ARRATA

Change Through Purpose.

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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?

1.1.1 Etymologically

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.**

Failure, mistakes, and blunders; they're all critical parts of change and finding purpose. Without the monolithic power that is a purpose, achieving the deeds you may soon find yourself dreaming up is nearly impossible. I hope Arrata will be able to allow you to experience and explore these ideas, and I hope you will be able to change too.

1.1.2 Literally

Arrata is a Tabletop-Roleplaying Game (TTRPG) system with a heavy focus on allowing Players freedom in how they roleplay while also giving them a helping hand in figuring out who exactly their character is, and why they choose to struggle with the horrific realities of their world. It is designed to be played with 3 - 6 Players and a single GM, with a bare minimum of 1 Player and 1 GM.

Arrata is not a numbers-focused game. There is dice rolling and the occasional addition and subtraction, but almost all of the math is incredibly straightforward unless you want it to become more complicated and dive into subsystems. To that end, this first part will focus on the underlying systems and ideas that define Arrata, with the goal that you can

construct the game you want to play by adding on subsystems that fit the setting and intent of a particular world.

1.2 What is Roleplaying?

Roleplaying is the act of putting yourself in the shoes of someone else. It's a form of improv where your job is to emulate and represent a character. There are many parts to roleplaying, such as the accent the character has, the ways they interact with different people, how they solve problems, etc. There is a lot to learn about roleplaying, but the best way to do so is to get into a game with a character and practice by doing it.

For TTRPGs like Arrata, roleplaying consists of a set of *Players* and a *Game Master*. The *Players* control fictional characters and describe what they do while the *Game Master* describes the world and how it interacts with the *Player*'s characters.

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.

1.3.1 GM Authority

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.

1.3.2 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 a Player would treat their Character. GMs can oftentimes generate hundreds or even thousands of characters throughout long campaigns, so characters that are underdeveloped or single-purpose are acceptable as long as they are not used in a derogatory or offensive manner.

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.

1.4.1 Player Characters

Player Characters (PCs) are the protagonists of any Arrata game. They exist to provide everyone with a point of view on the collective story being told and to allow the Player to interact with that story in accordance with 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.

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 document. Individual dice are written without the Y value. Here are a few examples:

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

I will refer to the composed value generated from this schema as *rolls*.

2.2.1 Rolled Dice

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

Here are a few examples:

- $4d20 = (10, 5, 14, 20)$.
- $10d2 = (1, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0)$.
- $5d6 = (4, 1, 6, 1, 5)$.
- ...

2.2.2 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 in 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 number of dice.

For example:

- I gained 3d6 for my 6d6 roll: $6d6 + 3D = 9d6$.
- I lost 2d20 from my 4d20 roll: $4d20 - 2D = 2d20$.
- ...

2.2.3 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:

- $!3d6 = (6 + 2 + 5) = !1d6 + (6 + 2 + 5) = 4 + 13 = 17$.
- $!2d20 = (20 + 20) = !2d20 + 40 = (10 + 15) + 40 = 65$.
- $!6d2 = (1 + 2 + 1 + 1 + 2 + 2) = !3d6 + 9 = \ldots$

2.2.4 Evil Dice

In opposition to exploding dice, Arrata will deal with *Evil dice*. Evil dice are denoted by adding an upside-down exclamation point, ¡. 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. For example:

- ¡$2d20 = (1 + 5) = 6$−¡$1d20 = 6 - (10) = -4$
- ¡$6d6 = (4 + 5 + 3 + 1 + 2 + 6) = 19$−¡$1d6 = 19 - (6) = 13$
- ¡$3d10 = (1 + 1 + 1) = 3$−¡$3d10 = 3 - (1 + 2 + 1) = \ldots$

Note: Evil dice and Exploding dice can happen simultaneously!

2.3 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.

2.3.1 Conditionals

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

For example:

- $4d20 > 10 = (12, 13, 4, 1) > 10 = 2$
- $5d4 > 1 = (1, 4, 2, 1, 3) > 1 = 3$
- $2d10 > 9 = (4, 7) > 9 = 0$
- $\ldots$

This counted sum can be used for several schemas, and the value of C can be used to further tune probabilities. Arrata makes heavy use of conditionals for its systems.

2.3.2 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.

3.1 Definition

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.

3.1.1 Quantity

Quantity has essentially already been defined; it is the Quantity 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.

3.1.2 Quality

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

- **B**asic: $C = 3$.
- **A**dept: $C = 2$.

- **S**uperb: $C = 1$.

For the value of stats, refer to the first level of the name of the Quality. For example:

- $10d6 > 3$ 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.

3.1.3 Composition

Stats in Arrata are not written in dice notation, instead, they are composed in the format BX where B is the letter of the Quality and X is the value of the Quantity. Here are some examples with the Arrata-composed stat and its equivalent dice notation form:

- $B6 = 6d6 > 3$
- $A100 = 100d6 > 2$
- $S40000 = 40000d6 > 1$
- ...

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

3.2 Checks

A critical part of roleplaying is meeting something that is a challenge for the character to overcome; something that they may or may not be able to do. 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, which the GM will interpret.

3.2.1 Success and Failure

Because Arrata uses dice pools and comparisons, Arrata works on a binary success/failure schema. 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 rolled is equal to or less than the Quality is called a failure. The sum of the failures of a roll is not usually used for anything and that operation will be stated ahead of time, so when you roll, don't worry about summing them up.

For example:

- Rolling $B2$: $(4, 2) > 3 = 1$ Success, 1 Failure.
- Rolling $A5$: $(2, 6, 1, 3, 5) > 2 = 3$ Successes, 2 Failures.
- Rolling $S4$: $(6, 2, 5, 4) > 1 = 4$ Succeses, 0 Failures.
- ...

3.2.2 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. 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.

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*.

Here are a few examples:

- Rolling $B2$ vs $Ob\ 1 : (2, 2) > 3$ vs $Ob\ 1 = 0$ Successes vs $Ob\ 1 = failure$.
- Rolling $A4$ vs $Ob\ 2 : (5, 6, 3, 5) > 2$ vs $Ob\ 2 = 4$ Successes vs $Ob\ 2 = pass$.
- Rolling $S6$ vs $Ob\ 4 : (1, 5, 1, 2, 3, 4) > 1$ vs $Ob\ 4 = 4$ Successes vs $Ob\ 4 = pass$.
- ...

3.2.3 Intent

When a check is called for, *Intent* must be defined. State what exactly it is your character intends to do and what they hope will happen by doing it; that will be used to define the *difficulty level*. The GM will then determine the outcome:

- If you *pass* the check,
- If you *fail* the check,
- If you have extra successes/failures.

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Special Thanks

To everyone that helped me along the way:

- Coffee