

**Everyone has their tipping point.
It might be a chance word at
the wrong moment, an opinion
spilled in the wrong kind of room,
something small and insignificant
that nonetheless changes the very
nature of a person, their core.**

**As the marauder's scrapgun fired,
Gant found hers.**

**A flex of bitter power, a skip of her
heartbeat, and something that had
been growing and shifting inside
her for years was released,
and she...
... Pushed.**

**Rivets buckled and nails burst, a
cloud of shrapnel splitting around
her in defiance of every natural law
she could name.**

**Potential, realized - after years of
practice she'd been starting to think
would never bear fruit.**

She'd done it.

Arconautics

Arconautics represents concentrated weirdness in an already weird world, the art of delving into the mysteries of the uncanny and turning the inherent strangenesses of the wildsea to your benefit. It's not quite magic, not quite science, but something that sits between the two - a bundle of abnatural laws and consequences controlled.

Basic Principles

The first step to harnessing arconautic power is to find an element of the natural world with some strangeness to it. Once you've found that element you need to obtain it, or at least a fragment of it, and learn how to tap that power for yourself. There are many, many ways of doing this, but a few common ones are...

- ⦿ Befriending and bonding with an unusual creature to adopt some of its abilities (such as keeping a chameleon that can alter your colouring as well as its own)
- ⦿ Forging an uncanny material into a relic or tool of some kind to keep on your person (such as forging a hammer out of supramagnetic ore, or a grappling hook out of still-moving leviathan bones)
- ⦿ Using alchemy to extract and ingest the essence of a particular strangeness (such as a solution of pinwolf staccatomygdala to gain their jerky, physics-defying speed for a short time)
- ⦿ Incorporating a part of the wilds into your own body as a permanent fixture (such as replacing your heart with the heart of a living storm)
- ⦿ Overcoming a weird injury or experience that would otherwise have ended you (such as surviving a lightning strike or spending a century trapped in amber)

Training and Crisis

There's a huge gulf between the potential for power and the ability to control it at will, and that's where training comes in. There are no spellbooks to learn from, no quick ways to mastery; arconautic potential has to be trained like a muscle or a new sense until it becomes a fundamental part of your own body.

For some individuals, this training yields control in small increments - an ardent that's replaced their blood with sap might spend months learning how to coax a branch to bend against the wind, or to bring a recalcitrant plant to bloom on command. Years later that very same ardent might be standing at the prow and, with a flick of their hand, bring a bloom tide roaring in from nowhere to carry their ship to its destination.

For others, training is a thankless and time-consuming process that yields nothing in the way of results until a moment of crisis; an unexpected event that catapults them into the realm of effectiveness. This might come as a triumphant moment, a relief, or even an unexpected shock. *In the example on the left, Gant unlocks the ability to manipulate magnetism in a moment just like this.*

So Why Aren't There More Arconauts?

With such power to be harnessed, you might expect arconautics to be a common feature of the rustling waves, but in truth, it's rare enough that citizens in more isolated settlements might never even have seen it in action. In the view of most non-wildsailors there are far easier ways to amass power, such as through wealth-hoarding, trade, skilled labour, and information gathering. Becoming an arconaut is messy, dangerous, painful and, ultimately, unpredictable - and the wild world is harsh enough for most already.

