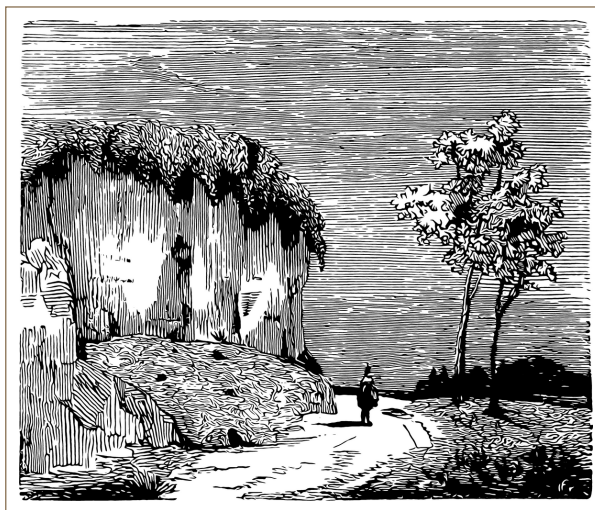


WIZARDS & LIZARDS

PLAYBOOKS

A WIZARDS & LIZARDS SUPPLEMENT



B E T A

Version 0.12 · not yet playtested

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CONTENTS

1. What a Playbook Grants	2
2. Advancement	2
3. Building a Playbook (for authors)	3
4. Four Playbooks (genre-neutral)	3
5. An Optional Caster	4
6. Balance: playbooks make a stronger party	4

The base engine makes a character from four attributes, a background, a kit, and a vice, and lets everyone try anything. That is enough for a whole campaign. A table that wants **defined roles**, the sworn shield who is simply better in a fight, the scout nobody hears, the adept who bends the world, bolts this rung on: a **playbook** is a small package that gives an archetype a reliable specialty and a trick or two, laid over the same base character.

Use playbooks for the **whole party or none**. A playbook character outclasses a freeform one in their specialty, so mixing the two is lopsided, and a playbook party needs tougher encounters (see the balance note at the end).

WHAT A PLAYBOOK GRANTS

A playbook is layered on the ordinary character (keep the four attributes, the vice, stress, and rank). It adds four things, no more:

1. **A calling.** One line naming the role. It works like a broad background: it grants permission across its whole domain, not just one trade.
2. **An edge.** In the calling's **narrow specialty** (its one core act), the character rolls a **standing extra die**, always, on top of attribute and situation (still capped at five). This is the archetype being reliably good at the one thing it is *for*, and it is the deliberate exception to the base engine's rule that advancement is never a bigger pool (The Engine): a playbook trades that minimalism for a defined role.
3. **A move.** One archetype ability the base engine cannot do, almost always a **stress spend**. A move is one clear thing: a trigger, a cost, an effect. It is the engine's answer to a class power, kept to a single sentence.
4. **Access.** What the role simply has: armor, a magic source, a kit of the right tools, a web of contacts. Access turns a whole class of rolls into right-tool rolls, or unlocks something (like wearing the heavy armor that stops two wounds).

ADVANCEMENT

A playbook grows on the rank the starter already awards (Novice → Expert → Master; see Characters). The base rank rerolls still apply; reaching a rank also grants a **playbook pick**:

- **Expert:** take a **second move**.
- **Master:** take a **third move**, or **master your edge**: in your specialty, a **4 also counts as gold**, so your signature act lands clean far more often.

That is the whole growth arc a playbook adds. Heavier progression (skill trees, many picks per level) is a separate rung, not this one.

BUILDING A PLAYBOOK (FOR AUTHORS)

1. **Name the calling and its specialty.** The specialty must be narrow: the one core act the edge covers (a stand-up fight, moving unseen, working your power), not a whole attribute. If the edge would apply to most of a character's rolls, it is too broad.
2. **Write one move.** A stress spend that does something the base rules cannot: redirect a blow, turn a Partial into a Success under a condition, grant an ally a die, ask a true thing. Keep it to one sentence and one cost.
3. **Grant access** that fits the fiction and unlocks or cheapens a class of rolls.
4. **List the Expert/Master picks** (usually one or two more moves, plus the edge mastery).
5. **Suggest a +1 attribute** so the archetype's edge and attribute point the same way.

Keep a playbook to a short block. If it needs a table or a page, it is two rungs, not one.

FOUR PLAYBOOKS (GENRE-NEUTRAL)

Reskin freely: a Vanguard is a knight, a line trooper, or a bodyguard; a Sneak is a thief, a scout, or a corporate infiltrator.

The Vanguard (*lean +1 Might*) - **Calling:** violence met head-on, and the line held. - **Edge:** in a stand-up fight, roll a standing extra die. - **Access:** trained in any armor, including the heavy sort that turns aside **two** wounds a fight. - **Move — Hold the Line** (1 stress): until your next turn, a blow aimed at an ally beside you lands on you instead; your armor applies. - **Picks:** *Bulwark* (1 stress: an ally you are guarding also ignores the first wound this fight); *Wade In* (1 stress: ignore the outnumbered penalty for a turn).

The Sneak (*lean +1 Agility*) - **Calling:** going where you should not, unseen, and getting past what is in the way. - **Edge:** moving unseen or beating a barrier, roll a standing extra die. - **Access:** the tools of the trade (picks, cutters, climbing kit), which make a barrier a right-tool job. - **Move — First Strike** (1 stress): a blow from surprise or against an unready foe counts as a Success even on a Partial, and fells a Lesser or Common foe outright. - **Picks:** *Ghost* (1 stress: after you act, you are not where they look); *Sleight* (1 stress: you already palmed or planted the small thing in question).

The Savant (*lean +1 Wits*) - **Calling:** knowing, making, mending; the one who understands the machine, the wound, or the old lore. (A caster with no dedicated Adept lives here.) - **Edge:** recalling lore, tinkering, or field medicine, roll a standing extra die. - **Access:** a working kit (tools, medicines, references) and the standing to have studied the matter at hand. - **Move — Patch Up** (2 stress or a spent supply): mend an ally a step up the condition track, short of the dead. **Or — Figure It Out** (1 stress): ask the referee one true, useful thing about how something works, honestly answered. - **Picks:** the other of the two moves above; *Jury-Rig* (1 stress: for one scene, a makeshift tool counts as the right one).

The Voice (*lean +1 Will*) - **Calling:** reading people and moving them, by command, charm, or lie. - **Edge:** reading or swaying a person, roll a standing extra die. - **Access:** contacts, a name in most places who owes or fears you (named in play). - **Move — Rally** (1 stress): a word, a plan, a distraction gives an ally a die on their next roll. - **Picks:** *Read the Room* (1 stress: ask one true thing about a person's want or a place's mood); *Cold Read* (once a scene, treat a stranger as a contact).

AN OPTIONAL CASTER

Magic runs on the base engine already (hold a source, mark stress, roll Will; see Magic), so any character can dabble. A setting with real magic may want a dedicated playbook:

The Adept (*lean +1 Will; settings with power only*) - **Calling:** working the setting's strange power and paying its price. - **Edge:** when working your power, roll a standing extra die (so your castings go wrong far less than a dabbler's). - **Access:** a **source** and two effects written as three-band spells (Magic). - **Move — the power itself** (mark 1 stress, roll Will, read the three bands). - **Picks:** a third effect; *Anchor* (spend a component so a lasting effect survives a rest); at Master, edge mastery (a 4 counts as gold when you cast).

BALANCE: PLAYBOOKS MAKE A STRONGER PARTY

A playbook party fights and works **a rung above** a freeform one in its specialty: a Vanguard's fight-edge alone is worth about what a good position is worth, which the sim shows turns a boss from a real threat into a comfortable win. So when the party uses playbooks, **scale the opposition up:** read the guidance in Running the Game (Tuning the Difficulty) as **one step harsher** for them, lean on tiers and numbers a notch higher, and remember their edges are narrow, so press them **outside** their specialties, where they are ordinary people like anyone else.