

The Echo Cycle

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The Rhythm of Play

An **Echo Cycle** consists of:

1. **The Sender** creates a fragment
2. **The Receiver** reads/listens to it
3. **The Receiver** responds with their own fragment
4. Roles reverse

Both players contribute one fragment per cycle. A complete game typically runs 8-12 cycles total (4-6 each).

Creating a Fragment

When it's your turn to send a fragment, follow these steps:

1. Choose Your Medium

Decide what form your fragment takes:

- Letter or journal entry
- Ritual instructions
- Dream or vision
- Map annotation
- Audio recording description
- Shrine inscription
- Psychic echo

2. Ground It in Place and Time

Reference a location on the map (existing or new) and indicate when this fragment originates:

- How long after the last fragment?
- Before or after a specific event?
- In response to what?

3. Make a Change

Every fragment must alter something. Choose one or more:

Minor Changes (most fragments should be this scale):

- Add a new location to the map (settlement, ruin, shrine)
- Reveal a memory or detail about the past
- Shift the emotional tone of your relationship
- Introduce a symbol or recurring image
- Add a question or mystery

Major Changes (use sparingly, 1-2 per game):

- Drastically alter established facts about a location
- Reveal a betrayal or hidden truth
- Permanently transform one of the Windcallers
- Destroy or redeem a major location

- Change the nature of your bond

Forbidden Changes:

- You cannot directly control the other Windcaller's actions or thoughts
- You cannot negate their previous fragment entirely
- You cannot declare their Windcaller dead without agreement

4. Invite Response

End your fragment with something that calls for reply:

- A direct question
- An unfinished ritual
- A symbol requiring interpretation
- A contradiction to resolve
- A location to explore

5. Update the Map

Add your new location or change to the shared map (see Map Generation section).

Fragment Length

Aim for **150-400 words** or **1-3 minutes** of audio. Fragments should be substantial enough to advance the story but brief enough to maintain mystery.

Spending Echo Tokens

You begin play with **3 Echo tokens**. These represent moments of clear psychic connection across distance. Spend them to:

- **Ask a Direct Question** (1 token): Your fragment can break the fourth wall and ask the other player directly about their Windcaller's intentions, feelings, or past. They must answer honestly in their next fragment.
- **Contradict a Memory** (1 token): Reveal that something previously established was wrong, misremembered, or changed. The other player must acknowledge this contradiction in their response.
- **Invoke a Shared Echo** (2 tokens): Create a moment where both Windcallers experience the same vision, sound, or sensation simultaneously—the only true communion in the game.

When you spend a token, mark it off on your character sheet. Both players track their own tokens separately.

Gaining Tokens:

You regain 1 Echo token when:

- You complete a ritual described in a previous fragment
- You answer a question left unanswered for 2+ cycles
- The other player explicitly acknowledges a truth you revealed
- A Storm Event occurs (see below)

You cannot exceed 3 tokens at any time.