



GLORANTHA: THE GODS WAR

QUICKSTART RULES



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SUMMARY

The Gods War is an asymmetric game for 3 to 8 players. This summary includes the *Empires* expansion but not the *Elder Races* or *Monsters* expansions.

Each player controls one of eight *empires*: *Chaos* (purple), *Darkness* (dark grey), *Sky* (yellow), *Storm* (light blue), *Earth* (green), *Invisible God* (light grey), *Moon* (red) and *Sea* (dark blue). The first four are in the basic game; the last four are in the *Empires* expansion. We refer to Darkness, Earth and Moon as “she”, to the Invisible God, Sea, Sky and Storm as “he”, and to Chaos as “it”.

The aim of the game is have the most *victory points* (VPs). A major source of VPs is an empire’s *buildings*; to protect these and to remove other empires’ buildings needs *units* that represent *gods*, *heroes* and *minions*. To put buildings and units into play needs *Power* from many sources, including buildings. Power is also needed to *move* units and declare *battles*, which can each *kill* and *route* units and *conquer* or *destroy* a building. Empires also need to achieve *Heroquests* to gain *gifts* that offer VPs, Power, *runes* and *abilities*. Successful empires will work with and against other empires.

EMPIRES

Each empire is different. It has a unique *ability* (Chaos has two), a unique *weakness*, and its units, Heroquests and gifts are specific to it. Most building types and some units have an ability that is specific to their empire. For most unit types there is a gift that relates specifically to those units.

An empire’s abilities are thus a combination of its unique ability, the abilities of its earned gifts, and the abilities of those of its units and buildings that are in play. Abilities, weaknesses, gifts, buildings and units all have names, for example Earth’s *Quake* gift that allows her to rearrange her buildings.

THE WORLD OF GLORANTHA

The game board is the world of *Glorantha*. The main board is the *surface world* of *land areas*, including the floating island *Kylerela*, and *sea areas*. There are two *sideboards*: *Hell* and the *Sky Dome*; their areas connect to land areas at the surface world’s edges (separate connections to and from Hell). The number of areas on the main board and the sideboards varies with the player count.



In the centre of the world is a space that changes over the game. First it is a land area, the *Spike*, that connects to the Sky Dome. Later, the Spike shatters and is replaced by the *Chaos Rift*, which causes distress to all empires except Chaos. Later still, the Rift may be closed and replaced by *Magasta's Pool*, which connects some sea areas to Hell. The replacement spaces are not areas.

All units and buildings can occupy any area: land (including the Spike and Kylerela), sea, in Hell or on the Sky Dome, except that Darkness cannot build on the Spike or the Sky Dome. Any number of units, from any number of empires, can occupy an area, but there can be at most one non-Chaos building and one Chaos building in an area. Chaos gains Power when its buildings share areas.

GAME PLAY

The game consists of *rounds*, each with an *Action Phase*, a *Power Phase* and a *Council Phase*.

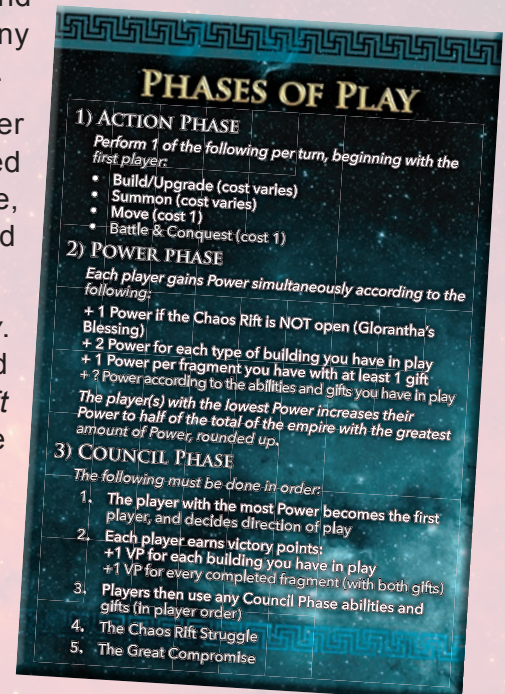
In the Action Phase, empires take single *action* turns in order until all empires' Power is spent. Most actions cost 1 or more Power. Actions include *summoning* a unit, *building* or *upgrading* a building, *moving* units, and *declaring a battle* that may result in *killing* and *routing* units and in the *conquest* or *destruction* of a building. Many abilities and gifts, such as Earth's Quake gift, allow new actions.

Empires get new Power in the Power Phase. Sources of Power include for each *type* of building in play, for having achieved Heroquests, and from various abilities. For the first Action Phase, all empires have 6 Power and, except for Chaos, have specified unit(s) and/or a building in play.

The Council Phase sets the *first player* and *direction of play*. Empires gain VPs for buildings, linked Heroquests achieved, and some abilities. If the Rift is open, empires use the *Chaos Rift Struggle* to try to close it; Chaos helps keep it open. Later in the game, the *Great Compromise* distributes VPs.

At many points, including from achieving some Heroquests and from various abilities, empires gain *runes* from a deck of 50 cards, all with different names and effects. Runes are played in the Action Phase of any empire's turn for the Power, VP(s), and/or other, often unique, effects that they offer.

The game ends when an empire reaches 35 VPs. Unused runes that offer VPs can be played, and any unplayed runes are then worth ½ VP. Finally, the player whose empire has the most VPs wins.



FURTHER DETAILS

EMPIRE INDIVIDUALITY

The final page of this summary describes each empire's unique ability and weakness and some of its other specific features; exceptions may be indicated but not detailed, shown here by using a word such as "usually". All are described in full on each empire's *Empire Sheet* and its gift cards.



HEROQUESTS AND GIFTS

An empire has six Heroquests to achieve (the Invisible God has eight), specific to that empire. Most require a condition to be met and are *achieved* when that first happens. Where possible, summoning each *greater god* and building its *Ziggurat* (strongest building) are among an Empire's Heroquests.

A Heroquest may offer an immediate reward of Power, VPs or runes when achieved. The empire then chooses one of its gifts to replace the Heroquest. An empire has a free choice of gift – except that one of Chaos' gifts, *Catastrophe*, is specific to its Heroquest *The Spike Shatters*.

Each gift may have an immediate effect, give an ongoing ability, allow a new kind of action, allow an effect before, during, or after battle, or may be used in the Power Phase or the Council Phase. Some gifts can only be used once and are then turned face down, still counting as achieved Heroquests. Sky and the Invisible God have some Heroquests that behave differently, achieved as actions.

An empire's Heroquests are grouped into pairs called *fragments*. In the Power Phase, each empire gains 1 Power

for each fragment that has either or both Heroquests achieved. In the Council Phase, each empire gains 1 VP for each fragment with both Heroquests achieved.

BUILDINGS

Most empires have three building types: six *Shrines*, three *Temples* and one *Ziggurat*. Darkness has an additional building type: one *Castle of Lead*. The Invisible God has only two building types: three *Castles* and three *Towers*. Chaos has only one building type: six *Chaos Nests*. Chaos can improve a Chaos Nest to an *Imbedded* Chaos Nest, but it remains one of only six buildings and of the same type. Buildings other than Shrines have abilities that are specific to the owning empire.

Only Shrines, (unimbedded) Chaos Nests, Castles and Towers can be built, for 1 Power each (2 Power for Castles and Towers). You do not need to have any units present, but the area must not have another building present – except that a Chaos Nest can coexist with a non-Chaos building.

Other buildings are created by *upgrading*, usually a Shrine to a Temple, for 2 Power, or a Temple to a Ziggurat, for 3 Power. The replaced building is returned to its empire's *pool* for reuse. Imbedded Chaos Nests, which are inverted, not replaced, and the Castle of Lead have their own rules; each requires a specific gift before being available as an upgrade. Castles and Towers do not upgrade.

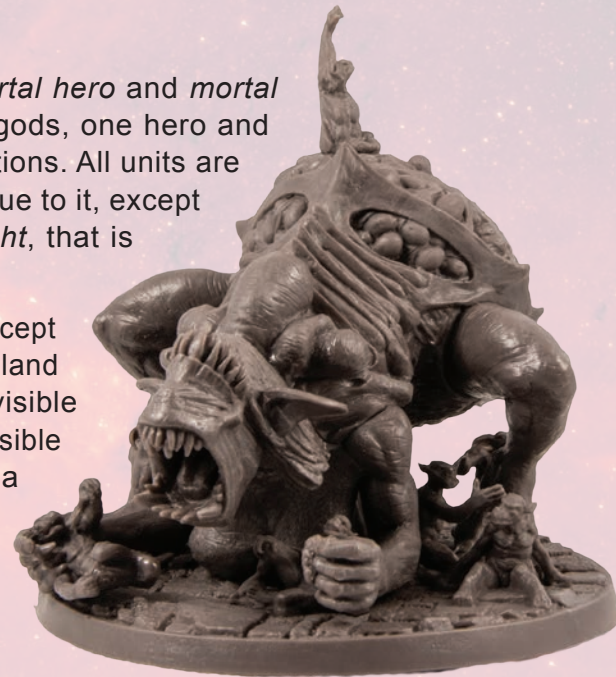
In the Power Phase each empire gains 2 Power for each building type in play; Chaos also gains 1 Power for each Nest that shares an area with another building, and 1 Power for each Imbedded Chaos Nest in play. In the Council Phase, each empire gains 1 VP for each building in play.



UNITS

There are four types of units: *greater god*, *lesser god*, *mortal hero* and *mortal minion*. Most empires have one greater god, three lesser gods, one hero and four minions; Chaos, Earth and the Invisible God are exceptions. All units are specific to their empire. Each greater god has an ability unique to it, except that Earth's two greater gods have the same ability, *Twilight*, that is actually a weakness.

Units must be *summoned* at one of their empire's buildings, except that Earth's gift *Ubiquitous* allows her to summon units to any land area. The cost is 1 Power for a minion (2 Power for the Invisible God's *Wizards*), 2 Power for a lesser god (3 Power for the Invisible God's *Specters*), 2 to 4 Power for a hero, or 4 Power for a greater god (2, 4 or 6 Power for Chaos' three greater gods). Each greater god (except Earth's and Chaos's *Malia*) has a condition that must be met before it can be summoned.



MOVEMENT

As an action usually costing 1 Power, an empire can *move* units from one area to one or more adjacent areas, or from one land area to another across a sea area using a *sea-crossing arrow*. With a unit or building on Kylerela, an empire can move it and can move units from it before and/or after that. To leave Hell, non-Darkness units need *permission* from a stronger unit in the same area, or later in the game can pay 1 VP; Storm's *Teleport* gift and some runes can also be used.

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BATTLES

As an action usually costing 1 Power, an empire can *declare battle* against another empire in an area. The attacker must have unit(s) present; the defender may have unit(s) and/or a building.

Battles can have four steps: a *pre-battle* step, a *battle* step, a *post-battle* step, and a possible *conquest* or *destruction* step. Various abilities and runes can only be used in one of these steps.

In the battle step, each empire rolls a number of *combat dice* equal to the total of its units' *combat ratings*. Minions have a rating of one (except for the Invisible God, Moon and using Earth's gift *Chastity*); other units have a rating of zero or more. All Empires have at least one unit whose rating varies with circumstances; in particular, Moon's units' ratings depend on the state of the *lunar cycle*.

Some pre-battle abilities can modify the number of dice rolled and have other effects, for example Storm's gift *Whirlwind* can add units (his lesser gods, *Storm Brothers*) and one die to the combat.

Dice rolls are simultaneous. Results using standard dice are that 6 is a *kill*, 4 or 5 is a *rout*, and 1, 2 or 3 is a *miss*. There are specialised *battle dice* that show these three results directly.

Buildings and abilities can modify results. A Temple adds one rout, a Ziggurat adds one kill; both are doubled for Sky. The Castle of Lead or an Imbedded Chaos Nest (the latter if not facing a greater god or a Ziggurat) adds one kill. A Castle or Tower adds one rout if facing any minions. An ability example is Sea's *Constrict* gift that can turn 2 routs into 1 kill per *Sea Serpent* (lesser god) present.

Each empire chooses which of its units suffers first kills and then routs, one kill or rout per unit (two for Darkness's lesser gods *Shades* using her gift *Spectral Form*). Killed units are returned to their empire's pools and can be summoned again (except Earth's and Sky's greater gods). The opposing empire chooses which single, usually adjacent, area all routed units are sent to; attacking units first.

If after a battle one of the two empires has at least one unit remaining, and the other empire has a building but no units, then the first empire must conquer or destroy the second empire's building.



A conquered building is replaced by a building of an identical type from the conquering empire's pool. Castles and Towers can be replaced by Temples, but not vice versa. A destroyed building is returned to its empire's pool, except that an Imbedded Chaos Nest is replaced by a Chaos Nest.

RUNES

A rune is played before or after an action or in a named battle step. Examples: *Magic!* Gain 2 Power. *Heat!* Gain 1 VP; then destroy an enemy's least expensive building. *Law!* Name any action. The next player to take that action loses 1 VP. *Behemoth!* Battle: turn all misses rolled in this battle into routs.

THE COUNCIL PHASE

After determining the first player (whose empire has the most Power, except Chaos, and who also chooses the direction of play), allocating VPs for buildings and fragments, and using any relevant abilities, the Council Phase may contain the *Chaos Rift Struggle* and/or the *Great Compromise*.

THE CHAOS RIFT STRUGGLE

The Chaos Rift Struggle occurs in each Council Phase in which the Chaos Rift is open. The Rift is opened when the Spike shatters, which happens when any empire reaches 10 or more VPs.

In the Struggle, each empire, except Chaos, must sacrifice a unit or building in play and put it into the Rift. Each empire must then sacrifice 1 to 6 points of Power. (Empires with fewer than 6 points of Power may sacrifice 0 Power.) The empire(s) sacrificing the least Power, even Chaos, lose 1 VP.

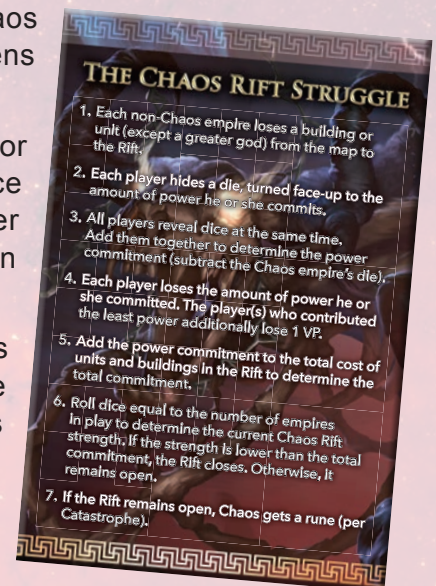
This round's sacrifices (only) are added to (except Chaos' sacrifice is subtracted from) the total cost of all units and buildings in the Rift, the latter increasing each round that the Rift is open. To close the Rift this total must exceed this round's Rift strength, the sum of one standard die per empire.

When the Rift is closed, all units and buildings in the Rift are returned to their empires' pools.

THE GREAT COMPROMISE

Once an empire has reached 20 VP, the Great Compromise occurs in each Council Phase.

Each player, in order, may choose to be the *Judge of the Great Compromise* until one accepts. The Judge spends half of his, her or its empire's Power, and receives 4 VP. The Judge allocates decreasing numbers of VPs, reaching negative VPs with six or more empires, to the other empires.



EMPIRE-SPECIFIC DETAILS

Some further details specific to each empire are given here; consult its Empire Sheet and gift cards for full details. The rulebook contains two pages for each empire on how to play it and against it.

CHAOS

Chaos gains Power for each Nest sharing an area with another building (unique ability *Festering*), and for each Imbedded Chaos Nest (their *Chaos Feature* ability). Its *Loathsome* weakness means that it is never first player and does not gain the 1 Power from *Glorantha's Blessing* that all other empires get when the Chaos Rift is not open. It has three greater gods: *Malia*, *Thed* and *Ragnaglar*, but otherwise just six minions (*Broos*). Its unique ability *Anarchy* increases Ragnaglar's combat rating for each killed unit, even when he is not in play. Only Chaos benefits from the Chaos Rift.

DARKNESS

Darkness' unique ability *Hellborn* allows her units to leave Hell at any time and move to any surface world area. Her weakness *Nocturnal* means that she cannot build buildings on the Spike or the Sky Dome. Her Castle of Lead offers runes and extra Power from a fourth building type. Two Heroquests are achieved by destroying a building or unit from all other empires; these are held until achievement.

SKY

Sky's greater god, *Yelm*, starts in Hell, and his unique ability *Nightfall* returns Yelm there if killed. His weakness *Optimist* means that he cannot declare battle in Hell. His two *Great Decree* Heroquests, achieved as actions, offer Power or a rune to other empires. This may persuade one of them to help Yelm leave Hell. His gift *Noblesse Oblige* allows him to use his Great Decrees each round. His gift *Solar Energy* gains him 3 Power if Yelm is on the surface world. His buildings are strongest in battle.

STORM

Storm's unique ability *Inferiority Complex* allows him to sacrifice 2 VP for 4 Power each round, and his greater god's ability *Kinship* gives his choice of 2 Power or 1 VP to another empire, he keeps the other. His weakness *Honor* means it costs him 2 Power to attack a 0 Power enemy. The ability *Fly* of his Temples and Ziggurat, and his gifts *Teleport* and *Whirlwind*, allow him improved movement.

EARTH

Earth has two greater gods, *Genert* and *Pamalt*, with weakness *Twilight* such that if they die that is permanent. She has seven lesser gods, *Earth Queens*, one for each other empire, their *spouses*. If a Queen with a spouse in the game is summoned then the spouse permanently owns the Queen

(weakness *Matrimony*); while such a Queen is in play Earth and her spouse each gain 1 Power (unique ability *Harmonious*). A Queen is summoned for free when Earth builds a Temple or a Ziggurat (ability *Earthtouch*). Earth's gift *Injunction* can eliminate a Queen each round for a rune.

INVISIBLE GOD

The Invisible God has unique buildings: *Castles* and *Towers*. His weakness *Ecumenicism* means they can be conquered, but he cannot conquer buildings. He has four each of two types of minion, *Knights* and *Wizards*; their combat ratings equal his numbers of Castles or Towers, respectively. His gift *Sturdy Peasantry* acts as an added Castle. He has four lesser gods, *Specters*, but no greater god or hero. He has four fragments; his gifts include three one use *Books* that can once be reset for one more use each. His unique ability *The Wizard Gate* connects all of his buildings for movement.

MOON

Moon's unique ability and weakness *Lunar Cycle* sets her units' combat ratings by the state of the lunar cycle (*Dying*, *Waxing* or *Waning Half*, or *Full*) that any empire can advance as an action costing 1 Power. Three of her Heroquests need a specific lunar cycle state in the Power Phase. Her gifts *Enslavement* and *Moonburn* can temporarily hold enemy units and buildings in off-map locations.

SEA

Sea's unique one use ability *Submerge* allows him to convert a normal land area into a sea area. His Temples and Ziggurat contribute to closing the Chaos Rift; once the Rift is closed his buildings only cost 1 Power to upgrade. His greater god (*Magasta*) cannot be summoned until after the Spike has shattered; *Magasta's* ability *The Mer-King* allows Sea to take multiple actions in a turn if they all originate in a sea area. Sea's weakness *Marine* means that he cannot use sea-crossing arrows.

