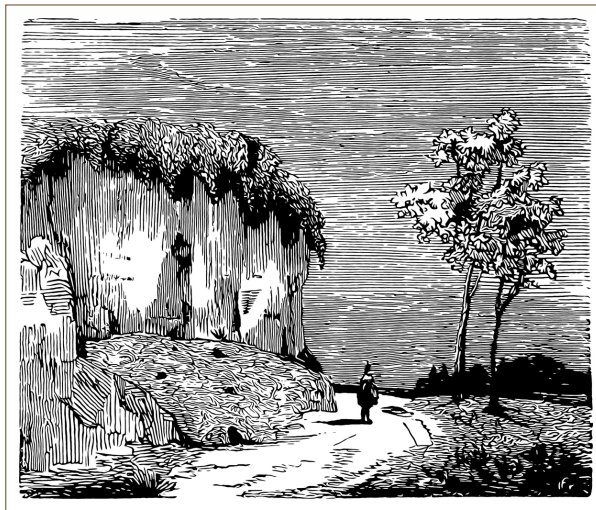


WIZARDS & LIZARDS

MAGIC TRADITIONS

A WIZARDS & LIZARDS SUPPLEMENT



B E T A

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The base rules already run magic: hold a source, mark 1 stress, roll Will, read the three bands, and on a Failure it turns on the caster (see Magic in the SRD). That is a complete, colorless engine for the supernatural. A **tradition** is what gives one setting's magic its own face: where the power comes from, what it costs **beyond** that marked stress, and the particular way it goes wrong.

This rung is the framework for building a tradition and five ready ones to drop in or reskin. It adds no new dice, and, importantly, **no new tracks**: each tradition's distinctive cost is carried by machinery the engine already has, stress, the condition track, a clock, a lasting mark, a downtime project.

WHAT A TRADITION SETS

Extending the SRD's "Authoring a Tradition," a tradition names five things:

1. **The source**, and the cost of holding it (a grimoire in a slot, an implant that fills a slot for good, a pact, a reagent lab).
2. **The casting attribute** (Will by default; a lore-magic might cast on Wits).
3. **The cost of a casting** beyond the base stress (below).
4. **The flavor of "wrong"**, the signature the Failure line wears.
5. **A sample spell list**, each spell three band-lines (Magic).

THE COST LEVERS

Pick **one** distinctive cost per tradition, on top of or in place of the base stress. That one cost is the tradition's identity; do not stack them.

- **Stress** (the base): renewable, capped at five, wounds you when full. The default, and the whole cost of the plainest magic.
- **A wound** (the condition track): power bought with the body, a step of harm to cast. Grim and immediate.
- **A clock**: a debt that fills and comes due (a pact, a creeping corruption). Cheap now, dear later.
- **A lasting mark** (like a lasting hurt): a scar of mind or body that fills a pack slot and bites until it is dealt with. The price of dabbling in the wrong things.
- **A downtime project** (see Downtime): magic prepared ahead, not conjured in the moment. Slow, deliberate, and portable once made.

FIVE TRADITIONS

ARCANE (THE RENEWABLE BASELINE)

- **Source:** a grimoire (a slot). **Attribute:** Will. **Cost:** the base 1 stress.
- **Wrong:** backlash, the Failure turns the spell on the caster or the room.
- **Spells:** the worked list in the SRD's Magic chapter (Mend, Bolt, Grasp, Veil, Ward) is arcane as written. This is the tradition to hand a table that just wants a wizard.

ELDRITCH (DREAD)

Forbidden lore that answers, and looks back.

- **Source:** a black book or a remembered word (a slot). **Attribute:** Wits or Will.
- **Cost:** 1 stress, and a **Failure marks you with a dread** (a lasting mark): you roll a die worse near the uncanny until you face down what you saw. Dread heals like a lasting hurt, slowly, in downtime.
- **Wrong:** the thing you reached for reaches back.
- **Spells:**
 - **Whisper of the Void** — *Success:* a true, useful secret. *Partial:* you learn it and it lodges (a stress). *Failure:* it answers with your name (a dread).
 - **Unmaking Word** — *Success:* a step of harm through any armor. *Partial:* the step lands and the air curdles, everyone near gains a stress. *Failure:* it unmakes something of yours instead.
 - **Ward of Names** — *Success:* the uncanny cannot cross for a scene. *Partial:* it holds, barely (a stress). *Failure:* the ward invites what it should bar.

ALCHEMY (BREWS)

Magic made ahead in a lab, carried in a vial, spent later.

- **Source:** a reagent kit and a lab (the lab is a haven facility or a downtime need). **Attribute:** Wits. **Cost:** a **downtime project** to brew a batch; using a dose in play is automatic.
- **Wrong:** the three bands are read on the **brewing**, not the drinking. *Success:* a clean batch of several doses. *Partial:* a batch with a flaw (fewer doses, or a side effect). *Failure:* a bad batch that sets a **taint** in the brewer, a lasting mark that mutates.
- **Spells (elixirs):**
 - **Vigor Draught** — drunk, mend a step.
 - **Corrosive** — eats a lock, a hinge, a suit of armor, or deals a step.
 - **Grey Smoke** — a vial conceals a scene, unseen and unheard for a minute.

PACT (THE PATRON)

Power lent by a bound thing that always, always collects.

- **Source:** a true name and a bargain (no slot; the debt is the cost). **Attribute:** Will. **Cost:** casting is **cheap** (0 or 1 stress, the patron pays the rest), but each casting **ticks the pact clock**. When it fills, **the patron collects:** a task set, a boon owed, a mark taken, and until it is paid, no more power.
- **Wrong:** the patron grants exactly what you asked, twisted to its own ends.
- **Spells:** the patron can grant nearly anything within its nature; write three effects it favors and read them on the bands, with a Partial ticking the pact clock **twice** and a Failure letting the patron choose the outcome.

BLOOD (VITALITY)

No book, no bargain, only what you are willing to spend of yourself.

- **Source:** your own life; anyone can work it, which is why it is feared. **Attribute:** any that fits the working. **Cost:** a **wound** (a step of harm) per casting, in place of stress. **Overcharge:** spend extra steps for a proportionally greater effect.
- **Wrong:** a Failure takes more than you offered, another step, or it spills onto an ally.
- **Spells:**
 - **Blood Bolt** — a step spent for two steps of harm at range.
 - **Blood Mend** — a step of your own to heal an ally two steps.
 - **Crimson Surge** — overcharge: each step spent buys a die on a physical feat this turn (a real bargain, and a short road to Dying).

FOR AUTHORS

Choose the **one** cost that says what your magic *is*, write the Failure line so it bites in that tradition's voice, and give three or four spells as three-band lines. Reach for a new track only if none of stress, a wound, a clock, a mark, or a project can carry the price, and it almost always can. A setting may run one tradition or several side by side; each caster works the one their source and training grant.