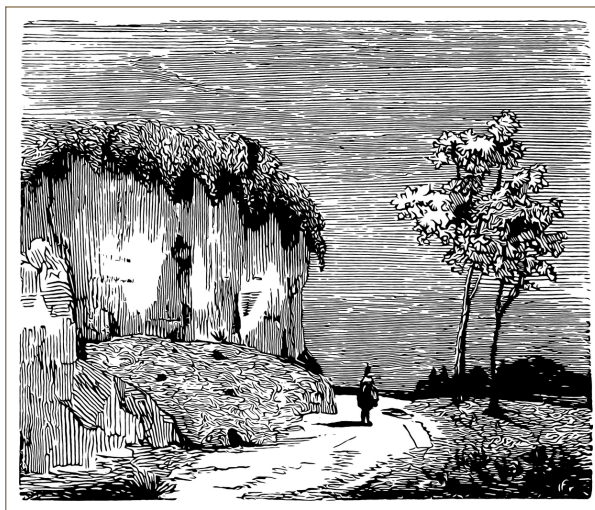


WIZARDS & LIZARDS

# BLOOD MAGIC

A WIZARDS & LIZARDS SUPPLEMENT



**B E T A**

*Version 0.10 · not yet playtested*

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**Blood magic** has no reservoir and asks no patron. It runs on the caster's own life. Every working burns **maximum Hit Points**, spending the body's future to buy power now, and there is no morning that gives it all back. It is the most immediate of the sources, cast freely with no pool to drain and no clock to watch, and the most dangerous: push too far and you **bleed out** where you stand. This is the personal, self-consuming end of the family (see *Alternative Magic Systems*).

This supplement swaps the core's **stress** fuel for **burned maximum Hit Points** and its **falter** for bleeding out. Everything else stands unchanged. If a rule is not below, it works as the core book says.

## BURNING LIFE

Casting **temporarily reduces your maximum Hit Points**. Mark the loss on the sheet. Your current Hit Points can never exceed the reduced maximum, so a spell that drops your max below your current spills your current down with it: you bleed as you cast. The reduction lifts only with rest and time (see Recovery), never faster.

| Magnitude            | Max HP burned | What it does                                                                   |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Cantrip</b>       | 0             | A trick of blood, at will. Burns nothing.                                      |
| <b>Spell</b>         | 2             | One real effect now, and it bites harder than other sources.                   |
| <b>Greater spell</b> | 4             | An area, a drain, a barrier of blood and bone.                                 |
| <b>Ritual</b>        | 0 (self)      | The slow rites, out of a fight. Some may spend <b>another's</b> blood (below). |

On a **partial (9–12)** take the reduced effect free, or burn **+1 max HP** for the full result. Always optional.

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## A SOURCE WITHOUT A POOL

Blood magic alone among the sources has no dedicated meter: no pool to size, no track to fill, no clock to tick. Its cost comes straight from the Hit Point economy every character already carries. That absence is paid back in **breadth**. Blood magic is the most multifaceted source, worn by more kinds of caster and keyed to more attributes than any other. Where the arcane sorcerer is always Wits and the summoner always Presence, a blood tradition **chooses the casting attribute that fits the caster who carries it**.

Because attributes in this game modify only the roll, never Hit Points or damage, the choice never touches the blood-burning economy. The cost is the same brutal HP whoever casts it; the attribute only says *how* a tradition reaches the blood.

| Attribute       | The caster     | How the blood answers                                                     |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Might</b>    | Warrior-caster | Vitality mastered by force of body; blood spilled in the swing.           |
| <b>Wits</b>     | Shaman         | Blood as lore and lineage, its rites learned and remembered.              |
| <b>Presence</b> | Folk witch     | Blood bound by will and word, in pacts of kin and curse.                  |
| <b>Agility</b>  | Berserk-caster | Blood whipped to frenzy, quick and reckless, the spell riding the motion. |

Pick one attribute per tradition and hold it. A single playbook keys to one; the variety lives across the many traditions a setting can grow, not within one caster.

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## OVERCHARGE

The signature lever and the temptation: when you cast, you may **burn extra maximum HP** to push the effect harder, **+2 max HP for +2 harm, an extra target, or a step of reach or duration**. Blood magic alone lets you simply pay more of yourself for more power. It is how a blood mage ends a fight in one bloody stroke, and how they die trying.

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## RECOVERY (SLOW)

Lost maximum Hit Points return **slowly, and by rest alone**. A full rest restores **2 max HP**; only proper downtime, tending, and time restore you fully.

Crucially, **healing does not give it back**. A cure, a potion, or a comrade's magic refills your current Hit Points up to your reduced maximum, but nothing short of rest raises the maximum itself. A medic can keep a blood caster on their feet; they cannot refund the spells. This is what makes the sacrifice real: the cost is paid in a body that stays diminished until it mends on its own. A hard day of casting leaves you a smaller, frailer version of yourself for days after; the blood caster who spends wildly on Monday fights Thursday half-empty.

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## BLEEDING OUT (THE OVERFILL)

You may always cast, life is always there to spend, right up until it is not. If a casting would reduce your **maximum Hit Points to 0 or below**, the spell still resolves as your last act: you immediately fall **Down** and begin **death saves** (core rules). Blood magic's overflow is not a mark or a madness. It is the floor, and the blood mage dances closest to it of anyone.

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## THE DRY EMBER: BLOODLETTING LASH

Every blood bundle grants **Bloodletting Lash**, the at-will poke: nick yourself for a token drop, no real burn, and whip a lash of blood at one target for **2 magical harm** (ignoring armor), rolled to hit. It never rivals a real weapon or the bolt. It is the free option that does not mortgage your max HP, the blood mage's safe strike when they dare not spend more of themselves.

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## ROOTS IN THE REAL WORLD

The tie between blood and power is one humanity has reached for again and again: the blood oath and blood brotherhood, the covenant sealed in blood, sacrifice on the altar, bloodletting as medicine, the bloodline as the seat of virtue or curse, the taboos around a wound, a birth, or a first blood, the pricked finger of the fairy tale. A GM building a blood tradition has deep, real wells to draw from. Mine folklore and history for the *texture*, the gestures, the taboos, the reasons a people both needs and fears its blood-workers, and let that shape the tradition's voice and its casting attribute. Treat living cultures with care and respect: take inspiration, never caricature.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A PLAYBOOK

- **Casting attribute: pick one to fit the archetype** (see *A Source Without a Pool*). Lean the L1 grant toward whichever you choose.
- **Spellcasting Advanced Action** named in voice (the *Rite*, the *Offering*, the *Sanguine Art*). Grant a starting bundle: one cantrip, the **Blood Bolt**, and one ritual, plus **Bloodletting Lash** as the poke.
- **A body worth spending.** However a blood caster fights, a healthy pool of Hit Points is their spell budget, so they want to be sturdier than the glass sorcerer. Their fragility is self-inflicted, a distinct niche from every other source. Armor access follows the archetype: heavy for the warrior-caster, little for the folk witch.
- **A decisive card, not a rotation.** Because spent vitality returns slowly, a blood caster spends big once or twice a fight, then stands and fights between sacrifices. Build a caster who is dangerous with steel or wit even at zero spells cast; the magic is the finisher, not the whole turn.
- **Speed 2**, baseline (a step higher for a nimble berserk-caster).
- **Niche and lack.** The blood caster does raw on-demand power, self-empowerment, and curses better than anyone, and lacks sustainability, safety, and any spell that does not cost them.

Setting flavors, each keyed to its attribute:

- **Warrior-Caster (Might).** A fighter who bleeds for power in the thick of melee. Signature: **Overcharge** on a big bolt or a **Sanguine Ward**. Fits a martial, high-stakes world.
- **Shaman (Wits).** Blood as inherited lore, spirits, and ancestral rite. Signature: a blood-scriving or spirit-binding ritual. Fits an animist frontier.
- **Folk Witch (Presence).** Curses, blood-bonds, and bargains at the village edge. Signature: **Hemorrhage** or a **Sanguine Pact**. Fits a folkloric, superstitious setting.

- **Berserk-Caster (Agility).** Frenzied and quick, the spell riding the motion of the kill. Signature: **Life Siphon** or a frenzy buff. Fits a savage, fast war-band.

The dark **Blood Sacrifice** ritual (paying another's life instead of your own) is open to any of these, and defines the **hemomancer**, whichever attribute they cast by. Discuss it at the table before it comes up.

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## SAMPLE SPELL LIST: THE SANGUINE CODEX

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

### CANTRIPS (FREE, AT WILL)

- **Bloodletting Lash.** The poke: 2 magical harm to one target, ignoring armor.
- **Scent of Blood.** Sense living, wounded, or bleeding creatures nearby, even unseen.
- **Clot.** Stop a bleeding wound, yours or another's; first aid, not healing.
- **Taste of Vitae.** From a drop of blood, learn a creature's kind and rough health.
- **Crimson Mark.** Draw a blood-sign on a surface or a willing person; harmless.

### SPELLS (BURN 2 MAX HP)

- **Blood Bolt.** The workhorse, and it hits above its weight: 5 magical harm to one target, ignoring armor. On 18+, it also makes the target **bleed** for 1 harm next round.
- **Sanguine Ward.** *Concentration.* A shell of hovering blood reduces each incoming harm by 2 while you hold it.
- **Hemorrhage.** *Concentration.* One foe bleeds for 3 harm each round until you release or lose focus.
- **Vigor of the Vein.** Pour your own life into another: heal an ally (or yourself) by transferring vitality. The rare blood spell that mends, at your body's cost.
- **Crimson Grip.** A fist of congealed blood: 2 harm and **Slowed** (or held) on one foe.

### GREATER SPELLS (BURN 4 MAX HP)

- **Blood Boil.** Boil the blood of everyone in a zone: 4 magical harm, ignoring armor.
- **Puppet of Sinew.** Seize a bleeding foe and move it like a marionette for a round or two; it resists with Might each round.
- **Sanguine Storm.** *Concentration.* A zone of flensing red mist; those inside take 3 harm each round.
- **Life Siphon.** Drain 3 harm from each foe in a zone; heal yourself by the total, up to your (reduced) maximum.
- **Wall of Bone.** *Concentration.* A barrier of grown bone and clotted blood seals a zone edge until it is broken.

### RITUALS (TIME; SELF, OR ANOTHER'S BLOOD)

- **Blood Sacrifice.** *Anchored (a bound, unwilling, or freshly slain victim).* Pay the ritual's blood cost from the sacrifice instead of yourself, powering a great effect. The hemomancer's dark heart; heavy in the fiction, and a line the table should discuss.
- **Sanguine Pact.** Bind two willing creatures by blood: they share harm, sense each other, or lend vitality across any distance.

- **Raise the Slain.** Return a freshly dead creature to life at a steep, lasting cost in maximum Hit Points, theirs and yours.
- **Scry in Blood.** A bowl of blood shows a distant place or person.
- **Ward of the Threshold.** *Anchored (blood painted on the frame).* A boundary the named kind of creature cannot cross.