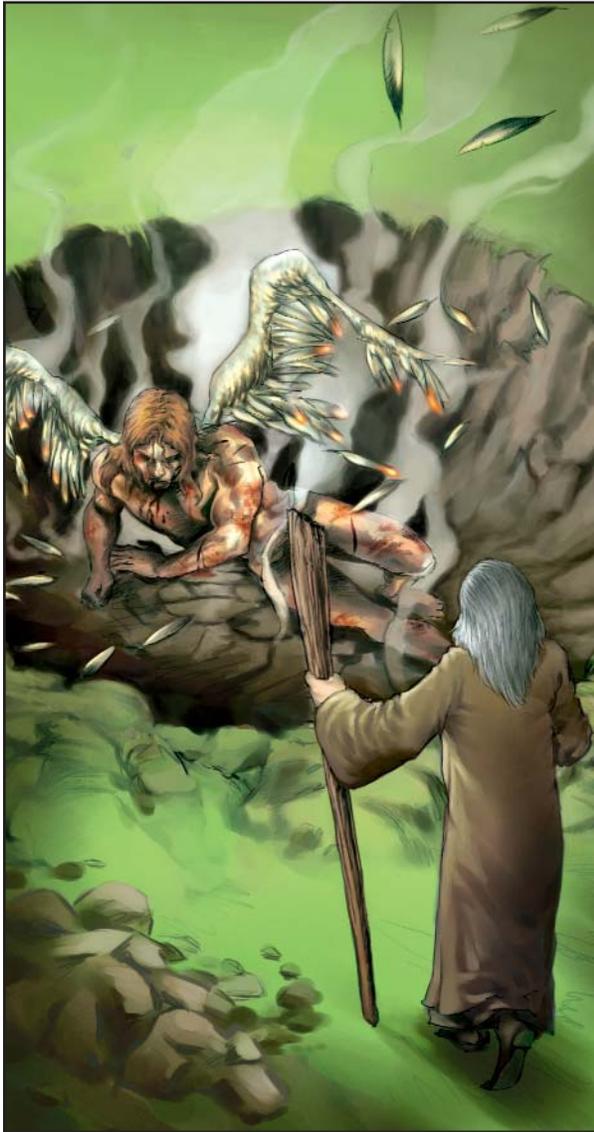


Temple of the Lost Gods



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AN e23[™] ADVENTURE SETTING
for GURPS[®] from
STEVE JACKSON GAMES
FOR 3 TO 6 PLAYERS

Written by Chad Underkoffler
Edited by Scott Haring
Illustrated by Bob Stevlic, Dan Smith,
and Guy Burwell
Maps by Scott Reeves

Welcome to *The Temple of the Lost Gods*! This multi-purpose setting can serve as the starting point, base of operations, scenery, or goal of a wide variety of adventures. Follow along and watch it from its glorious beginning, through its growth over the centuries, to its eventual collapse and decay. Each period offers different adventuring opportunities; different adversaries, and ideas how to slot the Temple into your current campaign, whatever, wherever, or whenever it may be.

This book uses a quick and easy abridgement of the *GURPS* rules called *GURPS Lite*, designed to get you – and your players – right into the action. *GURPS Lite* is available free at www.sjgames.com/gurps/lite.

About the Author

Chad Underkoffler is an editor for a telecommunications standards body by day and a freelance game writer by night. He's been gaming since 1981, to the confusion of his family. His column "Campaign in a Box" appears bimonthly in *Pyramid* (www.sjgames.com/pyramid/) along with several articles, he's written for Atlas Games' *Unknown Armies* line, and his website can be found at www.geocities.com/chadu/. This is his first campaign creation for Steve Jackson Games. He lives in Alexandria, Virginia, with his wife Beth and their two black cats.

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1. The History of the Temple of the Lost Gods

Over several centuries, the Temple of the Lost Gods served as a source of knowledge, comfort, and meaning to the people of the kingdom of Darliku. But, like all things, the Temple, its faith, its followers, and Darliku itself withered into the dust of history. Follow now the rise and fall of the Temple of the Lost Gods.

The Faith of the Lost Gods

As revealed to Madat, the First Priest, by Zedev the Messenger: A thousand years ago, the gods fought a mighty war in heaven. The skies raged, the earth shook, and the seas boiled as their fell weapons clashed and rang. It is unknown what the war was all about – Zedev refused to tell Madat – but the First Priest believed it had to do with humanity. After decades of bloody conflict, something terrible happened.

Against their wills, the warring gods were flung away from the world, cast into Heaven at great speed. So fast, in fact, that for centuries, their divine powers could not even slow them down, much less return them to the world. The gods found themselves scattered in the darkness of the night sky. Three hundred and sixty of those bright pinpricks that people name “stars” are actually Lost Gods.

Meanwhile, back on the world, those gods and spirits who had refused to take up arms in the War assumed the positions and roles of the missing. The Sun is not the first solar deity the world has known, and the Moon himself was born of commingled

GURPS TEMPLE OF THE LOST GODS

This setting is intended to be used with the *GURPS Lite* rules – available for free at www.sjgames.com/gurps/lite – along with the additional rules found in the *Appendix*, pp. 50-61.

THE KINGDOM OF DARLIKU

Darliku is a medium-sized nation. Half of the land is broad, temperate plains, the other half is rolling, forested hills. The largest city is the capital, Fizvarlu, with a population of around 50,000. Common trade goods are millet, rye, oats, and apples, as well as copper mined from the mountains on the southern border.

At the beginning of the Phase 1 period (p. 4), King Gwithdor rules Darliku. His warband is composed of wealthy noblemen, and the wizard and spymaster Madat supports his reign. While magic exists, it is only within the past century that it has been made to work *for* the kingdom rather than *against* it (in the form of evil magician-warlords). Through Madat’s wiles and skill, King Gwithdor successfully strengthens the boundaries of his realm against his raid-happy neighbors. He then passes his crown to his son, Gwindku, who is counseled by Madat’s daughter, the wizard Rayda.

divine and human blood (that is why he wanes and vanishes from the skies: he must rest his human half one night each month). Alas, while the New Gods have learned quickly and often try their best, they cannot entirely fulfill the Lost Gods' responsibilities – and that is why there is unnecessary pain, sadness, sickness, and death. If the Lost Gods could return, all would be set right, and such things would only happen for a reason.

The return of the Lost Gods is the mission of the Temple and the faith. According to *The Testament of the Messenger*, “the prayers of the faithful are as a path through the forest, as a beacon in the night, as a

THE SOLAR PANTHEON

The most common faith of the kingdom during Phase 1 is belief in a pantheon of anthropomorphic gods, with the solar deity (the Sun) as heavenly king; the other gods (like the Moon Demigod, Earth Goddess, Lord of the Hunt, Goddess of the Dawn, Lady of Fire, etc.) make up his court.

This religion has an intriguing concept of the afterlife. When living things die, they release their moisture-souls into the air. These souls collect into clouds and float through the sky until the Lord of Storms and Death determines that “enough” have collected. Then, the god makes it rain, and the souls fall back to earth as water. Plants absorb the rain, people and animals drink it, and in due course, souls pass into the consumers' children. The unlucky or ill-favored dead are doomed to collect in isolated stagnant pools, where they generate noxious weeds, molds, insects, amphibians, and reptiles. Until they evaporate, they must expiate their sins in this form.

The biggest difference between the priesthood of the Solar Pantheon and that of the Lost Gods is magic. Only those lucky few who already possess the talent before they enter the priesthood can benefit from the magical knowledge of the Solar Pantheon, whereas *all* who become priests of the Lost Gods gain Magery (see p. 50). This disparity of power is perhaps the largest issue standing between the two groups of clergy, if not the two faiths.

rope thrown to a drowning man.” To this end, the priests of the Temple direct their prayers skyward in the Rite of Rescue, concentrating on a specific star each night and the following day, to lead the Lost God home. Down this path of devotion, the Lost God may send powers and knowledge to his rescuers, even as he speeds along it toward the world.

The orisons of the pure shine brighter in the Lost Gods' eyes. For that reason, each priest and participant in the Rite of Rescue must strive to embody the Tenets of Virtue (Generosity, Hospitality, Hope, and Aptitude) as best they can. Each night of the year – except August 19th, the day reserved to the memory of the Messenger, Zedev, the Lord of Speed – the Rite of Rescue is performed, directed at a specific Lost God. The remaining five days of the year (six in a leap year), the High Priest decides which Lost God's knowledge is most needed in the world at the moment, and directs the Rite of Rescue at that particular deity.

Phase 1: The Founding of the Temple

Before the Messenger fell from the sky, Madat had a long career as the first wizard to the royal court of Darliku. When his beloved wife died, the heart seemed to go out of him – he stayed on purely out of duty. When King Gwithdor sickened and turned over the throne to Crown Prince Gwindku, Madat finally retired from court to manage his provincial estate. His daughter, Rayda, remained in the capital to support the new King Gwindku as court wizard.

Madat spent his retirement roaming the rolling hillsides of his property and conducting long-delayed magical research. With wry humor and a keen eye sharpened by court intrigues, he easily deflected or avoided the petty political machinations of his country neighbors. With only a single servant, he lived a quiet, introspective life for a handful of years, until he found religion – or, more precisely, religion found him.

One winter, the appearance of a new comet in the night skies was the talk of the village. A delegation of his neighbors came to Madat, to ask him to use his

Rules for the Madness Plague

Characters suffering from the Madness Plague possess the symptoms listed in the main text. However, some specific rules are needed to describe those symptoms' game effects:

Infection Range: Anyone who casts a spell near an infected person (within a number of yards equal to the IQ of the sick individual) must roll vs. HT or become infected; if an infected character casts a spell, everyone within a number of yards equal to the IQ of the magic user must roll vs. HT or catch the Plague themselves.

Mild fever, increased perspiration, "glittery" or "glassy" eyes: Noticeable on a Sense roll, but no other game effect.

Sleeplessness: Each night, infected characters must roll vs. HT. On a success, they fall asleep. On a failure, they remain awake. Victims receive -3 to all skill, Sense, and Will rolls for each day they remain awake (in addition to any Will penalties accrued from spellcasting – see below). Losing a night's sleep also causes a loss of 5 Fatigue. A sufferer whose Fatigue drops to 0 due to this sleeplessness will fall into a *coma* (see below).

Sleeping: Sleep is what heals the Madness Plague. When an infected person falls asleep, the total skill, Sense, and Will penalties he's collected from spellcasting or sleeplessness are reduced by one for each day he sleeps. (Fatigue is recovered at the normal rate, with one full night's sleep making up for the Fatigue lost by missing a night.) When all the Will penalties have been healed, the patient is cured. Victims will tend to sleep straight through until healed, but can be awakened with mild difficulty.

Coma: Characters who have entered a coma (as described above) are totally unrespon-

sive, cannot be woken by any means short of magic, and must sleep 2 days per point of Will penalty to "heal." Furthermore, unless forced, a comatose victim will lose 1 Fatigue point per meal he misses; when ST is reduced to 3 by Fatigue loss, he will begin losing hits per meal he misses. If a victim of the Plague loses enough Will before lapsing into a coma, he may starve to death without ever waking up.

Delusional Thinking: Non-magical PCs gain a temporary mild Delusion as a disadvantage (GM's option); magical sorts gain a temporary moderate Delusion (usually related to paranoia or megalomania) or Phobia.

Hallucinations: GM's option; ghostly images out of the corner of the eye and phantom voices whispering in one's ear are most common.

Magical Compulsion: If a victim of the disease possesses Magery or Temple Attunement, he must make a Will roll every hour to resist the compulsion to cast spells, or whenever he is presented with a substantial choice or risky situation: he needs to "scratch" his mystical "itch." Every day the patient casts at least one spell, he accumulates a penalty of -1 to Will rolls (not just to resist this compulsion, but *all* Will rolls). Infected magicians will throw spells until they knock themselves out by spending all their fatigue (see *GURPS Lite*, p. 29, and the *Appendix, the Realm & Temple Magic System*, p. 52). If an infected person casts a spell that requires more fatigue points than he currently possesses, he will take hits on a one to one basis to make up the difference. Magicians who are sick with the Madness Plague can literally cast themselves to death.



Spell Types

Each spell type listed below is a technique used in magic. GMs should feel free to create others to suit their campaigns.

Body of [Word]

Regular or Resisted

Temporarily transform the subject's body into an animate mass of [Word]; subject gains all the qualities of [Word] for the duration of the spell (if the Word is Stone, subject is a living statue; if the Word is Water, subject can flow through small holes; if the Word is Insects, subject becomes a swarm of bugs; etc.).

Default Penalty: -6.

Time to Cast: 5 seconds.

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: 5.

Cost to Maintain: 2.

Change/Transform [Word]

Area, Regular, or Resisted

Permanently change a small amount of [Word] into something else – water into wine, stone into mud, time into money, light into dark, etc. If the “something else” is more complex or valuable than the starting Word (like stones into gems), the GM may levy an additional energy cost; if greater amounts of [Word] are to be transformed, treat this as an Area spell.

Default Penalty: -4.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds.

Duration: Instantaneous.

Cost: 4.

Control/Shape [Word]

Area, Regular, or Resisted

Physically, allows the caster move an amount of [Word] around at 5 yards per second, and can change its orientation, position, and shape (but not its volume); can also be used *mentally* as a Resisted spell, to force subject(s) to obey the caster's commands.

Default Penalty: -2.

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: 2.

Cost to Maintain: 1.



Create [Word]

Area, Regular, or Resisted

Creates a small amount of [Word] (a torch-sized flame, a gallon of water, a second of time, etc.). Things cannot normally be created *inside* of other things. If used as a direct attack, the spell can be resisted; if the spell gets past the target's resistance, it does 1d+3 damage.

Default Penalty: -4.

Duration: Instantaneous.

Cost: 2.

Destroy/Weaken [Word]

Area, Regular, or Resisted

Destroys or weakens a small amount of [Word] (a torch-sized flame, a gallon of water, a second of time, etc.). If used as a direct attack, the spell can be resisted; if the spell gets past the target's resistance, it does 1d+3 damage.

Default Penalty: -3.

Duration: Instantaneous.

Cost: 2.

Enchant/Disenchant [Word]

Area, Regular, or Resisted

Enchant [Word] is normally used after another spell has been cast. When cast in this manner, Enchant [Word] allows the caster to extend the duration of the first spell (adding 10 minutes to its normal duration), temporarily instill an object with the effects of the first spell, or temporarily grant the holder of the object the ability to cast the first spell. Enchant [Word] can be made permanent with the additional expenditure of *unspent character points* equal to the first spell's casting cost.

Disenchant [Word] allows the temporary suppression of an enchantment or spell, stopping the operation of any spells in effect and blocking any new attempts to cast spells on the object or in the area. Disenchant [Word] can be made permanent with the additional expenditure of *unspent character points* equal to the original Enchant [Word]'s character point cost.

Default Penalty: -8.

Time to Cast: 10 seconds.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Cost: 2 for duration extension, 3 for temporary spell casting ability, 5 for temporarily instilling spell effect, 8 for permanent enchantment (plus *unspent character points*; see above).

Cost to Maintain: 2.

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