

# ARRATA

Change Through Purpose



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# Contents

<b>I</b>	<b>Core Rules</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1	What is Arrata? . . . . .	5
1.2	Examples . . . . .	6
1.3	Game Masters . . . . .	6
1.4	Players and their Characters . . . . .	7
1.5	Non-Player Characters . . . . .	8
<b>2</b>	<b>Dice</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1	Why Dice? . . . . .	9
2.2	Dice Notation . . . . .	9
2.3	Rolled Dice . . . . .	10
2.4	Addition and Subtraction . . . . .	10
2.5	Exploding Dice . . . . .	11
2.6	Evil Dice . . . . .	11
2.7	Dice Pools . . . . .	12
2.8	Conditionals . . . . .	12
2.9	The d6 . . . . .	12
<b>3</b>	<b>Stats</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1	Quantity . . . . .	13
3.2	Quality . . . . .	14
3.3	Composition . . . . .	14
3.4	Checks . . . . .	15
3.4.1	Success and Failure . . . . .	15
3.4.2	Obstacle . . . . .	16

3.4.3	Intent . . . . .	16
3.4.4	Extra Successes . . . . .	17
3.5	Advantage . . . . .	17
3.6	Disadvantage . . . . .	18
3.7	Help, All at Once . . . . .	18
<b>4</b>	<b>Quirks</b>	<b>20</b>
4.1	Quirk Types . . . . .	20
4.1.1	Boons and Flaws . . . . .	21
4.2	Fighting Quirks . . . . .	22
4.2.1	Acceptance and Rejection . . . . .	22
4.3	Intuition . . . . .	22
4.4	Argos . . . . .	23
4.4.1	Completing Argos . . . . .	25
4.4.2	Breaking Argos . . . . .	25
<b>5</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>26</b>
5.1	Character Stats . . . . .	26
5.1.1	Core Stats . . . . .	26
5.1.2	Stat Resources . . . . .	27
5.1.3	Skills . . . . .	29
5.2	Change . . . . .	29
5.2.1	Changing Stats . . . . .	29
5.2.2	Check ‘Points’ . . . . .	29
5.2.3	Optional: Intuition . . . . .	29
5.2.4	Changing Quirks . . . . .	30
<b>II</b>	<b>Subsystems</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Combat</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Injury</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Sorcery</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Faith</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Engineering</b>	<b>36</b>

<b>III</b>	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Dice Probability Distributions</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Quirks</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Equipment</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>IV</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>42</b>

# Part I

## Core Rules

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This part contains all of the core mechanics of Arrata; detailing Roleplaying, Characters, their components, dice rolling, and how Characters change.

### 1.1 What is Arrata?

Arrata is a roleplaying system inspired by the works of more traditional roleplaying games, with an emphasis on universality. The purpose of this system is to allow you to write stories with as much, or as little, nuance as you want.

Arrata comes with no setting; I believe it is better to create something of your own and flesh it out as you go along. Whether that's characters, the world, or the context in which those interact, you will be able to do things far more suited to your understanding than I ever could.

Doing things is often far more valuable and teachable than observing. Part of that is that *you will fail*. You will also succeed in creating your vision, although rarely in the manner you may be expecting. The great thing about fictional worlds is that they have no physical consequences, they cannot and will not hurt you, so you are free to try the things you want to, and to fail in awesome ways.

In using this system, a fictional world is constructed by a *Game Master* (GM). This world is populated with characters and given things like factions, populations, and conflict, things that make it alive and interactable. *players* take control of *player characters* (PCs) who are built with *Quirks* that define who they are as people, and *Stats* that define what they are as beings that interact with the world. Together, the players and GM create a story with the PCs as the protagonists, their actions being influenced by their Quirks and the outcomes determined by their Stats.

The word Arrata is a misspelling of errata, the plural of erratum; a list of mistakes in a written document. The word was chosen as it embodies the spirit of Arrata: **Change Through Purpose**. By failing; making mistakes and blunders, you will develop as a person and become better than before. I hope in some way this system will allow you to explore these ideas, and perhaps even learn how you can change yourself.

## 1.2 Examples

This book contains many examples of different systems and situations, and for your convenience, each example will be enclosed in a box and will look like this:

*Note: notes often describe intrinsic rules or behaviors.*

*This is an example. Have the Gamma function:*

$$\Gamma(x) = \int_0^{\infty} t^{x-1} e^{-t} dt$$

## 1.3 Game Masters

Game Masters (GMs) are a critical part of any roleplaying system. Their job is to:

- Understand the rules as thoroughly as possible.
- Roleplay Non-Player Characters (NPCs).
- Be courteous and fair to their Players.
- Provide a story and setting.
- Describe:



- The outcomes of rolls.
- The environment.
- NPCs and their actions.
- Reactions and consequences.

The GM is the world engine, describing and defining what the world is: how it looks, smells, tastes, and sounds, and how it interacts with the Players' Characters and their actions.

As a GM, you have the most responsibility; orchestrating sessions and campaigns, managing NPCs, handling disputes, etc. Your Players are counting on you to prepare and improvise as well as you can and if you can't do those things, I suggest being a Player. Game Masters are to be afforded extra rights over the Players. They will have to make rulings and decisions for the Players, and should act as a mediator; thus these rulings are to be respected and treated as the new rule of law unless otherwise changed by the GM.

However, it is important not to overstep your authority as the GM. Punishing Players unfairly or making nonsensical rulings are unacceptable. If you find yourself under a GM making such decisions, the best course of action is typically to discuss the issue with the other Players and GM and failing that, leave the group altogether.

## 1.4 Players and their Characters

Players are the people in charge of player characters (PCs); their job is to be the “soul” driving their character in the direction most appropriate for them. Players are charged with the following responsibilities:

- Roleplaying their character.
- Being courteous to the Game Master and fellow players.
- Knowing the rules within reason.
- Following the rules and decisions of the Game Master.
- Being honest about rolls and their character sheet.

PCs are the protagonists of any Arrata game. They exist to provide a player with a point of view on the collective story being told and to allow that player to interact with that story following how their character would behave. Their PC is the primary responsibility of the Player, and thus if a conflict arises regarding your PC, it is your duty to respect the PC and fight on their behalf.

## 1.5 Non-Player Characters

Non-Player Characters (NPCs) are characters in the story created by the GM or players that act without player input. Instead, the GM acts as the “soul” of every NPC and treats them as closely as how a player would treat their character.

GMs can generate hundreds or even thousands of NPCs throughout long campaigns, so NPCs that are underdeveloped or single-purpose are acceptable as long as they are not used in a derogatory or offensive manner. On the other hand, situations may arise where an NPC is removed from the story when they were planned to have a greater role, in which case the GM shouldn't attempt to rewrite history and the flow of the story, they should accommodate and adapt the story to fit the new reality.

# Chapter 2

## Dice

### 2.1 Why Dice?

Dice are tools that are used to generate random numbers, which are in turn used to determine the outcome of certain scenarios. By adjusting things like how we count the value of each die, how many dice are rolled, and what special rules apply to them, we turn completely random, arbitrary values into probabilities that reflect the upper and lower bounds of a particular thing.

### 2.2 Dice Notation

When using and discussing quantities of dice, often the term Dice Notation may be used. This refers to a system that helps define two things about the dice being rolled:

- How many dice are to be rolled, represented as  $Y$ .
- How many sides the dice being rolled have; represented as  $X$ .

This is composed with a  $D$  in between, which stands for dice, in the form  $YDX$ , although I prefer and will use a lowercase  $d$  for the rest of this book. Individual dice are often written without the  $Y$  value as  $dX$ .

*Note: 100-sided dice are often a composition of  $d10 + d10 \times 10$ .*

1 6-sided die:  $1d6$  or  $d6$   
 3 dice with 20 sides each:  $3d20$   
 14 dice with 6 sides each:  $14d6$   
 100 dice with 100 sides each:  $100d100$

## 2.3 Rolled Dice

When a roll is made, the result in this book will be recorded in parentheses () and each die's result will be separated by commas. These values are chosen at random for this book.

*Note: Ellipses ( $a, \dots, b$ ) are used to represent a range of data.*

$YdX = (r_0, r_1, \dots, r_Y)$  where  $r_k$  is the rolled value of the die  $X_k$

I rolled a six-sided die and got a 4:

$$1d6 = (4)$$

I rolled 3 twenty-sided dice and got 5, 15, and 20:

$$3d20 = (5, 14, 20)$$

I rolled 100 one-hundred-sided dice and got 99, 65, ..., 23, and 55:

$$100d100 = (99, 65, \dots, 23, 55)$$

## 2.4 Addition and Subtraction

There will be cases where a roll would be given or have lost dice to roll, in which case we represent the change to a quantity of dice as  $+/- XD$ , where  $X$  is the number of dice being added or subtracted and  $D$  (always capitalized) is denoting that  $X$  represents a quantity of dice.

Separately, if two different-sided quantities of dice are added, there is no attempt to unify them into a single roll. Instead, they are left in their separate states and written as  $Y_1dX_1 + Y_2dX_2$ .

I gained  $3d6$  for my  $6d6$  roll:  $6d6 + 3D = 9d6$

I lost  $2d20$  for my  $4d20$  roll:  $4d20 - 2D = 2d20$

I gained  $100d6$  for my  $5d8$  roll:  $100d6 + 5d8 = 100d6 + 5d8$

## 2.5 Exploding Dice

There are also cases where dice can “explode”. This means that when the maximum possible value of a die is rolled, the value of that die is kept, and you can add  $+1D$  to the roll, rolling one more die. This can theoretically repeat infinitely, although the probability of that is essentially impossible.

To denote a roll as exploding, add an exclamation point,  $!$ , to the front. Here are a few examples, not that they are summed to show how the value of the exploded dice affected the outcome:

*Note: Rolled dice that have a modifier applied to them are bolded (6).*

$$!3d6 = (6 + 2 + 5) = (6 + 2 + 5) + !1d6 = 13 + (4) = 17$$

$$!2d20 = (20 + 20) = 40 + !2d20 = 40 + (10 + 15) = 65$$

$$!6d2 = (1 + 2 + 1 + 1 + 2 + 2) = 9 + !3d2 = \dots$$

## 2.6 Evil Dice

In opposition to exploding dice, Arrata will deal with *Evil dice*. Evil dice are denoted by adding an upside-down exclamation point,  $\text{¡}$ . Instead of giving the roll an additional die to roll and add to the sum, Evil dice give an extra  $D1$  that subtracts from the roll.

*Note: Evil dice and Exploding dice can happen simultaneously!*

$$\text{¡}2d20 = (1 + 5) = 6 - \text{¡}1d20 = 6 - (10) = -4$$

$$\text{¡}6d6 = (4 + 5 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 6) = 19 - \text{¡}1d6 = 19 - (6) = 13$$

$$\text{¡}3d10 = (1 + 1 + 1) = 3 - \text{¡}3d10 = 3 - (1 + 2 + 1) = \dots$$

## 2.7 Dice Pools

Arrata functions on *Dice Pools*. This is a way of rolling dice that focuses not on the sum of the values of the dice rolled, but by comparing each value to a constant,  $C$ .

## 2.8 Conditionals

For Dice Pools, conditionals are used along with a given constant  $C$  to achieve a specific effect. For Arrata, this conditional is the  $>$  comparison operator. This is used to count the number of dice rolled that are larger than  $C$ .

*Note: This condition is a  $>$ , not  $\geq$ , so  $(3) > 3$  is 0, not 1.*

$$4d20 > 10 = (\mathbf{12}, \mathbf{13}, 4, 1) > 10 = 2$$

$$5d4 > 1 = (1, \mathbf{4}, \mathbf{2}, 1, \mathbf{3}) > 1 = 3$$

$$2d10 > 9 = (4, 7) > 9 = 0$$

This counted sum can be used for several schemas, and the value of  $C$  can be used to further adjust probabilities.

## 2.9 The d6

Arrata uses the d6 as its primary die and no others. It's a convenient die as they're extremely stackable, provide a decent window of probabilities, and are often very cheap and numerous, which is excellent for Arrata because Dice Pool-based rolls can call for 10+ dice at once.

Because we know all rolls in Arrata use the d6, whenever a Quantity of dice is discussed, dice notation will not be used. Instead, the roll will be composed into a **Stat**.

# Chapter 3

## Stats

Now that we've established the basic rules of dice, we can translate those into the mechanics, different parts of Characters, and the components that make them up. A stat is a composition of two elements:

- **Quality:** The  $C$  constant used for a conditional roll.
- **Quantity:** The number of d6s to roll.

Stats are values that represent the capability of a single part of something or someone. They represent, in a statistical sense, the upper and lower bounds of what that part can do.

### 3.1 Quantity

Quantity has already been defined; it is the number of dice rolled, specifically in d6s. It specifies the  $Y$  component of  $YdX$  or the value of the dice pool. In a more character-focused sense, Quantity represents the capacity to do what a particular stat does. It defines the upper bound for the stat's capability.

Quantity is an *uncapped* value, meaning that Quantity values can be arbitrarily large, from 1 to whatever lies just below infinity. Luckily, you won't need to purchase inf  $-1$  d6s, as Arrata will almost always deal with Quantity values from 1 to 10. In rare cases, Quantities might be in excess of

20, but those are extremely rare and represent supernatural forces beyond conventional limits.

## 3.2 Quality

Quality is the  $C$  constant used for a conditional roll for the dice pool. In Arrata, Quantity comes in 3 levels:

- Basic:  $C = 3$ .
- Adept:  $C = 2$ .
- Superb:  $C = 1$ .

When referring to the Quality of a stat, we use the capital first letter of the name of the Quality, as highlighted above.

Here are a few examples of dice notation conditionals and their corresponding Quality:

- $10d6 > 3$  is  $B$  Quality.
- $4d6 > 2$  is  $A$  Quality.
- $5d6 > 1$  is  $S$  Quality.

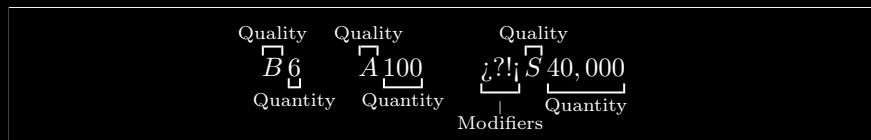
Quality is special in terms of characters' stats as it represents not how much a person could do with a stat, but how easily they reach that maximum. Most stats will be of Basic Quality, being Adept or Superb means that stat is beyond conventional ability; usually representing some sort of prodigal ability or technologically advanced method.

## 3.3 Composition

Stats in Arrata are not written in dice notation. Instead, they are composed in the format  $QY$  where  $Q$  is the letter of the Quality and  $Y$  is the value of the Quantity. Additionally, there may be modifiers, which are typically appended to the front of the stat when it's being rolled. Stats that are simply being stored, say on a character sheet, should never have modifiers. Here are three example stats:

*Note: Modifiers are used later, but are important to keep in mind.*





Now that stats are defined, we can discuss what they're used for.

## 3.4 Checks

A critical part of roleplaying is meeting something that is challenging for the character to overcome. When this happens; when an action is contested, a **Check** is called for. Dice are rolled and compared to a *difficulty level* to determine the outcome.

Checks are the core of the vast majority of TTRPGs, and Arrata is no different in this regard. Knowing when a check occurs and what to do are critical pieces of information for GMs and players alike. Not only do they drive the story, but checks are also used to challenge aspects of characters, which allows them to discover, learn, and change. This seemingly secondary role is where you will often find the most drama, and how you choose to pursue challenges and how you guide your character's changes are what this is all about.

### 3.4.1 Success and Failure

Because Arrata uses dice pools and comparisons, every die rolled is defined as either a *Success* or *Failure*.

Quality defines the threshold for what a success is; if a die is rolled and is greater than its Quality constant, then the die rolled is counted as a success. This is done for each die you roll and the number of successes is summed up. Any die whose value is less than or equal to the Quality (value rolled  $\leq$  Quality) is called a failure. The sum of the failures of a roll is not usually used for anything, and the need for that operation will be stated ahead of time, so when you make a typical roll, unless specified, don't worry about summing your Failures up, just the Successes.

*Note: Successes get probabilistically more occurrent with higher Quality.*

Rolling  $B2$ :  $(4, 2) > 3 = 1$  Success, 1 Failure

Rolling  $A5$ :  $(2, 6, 1, 3, 5) > 2 = 3$  Successes, 2 Failures

Rolling  $S4$ :  $(6, 2, 5, 4) > 1 = 4$  Successes, 0 Failures

### 3.4.2 Obstacle

In Arrata we refer to the *difficulty level* as **Obstacle**. When making a check, this value will be provided by the GM, by a specific subsystem, or it may not be provided at all (in which case, consider the Obstacle to be 0). Obstacle defines the lower bound of the number of successes needed to *pass* the check. If you roll successes below this value, you will *fail* the check. If an Obstacle value is higher than your stat's Quantity, you may attempt the check, but it may be better to seek alternative strategies.

For nomenclature's sake, Obstacle is shortened to  $Ob\ X$ , where  $Ob$  stands for Obstacle and  $X$  represents the value of the Obstacle for the check. For an entire check, it is written in the form  $Stat\ vs\ Ob\ X$ .

*Note:  $vs$  is a  $\geq$  operator, so  $3\ vs\ 3$  is a Success.*

Rolling  $B2\ vs\ Ob\ 1$ :  $B2 = (2, 2) > 3 = 0$  Successes  
0 Successes  $vs\ Ob\ 1$ : *Failure...*

Rolling  $A4\ vs\ Ob\ 2$ :  $A4 = (5, 6, 3, 5) > 2 = 3$  Successes  
3 Successes  $vs\ Ob\ 2$ : **Success!**

Rolling  $S6\ vs\ Ob\ 4$ :  $A4 = (1, 5, 1, 2, 3, 4) > 1 = 4$  Successes  
4 Successes  $vs\ Ob\ 4$ : **Success!**

### 3.4.3 Intent

When a check is called for, *Intent* must be defined for all parties involved. It's the GM's job to sum up these Intents and put forward *outcomes*. For the GM, they should define at least two outcome: Success and Failure. If there is ambiguity,

### 3.4.4 Extra Successes

When you roll past the Obstacle of a check, it might be that your GM allows for additional boons depending on your intent in the task. If you're trying to attack someone, you might deal them additional wounds, if you're haggling for a better price, you may very well rob them of a golden ring for a measly button. The magnitude of this boon shall be determined by the GM, although moderation is advised; going too far may result in more negative outcomes than expected (see: The Monkey's Paw).

*A cook is making a large volume of stew with their B5 cooking skill. The GM declares that with their ingredients, the Obstacle of the check will be Ob 2. The cook rolls and gets all 5 successes! The GM says that because the cook not only met but surpassed the Obstacle, the resultant stew is incredibly delicious, and the patrons consuming it are mesmerized.*

*Note: There are no extra consequences to having successes under the Obstacle of the check.*

## 3.5 Advantage

Events may occur such that a side in a check has manipulated the circumstances in their favor. We refer to this favor as *Advantage*, and multiple instances of favorable conditions induce higher levels of Advantage. For example: exploiting the environment, having a relevant Quirk, playing into your Argos, having the high ground in a fight, and getting Help from another character would all induce a level of advantage, *each*. If someone truly possessed all of those conditions, we would say they *have 5 levels of advantage*.

When advantage is had, the rolling side with advantage turns their roll into an open-ended roll. In addition, if multiple sources provide a level of advantage higher than 1, or the roll was already open-ended, then the extra levels of advantage turn into +1D each.

With open-ended rolls, remember that any maxes of the die (6) will add +1D to the roll. These 6s that have been rolled and are giving +1D are also counted as successes.

*Note: Open-ended rolls are denoted with a ! modifier.*

Rolling  $B3$  vs Ob 4 with 3 levels of advantage:  
 $!B3 + 2 = !(6, 4, 6, 2, 4) > 3 = 4 \text{ Successes} + !B2$   
 $4 \text{ Successes} + !(4, 2) > 3$   
 4 Successes vs Ob 4: **Success!**

### 3.6 Disadvantage

There are also situations where the inverse may be true; the terrain is unfavorable, your Quirks are opposed to the action, it opposes your Argos, having the low ground in combat, and enemies harrying you would all induce a level of disadvantage each.

Disadvantage imposes Evil dice to the roll, and is also obtained in levels. Past the first level of disadvantage, or if the roll already has Evil dice, the check will have +1 Ob imposed per level of extra disadvantage.

Evil dice subtract -1 Success from rolls that result in a minimum value for a d6 (1).

*Note: Rolls with Evil Dice are denoted with a ¡ modifier.*

Rolling  $S5$  vs Ob 3 with 2 levels of disadvantage:  
 $¡S5 = (4, 1, 5, 2, 6) > 1 = (3 - 1) \text{ Successes}$   
 2 Successes vs Ob 4: *Failure...*

### 3.7 Help, All at Once

There comes a time when two or more characters will be working towards the same goal at the same time. It could be that someone is attempting to help others, which is called Help, or that they're doing a sensitive task in parallel, which is called All at Once. Choose a character to act as the leader of the roll - this person should be the one who is relying the most on the other characters; the weakest link, the loudest sneak, the dumbest think.

Have the non-leading characters roll first, summing the successes and failures. Subtract the failures from the successes, and give that level of advantage to the leader of the roll. If the number is negative, give that level

of disadvantage instead. Also, note down a check for all characters rolling here.

Here is an example of Help:

*Agnar woke up at the bottom of a pit with a large boulder on top of him! He's uninjured, but at an awkward angle; luckily, his comrade Steven has arrived to help! Since Agnar is in the disadvantaged position and is the one in need of help, he'll be making this supporting roll with his A5 Power stat, and Steven will be leading the roll with his weaker B4 Power stat. The GM puts that, to free Agnar, the Ob will be 3. Failing to meet that Ob will result in the boulder crushing Agnar's foot, injuring him!*

*Agnar rolls first: 3 successes - 2 failures, a net of +1! That means Steven gets to roll with a level of advantage! Steven rolls: !(6, 1, 5, 2), 2 successes but he gets to roll an extra B1 because of the help from Agnar: (4), making 3 successes! They both roll the boulder off Agnar, an act that seems to have won Steven some free liquor tonight!*

And one of All at Once:

*Steven hears the scraping of boots up ahead. Unfortunately, both Agnar and himself lost their weapons in the fall and will need to deploy stealth if they hope to avoid getting gutted. Unfortunately, this calls for a Stealth check, one that falls under All at Once, and Agnar has the tact and Stealthiness of a pregnant horse (B2). Steven sighs, and prepares his A6 Stealth roll. The GM declares that this Stealth check will be an Ob 4.*

*He gets 5 successes - 1 failure! A net +4 advantage for Agnar! That means Agnar rolls a !B5: (6, 6, 3, 4, 1). 3 Successes so far, but he gets 2 more from the open-endedness of the roll: (4, 1). That makes 4 successes! Through some miracle, Steven manages to compensate for Agnar's bumbling mess of a stealth attempt, and they sneak past whatever's prowling these halls in one- well, two pieces.*

# Chapter 4

## Quirks

Quirks are the backbone of any character. They help you as a player or GM define who exactly a character is, how they operate, and how you should be representing them. The point of Quirks is to allow a degree of freedom in roleplaying a character without letting you lose what makes that character unique as a person.

Quirks are usually a single word or a very short phrase that defines a particular characteristic of someone. They are not intended to be stereotypes or absolute rules of how a character works. Instead, they define the boundaries, biases, beliefs, and any aspect of the character that's relevant to the story.

### 4.1 Quirk Types

Quirks are divided into three categories under the three classical rhetorical appeals: **Ethos**, **Pathos**, and **Logos**. Each category defines a set of Quirks and what they usually do for a character. By building a character with at least one or two Quirks in each category, you're almost guaranteed to have at least a half-interesting person.

**Ethos** Ethos expresses a character's Ethical, Moral, Societal, and Religious beliefs and context. Often they contain information about their past and how they're currently seen by the society they live in today. Ethos

Quirks are usually what gets a person into trouble; what they use to stir the pot and cause conflict.

**Pathos** Pathos deals with a character's emotional situation - how they act around other people and with what level of apathy or empathy they approach different tasks. Pathos Quirks tend to define things that may seem simple or stereotypical but can be used in much more nuanced ways when combined with other Quirks.

**Logos** Logos is how a character makes decisions; it's their inner voice that drives their actions step by step through whatever mess the other Quirks put them into.

### 4.1.1 Boons and Flaws

Quirks can offer *Boons* and *Flaws* which allow for relevant rolls to be modified. When a check is made such that a Quirk's Boons seem relevant, then that roll will gain a level of advantage. In opposition, if a Quirk's Flaws seem more relevant, they will gain a level of disadvantage. Note that this is not exclusive; Quirks that have a Boon in a scenario could also have a relevant Flaw, and therefore the roll would have a level of advantage and disadvantage.

*Note: Bring your GM treats; they may consider your PC's Boons.*

Here's an example of the *Veritable* Quirk:

**Name:** *Veritable*

**Defines:**

- *Being a genuine article or item.*
- *A real instance of something believed gone or impossible.*
- *Acting genuinely or truthfully.*

**Boons:** *People will often trust or believe you. They might see you as an ally when things are wrong in the world.*

**Flaws:** *You may often disclose things you should not. When there is great abundance, you may be seen as archaic.*

## 4.2 Fighting Quirks

Doing something that isn't what a character would normally do is incredibly interesting, but only if such an event is justifiable, otherwise Quirks would have no meaning other than to provide you with advantage and disadvantage. In the event where a character might reasonably consider and even act in a way contrary to a Quirk, we say they're *Fighting the Quirk*.

To clarify, Fighting the Quirk is an event where a character might say,

*“Do I want to be me? Do I accept who I am, or should I change?”*

Fighting against Quirks is the key to *Change* in Arrata. You as a player are the controller of your character and are ultimately the one who pilots the fate of your character. Part of that fate is deciding if a character *Accepts* or *Rejects* their Quirks.

### 4.2.1 Acceptance and Rejection

*Acceptance* and *Rejection* are measures of how much a character likes or dislikes a particular Quirk. Utilizing a Quirk in ways that demonstrate not only a reliance on the Quirk, but trust and belief in that aspect of the character is likely to increase your character's Acceptance of that Quirk. Doing the opposite; Fighting a Quirk (and succeeding), increases its Rejection.

Acceptance and Rejection function like stats, although they don't have a Quality, and aren't rolled. Instead, they act in opposition to each other; for every level of Acceptance, acts that fight against the Quirk gain a level of disadvantage. For every level of Rejection, acts that utilize the Quirk's Boons gain a level of Disadvantage.

But, they also offer relief when used to further themselves; acts that are faithful to a Quirk and use its Boons gain levels of advantage equal to the Quirk's Acceptance, and acts that fight the Quirk gain equal levels of advantage to its Rejection.

## 4.3 Intuition

Intuition is a point system that seeks to reward good character crafting and storytelling; when Quirks are roleplayed well, and when the conflict in the story is dealt with in interesting ways.



A single “Intuition point” is awarded to a PC by the GM when the player of that character does one of the following:

- Roleplays a Quirk well,
- Roleplays a scenario well,
- Creates a particularly funny or interesting scenario,
- Fights against a Quirk successfully.

It’s also important to note that for the given methods of gaining Intuition, if a particular Quirk is a reason why Intuition is being gained, then the Intuition will go into that Quirk’s Intuition category. If there isn’t a Quirk that caused it, the player may choose which category they want the Intuition to go to freely.

How often and in what volume Intuition is given out is dependent on the GM, but every player should be earning 1-2 Intuition points per 3-4 hours of play.

## 4.4 Argos

*Argos is a city in the Greek Peloponnese, the same island Sparta is situated on. Argo, the ship Jason used with his Argonauts, was the vessel by which he carried out his journey. Many terrible things happen on this adventure to find the Golden Fleece, but ultimately, they retrieve the Fleece and return to Greece where Jason assumes his father’s throne. This story is short-lived though, and the people reject Jason and his wife, driving them into solitude. Jason breaks his vows to his wife in exile, and she takes his new wife’s life as well as their child’s ascending to Mount Olympus. Jason returns to his land, where the Argo is on display. As he rests next to it, a part of it breaks loose, crushing and killing Jason.*

**Argos** in Arrata is the drive a character has. Their goal, mission, and ultimate weakness. It is their source of power and the destination where they’re “retired”; their final resting place. It’s from their Argos that a story is driven.

Argos is often a sentence or short phrase, written from the perspective of the character who has that Argos. The written Argos should be short, astute,

and clear in its goal; it should be a stopping point the character deeply desires and wishes for. You should write a character's Argos as if it were their final words, and in a way only they could fully understand.

This is because an Argos is incredibly dangerous for a character. It can drive them into stupidly dangerous situations, taking on foes far more powerful than themselves. It can also be corrupted and turned against them, used to manipulate a character for the benefit of another.

Argos should incorporate a character's Quirks; if they're *Caliban*, then so should their Argos, if they're *Corrupt*, then their Argos should be underhanded, if they're *Cursed*, then they should be fighting with or against that curse.

Argos provides your characters with a special power most others don't have: *Purpose*. With this purpose, their actions will become more likely to succeed, and actions that directly serve towards moving that character closer to their Argos should be offered a level of advantage by the GM. This is the power that Argos provides, but actions that go against Argos are severely punished. If a character moves against their Argos, ignoring the goal they've sought, they will be considered "Failing", and it's the job of everyone at the table to notify their player that they're not playing their character to their Argos.

If still, they continue to ignore or fight against their Argos, it's the GM's job to intervene. Characters who have a purpose but don't care for it will lose it, and revert to their original, purposeless existence. Remove these characters (and probably their player) from the table immediately. This is one rule that is immutable in Arrata: **Evict purposeless characters and the players who lead them to this**. If the situations and events that have occurred make it such that they lose their Argos, that is acceptable. But if a player's actions drag their character time and again away from their purpose, then they're actively breaking the rules of this system. Take necessary action and remove them.

Not all Argos are noble. People fight and die for incredibly stupid reasons constantly. A hope with Arrata is to allow you to see those purposes and their reasons, even if you might disagree with them, and understand them better.

### 4.4.1 Completing Argos

If the Argos of a character is made true, then we say that the character has *Completed their Argos*. Their journey in this story is over, the control of the player over the character is no longer needed for them to live in this world. Discuss with your group then; what should we do with this character? Do they retire, move out somewhere nice and settle down? Do we send them off on another, tangential adventure? Will the characters remaining hear of them again? Wonder what happy, or bittersweet ending would be appropriate for them. Ultimately, this is a decision between a player and the GM, with a heavy lean towards the player's opinion. As a player, you're bargaining for the best end for this person you've made come true. As a GM, you're trying to retire and fit that character into the background as well as possible.

Some characters might choose to stay and see the others' journeys through to completion. They might turn and abandon them in a bleak moment of vengeance. As the character's player, you should choose an option best fitting the character and see them through to the end well: it's your last responsibility to that character.

### 4.4.2 Breaking Argos

In opposition, there might come a time when an Argos is made void; a family seeking to be reunited is destroyed, a wish for peace is turned into an eternal war, and vengeance is proved wrong in its assumptions. When this happens, we say that the character's *Argos is Broken*. Often, this is a traumatic event for them, where emotions take precedence, and stupid decisions are made in desperation.

When Argos is broken, a decision is to be made immediately: what does the character do? Do they sink into endless despair, do they go on a rampage, do they turn and silently leave? Do any of the other characters stop them? A broken Argos can be mended, and a new one can be found. This is a critical part of *change*, but before that can be done, the trial of overcoming such a deep loss should be difficult. The GM should assign a few checks to see in what ways the character degenerates and what they lose. If it seems to be a total loss, *toss the character aside*. They're gone, and there's nothing you can do about it.

# Chapter 5

## Characters

This chapter deals with what and who characters are; what are they composed of, how are they compiled, and how do we go about creating them?

### 5.1 Character Stats

As a component of a character, a character's stats define *what* they are in the world; what they're capable of, and what they aren't. As an overview, these are aspects of characters that don't deserve an entire section:

**Name:** What they're known as. Self-explanatory, but could also include pseudonyms and nicknames.

**Player:** Who's responsible for playing the character.

**Age:** How long has this character lived in this world.

**Stock:** The race or species this character hails from.

#### 5.1.1 Core Stats

The core stats of a character are generalized parts of them: how strong, fast, and smart they are. These stats are used for generalistic scenarios that involve less tact and more brute force to solve a problem, and are often

used to determine the magnitude of a particular check's effectiveness if it succeeds.

The core stats are divided into two groups of three, the first being *mental stats*:

**Will:** General knowledge or common sense, ability to learn, and ability to resist urges.

**Perception:** Ability to see, smell, hear, and detect the environment and subtleties of the world.

**Conscious:** Ability to process and understand information as well as the speed of cognition.

The second group is the *physical stats*:

**Power:** Strength and physical capability.

**Speed:** Agility and swiftness to commit actions.

**Forte:** Physical health, conditioning, and ability to resist malicious infection.

### 5.1.2 Stat Resources

Stat resources (SRs) are a measure of something that a character has or something they're enduring; things like a curse, wealth, or the support of the people, that's been abstracted into a stat. This can be extremely useful to quantify something not necessarily quantifiable and then to allow something quantified to become part of the system in a way that allows it to be used in rolls.

What stat resources a character has and how they function are things to discuss with the GM and other players. If you feel uncomfortable with this mechanic or would rather use exact numbers or roleplay to represent these things, then feel free to ignore stat resources altogether.

Stat resources are divided into being either *Finite* or *Infinite*.

#### Finite SRs

Finite stat resources are things like wealth, the favor of the people, rations for a journey, and so on. These are things that are destroyed, lost, or diminished as you employ them.

Finite stat resources generally aren't rolled alone. They're used to add onto and modify rolls, but at a cost. When rolling a finite stat resource, *any failures* reduce the Quantity of the resource by 1. Once the finite resource's Quantity hits 0, the stat resource cannot be used until its Quantity is increased to 1 or above.

*Note: Finite stats can be used to abstract strange currencies.*

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## Infinite SRs

Infinite stat resources are things like curses, reputation, and unusual abilities. infinite stat resources are more complicated than Finite ones, and aren't used up when you use them; usually, it's much the opposite; infinite stat resources are more like core stats, they typically level up like traditional stats (see: Changing Stats) and are used to solve problems all on their own.

*Note: Infinite stats can be used to represent non-fatal disease.*

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### 5.1.3 Skills

## 5.2 Change

### 5.2.1 Changing Stats

Leveling is a mechanical process through which characters improve their abilities by performing actions and learning from their experiences. Most stats in the game are level-able, but it's important to consult your GM to confirm whether things like *Resource stats* are eligible for leveling.

### 5.2.2 Check ‘Points’

Each time you make a check for a stat that can be leveled, you gain a ‘check’ (point). These points accumulate slowly, increasing by +1 for every check made. Once the check pool reaches a value of 2 times the Quantity of the stat, the stat immediately levels up! You can then rejoice as you increase the Quantity by +1, and reset the check pool back to 0.

Depending on your character sheet, the check pool may be represented as a designated area to record the current value, such as filling in empty circles or iterating a number field. Regardless of the method, it's crucial to keep track of your checks, as this is the *only* way a stat can be leveled.

### 5.2.3 Optional: Intuition

This is optional but recommended:

When sufficient check points are available for a stat to level, you don't immediately level that stat. Instead, you must spend an intuition point of any category alongside with all of your check points (*even if there's more than needed!*). I offer this as an interesting addition to leveling to try and force more numbers-inclined players to focus on roleplay while still being

able to experience that precious dopamine hit. It also forces the players to spend their characters' Intuition more wisely.

#### 5.2.4 Changing Quirks



# Part II

## Subsystems

# Chapter 6

## Combat

# Chapter 7

## Injury

## Chapter 8

# Sorcery

## Chapter 9

# Faith

# Chapter 10

# Engineering

# Part III

## Appendices

## Appendix A

# Dice Probability Distributions



# Appendix B

## Skills

# Appendix C

## Quirks

# Appendix D

## Equipment

# Part IV

## Credits

# Special Thanks

To everyone that helped me along the way:

- Coffee
- The Boys