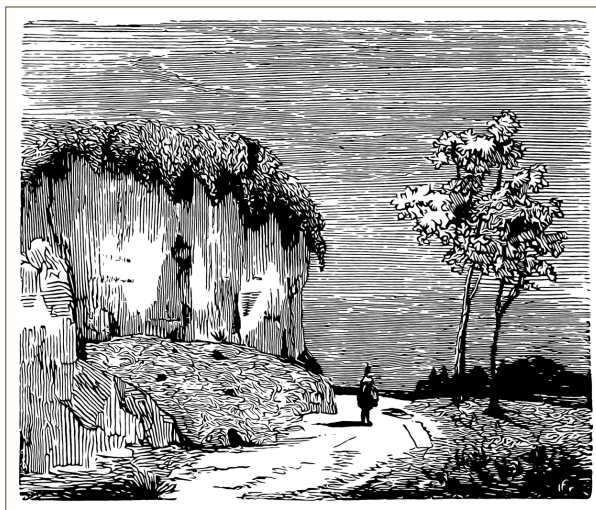


WIZARDS & LIZARDS

ARCANE SORCERY

A WIZARDS & LIZARDS SUPPLEMENT



B E T A

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Jon Mayo. PUBLIC DOMAIN (CC0-1.0)

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Arcane sorcery draws magic from **mana**, an inner reservoir of power the caster spends and refills. It is the gentlest of the alternative sources: renewable, personal, and forgiving, magic as a resource you manage rather than a price you pay. This makes it the natural first read of the family (see *Alternative Magic Systems* for the framework), the baseline the harsher sources deviate away from.

This supplement swaps the core's **stress** fuel for a **mana pool** and its **falter** for **mana burn**. Everything else, the 3d6 ladder, the four magnitudes, magical harm, durations, the dry-caster poke, stands exactly as the core book and the SRD's authoring notes describe. If a rule is not below, it is unchanged.

THE MANA POOL

An arcane caster has a **mana pool** of 4 + **Wits** points, drawn as a row of boxes on the sheet. **Wits** is the arcane casting attribute, so the pool and the casting roll lean on the same mind. Spend mana to cast; refill on a rest.

Magnitude	Mana	What it does
Cantrip	0	A trick, at will. Never spends mana.
Spell	1	One real effect now: a bolt, a condition on one foe, a ward, a useful working.
Greater spell	2	An area, several targets, strong control, a big effect.
Ritual	0	Slow and safe, out of a fight. Costs time, never mana.

On a **partial (9–12)** you take the reduced effect free, or spend **+1 mana** for the full result. As always, the buy is optional; a dry caster simply takes the lesser outcome.

A full pool of 4–7 points buys **4–7 Spells or 2–3 Greater spells** before it empties, the same burst a stress caster gets. A hard fight will drain it, and that is the point: the arcane caster is a burst engine, dangerous early and running on fumes late.

RECOVERY

Mana **refills completely on a rest**, the same rest that clears stress. A brief pause in safety (a breather, not a full rest) refills **half the pool, rounded down**. Mana is the most renewable of the sources; the caster wakes each morning at full strength.

MANA POTIONS (OPTIONAL)

A classic of the genre, and a GM dial worth understanding before you turn it on: a **mana potion** is a draught that restores mana on the spot. Drink one as an action to recover **2 mana** at once, even in the middle of a fight.

What they are really for is **turning coin into magic**. A mana potion is bought or brewed, never found lying about, and priced as real treasure. In a campaign with a growing purse (see the downtime and stronghold supplements) they make an excellent **gold sink**: the wizard is the one party member who can pour a fortune into consumables and feel every copper well spent. Wealth that would otherwise pile up flows back out across the alchemist's bench.

The balancing consequence, stated plainly: **mana potions trade the caster's burst limit for endurance**. An arcane caster is balanced against the martials precisely because the pool runs dry and drops them to the Arcane Spark. A caster who refills mid-fight for coin is no longer burst; they are as durable as their purse is deep. Turn potions on with eyes open, and keep the brake with two limits:

- **Price them dear.** A mana potion should cost about what a fine weapon does. If the party can carry ten, the brake is gone; scarcity is the balance.
- **Cap the pour.** A caster takes full benefit from only **one** mana potion per fight. A second in the same scene restores just 1 mana and pushes **1 stress**, the body rebels at flooding the well. A potion stays a clutch play, never a fountain.

A potion also pulls a caster back from **mana burn** (below): drink before you overdraw, if you can spare the action.

Brewing them. A mana potion is the natural work of an **Alchemist** (see the *Alchemy* supplement's **Brew Elixirs** ritual). A party with its own alchemist turns reagents and downtime into the wizard's fuel, and the two economies lock together: the alchemist pays taint at the bench so the sorcerer can spend coin in the field.

MANA BURN (THE OVERFILL)

When you must pay mana you do not have, you may **overdraw**: cast the spell anyway and tear the power from your own body. For **each point you could not pay**, take **4 unavoidable magical harm** (it ignores armor; it is your own magic turned inward), and your pool **cannot recover on a breather** until your next full rest. The spell resolves normally.

Overdrawing a Spell from an empty pool costs 4 harm; forcing a Greater spell costs 8, a heavy bite out of a caster's Hit Points but not, by itself, a killing blow. If mana burn drops you to 0, the spell still lands as you fall. Overdraw is a desperate last cast, not a tactic. It is the arcane echo of falter: painful, memorable, and survivable.

THE DRY EMBER: ARCANES SPARK

Every arcane bundle grants **Arcane Spark**, the at-will minor attack for when the pool is dry. One action, a single-target crackle of raw force for **2 magical harm** (ignoring armor), rolled to hit like any attack. It never outclasses a real weapon or the bolt; it is the floor that keeps an empty caster in the fight without letting them coast. Re flavor it freely, a spat spark, a flick of frost, a static jolt, but hold the cap.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A PLAYBOOK

Arcane sorcery suits a range of archetypes; build the specific one your setting wants. The shared spine:

- **Casting attribute: Wits.** Lean the L1 attribute grant toward Wits (the +2), which keeps the caster from also being the party's strong or commanding voice.
- **Spellcasting Advanced Action**, named in voice (the *Weave*, the *Art*, the *Recitation*). Grant a starting bundle: one cantrip, the **Arcane Bolt**, and one ritual, plus **Arcane Spark** as the dry-caster poke.
- **The mana pool** (4 + Wits) drawn on the sheet, with the mana-burn line.
- **Thin armor, soft in melee.** No mail. The sorcerer is glass: burst damage and utility, quick to empty, quick to fall if caught. That fragility is the balance.
- **Speed 2**, baseline. Mobility is not their niche.
- **A niche to name and a lack to name.** The arcane caster does area, range, and utility better than anyone, and deliberately lacks staying power, armor, and a reliable answer once the pool is dry.

Setting-appropriate flavors, same spine, different dress:

- **Academy Wizard.** High-magic, book-taught, formal. Signature: a controlling Greater spell (Web, Slow). Fits a world of colleges and licensed magic.
- **Wild Sorcerer.** Innate, untaught power. Signature: a bolt with an unruly rider on an 18+. Fits a world where magic is a birthright and a danger.
- **Elementalist.** Bound to one element. Trade breadth for depth: fewer spells, but the element's spells hit a step harder. Fits an elemental cosmology.

SAMPLE SPELL LIST: A SORCERER'S ARCANUM

A ready-to-use arcane catalog, sorted by magnitude. Copy chosen entries onto a spell-book sheet. Damage numbers are the L1 default; a playbook's damage step raises them as the caster levels. All damage is **magical harm**.

CANTRIPS (FREE, AT WILL)

- **Arcane Spark.** The dry-caster poke: 2 magical harm to one target, ignoring armor. One action, rolled to hit.
- **Magelight.** A floating light follows you, lighting a room. Personal; fades if it leaves your hand's reach.
- **Prestidigitation.** A trivial flourish: chill a cup, snuff a candle, clean a garment, sound a chime. No harm, no deceit that matters.
- **Read Magic.** Puzzle out a rune, a sigil, or the gist of an arcane script you study for a moment.

- **Ghost Sound.** Throw a brief, minor sound (a footstep, a whisper, a knock) to a spot you can see. Cannot form clear words.

SPELLS (1 MANA)

- **Arcane Bolt.** The workhorse: a ranged bolt of force for 4 magical harm, ignoring armor. On 18+, it also shoves the target back a space.
- **Frost Grip.** 3 magical harm to one foe and it is **Slowed** until end of its next turn.
- **Mage Armor.** *Concentration.* A shell of force reduces the next incoming harm each round by 2 while you hold it.
- **Jolt.** A close burst staggers one adjacent foe (**Staggered**, brief) and deals 2 magical harm.
- **Feather Fall.** You (or one subject you touch) drift down from any height, taking no falling harm. *Immediate*, reactive.
- **Detect Magic.** Sense active magic nearby and roughly how strong; does not name it.
- **Unseen Hand.** A phantom hand lifts, drags, or fetches a light object within sight, or works a simple latch or lever. *Concentration.*

GREATER SPELLS (2 MANA)

- **Fireball.** A blast fills a zone (or a 5 m radius): 4 magical harm to everyone in it. *Loud*; everything nearby hears it.
- **Lightning.** A bolt strikes a line to one distant target: 4 magical harm, **unavoidable** (ignores static Defense and armor).
- **Web.** *Concentration.* A zone fills with clinging strands; creatures in it are **Entangled** until they tear free.
- **Fly.** *Concentration.* One subject flies at their Speed while you hold focus.
- **Counterspell.** *Reaction.* As a foe casts, roll against them; on a success their spell fizzles and its cost is wasted.
- **Wall of Force.** *Concentration.* A shimmering barrier seals a passage or divides a zone; nothing crosses while you hold it.

RITUALS (TIME, NO MANA)

- **Arcane Lock.** *Anchored (chalk and silver).* Seal a door or chest; it holds until dispelled or the ward is broken.
- **Scry.** Watch a distant place or person you have a connection to, for a scene.
- **Sending.** Speak a short message, mind to mind, to someone you know, however far.
- **Summon Familiar.** Bind a small spirit-beast companion (raven, cat, toad) that serves as your eyes and hands.
- **Identify.** Learn what a magic item does and how it is triggered.
- **Teleport.** *Anchored (a token of the destination).* Move yourself and a few companions to a place you have been. The grandest working here; never cheap.