

This document is designed to help illustrate the potential paths for advancement for the various magic systems introduced in the Wizard's Keychains CYOA. This is by no means an exhaustive listing of all the ways each system can be used, but is instead intended as a way to introduce the basic principles of each system, and show the general lines upon which they each grow.

Each of the systems is 'compatible' with every other system, and they can all have unique synergies depending on how individuals choose to try to advance them.

Runescript (Kaltwildnis)

Introduction: A system based around abstract symbols that, when marked on objects with clear intent, can lead to supernatural effects related to the meaning of the symbols. The symbols themselves resemble Nordic Runes, with some elements of Sanskrit, Chinese kanji, and medieval astrology symbols.

Basics: The most basic usage of this system revolves around marking an object with an understood symbol. This marking must happen deliberately, with a full knowledge of the meaning behind the symbol being marked. Various factors can influence the final effect, ranging from the method being used to make the mark (carving vs painting vs weaving, etc) to the substance it is being marked on (wood vs metal vs stone, etc). The most important aspect, however, is the mental focus held during the act of making the mark. Intense focus will grant a stronger effect, but will also be more mentally draining to maintain through multiple markings. Some of the potential creations at this level might be a rune of healing on a blanket that will help those wrapped in the blanket heal faster from injury and disease, or a rune of fire carved into a log that causes the log to burst into a flame that sheds heat and light, but which will not spread from the log itself.

Intermediate: One of the major steps forward in using this system is discovering how to link symbols together to create an effect that combines their meanings. This can be done via physically linking the marks, or surrounding them in a box or circle to 'contain' their effects, but the best method features mental exercises that allow for the concept of all the marks to be held in focus while they are being carved. When done properly, the marks will combine into an effect greater than what they might make separately. For example, a house marked with the runes of protection and cold could be made almost impervious to low temperatures stealing the heat from within. Other methods of improvement include learning subtle variations on known marks that slightly alter their meaning, allowing for more specific and thus more potent effects to be made with them, or learning how to safely make marks into tattoos or other markings on the body, allowing those so marked to draw on the power and meaning of the marks. An example of the former might be subtle changes to the rune of wood, which can indicate specific types of trees or specific cuts of wood. An example of the latter might be a tattoo of the rune of bravery, which can allow the bearer to ignore fear, even that generated by supernatural sources.

Mastery: While early runes tend to be simple, covering relatively broad concepts, more advanced runes can be discovered that have extremely specific meanings. These runes are generally formed from simpler runes, layered on top of and across each other to form an extremely intricate design. For example, the runes for king, ice, knowledge, eye, trickery, and many others can be combined into the rune of Odin, representing the power and authority of the Norse god, and use of his mark could allow for drawing on his wisdom, or replicating his spear or other feats. In addition to more complex runes, more complex methods of chaining runes together exist. One of the simplest of these is the rune grid, where runes are placed in overlapping rows and columns, with each row and each column forming a rune chain, and each point of overlap representing a way in which the chains connect, ultimately forming an entire overarching effect. Such a grid would require the maker to maintain all of the effects being created and how they interact within their mind, but the end result could accomplish things such as creating a barrier to protect an entire city, or animating an enormous golem made of ice and stone to fight for you.

Spirit Bonds (Mata Hini)

Introduction: A system for contacting and making pacts with spirits, primarily those associated with natural features. This can allow for powers associated with the spirits to be shared with you.

Basics: Almost any item or natural feature will have some sort of spirit associated with it. From coconuts to a gentle breeze to a simple pebble or even a grain of sand, all will have a spirit. Basic usage of this system grants the user an awareness of these spirits, and the ability to draw them out and communicate with them. Most small scale spirits such as those listed above will be happy simply to be noticed and talked to, and will be quite happy to form a basic pact with a user who is friendly to them. These sorts of positive interactions will help the spirit to gain some power and potency, which they can then be called on to help provide to the user. A coconut spirit could help share the hardness of their husk to the user's skin, or a wave spirit could offer some of the force of their waves to knock something over. However, if neglected, spirits will lose power and interest in helping, which means juggling all the pacts can be difficult at first. In addition, most smaller spirits will find it difficult to act when they are farther from their source, at least at this basic level.

Intermediate: While the basic connection with a spirit is more of an informal agreement for them to help, it is possible to establish deeper bonds with spirits as well. The most common of these results in a light mingling of the essence of your soul and the essence of the spirit. This allows for the spirit to grow much stronger, and also allows them to aid you over longer distances from their source. However, too many such bonds can provide a drain on your stamina and spirit. Over time, as you adapt to your bonds, you will be able to support more of them. As mentioned, there are many forms that these more formal bonds can take. For example, a sacrificial bond can allow you to destroy objects and thereby provide energy to the spirit, such as casting objects into a specific bay to empower the spirit of that bay. A much darker bond is the path of dominance, where rather than befriending a spirit, you force it to submit to your will, and take its power for yourself. This can lead to damage being reflected on the spirit's source as you pull from it. Finally, as you grow into your senses, you can learn to contact larger spirits. The spirit of a grove of trees, rather than just the spirits of each individual tree, for example. These larger spirits tend to be more difficult to contact and rouse, and less impressed with simply being talked to, but once they ally with you, they can provide much greater assistance. The spirit of a stone wall, for instance, can provide much greater protection to you, and even help spread that protection to those nearby, while the spirit of one stone in the wall might only be able to toughen your skin.

Mastery: True mastery of this path lies in deepening your bonds with the spirits, and immersing yourself within their world. The first step to accomplish this is learning to view and understand the world in the same way that the spirits do. For example, a spirit of wind sees the world in the context of motion, especially motion of air. Humans are little more than contained breezes to them, birds are living toys that dance with them, waves are their slow-moving cousins. As you gain the senses and sensibilities of the spirits you are closest to, you will be able to work with them to interact with the world in larger ways, as well as simply gaining a greater understanding of how aspects of the world interact. The spirits that you have formed the greatest bond with may allow you to actually merge with them, temporarily forming into a composite entity. The spirit of a waterfall might merge with you to form a large humanoid figure made of rapidly surging water, while the spirit of a wolf might merge with you to take a form similar to a werewolf. In such a state, the benefits they've granted you would be further enhanced, and you would find that things that are wholly physical, without spiritual components, would do far less harm to you. Finally, you can, as always, contact larger and larger spirits, though the largest of them will likely require the intervention of some of the lesser spirits you have contacted, simply to draw their attention to you. Managing to catch the eye of an ocean or sky spirit on your own would be a tremendous feat, especially because the power they can grant is equally grand.

Alchemixture (The Orchard)

Introduction: A system focused on the preparation of edible mixtures, specifically in such a way as to imbue the creations with supernatural effects. The methods used can range from harvest to storage to presentation to actual cooking and mixing, with various effects stacking on each other from each stage.

Basics: The primary skills of Alchemixture take the form of a variety of ingredient preparation and cooking techniques, each of which can be used to bring out latent magical properties in food items, or which can strengthen active magical properties that an item might have. These can range from a specific method of peeling fruit which can amplify any healing properties it might have, to a method of adding seasonings to a soup which will increase the physical traits of those who consume it, with the specific traits affected being determined by the soup base. These also come with training techniques that can allow a user to accurately judge an ingredient or dish by smell, sight, touch, and yes, taste, to determine what properties it might have, and what techniques it may benefit from.

Intermediate: There are more advanced skills to Alchemixture that can extend beyond direct preparation of a dish. For example, there are specific techniques that can be used when harvesting, or even when growing an ingredient that can improve their quality and bring out hidden traits in them. There are plating and presentation techniques that can allow the benefits of multiple dishes to intermingle, and which can even bring out entirely new properties of the combined meal as a whole. There are even recycling techniques which can be used to help turn failed dishes into improvements to the cook's skill, or which can revert them into raw ingredients so the cook can try again. One of the most important advanced techniques to master is the art of refinement, which can allow lower quality ingredients to be improved with several interactive repetitions of the given technique. This can lead to some of the ingredients being lost, but it would be worth it when a bushel full of ordinary apples can be refined into one or two Golden Apples of Immortality.

Mastery: As the various techniques of Alchemixture advance and grow, they will grow increasingly complex, capable of having varying influences based on the quality of utensils and dishes being used, the geographical location being cooked in, the time of year and phases of the moon, and more. Proper alignment and accounting for all of these various factors can result in orders of magnitude better quality in dishes. A true master can capture the 'essence' of a dish they have successfully crafted in the past, or an ingredient that they have studied and worked with, and can infuse that 'essence' into future creations, even without a sample of the dish to work from. At a most base level, this essence can impart things like texture and taste to a new dish, but with true mastery, it can allow for the traits of the prior dish to be blended into and even multiplied within the new one, allowing each success of a chef to potentially be used to create even better successes in the future.

Crystal Attunement (The Delve)

Introduction: A system for preparing crystals to store magical energies, bonding with prepared crystals, and pulling on the stored energies to enact various magical effects. This system also covers ways of growing crystals with innate magical properties as well.

Basics: All crystals have a specific form of ‘resonance’, a mystical vibration that you are now able to detect and harmonize yourself with to form a bond with the crystal. Crystals also act as natural accumulators for mystical energy, with different types of crystals accumulating different ‘flavors’ of energy, which will be most suitable for certain effects. A particular ruby, for instance, may resonate well with the energies associated with heat and flame, while an onyx may resonate with the energies of shadow. Without proper preparation, trying to pull out these energies will result in little more than uncontrolled bursts, centered either on the crystal or on yourself. However, when the crystals are carefully shaped and carved, the energies they hold can be directed into specific manifestations, such as orbs of floating light rising from the crystal, or a curved barrier of force appearing to act as a shield.

Intermediate: While you will need to carry your crystals at first, one of the first tricks most learn is how to hold your crystals up with nothing more than the strength of your resonance, causing them to float and orbit around you. This level of control is also needed to help with ‘partitioning’ your resonance, ensuring that the harmonies of the crystals you are attuned to does not clash. You will learn more advanced methods of shaping crystals to allow for more precise control over their effects, and can even learn to blend crystals together, to create hybrid energies that are more suited for some specific effect. While most early crystals you work with will be largely ‘mundane’ gems, more directly magical crystals can be discovered as you continue, and with them can be found specific rituals and growing conditions that can be used to craft more of them as needed, allowing you to make more even when you venture beyond the Delve. Finally, there is a path that some embrace while others find it distasteful. Specifically, binding gems within some greater artifact, to act as a fuel source and to help direct the energies of the artifact. There are those who may shun you for ‘tainting the purity’ of the crystals if you take that path.

Mastery: The most powerful crystals that you can work with are those that not only attract mystical energies, but which have developed channels within their cores, which lead to dimensions and realms from which those energies originate. These crystals will grow inward instead of outward, with growths extending into these alternate realms, acting as lightning rods to draw in tremendous amounts of energy for you to work with. You can discover methods to encourage these growths, and to shape them, allowing further refinement and control of the energies into unique and potent effects. A gem that allowed you to levitate yourself before, might be expanded into a gem that can grant powerful and precise control over gravity within a large cavern. Similar methods can allow for the creation of gems which can shift configuration, allowing for the type of effect and even the type of energy they can draw on to be changed with but a thought. Some will take their connection to their crystals a step further, embedding various crystals within their body, which can allow for their entire body to act as a reservoir and channel for the energies of their crystals. And finally, it is possible that the gathered energies within a crystal can be ‘sparked’, creating an actual intelligence within the crystal, which can aid you in controlling its energies, and act as a faithful companion to the one who it resonates with.

Give and Take (Souk Tashe Mall)

Introduction: A system based on the universal concept of value, allowing for magical potential to be built up during the process of creating, exchanging, inflating, or otherwise interacting with tokens of value, especially within the context of established economic systems.

Basics: An extremely ancient art, the most basic principle of Give and Take is that when value is exchanged or acknowledged, a form of energy is created. This energy can be harvested by those who are aware of it, and interacts very directly with the concept of ‘value’. Trade and bartering will generate this energy, with more being generated the more that the elements of the transaction are valued, but the amount that can be gained is low when one is not a direct participant in the transaction. This energy can be spent relatively easily in ways that affect value, such as imbuing it in an object to make those who value it value it even more, or twisting things to make a seller accept a payment of less than an object might normally be worth. Such effects will be small at first, but even transactions influenced by this energy will still generate energy, and one who is clever can ensure that they ultimately gain more from their transactions than they spend.

Intermediate: The use of this art can extend beyond financial influence, and the most widespread example of this is the principle of sacrifice. Giving that which you value, to gain that which you value more. In short, by taking an object of value and infusing it with energy, it can be reduced to dust, and then some magical effect can be enacted. The value of the item and the amount of energy spent will directly affect what can be achieved. A small doll, which has no more worth to you than its monetary value, and which is tied to the energy of a trip to the grocers, might be able to create a parlor trick, like a blast of flame or a bright flash of light. Meanwhile, a necklace of great sentimental and fiscal value, combined with the energy of a large loan payoff or housing purchase, could result in a potent and permanent physical empowerment for yourself. To better fuel these sorts of efforts, techniques can be explored which can exploit the relative nature of value. There exists techniques which mirror various financial scams and schemes, which can allow you to ‘harvest’ energy from others at the expense of their own good fortune, which can allow you to artificially inflate the value of objects or things, long enough for you to extract large amounts of energy and push it into some working with a permanent benefit for you. Alternatively, it is possible to generate energy from less tangible sources of value, such as a good reputation or well-wishes from others, which can allow for a more... moral approach to generating energy.

Mastery: One of the key steps to true mastery of this art is the gathering of energy from passive or inactive wealth. While it is easy for any practitioner to identify the energy associated with an actual transaction or payment, it is hard for any by the most skilled to recognize and gather energy from the passive value of their possessions. Once they do, however, their energy can simply continue to grow, with the value of their possessions growing in turn, and thus fueling greater passive growth. At such a point, many of the most esoteric branches of this art will open up for them, allowing such things as the retroactive reversal of some misfortune in the past, literally converting value lost into value gained instead. Or they could draw in the success of potential futures, gaining value they have not yet, and may never truly earn. However, any true master will recognize the dangers that they must court to pull off such potent arts, as a mistake in judgement or error could bring in future misfortunes rather than successes, or could cut their earned fortune out from under them. One method that many masters will use as security against such will be to tie their fortunes to ‘locuses of value’. Corporations or wealthy entities that draw in value and wealth like a black hole, which can act as an anchor to draw a practitioner along in the shadow of their success, and allowing the practitioner to ‘redirect’ any misfortune they may accumulate towards their anchor instead.

Circle, Dot, and Line (No-Name Alley)

Introduction: A system based around geomantic and occult principles, using various shapes, combined into increasingly complex patterns, to direct eldritch energies into paranatural effects. These patterns tend to be best with the directing and manipulation of flows of energy.

Basics: There is energy that flows through everything, from the flow of traffic, to the flow of a conversation, and there are shapes that can be used to direct these forms of energy. As the name suggests, your introduction to these shapes will start with the Circle, the Line, and the Dot. Energy that flows in a cycle, energy that flows from here to there, and energy that is focused to a point. There are more meanings and more possibilities for how each of these symbols can affect the energy around you, but these definitions will suffice for a start. When combined, you can enact a variety of effects, though you will generally learn a set of pre-established patterns at the beginning. A circle with a series of lines through it can be used to bar a door, making it almost impossible to open via force. A set of lines and series of dots can be used on a club or a bat, dramatically increasing the force it can strike with. Each composite symbol will have a specific place it can be used.

Intermediate: But it is not enough to rely on rote knowledge, is it? The energy flow of three lines arranged into a triangle is very different from the energy flow of three lines in parallel, and understanding these distinctions is what will set you on the path to discover / craft your own symbols, and to uncover new shapes that can be added to them. The spiral. The star. The wave. Each adds their own shift to the flow, and can be combined in new ways. The pattern that bars a door can be changed to hurl someone who tries to enter away, or even redirect them to a nearby door when they try to charge through it. And you can discover methods to draw on more specific forms of energy. A pattern to call down lightning, perhaps, or a pattern that can cause gravity to pull water uphill. Even more 'esoteric' energies, such as 'attention' or 'knowledge' or 'fame' can be directed, keeping someone from perceiving a building or literally drawing insights to you from 'thin air'.

Mastery: At this level, you will begin to leave the level of two-dimensional flows behind, stepping first into more three-dimensional structures, and then into shapes that extend into dimensions beyond that. Marks that seem to shift when one isn't paying attention, or even which change right before your eyes. Such marks can be used to influence the world on a far larger scale, altering the patterns of electric lines or streets to form larger symbols, which then have yet bigger impacts. A grand ritual might be set up to literally incarnate the spirit of an entire city to aid or obey you, or to gather the fervor of a mob into an attack capable of leveling a building. One of the most potent methods of enacting these sorts of wide-scale effects is the technique of tracing the symbols onto one's view of reality within one's own mind. When done properly, the symbol that is viewed in one's head becomes imposed upon reality. Crowds will unconsciously move to form the symbol, branches in trees will fall to form it, and then energy will flow through it to cause what is desired.

Editoria (Scriptorium Vadis)

Introduction: A system for interacting with the world through the lens of narrative tropes and contexts. The effects created by this system will be generally linked to some sort of overarching 'plotline' that a user is attempting to create, and will grow or diminish in power according to how 'compelling' the story being told is.

Basics: The Editoria system operates on an expansion of the principles of cause and effect, specifically adding the potential of effects stemming from 'narrative' causes, as well as pure mechanistic ones. This primarily manifests in the so-called 'script sense' of the practitioners, which allows them to perceive the world near them through the lens of some script describing actions as they occur. This can allow for very short range prediction of events before they happen, such as the next sentence that someone will speak, or someone nearby suddenly deciding to stand up and walk away. This can also be leveraged to 'push' for certain events to occur, especially if a 'narrative' justification can be made for them. Such as an individual experiencing a sudden spike of bad fortune after declaring that things "can't get any worse", or someone attempting a difficult task gaining a boost in skill and ability at the task on their third attempt, after already giving their all and failing twice. Such 'pushed' events will necessarily be limited in scope and magnitude to begin with.

Intermediate: As a practitioner of this system progresses, their understanding of their 'script sense' will necessarily deepen, allowing for greater insight into the immediate surroundings. For example, they could gain an insight into the internal monologue and experience of someone nearby them, as if reading their thoughts and impressions from a page, or they might gain awareness of events outside of their direct senses, as if viewing their local 'scene' from an outside perspective. This later implementation is often connected to the development of an 'observer'. This technique is somewhat controversial, as while many hold that the 'observer' that a practitioner may create is purely a creation to facilitate their power, a few believe that the 'observer' is actually drawn from some area outside of conventional reality to observe what the practitioner is attempting to accomplish. There is no evidence for this latter viewpoint, but it continues to persist. Regardless, the 'observer' is often used as a focus for many of the techniques of the Editoria system, framing the desired outcomes in such a way as to be 'compelling' or 'interesting' from the point-of-view of this 'observer'. Two of the most prevalent advanced techniques that make use of this are 'pushing a theme' and 'projecting an archetype'. For the former, a practitioner will 'push' for their local area to become more 'hospitable' towards a given narrative theme, such as horror or comedy. This is generally less energy-intensive than trying to cause a specific event to occur, as the world will still act largely the same as it would without intervention, simply with a shift towards a given mood or concept. However, it can be useful when paired with a practitioner 'setting the stage' for a desired outcome to be possible. For example, pushing the theme of comedy while arranging for potential booby traps that would injure those caught in humorous ways can easily lead to intruders stumbling into the traps, even when they might normally be far more skilled. The second technique, 'projecting an archetype', is used on either the practitioner themselves, or on someone they are attempting to influence. Similarly to how a theme might be pressed onto the local area at large, an archetype, such as hero, coward, or showoff, can be imposed on an individual, causing certain traits or skills to be enhanced or gained, while those not in line with the archetype are suppressed. This functions best when the archetype at least somewhat matches the individual in question, though this still leaves a great deal of potential. Someone who loves to talk can be pushed to be an 'orator' to become more convincing and charismatic, or to be a 'blowhard' to be pushed in the opposite direction.

Mastery: A master of Editoria will have reached the point where viewing their local area is truly as easy as reading words on a page, granting them almost unparalleled insight into their surroundings. They will have much greater capacity for 'reading ahead' as well. Most masters will utilize some variation of crafting a 'plotline', at least for their larger efforts and workings. This will involve charting out a full story for their 'observer', starting with the beginning in the moment or near past, and charting it forward into a desired future. This can allow them to give a certain degree of 'momentum' to changes they wish to make, leading to each successful 'push' that alters reality in favor of their story allowing later 'pushes' to be more successful. This is not true reality warping, so simply generating treasure or such from thin air is unlikely, but such might be possible if it is contained within a compelling enough narrative. In general, to gain some treasure would require a compelling pursuit of the treasure, and realistic consequences arising from it afterwards, but if enough momentum is gained, twisting the world to allow such a thing could be possible.

Legend-Smithing (Lot Number Nine)

Introduction: A system for imprinting the 'legend' associated with an object onto an item that resembles it, granting it abilities associated with the legend. These legends are drawn from the collective unconscious, and are stronger but harder to work with when there is more belief behind them.

Basics: Faith is a potent power, which can empower legends that are shared between enough people and cultures. The act of Legend-Smithing is, at its heart, the act of taking this shared faith, and impressing it into an object that matches some portion of a story or legend, granting it traits based on that story. Initially, there are limits to how 'heavy' of a legend can be impressed onto an object, with more wide-spread and potent tales requiring more practice to imbue. But smaller generic tales can be fairly easily worked with, creating such objects as a lasso imbued with the concept of a cattle-wrangling cowboy, which will move and stretch through the air to wrap around a target; a gun imbued with the concept of an action hero, which will subtly guide the hand that holds it, and which will somehow hold far more bullets than it properly should; or a magnifying glass imbued with the concept of a gumshoe detective, which can help to draw attention to clues or oddities when examining an area.

Intermediate: As mentioned, more potent legends will require more potent techniques to be properly handled, as well as materials that can stand up to their 'weight'. Some of the techniques in this field are useful on their own, allowing ordinary base materials to gain traits of far better ones, such as a small ring made of yellow clay taking on the appearance and possibly even the consistency and hardness of gold. Once an object is prepared, then some of these 'weighter' legends can be called on, to form things such as the lightsaber of a jedi, or the wand of a young wizard. Even if the objects created can hold up to the weight of the legend, they may not initially have the full potential of such. As a user's ability grows, there are techniques that can be used to 'reforge' their creations, allowing for more and more of a legend's power to be imbued and accessed. Another method to bypass such limits might be to make multiple separate objects that each pull on a portion of a legend. A mask, whip, and rapier that all pull on the legend of Zorro could allow for far more of the traits associated with that legend to be called on, and at greater strength, when all of them are made and used together.

Mastery: There are many legends that are multi-faceted, or which are used in later stories in vastly different ways. Is Excalibur a sword that shoots blasts of energy, a sword that grants invincibility to those who wield it, a sword that can manipulate the soil and structures of the isle of Britain, or a sword with a very annoying voice? At the level of true mastery, objects can be crafted which can sustain all versions of a legend, even allowing for areas where legends may be contradictory to be smoothed over or ignored. This can also function on a more basic level, allowing a blade to simultaneously be the cutlass of a pirate, the katana of a samurai, and the dagger of an assassin, somehow managing to shift between and emulate each of its roles without conflict. At the pinnacle of mastery is the capacity to forge into an item a legend that did not exist before, and yet is reflected so well within the very structure of the item that anyone who sees it will somehow know and gain belief in the 'tale' behind it. There was no Battle of Lamur Tai Gon, and yet it is possible that you could craft the banner that General Leiyat raised in that conflict so well that those who see it will know the story, and those that follow its bearer will gain the might of twenty men as they fight.

Totems (Mijira Mystos)

Introduction: A system for coalescing unconscious psychic energy into a tangible form. The created totems will be highly symbolic, associated with broad concepts, and can grow in power and focus over time.

Basics: Totems are formed by a meditative process, where the creator will reach out in the collective subconscious around them, and draw in psychic energy, condensing it down into a tangible form. Early methods will generally result in a small, handheld object, and can either feature the energy being pulled in as-is, or filtered through a specific thought or concept. Raw, unfiltered energy will result in a somewhat random creation, while a Totem created via a specific concept will reflect that concept in some way. Each Totem will have some power based on their concept, with the more universal or broad the concept, the more potent the gained power. A Fear Totem, for example, might take the form of a black circle marked with angry red eyes, and could project a burst of terrifying miasma when utilized. A Flinching When Someone Taps Your Shoulder Totem, however, might take the form of a hand with a pointing finger, and only occasionally get the one who it is pointed at to flinch. All Totems will require some degree of mental energy to enact their powers, which can either be charged up in the Totem in a process similar to their creation, or drawn from the user's will and mentality directly.

Intermediate: Better methods of Totem creation can allow for far more flexible Totems to be made, which can have multiple abilities based on their concept, or which can link a few topics together in a careful process to create a more specific use that is stronger, rather than weaker than a broad concept would be. One of the largest ways to improve a Totem is to gather enough psychic energy within it to create what is known as a 'avatar' of the Totem. A secondary 'living' form that can allow the Totem to use its power independently. These 'avatars' will not be truly sentient, acting more like a robot programmed to follow the commands and desires of the Totem's user, with the nature of the Totem itself providing a degree of 'flavoring' towards how an avatar will carry out their commands. Naturally, avatars that better fit a Totem will result in the Totem itself being stronger and better able to draw in energy to empower itself. Another method of empowering Totems is to add specific rules, rituals, or restrictions to the use of the Totem. For example, a Motion Totem that can be used to lift and launch objects at high speed could gain strength by being limited to only lifting non-living objects, or restricted to only activating after a specific phrase and series of gestures has been performed. Restrictions that are linked to the basic nature of the Totem will have a greater effect.

Mastery: The most potent Totems will be tied very directly into the collective subconscious, which can both empower them when their specific concept is highly prevalent in the local subconscious, as well as encouraging their concept to become more prevalent, which can, indeed, lead to reinforcing loops of empowerment over time. If such Totems have been crafted with 'avatars', said 'avatars' may be able to gain a form of true sentience, though they will almost always retain a significant loyalty towards their creator. It is possible for Totems that have reached such a state to also be used as a focus when creating new Totems, which will mirror the concept of the original Totem, perhaps with a few minor shifts in their basic concept. These Totems will be stronger than normal, and can grow more quickly.

Expanding the Small (Microsmos)

Introduction: A system for drawing on the 'soul' that every item possesses, and granting it new abilities based on its growing potential. Abilities will be based on ordinary uses of the object becoming stronger, more defined, more metaphorical, or generally better within their typical areas of usage.

Basics: Every item in existence, from a blanket to an apple to a tiny sliver, possesses a form of 'soul'. This 'soul' is not tied to sapience or awareness, but rather to the item's potential. The process of Expanding the Small involves taking hold of this 'soul', and causing it to grow, pushing for the item to gain new traits based on the potential uses that the item could have. This process is simplest on smaller or 'less important' items, as their souls have less weight and are thus easier to work with. This does not make the abilities that can be drawn out any less impressive, such as turning a matchstick into a focus for various forms of fire magic, or turning a scrap of cloth into a 'cloak of concealment' that makes whatever is wrapped in it harder to notice. Note that this spellform is especially potent in the Microsmos specifically because even though the size of even small items is a couple of orders of magnitude greater compared to the practitioner, they still have the 'lack of importance' that makes them so easy to work with.

Intermediate: Advanced techniques in this field naturally involve methods for working with 'heavier' souls, as well as ways to draw out even more potential than you could before. Most potent among these better methods are those that allow for the realization of more 'esoteric' or 'metaphorical' potentials to be realized. As an example, a sliver of soap might normally be improved to simply function better, perhaps allowing things to be cleaned from a distance simply by waving the sliver at an object. However, the cleansing and 'purifying' nature of the soap could be linked to the concept of purity of the spirit and soul, and thus allow for the soap to grant access to bubbles and streams of holy magic via these advanced methods. Many of these advanced methods will also work to alter the shape of the item itself, to better fit whatever new role it might function in, which typically will also involve an improvement in the quality of the item. Finally, one of the methods of improving the items when a practitioner has reached the limits of how much potential they can expand out of the item's soul is to feed the potential from other items into the item in question. As mentioned, 'souls' of items are not connected to sapience, so while this method will generally result in the items stripped of their potential breaking down into dust, it does not equate to murder. Instead, the potential of the sacrificed objects helps to 'shore up' the empowered object, making it generally stronger and more potent, and potentially allowing for uses of the sacrificed objects to be emulated by the empowered object. For example, a book that has several torches sacrificed to it may gain the capacity to illuminate its own pages and the surrounding area with gentle, sourceless torchlight.

Mastery: One of the most advanced techniques that can be used to continue expanding an item after it has reached its apparent limit is commonly referred to as 'diving' into the object. This method involves the practitioner linking their consciousness and essence with the soul of the item, and projecting a mental avatar into a mental world with the item's soul, which represents the item's full potential. Once there, the different techniques used can lead to different methods of pushing the item to be able to improve further. One of the most common paths is to fight and defeat monsters within the world, which represents flaws and imperfections within the item itself. Once defeated, those flaws will diminish, allowing the item to be further improved. Other methods might include building or repairing sections of the world, solving puzzles to open inaccessible areas, or undergoing tests of worthiness by representative figures of the item. The process of diving, and some other advanced methods of improvement, can also lead to the principle of the item souls being non-sentient becoming false, allowing the items to begin to develop consciousness of their own, and thus allowing them to act independently. Most such awakened items will experience a minor increase in potency from awakening, and will be almost worshipfully devoted to their "Awakener".

Bludwork (Ragnocalypse)

Introduction: A system for gathering and utilizing power stored within the user's blood, gained via both training and active combat, and focused primarily on the improvement and boosting of various physical attributes.

Basics: This system operates via the cultivation of energy within one's heart and blood, which can then be used to improve the body and cause various effects. This energy can be cultivated by most forms of physical activity: exercise, sports, general labor, etc. However, it is most potent when it is drawn from combat and violence. If the combat results in a death, that will result in an even greater boost. Once one's blood has been energized, that energy can be spent on a variety of effects. Most commonly, it is spent to boost some aspect of the physical body, such as healing, strength, or flexibility. It is possible, albeit costly, to push this energy out into a held object, to do things such as make a thrown object fly farther, or make a held blade sharper. Energy spent this way will recover over time, though as with infusing it in the first place, regenerating energy happens faster when one is in combat. One important note is that, without active combat, death itself has little impact on this energy, so assassination or ritual sacrifice will not be particularly effective methods of gaining power via this system alone.

Intermediate: Much of the early improvement within this system will be focused on pushing one's limits as far as the energy their blood can contain, and how efficiently they use it. There are techniques to raise these limits, and simple practice can also raise them, slowly but surely. There are, however, other ways to improve one's usage of this energy. The most common is the forming of 'circuits' within a specific area of the body, dedicated channels that are linked to a specific usage, and only require energy to be directed to them to activate. This can allow for very complex usages to be prepared ahead of time, and then simply empowered when needed. A great benefit during the heat of combat. More advanced techniques exist for manipulating the energy externally as well, with the most common there involving the creation of temporary objects, such as shields or blades. Despite the commonly crimson color of these creations, they are not truly formed of one's blood, but solidified from the energy inside an individual, so cutting oneself to create them is not actually needed, a mistake that many novices will make during early attempts. One other common technique is the establishment of a blood bond, a link formed between two individuals. For those who do not practice Bludwork, this can allow them to share in a lesser version of the benefits that the user gains. When a bond is established between two users, they can end up amplifying each other's efforts, allowing both of them to reach greater heights of potential. These bonds will initially operate only at short ranges, but the distance at which they are effective can grow over time. Finally, one of the most violent methods of improvement is the capacity to 'harvest' from those who perish at your hands. These techniques focus the energy gained upon a foe's death into a portion of energy that carries with it traces of the foe's skills or techniques. Frequently, such 'loot' is transformed into circuits mentioned earlier, allowing for the enemy's abilities to be drawn on as needed. Alternatively, they can be studied to gain a more natural grasp of them.

Mastery: One of the passive benefits of the cultivation of Bludwork is that one becomes 'more of what one is'. A strong man becomes stronger, a cunning man grows more cunning, etc. Unfortunately, this means that it is very easy for a master of this art to become a bloodthirsty monster. One who is only concerned with the next fight, the next kill. The solution to this is typically a Code of War. While each Code is unique, their paths have a similar basis. In essence, they are a set of oaths and dedications for how one will fight and how one will live their life, which the user will literally impress upon their heart and veins, binding their power to the fulfillment of their oaths. These can come with their own secret techniques, unlocked via this dedication, and a general multiplication in strength and power when one is in harmony with the oaths they have taken up. These Codes are numerous, ranging from the Code of the Stalwart Protector, to the Code of the Eager Explorer, to the Code of the Silent Shadow, and many, many more. While other methods for controlling the 'battle addiction' that can come from Bludwork exist, and even methods for harnessing it and gaining power from it, the Codes of War are the most common method, with virtually every master of a Castle in Ragnocalypse having their own Code that they will help one train in.