

Magical Warrior Soul-Star Knights!

A thoroughly fun anime RPG by Paul Kidd.

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Game concept.

“**Magical Warrior Star-Soul Knights**” is both a celebration and a parody of the anime “magical world” adventure genre. In these stories, a group of ordinary Japanese high school students are always transported to a magical fantasy world – where they find themselves acting as mystic champions serving to save that world from evil.

So! Here’s a game system designed to handle this type of campaign. MWSSK has essential ‘anime’ elements designed to give the game the right ‘feel’! This is a game of posing – of spectacular attacks and weird magic, recurring enemies and tragic love. The ideal campaign will draw on the best elements of anime shows such as “Rayearth”, “Fushugi Yuugi”, “Escaflowne”, “Those Who Hunt Elves” and “El Hazard”.

One secret of this game is that the player characters in effect define their fantasy world and the adventures they will undergo. This little secret makes each game and each group of players a unique experience.

DON’T think “RPG”. Think “Video Game”! Characters should be given gems or ‘power ups’. A magical sword actually has three levels of power, each of which is gained only by trading widgets to strange mentors.

Oh – and did I mention the annoying magical pets...?

Game rules.

The keys to the MWSSK (pronounced “Mwssk”) game system are speed, simplicity and ‘pose’! All game systems are determined by a roll of two six sided dice. We add in special game cards for extra effect.

Style

The secret to this game is that the players and characters actually influence their own adventures. When creating a game world, invent a back story and a world that will serve as the ‘fantasy realm’ – the world to which your ordinary “Tokyo teens” have been transported.

Decide upon the look and feel – the culture and the ‘flavour’.

- Then let the players set the adventures and the tone.

The characters themselves are each created with a sense of their own personal fantasies and dreams. Umpire should draw on this when creating adventures. If characters have been created that have fantasy worlds full of romance, tragic love and moral crisis, then this is what should creep in to the campaign. Have a player character fall in love with the senior bad guy – or a best friend turn traitor and become the Characters’ nemesis! If character seem to have a swashbuckling bent, then hit them with derring do. If they love spectacle and awe, then wow them with hug vistas and frightening old ruins.... It’s all part of the fun. (and don’t forget to shock them with things outside all their expectations.

In essence, a campaign will follow a set sequence: Tokyo teens are somehow transported to a fantasy world. Here, they have a great mission – they are a part of the great story of this world. To achieve this goal, the teens must go forth, find tool, magic and skills – awaken abilities sleeping within themselves, find their true destinies... and defeat the ultimate evil.

Simple!

A campaign world and back story, “ELATTA”, have been provided for your gaming pleasure.

“Through the Looking glass”:

Decide upon a starting scenario for your game. Determine just HOW your Tokyo teens are transported to fantasy land. The campaign will usually open with a description of the character’s transfer from Earth into Fantasy land.

For instance – for the Elatta campaign detailed below, the player characters have been magically summoned by the servants of the Solar dragon. While of a school excursion, the Teens hear a deep magical tone. The noise increases painfully, until they all lose consciousness. When the teens awaken, they find themselves lying upon a mist-shrouded mountain upon an alien world...

“There’s no place like home!”:

One campaign goal for your characters might be simply to return back home (though why anyone would want to is beyond me!) Such a quest should be elaborate. In the case of the Elatta campaign, the magic used to return to Earth involves not only finding a dragon willing and able to perform the ritual of return, but also the striking of magical notes that resonate with the particular soul of each ‘transferee’. Skills in music are therefore vital to the return home!

Bear in mind – a fun extra layer to a campaign is to have player characters return to earth (either deliberately or accidentally), and drag their crusade back with them! The mighty magical enemies found in the fantasy world burst through into earth, and can only be fought by the player characters. *Wheeeee!*

(variant #257: What would Tokyo Teens do with a ‘stargate’ if they found it? Hmmm...)

Props

Props are important! It adds an extra dimension to the game if people have their ‘treasures actually laid out on the table.

Treasure

Go to a gift shop and buy a bag or three of ‘fairy stones’ (glass flat-bottomed pebbles). Buy several different colours (red, blue, green) to represent different types of “Soul

Stars”. You can also buy a box of poker chips to use as game money (white chips are 1 represent a silver ‘sequin’ coin, Red Chips represent a ‘red sequin’, and blue Chips represent a blue sequin). Little game counters can stand for copper coins. Some pop sticks can be used for magical swords (write the sword’s name in the popsticks). Decorated cocktail sticks can be magical arrows. Little bottle-shaped party poppers make excellent potion bottles. You can also find plastic rings etc in toy stores that could be useful as ‘treasure”. All players will need an envelope or bag in which to keep their loot between game sessions.

Cards

Cards to help enhance game play are provided as sheets in these rules – copy and print or paste onto card stock. Feel free to create your own! Add artwork to your heart’s content.

Dice roll system

All dice rolls are made on 2D6.

To succeed in a task, a character must roll 2 dice, hoping to equal or exceed a score of 8. The player character will add in bonuses for their own ability scores and skills. They will also subtract a ‘difficulty number’ from the score. Tasks that are difficult may cause a penalty of between 1 to 5 points from the character’s dice roll. A natural roll of 2 always fails. A natural roll of 12 always succeeds (as long as the task was in some way possible!)

Example: The PC “Kimiko” needs to cross a rickety, rolling log bridge across a chasm filled with biting bugs. She must roll an 8 or higher on 2D6 to success. She has a +1 bonus for any ‘athletic’ rolls due to her high Athletic score. However, since the bridge is treacherous, the umpire declares that there is a difficulty penalty of –2. Kimiko rolls two dice, which total 10. She adds 1 point for her agility bonus, then subtracts 2 points for the task difficulty, giving her a score of 9. She has succeeded in her task, and has avoided becoming lunch for the nest of hungry bugs.

When two characters actively compete against each other, both must roll dice and add in their skills and bonuses. The character with the highest total dice score will usually be the winner. (for instance – two characters have a long distance running race and treasure hunt, their would roll 2 dice and add in their bonuses for Athletic, Tough and Brainy ability scores).

Got it?

Two dice.

Add skills and bonuses.

Big numbers good, low numbers bad.

Now read on!

Character generation

Player Characters in this game all represent Anime Style teenagers from the modern world. Probably from some odd little Tokyo High school (although exchange students have been known). Characters are usually 12 to 14 years old.

Now! Players will have to conceive of a look, a mood and a 'feel' for their characters. Decide on a general appearance and attitude. Remember that hair colours could be virtually anything in the spectrum, and you should be fine. There are no ability differences between male and female characters.

Character name:

Pick something nice! Random Japanesey syllables are fine.

Age:

The umpire will have to decide your age. 12, 13 or 14 is usual.

Sex:

Male or female.

Descriptors:

OK! Pick 2 or 3 words you think might help define your characters attitude, outlook or personality. (EG: "Dire, Brooding, Pretentious" – or "Shy, bookish, curious") Whatever takes your fancy! This is a role playing aid, and a way for the Umpire to get an idea of the impression you give to strangers.

Favourite Movie/Series:

This can be a movie, TV series or anime series. And it's a more subtle question than you might think.

Your favourite movie is your personal fantasy yearning. If a player chooses 'Pirates of the Caribbean' for their character, then the character clearly yearns for derring do. They also know a little about the sort of things you expect in that kind of adventure.

The umpire will tailor make scenarios and encounters to match your characters fantasy desires. If someone picks a romance anime as their favourite movie, then star crossed love, tragic romance and heart-wrench are in the cards for that character's future!

Abilities

Characters have six Abilities. These all must have scores of between 2 and 12.

Take 45 points and split these up between the six abilities. BUT – pay an extra 2 points to raise any ability above 10 and another 2 points to raise above 11.

The six abilities are:

Athletic: Physical ability to run, jump, balance, punch, duck etc.

Brainy: The ability to remember information, to solve problems and learn.

Cute: The ability to sway other people with your looks or personality.

Feisty: Grit, determination and just plain stubbornness.

Sensitive: Awareness of the world, spirit and soul. Sharpness and awareness..

Tough: Endurance, pain resistance and physique.

Bonuses:

Each ability has a bonus number that is applied to various dice rolls. Pencil these bonus numbers in brackets next to each Ability score.

For every 2 full points an Ability is *above* 7, the character gains a +1 bonus.

For every 2 full points an Ability is *below* 7, the character gains a +1 bonus.

Hit Points:

These equal a character's toughness plus their Athletic bonus.

Chakra:

All starting characters have a chakra of 0. Magic is a skill that must be learned. Usually via a painful trauma!

Failing:

Pick a strange little failing your character has. They might be greedy for food, or clumsy – or be an absolutely terrible cook, or bad at schoolwork. This is all part of your characters' "colour"!

Schtick:

Pick one strange thing that you do well. This is often funny, or nigh inexplicable. Your schtick might be the ability to eat virtually anything – or to be a great drinker of alcohol – or 'feet do your stuff! (the ability to run away from danger faster than would be normal). You might be an eavesdropper, or a comedian – or be sexy, lovable, tenacious, or a thief. Or be able to look innocent. Pick something that might be colourful, and not spoil the feel of the game.

Pop skills:

Next, pick three things from pop culture and teen life that your character is particularly skilled in. These things will have unusual effects upon the game – umpires must be willing to accept proposals from players!

Here are some examples (but hell – go figure out your own!):

Twitch games: The character can use magical wands and ray projectors, and in good at spotting hidden enemies.

Hong Kong Action flicks: The character can improvise weapons, and can tell how tough their opponents are.

Romance Manga: The character knows the strange twisted rules and plotlines of romance manga, and will know what to expect in romance and romantic fantasy situations.

J-Pop: The character knows bands and music. But they are also a good karaoke singer, can sing and possibly dance well. Useful if forced to perform for a growling crowd of barbarian warriors.

Cosplay: Your character is good at getting the best effect out of costumes, and poses so well when dressed in magical armour!

Mecha manga: The player character understands all about this giant robot shit, and will instinctively be able to use such a device. And face it – there's going to be giant mecha somewhere in this damned fantasy land!

Karaoke: The character sings! They have a good memory for song lyrics – and this extends to the ability to remember magical spells and riddles.

Sports: Good at soccer, baseball, or whatever the hell else it is Japanese schools teach. Good at throwing accurately, or kicking a goal.

Schoolwork: This character can actually do maths – or was actually awake during chem.. Although no rocket scientist, you might be able to figure out the volume of something, or remember how to make electricity.

Fantasy stories: You know the kinds of plotlines and things that happen in fantasy worlds. Downside: Certain types of character in the fantasy world will instantly trigger your paranoia!

Artist: You draw real pretty! Incidentally, this will be of great help in creating magical scrolls, or spells that require images to be painted.

Magical girl manga: You will know how spells and enchantment rules tend to work. You will figure out wands easily!
Downside: Your clothes tend to fall off a lot.

RPG games: You know what to expect in these kinds of worlds. Hell – you know about monsters and widgets! You were BORN to adventure!

Model kit builder: Has a delicate eye for repairs, lifting gems out of webs of sensor beams. Also knows and likes weird machines.

Science Fiction buff: Your head is stuffed with SF esoterica, pedantry and scraps of science. You can figure out solutions to problems, but mostly based on your favourite shows. Your favourite Starfleet officer would do it this way or that way.

Computer geek: Hmm – limited use, until in the middle of a demon attack you finally find that ancient buried alien computer that unlocks the fortress of ages (where all the mecha are stored). Boy – THEN you'll be glad you too this one!

Esoteric skill:

Your character may now pick one skill or area that is usual for a typical Tokyo teen to have. This is something you are familiar with, nor really expert with – and it must be explainable!

For instance, you might have ridden a horse, so you can put down “horse riding”. You have gone along to archery club, so you put “archery”. Your brother is in the kendo club, so you put “sword fighting”. You can play a musical instrument, or have actually been camping and enjoyed it! Or maybe you read some occult books once....

Final:

And there we are! One character!

Didn't hurt too much, did it?

Decide what your clothes are and what you look like.

Now – for equipment, pick three things a kid might carry on a school excursion to Tokyo tower. EG – a drink flask, a cut lunch – a gameboy, school books, candy bars. Whatever takes your fancy. The umpire will veto anything that sounds ridiculous.

Skills

To recap (for those of you asleep in the back of the class...): To perform an action of use a skill, a player must roll 2 dice and score an 8 or higher.

The dice roll result is modified by the appropriate bonuses of any characteristics that might apply. These numbers are added (or subtracted if negative numbers) to the dice roll. (EG a roll of 7, with a -1 modifier becomes a “6”)

If a skill is being made that attempts to effect another character or creature (such as hitting them, persuading them, etc), then SUBTRACT the target's own bonuses. EG high characteristics for the target will lower the attacker's chances, and low characteristics for the target will increase the attacker's chances (subtracting a minus actually yields a plus.)

EXAMPLE:

Spooky decides to persuade a guard that she actually DOES have a reason to be sneaking about inside a palace. Spooky has a “Brainy” of 9 and a cute of 9, giving her two +1 bonuses for a total of +2. The guard, on the other hand, is a ravening idiot and has a “Brainy” of 5, giving him a -1 bonus. Spooky's total bonuses as +2 for her own abilities, and a +1 for the guard's low bonus, giving a total of +3 to her dice roll.

Ability bonuses.

Here are different situations, and the Ability bonuses that will probably apply:

For Melee Attack/defense: Athletic, Tough and Brainy

For Magic attack/defense: Sensitivity and Feisty

For ranged combat attack/defense: Brainy and Sensitive

For persuasion and bluffing: Brainy and Cute

To seduce: Cute
To avoid being seduced or persuaded: Brainy
To wheedle, plead or whine: Cute
To hide: Brainy and Athletic
To spot hidden things: Sensitive
To sense danger lurking: Sensitive
To inspire the troops: Feisty
To sense a person is lying: Sensitive
To solve a puzzle: Brainy
Climb a wall: Athletic

Skill types

Skills are vaguer and more rare in “Magical Warrior Soul-Star Knights” than in many other games. Characters have ‘areas of interest’ that define their general competence and ability. For instance, a character who has ‘War’ as an interest tends to know history, tactics and can recognise armour and equipment. A character who has an interest in “Romance” is familiar with the art of flirting, the signs of interest, and knows how to end an affair happily or tragically. There are also more specific, narrow skills – such as archery or musical instruments, melee combat or magic.

Unskilled actions

Characters can generally perform most simple actions. Some activities, however, require a definite training before they can be attempted. Firing a bow, driving a car or anything similarly complex cannot be done effectively by the unskilled. Anyone who has not learned these activities properly receives a –2 DRM on any action attempts using these skills.

- Bear in mind that most starting “Tokyo Teens” are NOT warriors. When they first arrive in fantasy land, they are unskilled in weapons and fighting (exception – those with esoteric skills might have combat ability. Kids who are good at sport can be assumed to get no penalty in unarmed combat). Tokyo teens must have their potentials awakened – usually as the first quest of their adventure in Fantasy land. Give them a totemic spirit to find or a mentor to rescue, and then have skills in their chosen weapons given to them as a reward.

Umpires and players can create skills as needed and as appropriate. In general, a skill covers something that needs to be taught and learned before it can be attempted. Horse riding, fencing, mathematics, magic etc.

A great many can be attempted without requiring specific skills. Players can bluff their way past enemies, balance over beams, and fight hand to hand without requiring special skills. They can, however, decide to become experts or masters at any such activity by paying experience as appropriate.

Expertise and mastery

Some characters gain special expertise with specific skills. An **Expert** gains a +1 bonus when using their skill of expertise. A **Master** gains a +2 when using a Mastered skill. For instance, a character might be rated as a Master archer.

The most important skills in an adventure game are:

Attack (always with a specific weapon)

Defense (vs melee attack)

Defense (vs Ranged attack)

Magic

Spell resistance

Combat

In combat, characters must first determine initiative. Next, the character with the highest initiative performs an action. The results of the action are determined. All other characters act in descending order of initiative. The turn then ends. A combat turn is reckoned to be a few seconds long.

At the start of any combat, all characters may choose a “POSE CARD” (a combat style) as a free action. “Poses” are special cards learned from mentors during game play. Reveal poses in order of initiative.

Initiative:

Roll 1D6. Add ability bonuses for Brainy and Athletic.

Actions:

When a character makes an action during combat, they can choose from one of the actions listed her:

- Choose a pose!

The character can take a POSE CARD from their hand and announce the pose aloud. The card now denotes the characters combat pose, and all bonuses and effects for the pose will be outlined on the card. If the character already had a pose in play, the old pose is returned to the player's hand.

- Fire a weapon

Fire a missile weapon such as a bow or wand. This can only be done by characters who are not currently in melee range of their enemies. To fire a weapon, the attacker will roll a normal skill check (roll an 8 or higher), modified by the firer's and target's Brainy and Sensitive bonuses. Range difficulty numbers of -1 to -5 are applied depending on the distance to target.

- Cast a spell

Spells are special attacks. To cast a spell, a SPELL CARD must be expended. Spells cannot be cast by characters who are in melee range of their enemies. To fire a spell,

roll two dice and score an 8+. The dice roll is modified by both the attacker's and defender's Sensitive and Feisty scores. See more on magic below.

- Use an item

A magical or special item may be activated.

- Make a melee attack

To make a melee attack, a character must be within 1 meter of the enemy (if they wield a sword or similar), or 3 meters (if the attacker has a spear or polearm).

When a melee attack is made, the attacker may choose to play an ATTACK CARD from their hand. These cards have an extra effect on the combat, as explained on each card. They are gained by studying under 'mentors'.

To make a melee attack, roll a normal skill check (8+). The roll is modified by the attacker's and defender's Athletic, Tough and Brainy scores. Attack and defense skills are applied to the roll.

- Move

The character may move up to their Athletic score in meters. If this is spent in charging straight towards an enemy into contact, a move can immediately be followed by an attack.

Damage

If a hit is scored, roll 1D6 and add the attacker's Athletic bonus to the result. This is the base damage scored against the target. Subtract this damage from the target's Hit Points.

When a being reaches half hit points, they suffer a -1 DRM to all attack and defense.

When a character reaches zero Hit Points, they are unconscious. They bleed by 1D3 points a turn until given first aid.

A character's Hit Points score can go into negatives. However, when the negative level exceeds the character's "Feisty" score, the character is stone dead.

(Eg – a character with 8 'Hit Points' and 7 "Feisty" will be unconscious once they take 8 damage. They can then lie around and bleed another seven points – but after that, they are dead dead dead!)

Unarmed combat damage

If a character strikes another with bare fists or with weapons designed to stun rather than open great steaming wounds, then roll only 1D3 damage. This damage is 'stun' damage, and will heal automatically in an hour or so. Armour doubles its effects vs unarmed combat damage.

An unarmed character who attacks an armed character receives a DRM of -1.

Armour

Armour subtracts from the physical damage caused by weapons and physical spells (fireballs and impact blasts).

Partial armour: -1 from damage
Good armour: -2 from damage
Superb armour: -3 from damage.

Some armours are magical. These provide extra protection from magical effects.

Some magical weapons lower the effectiveness of armour (ignoring the first point or two of enemy armour).

Cards

Mentors will teach characters how to make special moves, fight in special styles or cast magic. These abilities are all expressed by the gaining of special cards.

A character will gain pose cards, Attack cards and Sorcery cards.

The total number of cards a character holds can never exceed their Sensitivity ability rating plus their Brainy rating.

To play a card, the player must place the card on the games table and LOUDLY announce the card's name. Yes folks – you have to call out those special attacks as you use them! (“*Deem wing!*”)

We suggest that when player characters gain cards, they gain them randomly – it adds to the spread of silly combat moves in the game!

Pose cards:

Pose cards are cards representing combat stances and styles. They give bonuses and benefits to combatants. At the start of a combat, combatants may freely choose a pose. Changing pose is thereafter an action. When poses are changed, however, pick up the old pose card – you can switch back to that pose again as another action.

Attack cards

A character's store of attack cards is a pile of one use cards: each card can only be used once in each combat. A character can only ever have one of each type of attack card in their 'store'. Characters discard each card after play. Cards are recovered after the character has had an hour of rest.

To play an attack card, call out the card's title, place it on the table, and apply the special benefits of the card to the up and coming attack.

Sorcery cards:

Sorcery cards are specific spells. Like attack cards, these can only be played once per combat. After playing a sorcery card, discard it. All cards are regained after an hour of rest.

Magic

Magical spells are learned by using karma points to purchase Sorcery cards from mentors. Each card can be played only once in a combat, but characters may have more than one copy of each card in their store. Sorcery cards are regained after use by taking an hour of rest.

Using magic costs a character “Chakra” points. Casting a spell costs 1 Chakra point. Chakra points are regained after a night’s sleep and a good meal.

Extra Chakra points can be spent on magic. Each extra Chakra point spent on a spell gives the spell +2 to its dice roll for success. Each Chakra point spent to help resist a spell subtracts 2 from the attackers dice roll.

A character can never have more Chakra points than their Sensitivity score. Some magical items generate Chakra points, and these can be used to help power spells.

Experience

As characters face obstacles and undergo adventures, they gain KARMA points. These can be spent to increase the character’s abilities.

Typical adventure rewards are 1 Karma point for contributing to an adventure or helping to solve a section of a quest. Good role playing, solving moral dilemmas, or brilliant solutions gain an extra point. So – bad players might come out of an adventure with no Karma gain. Fun role-players who have solved dilemmas and been very entertaining might come out with 3.

Umpires should reward such things as tragic love, sacrifice, moral dilemma – loyalty and heartache. All those things that go hand in hand with the “magical warriors” genre.

Karma points can only be expended by seeking out a MENTOR. These are special monsters, denizens or characters who can impart a skill or a special ability. Finding mentors is a major element of any quest. Most mentors will only teach in return for “soul Stones” (see below). Usually wanting 1 soul stone for each 2 karma points being spent by the player character. Training will usually take a month.

Costs in Karma:

Gain an ATTACK CARD: 3 points

Gain a new POSE CARD: 6 points

Increase an Ability score by 1: (Karma cost = new level of Ability)

Gain a Chakra point: 5 points

Gain a new Skill: 3 points

Become an Expert: 10 points (must already be skilled)

Become a Master: 20 points (must already be an Expert)

Gift

Sometimes experience rewards will be given very specifically by umpires rather than by player choice. For instance, as a reward for rescuing a particular Mentor, that Mentor will simply give each character a blessing that increases their Chakra by 1, or will simply gift them with 1 Attack Card each. This immensely speeds play, but the Umpire will have to bear in mind the wants and dreams of their players.

Trauma:

Life changing experiences transform average high school students into Magical Warrior knights – soulful warriors capable of championing a world.

Whenever a character undergoes a desperately, soul wrenching moment, they may gain something from it. Character brought near to death, or who lose their true love – or who are forced to see a good friend die are all liable for some sort of “trauma”. Roll 2 dice, looking for an 8 and modified by the character’s sensitivity bonus.

PC’s who undergo such traumas become sick, suffering nightmares that torment them for a month. They emerge from these experiences with a bonus such as a free Chakra point.

We recommend this style of experience ‘reward’ as the way of introducing a character to their own magical ability. .

Soul-Star Stones.

Ever wondered why anime fantasy armour always has coloured gems set into it? And why armour for girls is always so damned shapely?

Soul-Star Stones!

These are magical crystals that are indispensable to the adventurer. To use these crystals, they must be set into the character’s armour and weapons, and then ‘attuned’ by wearing them for at least half a day.

Soul stones are found inside many monsters. They are made the same way an oyster makes a pearl. The monsters isolate and concentrate positive magical energy that might otherwise harm them and turn them into these stones. Collecting stones is therefore rather dangerous!

Wearing soul stones

A weapon can carry a single blue or yellow soul stone.

Armour or clothing may carry up to 3 red or blue soul stones.

A head piece can hold one blue soul stone

A single amulet can be worn that contains any type or colour of stone.

Types of stone

Soul stones come in five basic kinds.

Clear stones: No immediate use to anybody, but they look pretty and can be used in magical rituals. These are standard trade goods to give to Mentors.

Red soul Stones: These act as “Hit Points”. Each one holds 3 hit points. They shatter once they absorb 3 points of damage.

Green Soul Stones:

These stones heal 1 dice of damage, then disappear. They automatically activate when the wearer falls unconscious, or can be activated on mental command to heal anyone the wearer can touch with one hand.

Blue soul stones:

These contain one Chakra point. They may be recharged once expended in a process taking about an hour. However, each time they are used, roll 1 D6. The crystal shatters on a roll of 6.

Yellow soul stones:

These give any weapon that they are attached to a +1 to all damage rolls. They drain themselves and shatter anytime their wielder rolls a 2 or a 12 to hit.

It is also rumoured that there are other, rarer types of stones:

Black stones: These discharge through a hand or weapon to deal 1D6 damage.

Gold stones: These increase a character’s Athletic by 2 points for 1 combat, and then break.

Pink Stones: These increase a character’s Sensitivity and Initiative rolls by 2

Azure stones: These can be activated to teleport a character 100 meters.

Soul opals: These add 1 to the difficulty of being hit by evil magic.

Steel opal: These gems add 1 point of armour protection to their wearer. Only one can be worn.

Sky pearls: On mental command, the wearer is able to fly. Maximum speed is (Brainy x 10 meters per turn). A character can fly one hour at the cost of one Chakra point – although flying for short durations such as combats or to cross a chasm has no real chakra cost.

Random stone chart (roll 2D6)

2, 3 - Yellow

4, 5 – Green

6, 7, 8 – Clear

9, 10 – Red

11 – Blue

12 – Special stone. Roll again below.

Special stones: Roll 2d6

2, 3, 4, 5 - Pink

- 6 - Azure
- 7 – Gold
- 8 – Soul opal
- 9 – Steel opal
- 10 - Black
- 11, 12 – Sky pearl

Flight

In most anime fantasy series, the characters seem to end up with the ability to fly. So here's the rules!

At higher levels of experience, Player characters will almost certainly gain Sky opals. This is convenient, since all of the biggest, baddest bad guys will be able to fly at will.

In melee, characters who are in flight can only be attacked by characters who can also fly, or by characters the flier chooses to engage in battle. (Exception – character who swing from ropes or leap from towers might be able to get a whack in at a flying character is the umpire allows).

Flying characters add +2 to their initiative rolls.

Attacking a flying character when the attacker itself cannot fly gains the attacker a –1 DRM to hit.

Annoying magical pets!

It is highly likely that the player characters will have an annoying magical pet wished upon them at some stage in their adventures. This annoying POS is the essential key to their final quest – only it can open the vault of the giga mecha, or only it can guide the party from quest to quest to quest. So killing it is a no-no, no matter how attractive that seems!

Annoying magical pets should be a hodge podge of kitten, gerbil, bunny and magical weenie. They communicate only through 'catchphrases' or annoying squeaks and squeals.

To discover the name of your part's magical pet, why not randomly generate it! Roll 1D30, And use the roll to determine the first letter of each syllable. (call a 27 A "Ch", 28 a "Sh", 29 a "Ts", and 30 "Binky"). For the second part of each syllable, roll below:

Roll 1D6

- 1 = A
- 2 = E
- 3 = I
- 4 = O
- 5 = U
- 6 = Oo

Roll twice for a character's first name, hyphenating the syllables. It can also have a second name, if that makes the critter sound more annoying. (EG: "Ja-Ju Bi-Ku")

Mecha!

Nnnnn – I don't know why anime loves these things! It's the Japanese version of the American "Superhero" fantasy – just with a bigger shoe size...

But anyway! Yes – Mecha. They're a standard part of virtually all of these storylines. Either these are giant battle machines in human (or even dragon) shape designed to be worn and operated by a single character – or giant bio constructs, or battleships raised from the deeps... whatever!

In any case – it is highly likely that the climax of your campaign will require player characters to find the means of unlocking mechas and using them to defeat enemies of a similar huge scale.

(although in a campaign inspired by "Gundam Wing" or "Escaflowne", for instance, mecha combat is far more usual than person-to-person combat!)

"Bonding" with Mecha

Mecha in fantasy environments are usually slightly self-aware. They will allow only a certain type of user to operate them. Sometimes this means that a character must have proved themselves worthy of the honour, and must have received a blessing, a token or a magical summonation spell from a great mentor.

Mecha are easy to operate – but only after the user has practiced with the mecha. This term is called "Bonding" – a time when the Mecha and the operator both learn each other's quirks. Bonding can take time. If umpires desire, characters can be required to spend anywhere from a few days to few weeks practicing with their mecha. Using an "unbonded" mecha causes a -2 "unskilled" penalty on all physical actions while wearing the mecha.

Mechas with personality traits will abandon a user who goes against their code and beliefs. For instance, a Star Dragon Mecha that requires its user to be honourable and good will abandon a user who treads all over helpless villagers. Users who are abandoned by their mecha suddenly find themselves unable to control the great machines. The machine may even eject its user and depart, leaving the failed pilot to their fate.

Activating mecha

Activating a mecha – be it standing dormant in a shed or hidden inside a magical gem – usually requires a character to expend one Chakra point. The length of time required to activate a mecha depends upon the campaign. Entering a large machine and powering it up might take five minutes, but summoning a magical Star Dragon Armour with a magical gem takes a mere combat round!

In some scenarios, a "heart stone" or a key of some kind may be required in order to summon or activate a mecha.

Mecha statistics

Mecha are huge! They are effectively worn as suits of armour. They provide Strength, Hit points and armour that enhance the abilities of the user.

- A Mecha has a set number of “Athletic” score and Hit points. These replace the points used by the operator. All other abilities are those of the operator. Do not add the operator’s Athletics or Hit point scores to those of the mecha! Typical Mecha Athletic scores and hit Point scores are 27 (+10 Athletic bonus), but they can climb immensely higher.
- Mecha armour is usually extremely high. Typical armour is equal to the suit’s “Athletic” bonus.
- Most mecha have special powers. These powers include the following:
 - Flight
 - Breath weapons
 - Arm cannon
 - Swords and melee weapons
- Every mecha receives at least one special “Mecha Attack cards”. These are special powers only usable when fighting in a mecha vs a mecha-sized opponent.
- Mecha can also have strange special powers. For instance – a set of mecha that each represent one element might be able to combine themselves into one gigantic mecha with immensely powerful abilities.

Example 1

The Magical Star-Drake Mecha “Antares” (from the Elatta setting) is a powerful mecha. It and its sister Star Drakes are the only hope of meeting and destroying the Demon Princes in battle. The “Antares” armour is designed to be high in agility, and to enhance the magical abilities of anyone wearing such an armour.

Magical Star-Drake Mecha “Antares”.

Athletic: 27 (Bonus +10)

Hit Points: 30

Armour: 9

Special bonuses: Attackers suffer a –2 to hit this supple armour.

Mecha Attack Card: Hyper Antares Magic Blast! (Spell attack ignores target’s armour, and deals +1D6 damage).

Special powers: Flight. Breath weapon (4D6 out to 100 meters, 3 times per day). 2 inbuilt Green Soul Stars (heal 1D6 damage. Can both be activated as a single action)

All magical Soul-Star Stone powers owned/used by the pilot transfer to “Antares”. Antares wields a long sword which can utilize the effects of yellow Soul-Stars. Antares is summoned from within a special jewel, and appears around her user as a 1-round action.

Example 2

The umpire wants the “Imperials” in her campaign to have a number of “foot soldiers” armed in somewhat cruddy mecha. These are big enough to dominate normal battlefields, but are easier opponents to take on than the great battle mecha worn by her chief bad guys. She calls these minor mecha “Legion Mecha”, and designs them as follows:

Legion Mecha

Athletic: 21 (Bonus +7)

Hit Points: 20

Armour: 6

Special bonuses: None

Mecha Attack Card: Mecha gauntlet attack! (Energy gauntlet fires a string of 6 shots, all rolled separately, each doing 1D6 damage).

Special powers: Energy gauntlet (2D6+1 out to 100 meters, 3 times per day).

All magical Soul-Star Stone powers owned/used by the pilot transfer to the “Legion Mecha”. A Legion Mecha wields a mace which can utilize the effects of yellow Soul-Stars. Legion Mechas also carry a shield.

Mecha combat

Combat between mecha, or between mecha and non mecha, is handled as per the usual system. HOWEVER – Mecha are titanic targets, and human-sized characters who fire at *stationary* mecha with bows (or wail on their feet with hand weapons) receive a +5 bonus to hit.

When a mecha drops below half hit points, it receives a DRM of –1 on attack and defense just like any other being.

Mecha do not bleed – nor do they fall unconscious. Instead, when a mecha reaches zero hit points, all damage from that point on is dealt to the pilot. No armour heavier than level 1 can be worn inside a cockpit. When the pilot dies, the entire mecha is destroyed.

For a character to use its normal attack cards while operating a mecha, they must simply add the words “Mecha”, “Mega” or “Hyper” to the title when announcing their attack. Failure to do so means that the attack bonuses do not work!

Other bits of 'fluff'

Props:

People feel more nervous about losing factors when they are represented by something physical and real!

We suggest that players keep a little pile of counters on their character sheets. Use these to represent **Hit Points** and **Chakra points**, removing the counters as these points are expended. (Any games store will have chits or discs appropriate for this purpose).

Card lists.

Pose cards

Earth pose

Effect:

Gain +1 defense vs melee or missile attacks, and +1 defense vs magical attacks.

Air pose

Effect:

+1 defense vs magic. +1 attack with magic.

Water stance

Effect:

+2 when defending vs magic.

Fire stance!

Effect:

+2 when attacking with magic.

Dragon pose

Effect:

+1 to attack and +1 to defense.

Unicorn battle stance!

Effect:

+2 to initiative

Phoenix stance!

Effect:

+1 attack with magic, +1 attack in melee

Griffin pose!

Effect:

+1 to damage, +1 to melee attack.

Lion pose!

Effect:

Gain 1 chakra point and +1 to attack with magic. Use only once per combat.

Star beast power salute!

Effect:

Power up! Spend 1 Chakra to gain +1 attack and defense for the rest of this combat. Keep these bonuses even if you then change to another pose. Can be played immediately before entering a pre-planned combat. (Mind you, the noise warns the enemy that you're coming!)

Attack cards (used with melee weapons only)

Demon Wings!

Effect:

Make two attacks in a single action, both at -1.

Hawk Wind!

Effect:

+1 defense vs next hit during this combat.

Lightning flash!

Effect:

Ignore enemy armour

Power spring!

Effect:

+2 attack. +2 damage. Enemy adds +1 to hit on next strike.

Chakra gate

Effect:

Make no attack roll. Gain +1 defense. Gain +1 chakra.

Atemi blast!

Effect:

Unarmed blow accompanies normal hit. Roll an unarmed combat blow. If a hit is scored, negate the enemy's next action.

Serpent lash!

Effect:

Automatically gain +4 initiative for this turn.

Whirlwind Steel!

Effect:

Strike all enemies within weapon reach.

Shadow blast

Effect:

+2 to defense vs next melee attack if your own attack roll is made by 2 or more points.

Iron crush

Effect:

+2 to damage

Metal blast!

Effect:

If attack roll succeeds by 2 or more, then add +1D6 to damage.

Razor Hawk!

Effect:

+1 to hit

Double dragonfly!

Effect:

If you score a hit, make a second attack at -1 to hit. Continue attacks with cumulative -2 DRM until an attack fails.

Power leap!

Effect:

Move (Athletic x 2 meters) away from current position. Use this to disengage freely from combat, or use it to move into an attack.

Totemic power move!!

Effect:

Play this card instead of making an attack. Next turn, play two cards together and combine the effects of both!

Player must make mystic finger symbols, otherwise move does not work!

Sorcery cards

Star cleave!

Effect:

Sword strike cleaves open the ground. Make a linear attack, rolling to hit all creatures in a 20 meter straight line who are touching the ground.

Chakra blast!

Effect:

A powerful magical blast vs 1 target within 50 meters.

Unicorn kiss

Effect:

Kiss another character to heal them of 2D6 damage. This takes one combat round Take on 1 point of damage for every 4 healed..

Sky Dance!

Effect:

Summons air elementals. Can help character breathe underwater or in poison gas for 1 hour, or can provide 2 protection vs arrow fire for 5 turns.

Stone meld!

Effect:

Character is sucked into the ground, reappearing next turn at a predetermined point up to 20 meters away.

Fireball!

Effect:

Makes a flaming explosion 5 meters in diameter out to a range of 20 meters.

Lightning blast!

Effect:

Range of 20 meters. Ignores all armour.

Image blur!

Effect:

Adds +1 defense to any character for remainder of this combat.

Sonic scream!

Effect:

Roll to effect all beings within a 10 meter radius of the sorcerer.

Spirit swarm!

Effect:

Swarms of angry spirits make enemy suffer a -1 DRM to all of their activities for the next 5 minutes.

Arrow cards (attack cards used with bow fire)

Spin arrow!

Effect:

The corkscrewing arrow is difficult to parry. This shot gains a +1 DRM to hit.

Double dragon!

Effect:

Twin arrows are fired. Roll twice to hit, at a -1 for each shot.

Solar blast!

Effect:

The arrow is powered up by spending one chakra point. Double the damage inflicted by the arrow.

Power shot

Effect:

The shot ignores all armour.

Ice arrow blast!

Effect:

The arrow is charged up by expending one chakra point. A hit by an ice arrow deals 1D6 damage to the target's athletic ability as well as usual damage to hit points.

Wand cards (attack cards used with energy wand fire)

Titan blast!

Effect:

Spend one chakra point to double charge your weapon. A hit from this shot causes double damage.

Shock strike!

Effect:

Expend a chakra point to power up the shot. A hit from this shot stuns the enemy for their next action.

Skip shot!

Effect:

This shot can ricochet from a wall to fire at targets hidden around a corner. Alternatively, the shot can bounce off one target and into another. If the firer hits their first target, they can roll to hit any other target within 10 meters of the first.

Chakra burn!

Effect:

Disruptive energies from the wand will remove 1D3 chakra points from the target if the shot scores a hit.

Light burst!

Effect:

Instead of a lethal attack, the energy wand emits a blast of blinding light. All creatures in 10 meter wide by 20 meter long path in front of the wand must roll 8+ to avoid being blinded for 1D3 rounds (Brainy bonuses apply). Demons in such an area also take 1D6 damage.

Demon cards (for demonic opponents only)

Mucous blast!

Effect:

Mucous vomits from the demon. The demon's melee opponent's next attack and defense will be made at a -1 DRM.

Blood scream!

Effect:

A vile, bubbling scream gives this attack a +3 on its initiative.

Death Maul!

Effect:

If the demon lands an attack, it can then maul and rip into its opponent for another D6 of damage (armour is subtracted from this new dice).

Spore blast!!

Effect:

An explosive blast of choking spores automatically does 1D3 damage to all enemies within 2 meters.

Death-beast spear claw!

Effect:

+2 to attack.

Venom blast!

Effect:

If the attack hits, then reduce target's ATHLETIC score by 1D6+2. Change target's bonuses accordingly. If the target's Athletic score drops to zero or below, then the target is unconscious.

Mucous slide!

Effect:

+2 on next defense.

Demon glide!

Effect:

Leaping high and descending like a ton of bricks, the demon can smash enemies underfoot. Armour does not protect from this attack.

Pustule blast!

Effect:

An enemy hit by this attack has 1D3 points of their armour burned off (before rolling damage from the attack)

Tentacle swarm!

Effect:

A hit with this attack disarms the target.

Mecha cards (for mecha vs mecha)

Giga blast -

Effect:

Can be stacked with any other card for a single melee hit.

By channeling a chakra point into the blow, the attack deals +1D6 damage

Mucous blast!

Effect:

Mucous vomits from the demon. The demon's melee opponent's next attack and defense will be made at a -1 DRM.

Mucous blast!

Effect:

Mucous vomits from the demon. The demon's melee opponent's next attack and defense will be made at a -1 DRM.

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The ELATTA Campaign.

The world of “**Elatta**” is a fantasy world that exists parallel to Earth. It is a place that has undergone a massive ecological turmoil: The great island-continent of Hiilætu has undergone huge upheavals, and its civilisation has been all but destroyed.

All these disasters were accidentally created by man. Elatta was once in the grip of the sinister Hiilætian empire, but an age of war drove the Hiilætians back into their fortress citadels. Finally, the last boy-emperor of Hiilætu turned to magical means to restore his empire. He summoned ‘demons’ (creatures from an alien reality) to burst forth and destroy his enemies. But the resulting otherworld eruption disrupted weather patterns, changed the landscape and buckled the earth itself. The resulting ecological disaster was almost wiped out human life on Elatta. The survivors are beginning the long, hard road back to civilisation. In many ways, it is a frontier world – a world full of evil memory but hope for the future. The Hiilætian empire is destroyed – the demons are apparently gone. The landscape is twisted, sometimes alien and strange – but mankind has survived.

The world of Elatta is hauntingly beautiful. It is a place of upturned landscapes, stunning vistas and majestic ruins – of strange settlements where survivors try to rebuild the kingdoms of old. But the demons are still here, and they are secretly preparing to terraform Elatta into the image of their own poisonous home world.

Human life upon Elatta is doomed.

Until the “Magical Warrior Star-Soul Knights” are summoned from beyond...

Elatta

In Elatta, ancient wars have left a legacy of haunted deserts and rich green landscapes flowing over old stones and broken ruins. Ancient tombs and strongholds are filled with sinister spirits and horrific constructs that survive to awaken and prey upon unsuspecting innocents. No landscape is free of hidden, crumbling walls; granite faces carved into the rocks forever watch every forest path. It is a world where magic sweeps its currents through the landscape all around, changing with the seasons and with the waning of the moons.

Elatta is a world under siege; the disasters that wiped out Elattan civilisation still hover at the edges of the world, gathering their power until they can strike again. The world teeters in the balance between light and dark, life and death, and soon a mighty conflict will begin.

Most of all, Elatta is a place of sheer, spectacular beauty. No landscape is commonplace; no scenery is mundane. The plains of sighing towers spread out in a carpet of fantastic green, with wildflowers growing between the slim stone pillars that soar above the earth. In the mountains, fantastic growths of crystal hum and sing as they expand beneath the bright rays of the sun. Every forest pool has a sprite drifting magic

through the trees above; every stream flows past the beautiful marble ruins of a temple, or a statue made by artists long gone by.

The Dragons of the Sun and Moon

Two great celestial dragons watch over the world of Elatta. These are the Dragon of the sun, and the Dragon of the Moon. These beasts guard and protect the ecosystem of the planet, and are guardians of all life. The Sun dragon's particular realm is that of daylight, fertility and animals. The lunar dragon is concerned largely with night, with plants and with creatures of the rivers and the seas.

The dragons are often at odds with one another. Where the solar dragon takes interest in human affairs, the lunar dragon feels they she and her brother should remain aloof. The Sun dragon believes that humankind can deeply effect the environment. The Moon Dragon – living high above the world – believes that such damage is so momentary as to be unworthy of notice. They argue constantly, and are often not on good speaking terms.

The dragons are each served by four servitors. The Dragon of the Sun has four unicorns, each in control of one of the primary directions (North, South, East and West). These Unicorns watch over the ecology in their own areas, reporting back to the Solar Dragon. They will occasionally intervene in human affairs. In particular, the Unicorn of the West is a ferocious defender of rare animals, and will wreak bloody revenge upon pitiless or wasteful hunters of his chosen species. The Female Unicorn of the North is famous for caring for abandoned human children and raising them as her surrogate children.

The Lunar Dragon's servitors are more sinister. She is served by four elemental Chimerae – The Chimera of fire, the Chimera of Water, The Chimera of Air and the Chimera of Earth. These creatures each have a 'roving brief', watching over their own particular elements. They are known to be capricious. The Chimera of Earth has often raised volcanoes when in a 'playful' mood, and the Chimerae of Air and Water frequently raise storms. They do, however, have useful duties. The Fire Chimera actually watches over many forest fires. Although the fires serve a useful purpose in renewing the forest growth, The Fire Chimera sees to it that the fires do not wantonly spread. Sacrifice to the Fire Chimera has often saved houses or travellers caught in the path of onrushing fires. Likewise, fishing boats who toss large quantities of liquor overboard in sacrifice during a storm will often find themselves mysteriously transported to safe shores...

These creatures – the Dragons, Unicorns and Chimerae – are the nature deities of Elatta. They are largely unreachable, unseen, and play little direct role in human affairs. They are usually unmoved and uninterested in human politics.

They are also deities purely of Elatta. They are unable to use their powers, or even to exist within the alien world of the demonscape. No being born of Elatta can enter the demonscape and survive...

- Which is why the Dragon of the Sun decides to summon champions from another world...

Ancient History

In ages past - at least a thousand years ago - the continent of Elatta was home to it's world's oldest civilisation – the Hiilætian Empire. The Hiilætu communed closely with the gods and spirits; they were present at the great convocations of the sun and moon. Imperial ships plied the waters and sailed to far distant shores - armies conquered and legends were born. Hiilætu expanded outwards into the islands and even the shores of distant continents to discover a world of savage mystery. To the far west lay jungle kingdoms rich with gold and home to fanatical sects of warriors. To the east - countless islands, each home to strange customs and refined philosophies. The empire brought back the best of what it found - and sadly, it also retained the worst.

The Hiilætu relied upon their sorcery and intricately refined tactics to crush all opposition. This innate sense of superiority stained the Hiilætian psyche. The Hiilætu became arrogant, introverted and cruel. All other races were considered lesser beings – mere cattle to be bent to the Hiilætian will.

The Imperium was an age of endlessly refined ritual and culture - and as time wore on, the rituals became more important than the people caught within them. Military duties were placed in the hands of barbarian mercenaries to free the nobility for their endless vendettas, assassinations and duels - to free the Imperial court for its dances and its satins, its lace and its debauchery. The common people grew indolent on the tribute showered from abroad. Finally, as administration was placed into the hands of freed slaves and foreign hirelings, the Imperium became ripe to fall.

Court intrigues led to civil war - the “mage wars”, where each noble family tried to carve its own tiny empire using new-found magic as their weapons of choice. Weakened, the empire left itself open to invasion from the outside world.

The Fall of the Empire took one long and bloody century. While a shrunken court upheld the ancient rituals, barbarian “Patricians” divided the empire amongst themselves. Western fleets invaded and conquered half of the Elattan isle, only to be met by pirate alliances come to loot the fabulous wealth of the Imperial cities and settle the unfarmed land.

Finally, the empire was gone - all save a tiny principality still strutting with ancient and unwarranted grandeur. Elatta itself had become home to five kingdoms, each dynamic, warlike and innovative. They took the basis of imperial science, its traditions of swordsmanship and magic and blended them with the cultures of their far-flung homes. To the north lay Akomar, the realm of the pirate kings. To the south, the Kingdom of Tsu with its crisp art and polished philosophies. The Tiger kings of Gesht ruled a strip of the western coast, the black-skinned warriors slowly mingling with the paler native breeds. The east coast and the central lands were the domain of the Celenian dynasty - hard fighting southerners with rigid codes of honour and war.

The warlike kingdoms were engaged in continuous war for the next two hundred years, fortunes waxing and waning with the passing of the years. The stalemate remained in force until the Hiilætian emperor Roskeld XIX ascended to the shrunken “Imperial” throne.

Insane and brilliant, tall, slim and commanding, Roskeld combined the cruel sophistication of his Hiilætian mother with the drive and ambition of a Celenian father. Kindling an alliance between Celenia and the pirate kings, he orchestrated the conquest of the entire Elattan isle. In so doing, he founded a new school of magic - the School of Two-Sided Mirrors - which dredged up ancient magic spells from Hiilætu's past.

With a renewed empire in place, Roskeld suddenly faced a rebellion from the Imperial Sorcerer-general, the custodian of the School of Two-Sided Mirrors. A civil war split the new-formed nation, and in his madness, Roskeld opened a fissure into another world, there to summon allies to win back his crumbling throne.

Demons from an alternative world poured through the fissure into Elatta, unleashing plagues, earthquakes, and devastating storms. In a single night, the great cities of Elatta were destroyed, the people slain or scattered to the winds. Where the demons settled, the lands themselves began to change, warping horribly into the semblance of the creature's alien home; the earth itself became poisoned, and plants and animals mutated into horrific forms. Those humans caught inside demonic terrain became twisted fiends - slaves to the demons and helplessly insane.

In a massive battle about the imperial capital, the combined armies of Elatta met to drive the demons back. The fissure between worlds was banished by the combined efforts of Elatta's sorcerers - but at the cost of the lives of all the continent's great captains, great sorcerers, and almost all of her fighting men.

The threat of the Demonscape had been destroyed - but Elattan civilisation was at an end. Of the island's cities, not a single one remained. The towns had been plague struck and mutated - the lands and weather patterns drastically changed. The few survivors flung themselves into the task of simply learning to survive; courtiers became nomads, and soldiers hunted food. National and racial boundaries disappeared and scattered tiny communities settled amidst the ruins of a broken world.

A Hundred years have gone by. The mixed races of Elatta now live in tiny, ragged settlements built within the ruins of fallen empires. Most settlements are isolated, and there are no real trade routes or nations. Survival is the order of the day. Few living humans can now remember the time of empires. A few older survivors can remember their grandparents telling them vividly of the invasion of the demons and the fall of kings. But life now is a matter of keeping communities alive. Of coming to terms with a changed environment, and sheltering from the strange magics that seem to haunt the ancient land.

Suggested campaign plan

This is a sample campaign that can be run based in the fantasy world of Elatta.

Elatta is presented as a world in the grip of an insidious threat. The Player Characters are summoned to somehow save the world – but circumstances deny them the guide and mentor that could have laid out their mission and made their lives easy! Still – the player

characters arrive fresh from Tokyo, and wander out into an alien world, there to awaken the magical hero that sleeps within them all.

Initially, the player characters know nothing of Elatta. They are unskilled in combat, have no magical ability or Chakra points, and do not know how to access the power of Star-soul stones. These are all abilities that they have to earn in their first adventures – and they will have to learn swiftly and well!

Immediate background:

The Dragon of the Sun and the Dragon of the Moon have quarreled yet again (Eh – technically they're married – so it happens all the time). From his palace in the ice pole of Elatta, the Solar dragon has had his agents watching the devastating collapse of the world's ecology. He has wanted to somehow intervene. The Lunar dragon, however, argues that the eco system is righting itself: plants and animals are changing to meet new conditions, and that such a state of active evolution is positive rather than a thing to be feared.

Unsatisfied, The solar dragon has had his unicorn servitors keep a close eye upon conditions in the Hilaetian island continent. The unicorn of the North has made a fearful discovery. The demon blight is spreading. The unicorns suspect that several titanic Demon "Princes" remain on Elatta, and that they are gathering power before attempting to terraform the whole of Elatta, changing the world to suit their own poisonous alien forms.

The Solar Dragon came to personally inspect the discovery – and fell into a trap set for him by the Demon Princes. The Solar Dragon has been magically paralyzed and imprisoned inside a hideous cocoon somewhere deep inside the demon blight. Without the solar Dragon, Elatta has lost one of its most powerful protectors.

Fleeing from the demon ambush, the Unicorn of the North acted on her master's half-formed plan. The unicorn performed a ritual to summon champions from another world to work for Elatta's salvation. Only a non-Elattan can withstand the poison of the demon blight. The unicorn drew a magical circle upon the ground around a cluster of crystal outgrowths high in the mountains. She gave a musical call that made the crystals resonate with their counterparts on earth. A group of Tokyo teens who were on a school outing to a museum were close to a display of a giant geode, and so found themselves magically transported to Elatta.

Phase 1: arrival

The Tokyo teens are in a museum inspecting a titanic geode, when suddenly a growing hum rises to a painful pitch. The world seems to dissolve, and they feel themselves cast into a void. The teens arrive with a crash upon Elatta, high in mist-shrouded mountains. They see a huge silver unicorn with her head thrown back and singing the powerful note that sets the crystals shuddering. Magic arcs and blasts into the ground like lightning, and there is a terrifying sense of power in the air.

Moments later, the Sorceress "Kala" – a sinister creature flying through the air as if by magic, long, lean and shrouded in faceless black armour – arrives. She attacks and slays

the unicorn from behind. The teens are buried in the rubble as the mountainside collapses on them. As they fall unconscious, they hear Kala speaking to a male minon. The male voice – rich and quiet, mockingly derides the unicorn’s attempt to summon so-called champions. (“Magical Warrior Soul-Star Knights”). Much mocking, evil laughter – and then the player characters are left for dead.

Hours later, the teens revive. The shattered mountain has opened a fissure to a ancient buried temple, and the teens have been saved by the ruins. They dig themselves from the rubble, and find the unicorn barely alive. The only words they hear from the unicorn is a dying order for them to find “Armissa” – and to free the Dragon of the Sun.

The mountain is empty. The forest is stunning – and this clearly isn’t Kansas. There is no sign of civilisation – no one’s mobile phones work – and it’s apparently a loooong walk to the nearest McDonald’s...

Left alone amidst the majestic splendour of Elatta, the Tokyo teens will have a difficult time. They must navigate a wilderness

Phase 2: Gaining weapons, gaining power – hints of mission.

The player characters must now navigate a strange alien landscape. They emerge into the ruins, the magic and the mystery of Elatta. Encounters with strange wild life can bemuse the travellers.

The Tokyo teens will encounter their first ruins, and their first ‘natives’. Enquiries after ‘Armissa’ reveal that Armissa is an adopted daughter of the Unicorn of the North. A quest to locate Armissa will finally turn the woman up. She has been investigating the demonblight, and trying to probe its extent and its threat to the environment.

Armissa will not initially trust the Player characters; she has felt her ‘mother’s’ death, and can scent unicorn blood upon them. She sends the player characters forth to find “totemic swords” – magical swords aligned to the Sacred Dragons of Elatta. These swords are hidden in ruins and guarded by evil magic. The swords will also reject users who are unworthy.

Gaining the swords in the first real quest the player character will undergo. The totemic swords are each aligned with a specific animal – one per player character. Animal totems should be chosen as specifically appropriate to the players of your game: Jackal, Hawk, Serpent, Tiger, Mantis, Fox, Okapi (eh?), Gazelle.... Think of things that are going to look cool once the player characters adopt appropriate totemic armour. Each of these animals has an association with a constellation in Elatta’s skies. (these skies, incidentally, have exactly the same stars as planet earth; if a Tokyo teen has any interest in astronomy, tell them that they recognise the star scape).

The totemic swords will each gift their owner with sword skill. When the swords are brought back to be shown to Armissa, she will accept that the player characters were clearly chosen by the Unicorn of the North as champions. She will fill the player characters in on some of the back story – the arguments between the solar and lunar dragons, the fall of the empire etc. Armissa does not know that the solar dragon is

imprisoned- only that the Unicorns have all been asked to gather evidence that the demons are a growing danger to Elatta.

*“Fluff: The player characters can find an NPC who will accompany them. This individual could answer some limited questions about the world.
- Or maybe not! What if the party were to encounter a strange, vague (and newly built) marionette – the “daughter” of an old man who has now died. She does not understand why her father does not move...*

Phase 3: Find first mentor

Armissa sends the player characters off to help discover the extent of the local demon blight. She also tells them of a mentor, “Yuderin”, who can help them grow into their powers. Yuderin lives somewhere within the dreaded forest of bones...

The players can be sent to explore wildernesses – and to find Yuderin. Yuderin will set the characters tasks, such as finding him treasures. The totemic swords can each be ‘powered up’ to become magical, gaining a the ability to ignore 1 point of enemy armour (other quests can increase this to 2 points of armour penetration, and a damage bonus of some kind).

Yuderin will send the characters on to other mentors. In this way characters can learn magic.

By seeking out great animal spirits and freeing them from the traps in which dark imperial sorcery has held them, the player characters can gain access to ‘Totemic armours’. These are ornaments and harnesses that use magical energy to provide protection (suits of armour that offer 3 points of protection at no encumbrance).

The players will have their first encounters with the Parliament of dolls. Their old Nemesis "Kala" will reappear, and will send her minions of to defeat the player characters. Ongoing bad guys will be established. The player characters will have their morals and their determination sorely tested.

In the end, the player characters should end up with a suite of attack cards and magic. They should also have encountered changelings, finds and demonblight – sure evidence that the demons are trying to absorb Elatta. After long and exciting months of adventure, they once again encounter Armissa.

Phase 4: Find a unicorn:

Armissa has been unable to find a unicorn to report her findings to. She sets out to seek one, and asks the player characters to do the same. A long quest will ensue. The unicorns have been captured by the bad guys, and must be freed in a terrifying expedition into their stronghold. Major duels (and possible betrayals by NPC friends and lovers) can take place.

When a unicorn is freed, it will tell the player characters that the solar Dragon cannot be found. The Solar dragon has possibly been captured by the Demons. The Unicorn will ask the players to seek out the Lunar dragon for help. The lunar dragon might be able to

give the player characters access to the “Magical Star-Drake” mechas that will allow them to face the demon princes in combat.

Phase 5: Find the Lunar Dragon

To find the lunar dragon, player characters must first find a chimera. But at the same time, the Parliament of Dolls and the Imperial Emergent will be doing their utmost to find and destroy the Tokyo teens. The demons will also go onto the offensive, and will start to spread the demon blight.

The player characters will have to find a chimera, and get from it the location of a hidden, ancient temple which will allow the PC's to transport themselves to the Lunar Dragon's palace. This quest will take them past the deepest denizens of the dark. They may also arrive to find their enemies already present and ready to speak to the Lunar dragon. They must try to present a better argument than their enemies, who will try to convince the dragon that THEY rather than the PC's are the only hope for Elatta (Imperials will claim to be able to organise a proper civilisation that will halt the demons in place). The Lunar dragon hates rudeness and argument – and is also grouchy because she is in love with the solar dragon, and he never calls!

Working together, the lunar and solar dragons can cast the “Great Spell of Re-Making” and heal the land, eradicating the demons. But this is so drastic a move that the Lunar dragon remains unconvinced of its necessity.

Only a person of pure heart can penetrate the haze that surrounds one of the great Dragons of Elatta. A player might have to approach the dragon to show evidence or whisper a secret – and this will open a gateway that will cause the next tragic act to happen:

At the point where the player characters finally convince the lunar dragon to help (perhaps by providing evidence that their enemy helped to imprison the solar dragon), their enemies will move. They will capture and imprison the lunar dragon, and a massive fight will erupt. The player characters will have to flee – but servants of the Lunar dragon will give them the key to finding the great Magical Star Drake Mechas – the mechas that will allow the PC's to rescue the dragons and fight the demon lords.

Phase 6: Find the soul-star armours

With both dragons gone, strange changes take place in Elatta. The sun seems to dim, and conditions become perfect for the demon blight. The demons flood inexorably forth...

The player characters will have to enter into demon blight itself to seek out the buried resting places of the Magical Star Drake Mecha. The demons will react, sending forces to destroy the PC's.

The mecha must be awakened. A haven must be found where bonding can take place. No sooner are the player characters gaining confidence with their new mounts, when they are attacked by “Mecha Scale” enemies – “Death Dolls” or “Gigas” run by one of the bad

guy factions. The mighty battles that follow will weaken the bad guys, and allow the demons to break free from their false alliance and finally surge out to destroy all of Elatta.

The player character's old mentors and allies gather to help the player characters face the demon lords and save the world. It is clear that the dragons must be freed, otherwise the world is doomed.

Phase 7: Defeat the demon lords.

The demon lords are "Mecha scale" opponents at the head of titanic armies. These armies must be met and defeated by the player characters and their allies.

Finally, the demons will make a last stand in their heart land. They guard the imprisoned dragons of the sun and moon.

As victory seems in the players grasp, the demons will open a gate to their own foul world. New legions and new demon princes will flood forth for the climatic battle.

Phase 8: Free the Solar and Lunar Dragons

The climax of the campaign is a fight to the death about the imprisoned bodies of the dragons of the sun and moon, while the gate to the demon world gapes wide. Player characters may or may not survive this epic fight.

This battle will be an action to delay the demons and hold back the demon princes while someone attempts to free the dragons. If the Teens have a nemesis, jilted lover or warped friend, then THIS is the place for that final 'duel in the sun'.

The dragons are surrounded by a haze that means they can only be approached by the pure of heart. However, the evil spell that holds them prisoner can only be broken by spilling the life blood of an innocent.

(The tragic solution is for a player character to sacrifice themselves and run themselves through, using their own blood to free the solar and lunar dragons.)

When the dragons are freed, they reel skyward and intertwine, casting the great spell of re-making. The demons are destroyed and the gateway is closed. The Island continent heals and becomes green once more. Anyone slain in the final battle is healed and brought back to life.

The story ends happily

Foes:

Three sets of "bad guys" oppose the player characters during the campaign.

The Demon Princes

Elatta is home to a number of savage "Demon Princes" – giant, hideous blasphemies that control and spawn demonkind. These titanic beings are "Mecha sized" opponents, and can only be fought effectively by Mecha-equipped characters.

The aim of the demons is to remake Elatta into a copy of their own poisonous world. The demonblight is deadly within hours to any native of Elatta. Tokyo teens are not effected by the blight's evil miasma.

Sample Demon Prince.

Athletic: 30 (Bonus +11)

Hit Points: 30

Armour: 11

Special bonuses:

Mecha Attack Card: Giga mucous blast! (Goops an area 100 meters in diameter. All human sized characters are caught. All mecha must roll 8+ (with Sensitivity bonuses) to avoid being immobilized for 1D6 turns. Good can be dissolved by any alkaline substance).

Special powers: Flight. Regeneration (regenerates 1D6 damage 3 times per day).

No two demon princes are alike. Roll for demon special effects.

The Imperium Emergent

In the darkest recesses of Elatta, the Imperial dream has been reborn.

The sorceress "Kala" is an imperial who was raised in a ruined palace by illusions and simulacrums of great leaders of the Imperial past. She has been inculcated with the belief that the true heir to the Imperium lies somewhere in Elatta – someone who will enable the Hilaetian empire to be reborn. The lesser races will be enslaved, and the glorious madness that is the empire will come to the entire world of Elatta!

Kala has encountered the Warrior "Tanru" – a mad Celenian prince. Tanru controls a several mecha armours that he does not know how to operate (but he will discover their workings later on in the campaign, when he will outfit all the evil Imperial characters with mecha)

Tanru can communicate with the demons. He has made an 'alliance' hoping to use the demons as shock troops to conquer the world. Kala found the means to coax the solar dragon to the demonblight, and the demon princes were able to power Kala's evil spell that has imprisoned the Solar Dragon in an unbreakable force field.

These two evil characters now seek their "Emperor" or "Empress". When they find this genetic descendant of the sacred throne, they will take their chosen heir to the old throne room, where the knowledge and personality of past emperors is stored in the hellish "throne globe of Hilaetu". The victim's persona will be warped by the inflood of personality and memory, turning them into an evil force of incalculable power.

The chosen "Emperor" or "Empress" is most likely to be an NPC beloved of the player characters. This NPC will eventually be taken from the party. They will have their "Imperial Memories" awoken, and will lead the effort to enslave all Elatta. This character may even try to seduce of friends or forlorn lovers amongst the PCs (or well known NPC's), making for an extra layer of emotional trauma to the campaign! Old friends or members of the party could become the assassins, the bodyguard and mecha pilots who

now face the Tokyo teens in battle! (but to turn them back from evil would be a triumph worthy of a hero! Or what if an innocent victim was “turned from evil” during the final battle as the last PC falls, just in time for them to break the dragon prison and save the world! Now there’s a “tragic romance anime” ending!

Kala - A mad visionary, sadistic, erotic and charismatic. Worshipped as a goddess by her capering subjects. A sorceress of considerable power.

Hitha – Kala’s evil Female lover - A cruel plotter, lean and suave, who holds the reins of power. She plays up to the empress’ visions and fantasies, and then conducts the “empire’s” business with an indolent, cold malice. She is an incredibly accomplished sword fighter.

Tanru – Savage warlord – A bloody minded, insane warlord. He is devoted to Kala, and is gripped by a vision of a resurgent empire capable of carrying its conquests to the stars and beyond. He intends to lead his legions against the very earth itself!

The Jester - A capering, giggling sorcerer. Clearly insane, utterly out of control - can appear anywhere and any time, unleashing his lethal jokes. He is dangerous not only due to his power, but because his insanity makes him operate according to his own mad laws.

Soldiers:

The Imperials use undead as their main ‘manpower’. They raise the bodies of slaughtered villagers, or unearth skeletons in the ruins. Many of their skeletal servitors have personalities and skills – and have attack cards and sorcery cards! These can be lethal opponents!

Imperial Mecha

Athletic: 30 (Bonus +11)

Hit Points: 30

Armour: 11

Special bonuses:

Mecha Attack Card: *Mecha slam* (if a hit is successfully scored, this move hurtles a mecha sized opponent to the ground, immobilizing it for one turn)

Special powers: *Flight.*

All magical Soul-Star Stone powers owned/used by the pilot transfer to “Antares”.
Antares wields a long sword which can utilize the effects of yellow Soul-Stars. Antares is summoned from within a special jewel, and appears around her user as a 1-round action.

Legion Mecha

Athletic: 21 (Bonus +7)

Hit Points: 20

Armour: 6

Special bonuses: None

Mecha Attack Card: Mecha gauntlet attack! (Energy gauntlet fires a string of 6 shots, all rolled separately, each doing 1D6 damage).

Special powers: Energy gauntlet (2D6+1 out to 100 meters, 3 times per day).

These mecha are created by Kala to serve the Empire once Mecha enter the campaign. They are typically piloted by the most skilled of the Empire's undead warriors.

All magical Soul-Star Stone powers owned/used by the pilot transfer to the "Legion Mecha". A Legion Mecha wields a mace which can utilize the effects of yellow Soul-Stars. Legion Mechas also carry a shield.

The Council of Dolls

A coalition of Marionettes have decided to replace the organic life of Elatta with their own superior mechanical form. They believe that the age of organic life is past; they will first weaken the remnants of mankind, then overwhelm them and extinguish them. They see the demons as valuable allies – the dolls do not care about the environment.

The Council tries to make humanoids go to war against each other and weaken themselves. They use their agents to stir up dissent and strife, always preferring to work from the shadows until they are powerful enough to begin their final wars of conquest.

This "enemy" is a deadly minor player in the campaign.

Puppet Master - The Council leader - tall, magnificent and dark. Warped by his hatred of organic life forms, he treats his conquests as a crusade to free the Marionettes - to replace humanoid life with a superior race of beings.

The Shadow dancer - Wrapped in a black cloak - silent, sorcerous and mysterious. The shadow dancer may well have its own hidden reasons for joining the council of Dolls - but for now, it serves as a silent, sinister general and mage.

Doll - A corrupter and an assassin that conquers through infiltration. Slim, perfect and sensual - the perfect sexual fantasy, "Doll" is covered in synthetic skin that makes it impossible to tell that she is an artificial life form. She will change skins and outward personae to suit her mission.

She would prefer to torment and tease a handsome male opponent rather than destroy him. Doll has found that the chase and the battle are full of thrill.

The unliving - The soldiers of the council. Grim and tenacious, fighting with logic and absolute patience.

Toys - Small, deadly weapons of the Council of Dolls. They can be a child's doll - a clockwork cat. The Council uses these creations as assassins, striking down selected enemies and causing chaos.

Doll Mecha

Athletic: 24 (Bonus +8)

Hit Points: 20

Armour: 8

Special bonuses: None

Mecha Attack Card: *Mecha blade attack!* (A buzz saw-like blade is cast at enemies. This massive weapon deals 5D6 damage).

Special powers: *Flight. Flame gauntlet 2D6 damage, 3 shots, range = 20meter wide cone, 50 meters long.*

These giant mechanicals appear once the campaign moves into "mecha level". These creatures carry a sword and shield.

The Magical Star-Drake Mechas

These magical mecha are the sole hope for Elatta's future. There is 1 per player character. Each one is named after a particular star or constellation (Antares, Sirius, Andromeda, Orion, etc)

The design of these mechas is intended to compliment the combat style of the intended pilot. For instance, a dexterous player character who keeps clear of melee and uses magic might end up in a dragon mecha that is lighter in "Athletic" power, but hard to hit:

Magical Star-Drake Mecha "Antares".

Athletic: 27 (Bonus +10)

Hit Points: 30

Armour: 9

Special bonuses: *Attackers suffer a -2 to hit this supple armour.*

Mecha Attack Card: *Hyper Antares Magic Blast!* (Spell attack ignores target's armour, and deals +1D6 damage).

Special powers: *Flight. Breath weapon (4D6 out to 100 meters, 3 times per day). 2 inbuilt Green Soul Stars (heal 1D6 damage. Can both be activated as a single action)*

All magical Soul-Star Stone powers owned/used by the pilot transfer to "Antares". Antares wields a long sword which can utilize the effects of yellow Soul-Stars. Antares is summoned from within a special jewel, and appears around her user as a 1-round action.

A tough, close combat version of the armour would be more like this:

Magical Star-Drake Mecha "Sirius".

Athletic: 30 (Bonus +10)

Hit Points: 30

Armour: 11

Special bonuses: This power-house mecha gives a +1 bonus during melee attack.

Mecha Attack Card: Sirius giga strike!! (Melee attack ignores target's armour, and deals +1D6 damage).

Special powers: Flight. Breath weapon (4D6 out to 100 meters, 2 times per day). 2 inbuilt Green Soul Stars (heal 1D6 damage. Can both be activated as a single action)

A guide to Elatta

Races

Settlements of survivors in Elatta today are often made up of mixed races. Although each race tends to marry within its own kind, they live in communities with other races. They are descendants not only of local residents, but also of abandoned mercenaries, escaped slaves and lost soldiers. Community identity is far more important than racial background (the exception being the “Old Imperials”, who are viewed with a universal twinge of dread)

Humans

Approximately half of any given population of a town or village in Elatta will be “human”. The somewhat chequered history of the island has led to a number of races taking residence - representatives of all of which can be found intermingled in virtually every single settlement. In many cases, the different races within a settlement have interbred and blurred - but there are still towns and villages that are quite homogeneous in race.

Old Imperial

This is the bloodline of the Nobility of the old Hiilætian empire - an empire that once used the isle of Hiilætu as a base from which to terrorize the surrounding world. This is the rarest of the human racial groups. They are viewed with superstition, aversion and dread by other races, and often live alone in the shattered grandeur of old ruins.

The Hiilætu abandoned toil and common labour to become a society of “nobles” (initially warriors, sorcerers, administrators and explorers) who used slave castes and imported labour to perform the drudgery of craft and agriculture. Although many imperials were relatively poor, the highest, most noble bloodlines were extremely inbred and exquisitely refined.

Even long after the disappearance of the empire, some old imperial families remain almost totally pureblood - to marry an “under race” is viewed with total disgust.

Old Imperial blood is immediately obvious. Hiilætu are always tall, averaging about 2.2 meters in height, with very slender builds. Their skins are a dark, smoky hue, and their hair is always a pure, straight silver-white. Hiilætian eyes are violet or scarlet. Hiilætian facial features are sharply chiseled into lines that other races find haughty, arrogant and cruel. Their fingers are long and supple. The women are small breasted and often lithe. People of pure Hiilætian blood often cling to the bizarre art styles and revealing dress codes of their ancestors - as well as clinging to their traditions of vendetta, intrigue and sorcery.

Slave caste

The remnants of the empire’s slave castes have bred and prospered, intermingling with the other more mundane human races to add a streak of colour to Elatta’s ragged settlements.

The Hiilætian nobility were skilled sorcerers and geneticists, and bred their slaves to conform to the whims of fashion and dictates of social convention. Most easily manipulable were hair and eye colours; those of slave descent might have eyes of

virtually any colour, including gold, silver, pink and orange. Hair colours range from the mundane, right up to reds, pinks, greens, purples and blues.

More rare are those whose skin colours were deliberately changed. Dull, pure black skin was considered aesthetically pleasing to the spirits, and such slaves were bred as servants to the empire's many shrines and temples.

Strangely enough, it is the "slave" cast that keeps alive the cultural traditions of the old empire, for it was the slaves who provided musicians, dancers, artists and scribes to their society. They therefore keep alive the best of the Empire's legacy without its taint of decadence and cruelty.

Celenian

The big, loud, honour-serving Celenians were armoured horsemen from distant, colder lands. The Imperium imported many such folk to serve as soldiers in its armies, allowing them land to settle and breed yet more troops. The Celenians finally overthrew their old masters to establish one of the many successor kingdoms that rose upon the empire's ruins.

Celenians are fair skinned and fair haired (blonde, red headed, or chestnut brown hair being common). The men tend to be big framed - the women strong and voluptuous. They are much given to drink and dance, combat and chivalry. Pure-bred descendants of Celenians are often raised on the aggressive, chivalrous combat codes that served to make their ancestors such ferocious foes and such generous conquerors.

Tsu

The Asiatic Tsu were another military import of the empire - although their skills in exotic sorcery and medicines led to them spreading from their settlements and out into the temples and palaces of the Imperium itself. In battle they were mounted archers and scouts, using a cunning that the Hiilætians much admired. When the empire fell, Tsuian cunning led to their successor kingdoms becoming powerful and feared.

Descendants of the people of Tsu are Asiatic in build, with golden skin, almond-shaped eyes and straight black hair. Their women are considered beautiful, their warriors cunning, and their religious philosophies have spread to almost every corner of the isle. The Tsu adore their "Hooley Birds" - the riding beasts that were once so much a part of their old nomadic culture. All Tsu are taught to ride from an early age.

Geshtii

A handsome people from far tropical kingdoms brought to the empire as soldiers, craftsmen and dancers. The Geshtii are a Negroid race who still proudly retain much of the bizarre artistic traditions of their long lost homes.

Geshtii men are often powerfully built, and are renowned for their endurance. They retain a tradition of "warrior societies", shaping their armour to represent the animal patrons of their secret brotherhoods. In battle, they are true berserks, filling themselves with the power of their ancient gods. The Geshtii have dark umber skins and wavy black hair; their eyes are almost always brown. Geshtii clothing tends to be woven from bright geometric patterns, and is a much appreciated trade item popular amongst the fair skin races.

Acomarian

The Acomarians are a race blended from many sources - and unlike most races on Elatta, they were never actually invited! The Acomarian pirate kingdoms raided the empire constantly during its life, and were a major contributor to its final fall as Acomarian ships swarmed to the shores and settled the rich, often wild lands of Elatta. Their successor kingdoms gained a reputation for deviousness, greed, generosity and general boisterousness - qualities that irritated the Celenians in particular (although one suspects there was a certain amount of wistful admiration behind their disgust).

Acomarians are relatively small, and have swarthy skins. Weirdly enough, blue eyes are common, and hair is often black with a sheen of red. The descendants of the old pirate kings (and *every* Acomarian claims to trace their bloodline straight to captains and kings!) dress in mad-bright, swashbuckling motley. They are dancers, tricksters and romancers; Acomarian men seem to have a way with women that makes other races putty in their hands, while wild Acomarian dancing girls and female storytellers have been the downfall of many a dazzled noble boy.

In conclusion; although a human's race may not be the defining core of their loyalties and character, they can be fun additions to the creation of a player character's persona. To be the last embittered scion of a Hiilætian noble house - a proud Celenian, or a Geshtii steeped in the traditions of their secret warrior cult can all add colour for role play.

Splicers

The wars between the successor kingdoms that so devastated Elatta in the past have left an indelible mark upon the folk who now live upon this much-changed world. During the mage wars centuries ago, humans were spliced with animal characteristics in an attempt to give them enhancements that would be of value in battle. The descendants of these experiments have thrived and interbred, becoming easily as numerous as pure humans, and a perfectly accepted part of human society.

Called "Splicers", these modified humans are not particularly monstrous to look upon. They are simply human beings who sport a few unusual animal features - usually the tail and ears of whatever species of animal their ancestors were merged with, and often a short, velvety coat of fur. They breed perfectly well with humans and other "Splicers"; half the offspring will be of the father's race, and half will be based upon the mother's species.

There are all manner of "splicer" types thriving in Elatta. A few examples include the following:

Bear - Solid humanoids tending towards muscular builds. Ursoid warriors are often gigantic.

The most striking bears are those creatures based upon Pandas; the round black ears and downy fur of the females is often considered quite alluring.

Bee - An insect hybrid marked by two graceful little antennae on their brows, as well as vestigial wings. Their bodies are the same as those of humans - with the addition of a fine, downy yellow fur.

Cat - Cat tail and cat ears upon a normal human. Sometimes fur and hair colouration can include tiger stripes. Feline “Splicer” characters tend to be playful, lazy, smug and affectionate - and sometimes rather infuriating.

Dog - Dog ears and tail added to a normal human body. Some canine “Splicers” can sport spotted fur like dalmatians, or are patch-coloured like particoloured mutts.

Fish - These creatures have fin like ears and a slightly silvery cast to their skin - quite delicate and haunting, in point of fact. Hair colours are often blue or green. They do not normally have tails.

Fox - Fox “touched” sport a fluffy orange tail and pointed orange ears. They tend to be small in build and rather lithe and agile - and suffer from a reputation for cunning that is not exactly undeserved...

Horse - A long sweeping tail and tall pony-like ears. This species tends to be rather long in the leg, and are often very attractive. Skin colours can occasionally be patched like painted ponies or even appaloosas. Some striped variants occasionally surface from time to time.

Jackal - Tall, thin and elegant - long of face and with tall ears. Jackals slicers have an affinity for the magical arts and a talent for self preservation that often makes them objects of cautious appraisal.

Mouse - Large round ears and a skinny mouse tail. This subspecies tends to be curious, have high psyches, and be rather low on size and build.

Rabbit - Rabbit ears high upon the head and a little bunny tail above the bottom make females of this sub species extremely popular! A high perception also makes rabbit males quite good scouts and warriors.

Sheep - Are graced by a fairly attractive set of horns (both males and females) and woolly tails. This species has a reputation for stubbornness.

Snake - These creatures are the most alien of the “splicer” types, having serpentine lower bodies attached to a human torso. Despite not having any legs, they are fairly agile and graceful, and the females of this subspecies are notoriously attractive...

Many other types can be found; see the notes on flora and fauna of Elatta for inspiration.

Marionettes

These are mechanical constructs created by the savants of the Imperium in times gone bye. They are mechanical dolls of great durability and flexibility that have been endowed with living souls taken from organic beings and housed within a crystal matrix deep inside the Marionette’s skull.

These beings can either be exquisitely beautiful or quite monstrous; the imperials built them for sport, intending them to be showpieces and amusements. Some Marionettes are

extremely old, while others are new constructs carefully made by loving parents or human sorcerers. They can feel pain - and can also perceive pleasure (some models are quite capable of sexual activity).

Like most of us, Marionettes must learn all of their behaviour patterns - but unlike organic beings, Marionettes lack a body of instinct on which to base their lives. This can make them seem quite odd; they sometimes seem a little blank and distracted, or spend much time observing the behaviour of other creatures and copying it. They DO feel emotion, but seem to come to it more slowly than other creatures; if they love, they gradually fall in love - if they suffer, they become aware of it only piece by piece.

Marionettes do not reproduce in the normal sense. While it is possible for them to create offspring by building a duplicate mechanism, this process is prohibitively expensive, and often far beyond the pockets of most marionettes. Marionette couples will work long and hard to gather the coins to pay for the expert help and costly materials they need to create a child.

These beings DO require sleep, needing to close off their minds and dream just like any other living creature. They do not eat, but must occasionally consume lubricants and powders to keep their gears turning. Marionettes can die (their bodies generate the power required to keep their spirits alive inside their crystal housings).

Weeds

A breed of warrior plants bred during the mage-wars, “Weeds” are descended from ordinary hogweed. Lithe, fast, cunning and tenacious, “Weeds” have survived out in the wilderness where they plant and cultivate their young, often raiding humanoid settlements for tools and beast blood - a food they particularly crave. Hogweeds have a primitive, savage culture linked by wild dances about fire, earth, air and water. Weirdly enough, they are wonderful singers, capable of making a variety of eerie, haunting sounds.

Weeds are viewed with supreme suspicion by civilised society - but occasionally they are allowed inside civilised settlements (although they will be carefully watched by one and all). The dangerous jaws that equip a weed’s head are for defense, and not for the ingestion of food. Weeds *do* eat - they must make a daily intake of fluids by jamming their feet/root clusters into water to drink (although they also greatly enjoy drinking beast blood, beer, thick soups and milk). Weeds can, however, survive for more than a week simply by spending an hour a day with their feet stuck in the dirt and their leaves spread to the sun.

Their feet have a sense analogous to taste, giving Weeds the ability to track quarry. They are also notoriously hard to poison, and are virtually immune to venoms.

Equipment

The survivor settlements often have trade goods for sale. Wandering Ruin Hunters often delve into old ruins and come up with surprising pieces of old treasure for sale. But in general, complex or rare items have a high price, since making such items is a special job or entails a deal of ‘ruin hunting risk’.

Technology levels before the demon wars were essentially medieval. People rode horses and Hooley birds, fought with swords and bows. But magic was an all pervasive force. Weapons were made of stranger alloys, combatants drew of sorcery and strange powers – wands and power gauntlets, Soul stars and magic crystals were all part of peace and war.

Now that civilisation has fallen, technology has dropped. Most settlements are capable of anything involving simple tools – but the resources and the skills to make the alloys, the complex weapons and the magics of old have disappeared.

Money

Elattan coins are called “Sequins”. They are made from a strange, metallic crystalloid substance created by the Hiilætian empire. Where gold and silver can melt and tarnish, Sequins remain forever bright and hard.

The basic coin is a disk of a milky white crystal. A “silver Sequin”

The next denomination is a coin made from a dark scarlet crystal – a “Red Sequin”. A Red Sequin is worth 5 silvers.

The highest denomination are coins made from a deep sea blue crystal – Blue sequins. A blue sequin is worth 20 silvers.

There are also a number of copper coins – loot from a dozen ancient empires. Copper coins were circulated in the empire as small change. There are clipped into a set weight, and usually have a worth of about 1/20th of a silver sequin. They are used for small transactions such as buying sweets.

All costs on the following lists are given in standard silver sequins.

Armour

Imperial ornaments

A metal bikini, or shoulder guards and head ornament, or chain mail lingerie; offers a little bit of protection and one hell of a lot of style! Soul-Star stones can easily be slotted into these outfits. Add a DRM of 1 to any seduction attempts by anyone wearing this armour.

Cost: 100 Sequins

Protective value: 1

Imperial war harness

This is a more exotic, more costly and even slinkier version of the Imperial ornaments. Magical fields worked into the harness give this outfit 2 armour points at no encumbrance cost. Soul-Star Stones can still be worn with this outfit as usual. Add a DRM of 1 to any seduction attempts by anyone wearing this armour.

It is very rare to find a suit of this armour for sale. It is more usually found hugging like a second skin to the silky soft, aerobicised booty of an evil sorceress.

Cost: 1000 Sequins

Protective value: 2

Piece-metal

Chunks of scrap metal riveted onto old hides. Shabby but cheap! Any crystals attached to such armour must be attached by straps, and can be lost (on a roll of 6 on 1D6) when struck in combat.

Cost: 10 Sequins

Protective value: 1

Partial plate

Plate protection for the chest, with an added helmet, and armour for the shoulders, shins or forearms. Slightly cumbersome. This armour reduces the wearer's initiative score by 1.

Cost: 20 Sequins

Protective value: 2

Plate

Complete metal protection for the body and limbs. Plate is cumbersome to wear, and restricts the wearer's ability to see and hear accurately. The wearer receives -1 DRM's to initiative, to all perception rolls, and halve their movement. Plate armour wearers also cannot use cards that include such keywords as 'spring', 'jump' or 'leap'.

Cost: 50 sequins

Protective value: 3

Shield

Shields and bucklers are used in conjunction with one-handed weapons to aid in defense. A character using a shield adds gains a DRM of 1 to their defense vs physical missiles and melee weapons.

Cost: 5 Sequins

Weapons

Simple weapons such as clubs, self bows and cleavers are made in settlements. More elaborate swords and polearms, self bows and energy wands are all found in ruins or on old battle sites, and come at a higher price. It is not always likely that such items will be available for sale to strangers.

Simple weapons: 10 Sequins

Clubs, cleavers

These weapons are cheap and easy to make, but are clumsier than 'ancient' weaponry. Clubs and cleavers receive a -1 DRM to initiative.

Staff

A long pole. These weapons do 'unarmed combat' damage, and have a melee range of 2 meters.

Bow

A bow made of wood, bone or horn. Good, functional weapons. Arrows cost a sequin each.

Point blank range (no accuracy DRM): *2 to 10 meters*

Short range (-1 Accuracy DRM): *11 to 30 meters*

Long range (-2 Accuracy DRM): *31 to 80 meters*
Extreme range (-3 accuracy DRM): *81 to 150 meters*

Ancient weapons: 50 sequins

Sting sword

These slim swords are similar to Earthly rapiers. They were the favoured weapons of the Imperials. They subtract 1 from the damage they inflict (with a minimum modified dice score of 1), but add 1 to initiative rolls. If used one handed, they double the normal melee range (eg, to 2 meters). Useful for whirlwind attacks!

Sword

An elegant straight sword. If used two handed, it adds +1 to its damage rolls.

Razor spear

A long spear with a long, slightly curved blade useful for both cutting and thrusting. Melee range with these weapons is 3 meters. It cannot be used with a shield. Razor spears add +1 to their initiative vs shorter weapons.

Fang Mace

Elaborate maces used by Imperial soldiers. Maces can be used one or two handed. If used 2 handed, they gain a +1 to damage rolls. Maces ignore the first point of an enemy's armour. However, they are clumsy, and suffer a -1 penalty to initiative.

Crystal bow

A handsome bow made of crystal. The crystal greatly helps to speed the weapon's arrows. Crystal bows have an effective range of 200 meters.

Point blank range (no accuracy DRM): *2 to 10 meters*

Short range (-1 Accuracy DRM): *11 to 50 meters*

Long range (-2 Accuracy DRM): *51 to 100 meters*

Extreme range (-3 accuracy DRM): *101 to 200 meters*

Special weapons: 100 sequins

Energy wand

A rare weapon that projects a blast or force out of a staff made of fused bone and crystal. They normally hold five shots, and them must recharge themselves by being fed a Chakra point. Absorbing the chakra charge and converting it to usable power is a process that takes the wand a full day. Energy wands ignore the first point of enemy armour.

Point blank range (no accuracy DRM): *2 to 20 meters*

Short range (-1 Accuracy DRM): *21 to 50 meters*

Power gauntlet

Very, very rare indeed. These fit over the hand, and project a blast of power from the palm. They attack everything within a ten meter long by five meter wide cone. (roll to hit vs all characters in the effected zone). They fire but a single shot, and them must be recharged in the same manner as an energy wand.

Miscellaneous equipment

<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Backpack	2	Can carry c. 20kg of equipment
Bandoleers	1	Cross belts with pockets for storage
Cavy (guinea pig)	.5	Can be stewed, boiled or fried
Clothes - survivor	5	Sturdy and serviceable
Clothes – ruin hunter	10	Sand goggles, filter mask, pockets galore
Clothes - fancy	20	Always makes a good impression
Donkey	25	Carries c. 100kg, rather slowly.
First aid kit	5	Bandages etc for 5 treatment rolls
Grappling hook	5	Weighs 1kg. Very bulky
Grappling hook - folding	10	Weighs 1 kg - less bulky.
Herbal remedy	2	“Did anyone take cooking skill?”
Hooley bird	25	Feathery riding beast. Cowardly.
Hooley bird - war	100	Swifter than a horse, but lighter.
Horse - pack	40	Carries about 150 kg, speedily
Horse - riding	80	Bolts at first sign of danger
Horse - war	120	Trained to face fire, magic and fleas
Hunting bird	50	Flightless. Prettier than a deerhound
Lantern	2	Weighs 1 kg when full of oil.
Llama - pack beast	25	Carries about 60kg, and can hum.
Lock picks	10	Not readily available!
Lodgings (inn) - 1 night	2	Includes breakfast. Bath extra.
Meal (inn, tavern)	2	Tip the waitress. She’s cute!
Mule	50	Carries 160 kg - stubbornly!
Phosphor bulb	2	Illuminates 10m. square for 15 minutes
Rations - 1 week	5	Weighs 5 kg. Tastes like roadkill
Rope - 20 meters	2	Weighs 6 kilograms - bulky!
Shiny baubles	50	Gives +1 DRM to female Cute.
Sleeping roll - cozy	2	Weighs 1 kilogram.
Tarot deck	10	For divination or gambling games.
Telescope	120	Weighs 1 kilogram. Rare! Fragile!
Tent - 2 person	5	Weighs 4 kilograms. Drafty.
Tinderbox - ordinary	1/2	Takes a few tries to work.
Tinderbox - never fail	5	Pneumatic. Kinda neat.
Tools - blacksmithing	5	Weighs 5 kilograms - bulky!
Waterskin - 4 litre	1/4	Weighs 4 kilograms when full
Weird pet	2	Small, cute and often irritating.
Wine - 1 litre	1	Trims fatigue recovery time by 1/2!

Weather:

Weather patterns all across Elatta have been mutated beyond recognition. Where once rains came, there is only desert; in other places, fertile plains have become endless bogs. Villages made of marooned ships line the edges of long-dried lakes, and new mountain ranges soar above the shattered cityscapes.

In general, winter is quite cold. It can snow in the high mountains, and warm clothing is essential. The Elattan summer is searing hot, requiring well-ventilated clothing. Other

weather patterns are entirely reliant upon region, proximity to demon lands and random chance. One valley might be a godless desert waste, while a neighbouring valley seethes with underground springs...

Drugs, herbs and strange substances:

These substances were once common in the empire. But in these latter days, they are all rare. The only source of these substances is Imperial ruins, or isolated little groves hidden far from normal settlements.

Healer bees

The honey of healer bees has disease-curing properties. Unfortunately, the bees are cliff dwellers who have a penchant for making their hives inside old, deserted buildings in very high places (such as haunted ruins!). Their honey sells for about 50 Sequins for a Dose. A dose of healer honey heals 1D3 damage, and can cure most bacteriological diseases.

Brain rot fungus

A hallucinogen that induces a lazy state of well-being and acceptance. "Rot heads" are slothful and self satisfied - and generally extremely boring. This is a hold-over from the old Empire, where many slaves would take the drug to ease their woes. The ex slave species and splicers view this drug with disgust and horror.

Demon dust

Addictive, foul and eventually fatal, demon dust is a spore exuded by the skins of certain demons. It grants a feeling of almost superhuman power (+1 DRM to all Athletic and Feisty rolls!)

The down side? Eventually total madness will set in. The user becomes a mad thing thirsting for blood...

Dream crystals

The most expensive of all "drugs" are crystalised dreams. Users of ancient Imperial Magic can send a spirit out of an evening to catch another being's dreams. Through alchemy, this dream is then turned into a small crystal, which looks a little like a snowflake. Users can then ingest the dream and experience a waking fantasy which is remarkable pleasant - and very, very costly. The experience is also extremely addictive.

Snow blooms

Found only on the very highest peaks above the cloud line, snow blooms are exquisitely beautiful - and extremely hard to come by! The exquisite scent of snow blooms is haunting and powerful. It also gives an automatic +2 DRM to any seduction attempts when used as a 'love gift'. It thus becomes the perfect gift for an evil bad guy to use to seduce and 'turn' an innocent young adventurer from a far world!

The flowers will keep for only a few days after being plucked - although they will keep for weeks if properly packed in mountain snow.

The landscape

Always spectacular, and usually a strange mix of the comforting and the alien, Elatta is a land changed and blasted by magic. Vast areas of land were absorbed by Demonscape, only to be reclaimed as the demonic gate was closed by the heroes of old. The blighted lands remain horribly changed - new mountains, volcanic landscapes - dead forests or empty lakes. In other areas, swamp lands seem to have grown and fed upon weird poisons and strange spells - the salt crust marshes are a place where metallic stains run through the oily water, and marsh-spiders with feet like dinner plates watch passers-by through strangely intelligent eyes.

Elatta is a place of hot summers and cold winters. In the summertime, cicadas sing and the people lounge by rivers watching passing clouds; in winter, light snow sometimes falls and heavy rainstorms come.

In general, the landscape divides itself into seven basic kinds:

Plains

Areas with flat ground covered with low growing plants such as grasses, ferns and bracken. A considerable number of small trees grow on Elatta's plains - silk-woods, with their broad spreading, shady branches grow in clumps of a dozen or more, each clump a hundred meters removed from the next spinney. In summer, these trees release drifting ribbons of seed that float like silk strands, dancing dizzily in the air. Squirrels and possums dwell in the trees, and new-moon gazelles are common herd beasts found grazing in the shade. Open water tends to take the form of creeks, which can be seen from a fair distance due to the dense wall of trees that always line the banks.

Some specific example of plains include:

The plain of sighing towers.

Tall volcanic "plugs" are all that remain of countless volcanoes that once dominated the land. The "towers" are the lava plugs that once filled the volcanic cones; the cones themselves have long since faded away.

These plains are dotted by countless thousands of these tall stone towers, each one a more than a hundred meters across and perhaps three hundred meters high. The spectacular towers catch the breezes of morning and evening time, vibrating softly to produce a strange, unearthly melody. The sound of the towers is never forgotten once it is heard; some travellers have been found simply sitting in their shade, content to spend long weeks just basking in the music of the world.

Ridgebone plains

These plains are marked by sharp ridges of rock about three to five meters high that run north-south in an unbroken line. While this makes it hard to lose one's sense of direction on the plains, they also make east-west (and west-east) travel virtually impossible.

Life is further complicated by the ferocious blue runner birds that establish territories in the various "channels", racing down the chutes to attack passersby. Thankfully, their territories are rigidly defined; if it can be managed, they can be escaped by a quick scabble across one of the sheer vertical ridges.

Mountains

Mountains in Elatta tend to be either low, smooth old peaks that have existed since the dawn of time - or savage, often impassable ranges thrown skyward during the incursions of demonkind into the earth. Demonic mountains have a deservedly hideous reputation; they are often utterly impassable, and serve as lurking places for fiends and demons, and altars to their loathsome gods.

Samples of Elattan mountain ranges include:

The crystal mountains

Spectacular ranges of "hills" made from gigantic growths of crystals. The vast crystal structures jut at every angle, making navigation virtually impossible after the first few hundred meters. But even being lost in such a place is like a dream come true; the crystals catch and diffuse the sunlight, spreading rainbow colours in the air.

The cloud island peaks

Majestic flat-topped mountains rising from the southern forests of Elatta. The lower slopes are rain forest - pure and beautiful, home to countless fabulous butterflies and plants. The forest gives off a dense mist every morning - a mist that rises to conceal the mountain peaks for the bulk of the day.

The mountains themselves are all flat-topped. The top few hundred meters rise from the solid sea of fog to stand like islands in an ocean of mist. To stand atop such a mountain is to feel oneself the master of a perfect, isolated world. Giant, ribbon-like serpents loop and cruise through the fog to dance in the sun. Poets and lovers have braved epic journeys just to sit upon the peaks and see the sunrise stain the clouds with golden light. A vow made upon the peaks is said to be eternally blessed by the gods.

Desert

The drastic shift in weather patterns caused by the demon wars has turned once-fertile lands into parched landscapes of dust and sand. Elattan deserts are always littered with ruins - towns, villas, castles and cities that have been abandoned to the dust. These places surface during windstorms, sometimes offering their shelter to stumbling travelers - only to disappear again in a brief matter of days.

The forest of bones

A huge belt of forest once ran through the central heartland of Elatta; now, this area is a dust desert, baking hot and shimmering in the sun. It is a land of hard, cracked soil covered in sparkling salts -

- and of the skeletons of countless millions of trees.

The trees stand as they once did in life, trunks tall and branches spreading. Withered, grey and stark, the dead trees cast crazy shadows as the sun arcs through the sky. Travelers who have braved the trackless waste report that the wind makes the branches softly moan, as though the trees thirsted for the lives of passers by...

The smoking desert

A wasteland of white-grey ash caused by fires somehow smoking underneath the soil. The ground feels warm - and at some places, can be hot enough to set boots on fire or sear unprotected skin. This is an area of strange smokes - of hisses of superheated steam suddenly blasting up into the sky in incandescent plumes. Fire sprites dance on gusts of scorching air, and weird creatures giggle in the fire-lit nights. An area to be crossed hastily.

Forest

Elatta's forests are generally magnificent mixed woods, where white oak, black oak, hawthorn and maples intermingle in a dazzling display of green. While they can sometimes appear dark and threatening, they are also primal and magnificent - havens for half forgotten beasts and magics abandoned by mere humans in ages long gone by.

Spritewood forest

The quintessential Elattan wood - and in the aftermath of the demon wars, the Spritewood has taken on a mysterious life all of its own. Wood sprites, water sprites - sprites of earth, soul and flesh - all seem to treat the Spritewoods as their home. Every stream sparkles with tiny presences dancing in the ripples - the rocks stir to the slow movements of earth sprites, and the leaves dance to movements of unseen winds.

There is a downside; no building made inside the forest ever lasts, nor do woodcutters seem to live long and healthy lives. The sprites can be easily roused to anger, and are unforgiving foes.

The Demonblight

A forest - but none such as Elatta has ever seen before. The Demonblight is a fungal forest - a place where giant woody stalks tower in the sky, spreading fleshy shelves to blot away the sun. Inside the wood, countless spores stir the air. Moulds and mildews make swollen cankers on the soil, and great fleshy fans of blood red and brilliant orange spread like coral groves. The ground is often deep in spores - deadly dangerous when stirred and accidentally inhaled. Puffballs and lumpen growths make a maze of underbrush, and weird creatures call to one another in the gloom.

It is unsubstantiated whether the "Demonblight" actually serves as a home to demons, or whether it is a slice of some strange alien world somehow come to Elattan soil. No human will willingly enter it, and none have ever walked far into the wood and still return.

Swamp

With the crippling change of weather that followed the demon wars, rivers silted up or drifted out onto unmarked terrain. In other places, poisoned waters seeped up from dark scars torn in the earth. The wetlands of Elatta can be as pretty and as eerie as any natural place - but many swamps have roots that are more tragic and sinister.

Salterust Swamp

A drowned city, vast and silent. The waters are salty, and stained by veins of metal and venom leaking from sources far beneath. The stems of plants and rims of pools are encrusted with metallic salts, and the water crunches as travellers step through the solid skin of salt that rests above.

Statues, palaces and a whole walled city were consumed by the rising flood. Fabulous discoveries are no doubt waiting to be made. Thus far, the only creatures to enjoy the bounty are the giant spiders that live inside the marsh - creatures the size of a man who skim across the unbroken salt with big feet shaped like dinner plates. Their eyes are strangely intelligent, and they seem to act in groups as often as they are seen alone.

The Newtwood

An expanse of green wetlands, where tall trees grow out of shallow waters that never dry up from year to year. Thick floating islands of weed are home to birds, to ocelots and

crocodiles. But most famously of all, the newtwood is a home for salamanders, frogs and newts. These creatures grow in spectacular profusion, climbing the trees and weeds to sparkle like jewels. Their singing ebbs and flows in fantastic choruses, making all the wetlands into one gigantic symphony. Somewhere in the swamps, fantastic palaces are still rumoured to lie; if so, then the gems and riches are now beds for frogs who shine more beautifully than mere rubies and gold.

Cityscape

There are no living cities left within Elatta - but many towns occupy the centre of ruin-sprawls that were one proud metropoli. In some cases, new houses have been built atop the flattened ruins of the old. In other places, once grand temples have been converted into alehouses, and every peasant has a crumbling villa for their home.

The city of sorcerers

Shai-tu, the Imperial scholar city, was utterly depopulated by a plague during the demon wars. Now the streets lie deserted - and the walls are painted with countless charms against disease until they look like a fantastic, twisted diary or comic book.

A few houses are still open; civilisation clusters about the old university, which still has many standing towers. The new population of perhaps two thousand try to keep a tradition of being scholars and sorcerers - pretensions somewhat ruined by the gardens and the chicken coops now filling old libraries and temple halls.

Shelltown

Falling dead in battle, the demigod Hiratsu fell upon the once fine city of Furinvalt and expired. The demigod's titanic shell - part beetle, part lobster, and part water bug - now forms the centre of a new and vibrant town.

The shell itself - a hundred meters high and perhaps six hundred long - is empty. Inside, partitions of sacking, walls of mud and woven sticks divide the echoing space into streets, apartments and homes. The open spaces serve as a market - the hanging blankets serve as walls. Lamps are hung from the demon's spine to turn night into a time of mellow light and fantastic shadowplays. The town is a trading post and is the home to many "ruin hunters", who find the eerie architecture irresistible.

Demonscape

There are places that never quite returned to sanity when the demon gate was closed. Isolated, terrifying and utterly shunned, these nightmare landscapes are a taste of what Elatta might have once become-

Or could become again...

The scar

Here, the earth itself seems to fold and pucker like diseased, disfigured flesh. The soil is spongy and foul pink, oozing an acidic, stinking fluid when cut.

Between the folds are stinking channels that can perhaps be walked - like negotiating the colon of some foul, titanic beast. Pustules swell on the sickening surface, popping and oozing disease-ridden fluids - dark things slither and strange sounds echo in the gloom. If there are treasures here, none have ever managed to escape to bring them home.

The vale of screams

Skeletal shapes seem to make up the rocks and glassy soil, as though the bones of titanic monsters and lesser demons, large and small, had somehow partly liquefied and turned into rock and stone. The effect is unspeakably foul - fangs and skull scream from every outcrop - half-rotted vertebrae and ribcages seem to make up every eddy in the twisted land. The shapes lie so thick that travel is almost impossible to conceive - like picking slowly through a titanic slaughterhouse strewn with countless cadavers and old bones.

The Valley is in a river gorge - and the river's roar is so loud as to be almost deafening. This is a stronghold of demons; a demonic lord still holds sway within the valley, and he increases his followers by sending servants forth to bring in human prey.

Cultures

The peoples of Elatta are now a mixed and colourful amalgam of all the many races who have migrated to the isle. The little settlements that now make up Elatta's fragile civilisation are often made up of several ethnic and racial types. These cultures often have their little idiosyncrasies.

Imperials and "slaves":

The pure Imperial "strain" exists only amongst the last few remnants of Imperial noble houses. Tall, pale haired, dark skinned, and renowned for women of haunting and disdainful beauty, the Imperial race of Hiilætu was a striking one indeed. However, since the empire was so renowned for its cruelty and its indolence, pure Imperials are always viewed with some trepidation.

The Imperium also left a legacy of ex-slave races - taken from every imaginable stock. Sorcery was used to breed slaves as "sports", providing a bizarre array of hair colours. Those with "sport" blood within them - perhaps 1/3 of the human and splicer population - might have hair of light blue, purple, bright red, pure white, striped or might even be quite bald.

The remnants of the Imperial races pride themselves on their complex musics, refined dances and cunning poetry (although some slave descendants deliberately shun such accomplishments as being reminders of their servile past).

Imperial law has left its legacy. Legal cases may still be decided by a duel between the two contesting parties.

Acomarians:

The Pirates of Acomar were a swarthy race; dark haired and olive skinned, bright eyed and cunning. Their colourful dress, boisterous attitudes and sheer charisma have made them the most colourful addition to Elattan culture.

Acomarian cuisine is... famous. They are fond of insanely hot spices! Be careful about letting Acomarian characters do the cooking tasks about camp!

Acomarians also have few obsessions about telling truth; they see things in "grades of truth", which allow them to tell whopping fibs and tales to each other without the slightest blush of embarrassment.

Acomarian music is also famous. Passionate dances, weeping ballads - their music always brims with extremes of emotion.

Tsu:

The successor kingdom of Tsu has provided Elatta with a strain of golden skinned, almond eyed, dark haired Asiatics. Tsu blood occasionally produces extraordinarily long-lived individuals - a few sages of ancient history are documented as living to 160 years of age.

Hooley birds are the riding beasts that the Tsu introduced to Elatta, and these birds are very much still a part of their culture. The birds are much groomed and cared for, and riding skills are highly prized. Riding races are the most common way of solving disputes. Tsu refuse to eat the flesh of any avians for fear of offending the spirits of their riding beasts.

The Tsu respect a sort of “wanderlust” that strikes all of them from time to time. Called “Ride-about”, this mood makes them restless for travel and new horizons. In some Tsu, this will simply be a made ride out across the hills or a camping trip; for others, it will involve a strong desire to visit far vistas and new horizons.

Geshtii:

The Geshtii were a black skinned people - tall and powerful. Popular in the old Imperium as bodyguards, the descendants of these Geshtii are spread all about the isle - although they still concentrate in areas once inhabited by the Tiger kings. They are deservedly famed for their berserk courage, bright clothing and wild dances.

The Geshtii are brewers; they create and consume a number of beers, grading them in pungency according to ancient codes. Their most potent creations are definitely an acquired taste. Ingredients such as tar weed, kelp and bananas make for regional variations that other races would rather simply avoid...

Celenians:

Huge white-skinned warriors with red or stark blonde hair, the Celenians were shock troops that awed the Hiilætian Empire. Blonde hair is often considered attractive by other races, and so Celenians have a possibly undeserved reputation for beauty.

Definite gourmands, Celenians combine their chivalric honour codes with a love of fine foods and fine wines. Although they will wear a rough, harsh warrior persona, they will go to great lengths to make sure that they have proper wine and a decent cheese to consume by the campfire at night.

Celenian female fashion is much admired for formal occasions. It contrasts directly with the overt eroticism of Imperial fashions.

Splicers:

Splicers will adapt themselves to the dress and attitudes of their “home” cultures. They do, however, have habits and attitudes that show their animal sides. Felines are playful, obsessed by chasing butterflies and napping in the sun. Mice tend to be curious and clever. Jackals and dogs are made restless by the full moon, which becomes a time for courting, for fighting and for keeping settlements awake at night with midnight choruses of howls...

Marionettes:

Rare and often solitary, Marionettes live slightly apart from normal humanoid society. Occasionally the subject of aversion, they are not normally shunned - but few humanoids feel truly comfortable near creatures who are so utterly alien.

Weeds:

Often found lurking about the edges of civilised settlements (if you can call a village made in the ruins of an ancient pleasure palace ‘civilisation’), weeds are a common enough sight in trading bazaars as they try to swap game, berries and old treasures for metal tools, beast blood, wine and beer. Their savage dances, booming music, noisome eating habits and love of off-colour jokes makes them rather *interesting* visitors...

Religion

The Imperium had a dark, somewhat sinister religion based upon ancestor worship. Their revered, powerful ancestors were honoured in shrines and temples, and were woven into an elaborate pantheon. As the empire grew darker, more cruel and decadent, many sought the direct aid of ancestor spirits, who were often able to feed their worshippers with sorcerous powers

The Great elemental Dragons of the Sun and moon were paid respect, but were not directly worshipped. Even so, a small priestess hood remained, isolated from the degeneracy of the Empire – a strange sisterhood that looked back to a simpler, more honourable time. The sisterhood might even still exist today, hidden in some far corner of the shattered world...

A strange group of “Demi-gods” were known to exist. These were physical entities of great age and might. Most of these were wiped out in the demon wars.

The successor kingdoms have also left their theological mark. The Tsu have left a legacy of belief in “Enlightenment”. In some places, one can still find worshippers of the barbaric animal-headed gods of old Acomar. The Celenians had a pantheon of humanoid gods - Yarita, the goddess of sex and fertility, and Kor, god of battle being the best remembered.

Fauna

The total destruction of the Elattan ecosystem has seen the fall of many native species, and the displacement and adaptation of all of the survivors. For better or worse, the empty niches have been filled with forms either mutated by magic, or - more alarmingly - life forms which have colonised Elatta from the worlds of the Demonscape.

Domesticated food animals in Elatta include several birds, cows, sheep, goats and cavies. (Both large and small. A slice of capybara, anyone?) Domesticated utility animals include horses and donkeys (the Elattan horse strains often include some bizarre “sport” colours bred by the old Imperium), as well as llamas, large flightless hunting birds (based on Hooley birds) and dogs.

Armadillos

There are several species of armadillo living on the continent. These range in size from dainty little creatures the size of a small rabbit, to busy critters the size of a Labrador. They are not particularly tasty, and their hefty armour makes them a puzzle for most predators. The violet armadillo – one of the most prevalent species – is quite resistant to

magic. It can absorb up to 2 chakra points of magical damage per hour, and apparently can live off this energy in lieu of food. They can sometimes be seen baiting packs of Imperial Jackals, deliberately provoking a magical attack against themselves before retiring into their burrows.

Armadillos are largely insectivorous. The largest armadillos – the “Scarlet Plated Ridge-Backs”, make a habit of breaking into the huge termite mounds found in many plain areas, and feasting on the bugs within. Nests emptied in this way can be used by travellers as emergency shelter from dust storms.

Bird life

Elatta is home to a spectacular profusion of birds. The Imperial isle in particular is the breeding ground of countless varieties of humming bird. Many flowering plants are pollinated solely by these tiny little creatures. Hummingbirds are considered to be magical and lucky, and villagers will still provide nests material for them in the breeding season. The discarded tail feathers of breeding male hummingbirds are highly valued as ornaments.

There are several species of hawk and eagle. Huge condors live in the mountains. There is also a “night condor” – actually a giant owl that glides huge distances in the dark night skies.

Parrots of various kinds can be found in the forests. Many pelicans and storks live in the wetlands. Imperial Ibis are an eerie silver-hued ibis with a grave, wise expression. They are matched in beauty by the Solar Heron – a huge wading bird with feathers coloured in gorgeous swathes of orange, red and bronze.

A final bird worth mentioning is the sky-fisher. These brilliant blue birds are possibly related to kingfishers. They use a flash of Chakra energy to disorient attackers and small prey. These birds were often domesticated in ancient times to live at the edges of estates and give warning of intruders.

Cavies

Guinea pigs. These are a very common food animal. So common, in fact, that visitors to Elatta are soon going to get sick of the damned taste!

A giant Cavy similar to the Earthly Capybara is a common creature found along river banks in forested areas. They taste just like normal cavies – only there’s more to go around! Mmm – eat hearty!

(For more information on cavy recipes, why not phone your local cavy cookery center TODAY!)

Creeps

A legacy of the demon gate, these creatures look something like a cross between a squid and a giant wood louse. About the size of a human hand, these creatures attack wood with their tentacles, squirting it with enzymes to break up the cellulose and then consume the resulting pulp. A pest in homes and ruins, these creatures are slimy but otherwise harmless. They are found in urban settings, forests, and ruins.

Cutters

A cross between locusts and piranha - and one of the nastiest gifts of the Demonscape. Cutters are wicked, hideous little creatures no bigger than a human thumb that have long legs and a pair of sharp little piercing/sucking claws. They spring out from long grass to

try and pierce the skin of passing animals, grab a drop of blood, and then leap away. Thankfully, they are extremely territorial and never attack in clouds - but their attacks are painful, annoying, and persistent. Cutters like the open grass; after a zooplankton cloud settles, villages will often burn any surrounding grasslands to clear the vicious creatures away.

Dragonsnakes

Lairing in ruins, Dragonsnakes are large, heavy serpents with carnivorous fangs and rough, scaly hides. They have vestigial spurs and flexible stomach ridges that allow them to cross soft sands, climb trees and pass over the roughest of rocks at surprising speed. They are masters of ruins and rubble, striking out to kill rabbits and even sheep or deer. Their heads are easily larger than a jackal's, and have more powerful jaws. They average about 10 meters long, with wide, flat bodies.

Male dragonsnakes have a habit of collecting shiny, pretty objects and placing them in the rubble about their dancing mounds, on which the creatures prance about to attract mates during springtime.

Dragonsnakes can be a problem if player characters decide to dig into their lairs, or disturb their dancing mounds; a Dragonsnake bite can easily snip off a human hand. Their lairs usually contain 1D3 Soul-Star stones

Athletic: 9 (+1)

Brainy: 7 (0)

Cute: 2 (-2)

Feisty: 5(-1)

Sensitive: 9 (+1)

Tough: 9 (+1)

Hit points: 10

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6-1 (minimum of 1)

Notes: *Not intelligent, but crafty – capable of feigning death, or using an back tunnel to strike enemies from behind. These creatures fear fire. Double enemy attack bonuses and defense bonuses for “Brainy” (once you know how these creature’s bit and strike, you can see that they’re not too imaginative about it!)*

Flitsnakes

Elattan tree snakes are usually able to flatten their body and leap into the air, gliding easily from branch to branch through Elatta's forests. Small constrictor snakes about a meter long, flitsnakes eat frogs, possums and small rodents, and make interesting pets.

Floaters

Floating airborne jellyfish about the size of a beach ball, with stingless 2-meter tentacles that they use for communication and hunting. Floaters are ringed with simple eyes; when touched by flame, they violently explode and burn.

Although they appear a little odd, floaters are popular since they feed upon clouds of zooplankton. At evening time, flocks of floaters can be quite beautiful; they catch the dying sunlight like beautiful prisms, spreading little rainbows across the sky. The flocks communicate with one another by giving clear little bell-like chimes, which are hauntingly pretty. Floaters sometimes nest inside empty ruins to shelter from strong wind.

Hooley birds

Flightless birds evolved as hunters and scavengers, these creatures are now often used as riding beasts. Hooley birds have heavy beaks and large talons - all designed to make short work of fleeing of prey. Domesticated Hooleys come in a wild array of colours, They are quite creative and curious - making them amusing and irritating companions. The males are vain and lordly, and can mimic human voices and barnyard sounds.

Athletic: 9 (+1)

Brainy: 7 (0)

Cute: 7 (-0)

Feisty: 5(-1)

Sensitive: 9 (+1)

Tough: 7 (0)

Hit points: 8

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6

Notes: *Hooley birds can run a high speeds, for short bursts. They move 6 times their Athletic score when charging or fleeing, but only for 5 turns.*

Hooley birds are large targets, and receive a defense DRM of -1 when being attacked by human-sized opponents.

Horses

There are two main breeds of riding horses present in Elatta. Additionally, herds of wild horses – mostly of similar breeds – can be found roaming the plains.

The old Imperial breed of horse is a strange, long nosed, spindly creature with a peculiarly limber gait. These horses are quite fast, and very good on a long distance run. The imperials bred their horses as toys and playthings, and so a bizarre variety of pelt and mane colours exist - including striped, spotted, black, white, pink, lavender and green.

Athletic: 10 (+1)

Brainy: 5 (-1)

Cute: 5 (-1)

Feisty: 5(-1)

Sensitive: 11 (+2)

Tough: 9 (+1)

Hit points: 10

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6-1 (minimum of 1)

Notes: *Horses are large targets, and receive a defense DRM of -2 when being attacked. Horses may gallop 4 times their Athletic score in meters per turn.*

Celenian horses are huge, heavy warhorses bred for battle. They have short endurance, but make up for this with massive muscles and savage temperaments.

Athletic: 11 (+2)

Brainy: 5 (-1)

Cute: 2 (-2)

Feisty: 7(0)

Sensitive: 7 (0)

Tough: 10 (+1)

Hit points: 12

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6

Notes: *Horses are large targets, and receive a defense DRM of -2 when being attacked. Celenian horses may gallop 4 times their Athletic score in meters per turn, but can only maintain this pace for five turns.*

Imperial Jackals)

The lordly, elegant jackals of Elatta fill the niche of wild hunting dogs and wolves. Operating in packs, they hunt gazelles in the plains, deer in the forests, and eat all manner of small game. While not actually dangerous to humans and humankind, they are born scavengers and would attack a wounded, defenceless man. These creatures usually run in packs of 2D6 individuals. They are swift running, and will use ambush techniques to drive prey towards hidden members of their own pack.

Imperial jackals all have a long unicorn-like horn. This is used to discharge magical bolts. A Jackal can only discharge one such bolt in an hour, but working as a pack they can use this magical energy to drive off larger enemies.

Athletic: 6 (0)

Brainy: 9 (+1)

Cute: 7 (0)

Feisty: 7(0)

Sensitive: 11 (+2)

Tough: 5 (-1)

Hit points: 5

Chakra: 1

Damage per attack: 1D6-1 (minimum of 1)

Notes: *Imperial Jackals are extremely lithe. They receive a defensive DRM of -2 when shot at or targeted by magic of any sort.*

The horn of an Imperia Jackal can discharge a bolt of magical Chakra energy. This attacks as a normal spell with a range of 30 meters.

Marsh spiders

Very large spiders (make that VERY large spiders!) Their big, dinner-plate sized feet allow them to walk across quick sands, water weeds, lilies and mud - and they can actually skate across open water. Possibly intelligent, these creatures are not innately hostile - although they are clearly carnivorous.

Athletic: 6 (0)

Brainy: 7 (0)

Cute: 2 (-2)

Feisty: 7(0)

Sensitive: 7 (0)

Tough: 7 (0)

Hit points: 7

Chakra: 1

Damage per attack: 1D6-1(minimum of 1)

Notes: *Any creature hit by a marsh Spider's fangs must immediately roll 2 dice, trying to score an 8+ (Bonuses for Toughness are allowed). Failure means that the victim is paralysed by the spider's poison.*

New moon gazelle

Elatta has deer of many kinds in her forests - including tiny-tusked deer imported deliberately from Tsu, and the spotted deer of old Gesht. But most startling of all are the new moon gazelles, whose curving horns so gracefully match the shape of a sickle moon. These gazelles tend to feed in the twilight and the dawn, and their silver-grey coats can make them almost invisible in the predawn haze.

Athletic: 6 (0)

Brainy: 5 (-1)

Cute: 7 (0)

Feisty: 7(0)

Sensitive: 11 (+2)

Tough: 5 (-1)

Hit points: 5

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6-1 (minimum of 1)

Notes: *Once a new moon gazelle is startled, it leaps in spectacular bounds. Any missile or spell directed at an evading gazelle receives a -3 DRM.*

New moon gazelles can absorb one point of chakra energy cast at them in spell form. This can then be redirected back at the attacker. When Imperial Jackals attack New Moon Gazelles, they do so warily.

Picas

The rabbit equivalent of the island continent is the 'Pica' – a small eared, burrowing creature that is actually a marsupial. These creatures live in communities of up to a score of individuals. They are commonly caught for food.

Pigs

Feral pigs have now reverted to their wild state. Pig hunting is a dangerous but rewarding sport.

Athletic: 9 (+1)

Brainy: 6 (0)

Cute: 2 (-2)

Feisty: 9(+1)

Sensitive: 7 (0)

Tough: 9 (+1)

Hit points: 10

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6

Notes: *A charging boar moves at four times its Athletic rating.*

Possoms

A variety of possums – arboreal, flying and even aquatic – are the standard denizens of Elatta's trees. Possum flesh is quite delicious, often tasting of the fruit or flowers that the creatures feed upon.

Razor sloths

Huge bear-like creatures with extremely long, heavy claws. They eat leaves, fruits, and also feast upon hives of insects (they are notorious for loving the honey of Healer Bees).

Razor sloths are not actively hostile unless bothered, but go almost berserk when attacked. They do not suffer from the shock effects of wounds, nor do they fall unconscious when their toughness reaches zero! They are found in wilderness areas, favoring forested mountains and hills.

Athletic: 12 (+2)

Brainy: 4 (-1)

Cute: 2 (-2)

Feisty: 7(0)

Sensitive: 6 (0)

Tough: 12 (+2)

Hit points: 14

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6+2

Armour: 1

Notes: A Razor Sloth does not fall unconscious when it reaches zero hit points. Instead, it keeps fighting until its hit points reach a negative level equal to its 'feisty'. However, it does bleed like any other creature once its hit points reach zero.

Razor sloths are large targets, and receive a DRM of 2 when facing attacks or missile fire.

Spikes

Another creature of the demonscape, 'Spikes' are small creatures that look like metallic sea urchins. Spikes are about the size of a human fist, and move slowly across the ground by rolling end over end. They tend to come in large clusters of several hundred organisms, and move slowly along the ground eating grasses and low lying plants. Treading on a spike is painful, although the spines are unable to penetrate a heavy boot. Falling onto a thicket of spikes is too awful to contemplate.

Weirdly enough, spikes seem to be quite a delicacy for the Imperial Ibis – a bird that frequents the plains and wetlands. Ibises will carefully pull out “spikes” protective spines with their long beaks and then crack the creature open against a rock or log – a time consuming process that apparently rewards a gourmet meal. Whether eating demonic fare is having any effect upon the intelligent and lordly Ibises has yet to be seen...

Imperial Tapir

Gigantic, elephantine creatures with attractively striped pelts and long prehensile noses, tapirs live in plains and forest lands – but are commonly domesticated as beasts of burden. Tapirs are ridden and controlled from a box-like howdah mounted on their backs, and howdahs can take a ton of cargo or four passengers with room to spare.

Athletic: 21 (+7)

Brainy: 4 (-1)

Cute: 7 (0)

Feisty: 11(+2)

Sensitive: 6 (0)

Tough: 12 (+2)

Hit points: 25

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6+7

Armour: 2

Notes: *An Imperial Tapir is a titanic target. Roll vs an "Athletic" of 7 to hit the Tapir. Player characters hit by a Tapir are allowed to 'save' by rolling 8+ (modified by 'Brainy' bonus). Making this saving roll halves the damage (it was merely a 'swiping blow'). Player characters who make a habit of attacking Tapirs should probably be trodden-on.*

Sabre-toothed Tigers

These creatures are striped, powerful, and equipped with two long dagger-like fangs that allow them to attack larger prey. They are the only animals known to prey upon Giant Sloths and Tapirs (although even then, they can only attack young or sick Tapirs). They will, however, attack smaller prey when very hungry. They are not suited to chasing fleet-footed gazelles.

Rare but beautiful, Tigers are viewed with a certain wary reverence. Villagers will often try to scare marauding tigers away with noisemakers and whistles before going to the dangerous extreme of hunting the creatures down in the dense foliage that they love.

Athletic: 10 (+1)

Brainy: 7 (0)

Cute: 9 (+1)

Feisty: 7(0)

Sensitive: 8 (0)

Tough: 12 (+2)

Hit points: 13

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6+1

Armour: 1

Notes: *Tigers are ambush predators. Their striped patterning makes them difficult to see when they conceal themselves in dappled leaves or grass. Attempts to see well hidden tigers are made at a DRM of -1.*

Zooplankton

A gift brought by the demoscapes that has definitely come to stay! Annoying clouds of tiny flying shrimp, teeny tiny "jelly fish" and lots of things with little feelers and eyes – all of them scarcely bigger than a pinhead. Zooplankton flies about the landscape in big pink wind driven clouds, feeding on the sun's rays, airborne moisture and fungus spores. Zooplankton clouds are definite travel hazards, and can make towns into a total misery if they settle over the streets. The tiny organisms get into the eyes, sting the skin, and smell like prawn soup that has been left in the sun for a few days.

Entirely at the mercy of the winds, these clouds drift about the island, eventually coming to ground where some of the life forms metamorphose into creeps, floaters, cutters and spikes. They are found absolutely [f\\$%@ing](#)-lutely everywhere!

Flora

The original plant life of the island continent was similar to that of South America: There are tropical plants, cacti, vines, orchids and creepers – pines and hardwoods in profusion. The Imperials also imported all manner of exotic fruit trees, and planted these throughout their Empire so that travellers would always have refreshment close at hand. Imperial parks and gardens had flowers, trees and decorative plants of all kinds, and many of these have run wild. Any imaginable kind of plant can be found on the island.

In addition to these ‘natural’ plants, there are several that were magically grown. These magical plants are rare – and often dangerous.

House tree

These trees are mutated from Boabs. Their trunk swells out to enormous, bulbous size, and is hollow. They can have windows and doors carved into them without seriously interfering with the life of the tree. These plants were developed as cheap housing for slave casts. The trees take 40 years to reach a usable size. Groves of these trees can be found near old slave camps and estates.

There are some rare house trees that grew in strange colours and enormous size. There trees were clearly attempts to make far more grandiose houses as ‘hunting lodges’ for wandering nobility. They turn up from time to time in the deepest forests and most inaccessible wilderness. These special house trees are often self aware, and will close doors and windows to entrap intruders.

Power Puffs

A ground cover of small, pink-hued fungal puff balls. The puff balls exude spores that engender a dreamy state of well being and ennui. These plants were grown to line pleasure gardens where nobles could lie and idle. While not dangerous, they can be annoying: Making camp on a carpet of puff balls could lead to an unplanned, self-satisfied little holiday lasting for days!

Dragon orchids

Mobile carnivorous plants apparently used by Imperials as house pets. These creatures slither along on their vines and roots, smiling away at the world through their brilliant flowers. Dragon orchids can catch mice and small birds, and can give a human being a nasty bite. If domesticated, they are useful at keeping down pests. Dragon Orchids are surprisingly intelligent.

Mandragore

These small plants have roots shaped like a human homunculus. In the dry season, they can actually uproot themselves, and will walk off in search of water. Mandragore sap is extremely poisonous, and toughing the leaves or roots causes a rash similar to poison ivy.

Men

The most colourful and difficult opponents for characters are often fellow humans (plus Weeds, Splicers and what have you). These characters have a wild variety of weapons and special combat cards available, and can often use magic.

To quickly generate a humanoid combatant, simply roll 2D6 for each characteristic.

As the Tokyo Teens gain abilities, they will move far beyond the point where common citizens are their foes. The magical champions who hold the key to Elatta will soon fight only evil sorcerers and brooding bad guys – all of whom come stuffed with pose cards, attack cards and magical powers.

Demons and fiends

These are the savage, bloodthirsty “bad guys” of the Delves game setting. Demons are a threat to all rational life, and must be exterminated wherever they are found.

Demons are the denizens of the “demon-scape” - lands that have somehow intruded into the reality of Elatta from an alternate world. In theory, the gates between these two worlds are now closed - making the remaining demons castaways. Demons act to increase the extent of their demon-scape lands. They do this by spreading spores and butchering forests, killing wildlife and engineering deep rifts into the earth, which pipe up the steam and filthy minerals the demons prize. With the windows into their own worlds closed, the demons nevertheless have one hideous means of “recruitment” open to them; they can absorb Elattans into the demonic race, making humans and humanoids into puppets completely under demonic control. Demons attempt to absorb and assimilate the humanoid populace of Elatta, using kidnapping and stealth as often as they use invasion and open force.

The signs that demons have infiltrated an area are the disappearance or mutation of wildlife - the spread of alien fungi (which grow from spores carried on demonic shells and skin), and the feeling of disquiet. “Sensitivity” is the surest way of homing in upon the alien vibrations that are generated by demons and their minions.

Demons use neither magic nor tools and weapons - instead, they use their warped bodies as instruments of death and power. They share no features with animals of the sane Elattan world (no goat heads, no cloven hooves); instead, they conform to a totally alien biology. Jaws are often four-pronged affairs opening up their entire heads like the petals of a hideous flower. Tongue-like tentacles can shoot out of their gullets or spores spurt from sphincters dotted all over their skins. Demons with crystal-plated skin offer a window into the horrible veins and secretions bubbling beneath their hides. These creatures are alien - and utterly horrible. They are devoted to the absorption and destruction of all humanoid life.

Demonic random effects

All demons and demon-kin have random special powers. No two demons are exactly alike, and each one presents a unique nightmare for any who would try to kill the creature in battle.

All fiends and demons roll once on this chart. Greater demons roll twice.

1D6 roll

- 1 Multiple prehensile tongues. (reach of 3 meters). Hits with tongue attack immobilize opponent. Immobilised characters can break grip by rolling 8+ (with Athletic Bonus) as a combat action.
- 2 Armoured skin (This hideous creature has +2 points of armour)
- 3 Crystal plated skin (This vile creature has +1 points of armour, and gains a resistance DRM of 2 vs magical attack)
- 4 Screamer! Makes a sonic attack in a 20 x 10 meter cone once per combat, attacking all in the cone's area. Armour does not protect victims from the sonic scream.
- 5 Extra limbs or heads. Gets a second melee attack at -2 each round.
- 6 Mucous spurts. If melee opponent rolls a 2 or a 12 when striking, opponent slips and loses their weapon!

Demonic attack cards.

The larger demons all have special attack moves. A fiend draws one random attack card from the 'demonic attack card' lists. Standard demons or changelings draw two demonic attack cards. Greater demons draw four demonic attack cards.

Demon princes are extra special opponents, and come filled with poses, attack cards and magic. These enemies are found only at the climax of the campaign.

The demons

Imp

Imps are possibly not "proper demons"; they appear to be a parasite or "hanger on" of the larger, more sadistic demon kind. Imps are small creatures with slick, mucous covered skins and pointed ears with the characteristic 4-way demonic jaws. They are fast moving, agile and literally slippery. These creatures always attack in swarms, and are usually ravenously hungry for meat. Demons use them as slave labour, as food, and as "hunting dogs" scouting the way for larger forces - although typically the imps player characters encounter will be breakaway groups who have escaped their demonic masters to nest and breed upon their own. Typical imp nests consist of mucous-lined burrows and tunnels delving into the ground and even looping up onto rocks and trees, all centred about a central mound - a vile bulbous lump like a giant "brain coral" that somehow seems to be the focus for breeding more imps.

Athletic: 3 (-2)

Brainy: 3 (-2)

Cute: - Forget it!

Feisty: 5(-1)

Sensitive: 8 (0)

Tough: 3 (-2)

Hit points: 1

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6-2 (minimum of 1)

Armour: 1

Notes: *Imps do not roll for demonic special effects . Their small size and agility means that any physical attack against an imps suffers a -4 DRM.*

Imps stack into 'swarms' of 1 to 6 individuals that occupy the space of 1 human foe, and who all attack the same enemy. Make one attack per swarm, and add +1 to their damage and +1 to their chance to hit for each imp in the swarm. (see – dangerous little mo-fo's, ain't they!)

- Nuke the sire from orbit. It's the only way to be sure...

Changelings

The most insidious threat to human life perhaps comes not from the mighty demon lords and their legions of warriors, but from “Changelings”: the enemy within. Changelings are demons who have taken on the outer appearance of as humanoid being - usually by eating the human they have replaced, and then pupating in a quiet place until they can metamorphose and emerge. They absorb the knowledge of the character they have ingested, and can carry on a good masquerade as they take on their stolen identity. Their physical change is only skin deep, however, and they are still literally a demon covered by a thin layer of human skin. If injured, the demonic form will show beneath the human shell. If forced to give battle, a changeling will split its human skin (always horribly!) and emerge as a true demon. With its cover “blown”, the changeling will fight with manic fury! It will not retain memories absorbed from its human host for more than a few hours after abandoning its charade.

Changelings are a special sub-type of demons, and are skilled at masking their true nature. Characters may make a ‘sensitivity’ roll to sense that something evil is afoot – but such attempts vs changelings are given a -3 DRM.

Athletic: 9 (+1)

Brainy: 7 (0)

Cute: forget it! (use host's ‘cute’ when in disguise mode)

Feisty: 9(+1)

Sensitive: 8 (0)

Tough: 10 (+1)

Hit points: 11

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6+1

Armour: 1

Notes: *Roll for demonic “special effect” to give each Changeling a unique power.*

Changelings usually only ‘replicate skilled and dangerous beings. They will have attack and pose cards absorbed from their host.

Fiend

The most common - and most horrible - sight in demon-struck area is the “fiend”. These shocking creatures were once humans. Demons infect human captives with their own blood and spores, causing their victims to pupate and emerge as horrific hybrids of demon and human form. Still recognisably humanoid in shape, they now have the claws, spines, jaws and dripping mucous-covered skin typical of demon kind. Essentially mindless, fiends are capable of little independent thought; they are under the sway of a demon, who seems to control them via mental commands. When bereft of their controllers, fiends go on a blind rampage, attacking any non-demonic/fiendish creature they can find. They will continue to attack, regardless of wounds and fatigue, until they are destroyed.

Demons care nothing for Fiends, and use them as assault troops to destroy irritating targets.

Athletic: 7 (0)

Brainy: 5 (-1)

Cute: forget it!

Feisty: 5(-1)

Sensitive: 5 (-1)

Tough: 7 (0)

Hit points: 7

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6

Armour: 1

Notes: *All fiends are vulnerable to light. Strong light drives them back. The fire from energy wands or light-based spells causes +2 damage against Fiends.*

- There will come a time when player characters are too tough to be very vulnerable to these creatures. They make great ‘background hordes’ to serve as a backdrop for evil demon princes. However, if Umpires want to be evil, then demon Princes in such situations can cause fiends to explode, each making a sticky web of goo that puts a -1 DRM on player character attack and defense abilities.

Demon

True demons are savage, cunning and violent. They tend to be impatient, and are driven by an implacable hatred off mankind. They prefer to let lesser minions carry the brunt of an attack, but will ensure that such attacks are carried through without regard for casualties.

Demons are not particularly intelligent; it is the Greater demons who plot and plan; The lower orders are telepathically controlled by their more powerful kin.

Athletic: 11 (+2)

Brainy: 5 (-1)

Cute: forget it!

Feisty: 9(+1)

Sensitive: 6 (0)

Tough: 10 (+1)

Hit points: 12

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6+2

Armour: 1

Notes: *Demon corpses spread a vile mould that slowly 'terraforms' the environment into demonscape. Dead demons must be burned to prevent them from spreading their blight. Wounds caused by demons can also fester, eventually changing the victim into a Fiend. Wounds must be washed with alcohol to prevent the spores from taking root...*

Greater Demon

Apparently ruling nests of lesser demons, Greater demons are clearly intelligent - although theirs is an intellect utterly alien to man. Demons seem to be motivated by a strange need to turn the environments of Elatta into copies of their foul and lethal homeland. They have no wish to communicate with human beings, nor to exploit or cherish anything the world might have to offer. There are rumours that demons gather for strange convocations, rearing and screaming during thunderstorms - but since no one could possibly have seen such a thing and survived, this remains mere speculation.

Athletic: 15 (+4)

Brainy: 7 (0)

Cute: forget it!

Feisty: 9(+1)

Sensitive: 8 (0)

Tough: 13 (+3)

Hit points: 17

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6+4

Armour: 2

Notes: *Woa Nellie! These guys are major monsters. They should not be faced by player characters until the PCs are well kitted out with combat cards, poses and magical weapons, otherwise dinner will be Tokyo Teens of toast!*

The roar of a greater demon causes a twisting of reality. Greater demons can roar as a combat action, and this heals all demons in a 100 meter radius of 1D6 damage (although dead demons remain dead!) Similarly, all non demons in the area suffer a -1 DRM to their activities due to the painful warping of space.

Demon prince

The mightiest lords of demonkind are massive beings - hideous, titanic things that dwarf their slaves and followers. They are so huge, so massive, that they can only be defeated by Player Characters equipped with MECHA (giant robotic suits).

There are only a few demon princes upon Elatta - lewd by their Demon emperor, the most powerful of their kind. These beings are each unique, and are outlined under the 'campaign' section of this book.

Demonic fauna and flora

Demonscapes are few and far between - they are considered pure fables by most of the isolated inhabitants of post-invasion Elatta.

Demonscapes do have analogues of animal and plant life - always noxious and deadly to human life. Hideous skeletal growths of flesh or fungus - piercing tentacles thrashing in the breeze, or hideous grubs that cling and chitter to the molten rocks. Worst of all, Demons seem to feed from rivers of flesh - actually colonies of hideous amoebic creatures slithering so thickly over one another that they appear to be a river of slime. These slime rivers, reeking and screaming as they slide across the poisoned soil - are perhaps the most nauseating aspect of the demonscape for the casual "passer by".

The atmosphere in such places is deadly to all natives of Elatta. Tokyo Teens can withstand the ill effects of the atmosphere, but they are still going to be disgusted by the smell!

Spirits

Disembodied spirits are an accepted part of Elattan life. Ghosts haunt murder sites, old battlefields and ruins; carnivorous spirits ride the blade-edge of storm winds, attacking unwary travelers. Isolated spots of beauty often have their guardian beings, powerful and unseen. A wise man learns how to sense the presence of such creatures, and either avoid them or placate them. Some humans have been befriended by such entities; these people are almost always blessed and destined for great mysteries. Alternatively, many a rash explorer has come to grief with their body possessed and their own mind cast adrift on icy winds...

Spirits can often be mollified by offerings of blood, or by the destruction of valued baubles such as gems, jewelry or magic swords.

Spirits are immune to magic and physical weapons. They fight by making a roll to mentally damage their opponents (roll 8+, modified by "Feisty" and "sensitive" scores). Damage is put onto the target's "Toughness" as normal. Likewise, they can be fought by retaliating in the same way. To generate a "spirit", roll 2D6 to determine its Feisty, Toughness and Sensitive attributes. Powerful spirits will add a few points here and there. More potent spirits will have chakra ratings of 1d6.

Chakra points can be expended to add 1D6 to damage inflicted in spirit combat, or to reduce damage by 1D6. A maximum of 1 chakra point can be expended during any attack or defense

Some spirits are tied specifically to a place or a shrine. Destruction of their place of power will halve all of their abilities. Such spirits will usually negotiated to prevent their haunts from being destroyed. Spirits will tend to know about things such as local caches of Soul Star stones.

Constructs

The most common enemies of many pc's will be magical constructs - creatures raised by sorcerers to be the guardians of ancient treasures or the instruments of assassination and mayhem.

Zombie

The animated corpses of the dead. Zombies are slow moving, stupid and utterly tireless. They never sleep, never fatigue, and remorselessly pursue their simple instructions; once set to following a victim, they will continue to shuffle towards him oh so slowly until they can choke the life out of his miserable hide. Easy enough to trap and waylay, what they lack in brains is often made up for by sheer numbers!

Athletic: 9 (+1)

Brainy: 3 (-2)

Cute: Eww!

Feisty: 2 (-2)

Sensitive: 3 (-3)

Tough: 10 (+1)

Hit points: 11

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6+1

Notes: *Zombies are slow. They gain a -2 to initiative, and there is a +2 DRM to hit them in combat.*

Zombies move at half the normal rate of a human. They do not bleed or fall unconscious when reduced below 0 hit points, but instead fall down and crawl very slowly towards their enemies (1 meter per turn) getting a -1 DRM to hit.

Skeletons

Due to their extreme loss of weight, skeletons are much quicker than Zombies - but have very little muscle power to put behind their blows. As mindless and tenacious as Zombies, they are often found in ancient ruins as guardians of forbidden treasures.

Athletic: 7 (0)

Brainy: 3 (-2)

Cute: Eh – I guess you could polish one up real nice...

Feisty: 2 (-2)

Sensitive: 3 (-3)

Tough: 8 (0)

Hit points: 9

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6

Notes: *Skeletons are immune to the piercing damage caused by arrows and sting swords.*

Skeletons do not bleed or fall unconscious. When reduced below 0 hit points, they crawl very slowly towards their foes (1 meter/turn), and have a -1 DRM to hit.

Golems

Slow moving, massive creations 3 meters high fashioned from rock or steel. These creatures are primitive, stupid and mindless, easily making them a match for player characters. Golems are usually set to guard a particular area or item - or can be awakened in the depths of a ruin to home in and retrieve a special treasure once PC's have removed

the treasure from its rightful place (hey - FUN!) Stupid, capable of smashing through walls or walking on river bottoms, these constructs can be a thief's nightmares come true!

Golems always have a Star-Soul Stone at their heart.

Athletic: 13 (+3)

Brainy: 3 (-2)

Cute: Not really

Feisty: 11 (+2)

Sensitive: 7 (0)

Tough: 10 (+1)

Hit points: 13

Chakra: 0

Armour: 3

Damage per attack: 1D6+3

Notes: *Golems that fall below 0 hit points do not fall unconscious or bleed. Instead, they move as ½ speed and suffer a -1DRM on attack and defense.*

Barbs

A fast moving construct made of bone, wood and shadow. These creatures have thorny extremities that can stab like a spear or cut like a knife; they can cling to ceilings, run up walls, and leap fabulous distances and heights. Fast moving and silent, they are some of the deadliest guardians player characters may encounter.

Barbs usually attack in very large numbers - usually from many directions at once!

Barbs always have a Soul Star stone at their heart.

Athletic: 9 (+1)

Brainy: 3 (-2)

Cute: That would be 'no'

Feisty: 7 (0)

Sensitive: 7 (0)

Tough: 8 (0)

Hit points: 9

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6+1

Notes: *These creatures are lightning fast, and get a +2 DRM to initiative rolls. They can freely move up walls and along ceilings, and are almost impossible to spot in the dark.*

Mysterious beasts

Wind serpent

Bred from jungle serpents discovered long ago and far away, Elatta's wind serpents are the descendants of imperial battle mounts. Long, thin snake-like creatures covered in iridescent feathers, wind serpents have flat bodies reminiscent of their smaller cousins, the common flitsnakes. The front of the wind serpent has developed into fan shaped

feathered wings, which can propel the entire creature gracefully through the air. Adults measure some 20 meters in length, and are capable of bearing a light burden aloft. A youth or Tokyo teen.

Wind serpents are now largely feral, keeping to the high mountain forests where they loop and dance to greet the morning sun. The secret of training these creatures has died out - but there may be mentors who can remember the old techniques.

Wind serpents always have a Star-Soul Stone at their heart.

Athletic: 9 (+1)

Brainy: 7 (0)

Cute: 11 (+2)

Feisty: 7 (0)

Sensitive: 7 (0)

Tough: 8 (0)

Hit points: 9

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6+1

Notes: *These creatures are children of the Solar Dragon, and are protected by the unicorn of the West. Hunt them at your peril!*

Rock-gobbler

A horrible creature brought from far climes during the ancient Imperium, and which seems to have made a home for its species amidst ruins, rocks and wastelands. Rock-gobblers are 2 meters long and made of unusually dense flesh, giving them a typical body weight of about 250 kilograms.

Armoured like an armadillo and equipped with a vicious beak, these creatures are so well camouflaged that spotting them is almost utterly impossible unless they move. They lie in ambush in overhangs of rock or upon steep hill slopes, and then roll themselves at targets like boulders, hoping to smash legs and bring victims down to a level where they can be savaged to a grisly death. Rock gobblers make a missile-style attack when they roll downhill, doing 2 dice of damage when they hit a target. If their "boulder roll" misses, they will swiftly uncoil to fight - unless the odds prove too great, in which case they will simply continue to roll downhill and escape. Characters who make a 'sensitive' roll and see the attack before it happens gain a DRM of -2 to be hit by the rock gobbler.

Athletic: 7 (0)

Brainy: 7 (0)

Cute: Depends on your POV

Feisty: 7 (0)

Sensitive: 5 (-1)

Tough: 8 (0)

Hit points: 8

Chakra: 0

Damage per attack: 1D6

Armour: 3

Notes: *These cowardly creatures will keep rolling and depart the area if they miss their attacks and are still faced with equal numbers of opponents or more. They tend to come in 'packs' of 1D6 rock-gobblers.*

Ruins

The imperial nobility were keenly interested in spying and assassination, theft and treachery. As a result, their palaces, their temples and their tombs were interlaced with secret passages and cunning, deadly traps. Magical constructs were set to slaughter the unwary. Treasures, jewels and weapons were hidden in elaborate labyrinths, and protected by all the cunning of degenerate, brilliant minds. To enter such a place is to run a gauntlet of lethal traps - to face puzzles designed to taunt and tease - to be misled and mocked by architects and owners long dead and gone. Ruins are also the refuges of monsters of all kinds, who make their nests where other creatures fear to go.

Ruins leftover from the successor kingdoms are far more wholesome and safe - although the plagues and demonic spirits that stripped the world of its population might still be locked inside some pocket in the wastes. Elatta is littered with deserted cities - some even at the bottom of lakes, or tilting crazily from the slopes of new-grown mountains. Humble treasures may be found in old hovels and the dusty streets - while better pickings may be found inside the ancient castles, towers and palaces. Deserted towns and cities are favourite places for bandit gangs, for roaming spirits, monsters and demons to use as hidey-holes. In addition, the "fall out" from the demon wars can create interesting and shocking effects - wandering vortices through which the death of the city can be seen, or ghostly armies of skeletons still numbly carrying out a mockery of their faded lives. Each ruin is unique - each one fascinating and always dangerous.

The most terrifying ruins of all are simply called "nests". These are remnants of demonic overlords from the period of the demon wars. They are foul, horrific structures made of obsidian and molten glass - structures made of tunnels that snake and loop like intestines far into the earth. There are openings and chambers - and hideous secrets. Some say that such places contain portals into other worlds, or doors into the demon's world.

And sometimes - the nests are still home to fiends and demons. Creatures simply biding their time until they can wreak vengeance on living souls...

Settlements

In general, humans (and their various co-existing subspecies) will congregate in villages of between 20 to 120 inhabitants. Larger towns are rare, due to the scattering of Elatta's population after the demon wars. To random generate a settlement, just take some dice and follow the two steps below.

Step 1- location and construction (roll 1D20)

- 1 Hot springs (a location dotted with geysers and sulfur springs)
- 2 Quiet glade (a new settlement made in a lush oasis or forest)
- 3 Hillside (a new settlement made upon a very defensible hillside)
- 4 Ruined palace (houses built amidst marble statues, dry fountains and temples)

- 5 Destroyed city (a huge, empty ruin of broken houses and empty streets)
- 6 Destroyed town (a settlement built within the ruins of a deserted town)
- 7 Ancient college (a settlement based about the ruins of a centre of learning)
- 8 Ancient farms (old villas mixed with new made huts)
- 9 Giant animal/god skeleton (eerie but impressive!)
- 10 Land-locked boats (ships stranded on dry land when rivers and seas retreated)
- 11 Tree houses (the settlement is up in the air, safe from local ground predators)
- 12 Tunnels beneath ruins (safe and sound from “that which lurks above...”)
- 13 Huge temple (huts and houses built within a gigantic, echoing temple complex)
- 14 Ruined fortress (even with shattered walls and towers, it is still quite defensible)
- 15 Cliff face (a settlement built halfway up a cliff face - usually accessed by elevators)
- 16 Crater (Built within a massive crater - the crater walls make a good stockade!)
- 17 Mesa or small tower (raised high above the dangerous lands below)
- 18 Caves (dank but secure)
- 19 Ancient battlefield (bonefields provide rich pickings and great dangers...)
- 20 Mobile settlement (eg yurts, tapir-towed wagons, etc etc)

Step 2 - the mood of the settlement (roll 1D20)

- 1 Festive (good wine, loose women, gambling and games!)
- 2 Suspicious (“we don’t git many strangers in these here parts...”)
- 3 Generous (glad to help!)
- 4 Feuding (either violently, or through intrigue. Outsiders make good agents!)
- 5 Terrorised (local monsters or banditos; a perfect chance for PC’s to save the day!)
- 6 Commerce minded (keen for business, hoping to make a good impression)
- 7 Ancient secret (guardians of a treasure (or a danger) which they hide from strangers)
- 8 Willing slaves (a blissful town amidst fields of flowers? Pacifism is contagious!)
- 9 Productive (town produces one particular item for trade*)
- 10 Puritanical (rigid code of moral behaviour. Can still be hospitable.)
- 11 Cosmopolitan (well used to visitors. Lots of travel goods for sale.)
- 12 Pretentious (every tavern girl has a noble title and an attitude to match)
- 13 Militant (lots of fighting instructors, military goods and soldiers.)
- 14 Religious (perhaps a monastic settlement? Contemplative, helpful, pacifistic.)
- 15 Trading post (a-brim with goods, pickpockets, treasure maps, guides and girls)
- 16 Starving (maybe evil demonic fungus eats the crops?)
- 17 Haunted (settlement has a monster or a nemesis that makes people fearful.)
- 18 Imperial (A family with rigid rituals, living in splendid isolation)
- 19 Fearful (Spreading demon blight – or people are going missing 1 by 1)
- 20 Roll twice

*Are you really *that* keen to know what it is? Try rolling 1D6 below:

- 1 Foodstuffs (Cattle town? Seaweed? Honey from giant bees?)
- 2 Mercenaries
- 3 Magic (medicines, sorcery, or perhaps a healing spring? Jealously guarded!)
- 4 Luxuries (eg. silk, wine or horses)
- 5 Weapons and armour
- 6 Relics (rich ruins yield gold, metals, treasures...)

Settlement leaders might be warlords or despots, elders, elected mayors - or just group consensus! Do whatever seems best for the colour of the scenario.

Settlements that are used to visitors will have an inn - but most villages will at least have a tavern or a meeting hall where travellers can stay overnight.

Random encounters

Should an umpire wish to quickly generate travel encounters for parties that wander the wilds, then by all means try the following random encounter charts.

D10 Encounter

- 1 Ruins
- 2 Settlement
- 3 Large wildlife
- 4 Puzzle
- 5 Travellers
- 6 Wandering thieves
- 7 Monsters
- 8 Awful weather
- 9 Travel problem
- 10 Spirit

Once the general type of encounter has been determined, consult the charts below for specific details.

Ruins (D6)

- 1 Imperial fortified palace/tower (always guarded by fiendish traps)
- 2 Imperial mausoleum (filled with great treasures and greater dangers)
- 3 Temple (can be building, a giant hollowed statue or even thermal caves)
- 4 Successor kingdom's castle (usually a lair of nasty creatures)
- 5 Deserted town (some pickings are possible. Mutant animals and ghosts abound.)
- 6 Inhabited ruin (evil sorcerers preferred)

Settlement

A village is found in the wilderness! There is a 1 in 6 chance that the village will be the site of a recent massacre of the inhabitants (just to give the players that eerie encounter they've so long been dreaming about!)

Large wildlife

Wildlife appropriate to the terrain (eg. crocodiles in a swamp, jackal packs on the plains) appears. This could be a grand opportunity to hunt or be hunted. Alternatively, wounded travellers might be rescued from the jaws of a jackal pack, or creatures might lead the way to much needed water in the desert, etc.

Puzzle

- 1 Mysterious statue. Solving a logical puzzle points the way to quest and treasure
- 2 Remains of a dead war party - utterly and horribly killed by mysterious means
- 3 Caught in ancient Imperial trap. Certain death unless a conundrum is solved.
- 4 Stalked by a magical construct. Must somehow placate or trap the things.
- 5 Ghost or spirit makes mysterious appearances, trying to plead for help
- 6 Party wanders into a deliberately designed maze.

Travellers

- 1 A lost individual (a child? A lone survivor? A brash young adventurer?)
- 2 Traders (keen to share a campfire, a meal and some news.)
- 3 Suspicious travellers (hostile towards heavily armed adventurers)
- 4 A mystical traveller (A unicorn in Human guise)
- 5 Hostile ruin explorers (who think PC's are "jumping their claim")
- 6 Something tantalizing (monks escorting a treasure? A beautiful princess?)

Wandering thieves

- 1 Bandits
- 2 Thieves masquerading as traders
- 3 Undead
- 4 A single stealthy skulker (patient enough to follow the party and wait...)
- 5 Confidence trickster
- 6 Spies working for the bad guys.

Monsters

Pick one!

Awful weather

Zooplankton storms, downpour or dust, scorching heat or howling winds, as appropriate to place and season. This not only loses the party travel time, but it can also threaten equipment, and sometimes even life and limb ("I told you not to pitch the tent inside that old dry watercourse").

Travel problem

All the unforeseen problems that make wilderness travel so exciting and endearing! Travel problems cover everything from avalanches to diarrhea - from having a sloth eat all the rations to simply getting utterly lost! Players might need to improvise a bridge across a dangerous ravine: Wagons can become bogged or lose a wheel, or riding beasts may bolt and run away. In snowy mountains, one character might be stranded on an ice pillar or inside a crevasse. In a desert, the ground may become "quicksand", or all the party's water may be snatched by jackals. In swamps, thick fog or a leaking boat can be good fun. Travel problems stretch PC ingenuity, and can lead to whole little adventures by themselves!

Spirit

The PC's encounter either a guardian spirit who looks after the zone through which they pass, or somehow disturb a ghost. PC's can be given the chance to unwittingly outrage the ghosts - eg. by rifling a skeleton of its few treasures, or hacking into an ancient tree to seize the gem buried in the trunk.

Character sheet

Character name

Age Sex

Descriptors

Favourite Movie/Series

Characteristic (Bonus)

Athletic

Brainy

Cute

Feisty

Sensitive

Tough

Hit Points

Chakra

Failing

Schtick

Pop skill 1

Pop skill 2

Pop skill 3

Esoteric skill

Melee attack/defense bonus

(Athletic, Brainy, Tough)

Ranged attack/defense bonus

(Brainy, Sensitive)

Magical attack/defense bonus

(Feisty, Sensitive)