GURPS® Fourth Edition

INFINITE WORLDS™

WORLDS OF HORROR™



Written by KENNETH HITE
Edited by NIKOLA VRTIS
Illustrated by IGOR FIORENTINI

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Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the ***GURPS Basic Set,*** *Fourth Edition.* Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

Introduction

Let me tell you a secret. The real purpose of the Infinite Worlds is not, actually, to explore plausible theories of historical development. It's not even to facilitate hooking together your last six ***GURPS*** campaigns. No, the real purpose of the Infinite Worlds is this: If it makes a good story, there's a world out there for it. You never have to toss out a good story because "it just wouldn't fit into my campaign world." If you're in the Infinite Worlds, we'll find you a world where it fits. Or we'll help you build one. But first, you think up the story. Story first; world second.

Of course, if it's a good world, then there's more than one good story in it. And if it's an *evil* world – well, then, there are a whole host of very evil stories in it.

Hence ***Worlds of Horror.*** Here, we present worlds built around some very good evil stories – some of them famous, some of them even legendary. Worlds waiting for you to plant your own stories in them, to see what fruiting bodies will sprout.

About the Author

Kenneth Hite is the author of ***GURPS Horror*** for ***GURPS*** *Fourth Edition,* and the developer and co-author of ***GURPS Infinite Worlds.*** He isn't sure whether this title counts as the hellish spawn of their unholy union, or the blood-soaked arena where they fight to the death . . . *and beyond.*

He lives in Chicago, which is definitely the latter.

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If you wanted to live, you forted up with maybe a couple hundred people, tops – the infection seemed to follow bigger crowds – or kept on the move and hoped for the best. The next couple years were a little better, as most of the folks who could get the flu had already got it; all that killed us was gangs and walking dead and cold and hunger. Some of us had survived. It's not impossible that . . .

– pages discovered by Infinity Patrolman Ben Tseretse in a farmhouse outside Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Most – almost all – of this parallel is overrun by "plague platoons" and walking dead. But "almost all" isn't all. There are some remote islands where the disease never reached, places too far off the shipping lanes, or where paranoid local authorities cut off travel: New Caledonia, St. Helena, and American Samoa are the most significant examples. And two much less remote islands – Honshu and Shikoku, main islands of Japan – still remain plague-free. This safety comes at great cost: The islands are completely controlled by the Navy Medical Corps, and every Japanese citizen is watched by not just the Kempeitai but by his friends, neighbors, and employers. Anyone suspected of infection – or of concealing infection, or of interfering with counter-infection measures and ordinances – is shot and burned by the military. There is little dissent so far: Everyone remembers the horrific radio broadcasts from Kyushu when the plague hit Nagasaki in early 1920. Many stood on the beaches with sharpened bamboo spears and flaming balls of pitch keeping the infected away all summer until the seas grew too rough for invasion.

The entire Japanese economy produces weapons, food, and enough technology to keep the lights on and the wheels turning. The Navy raids other Japanese islands and some nearby coasts (including non-Japanese survivor colonies) for more supplies, although the attrition rate from infection and resistance is appalling. But they have little choice: the two surviving Home Islands must eat, and the factories must run, or the *shuten-doji,* the walking dead, will swarm over the shores and the Rising Sun will set forever.

Gotha-Z Zombies

Gotha-Z zombies come in two varieties, depending on the state of the virus' host. After contact with either variety, make a HT roll at -4 or be infected with the Gotha-Z virus (2d minutes delay, HT-4, 1d toxic damage, 24-hour interval, 28 cycles). Close combat with a Gotha-Z zombie adds -2 to that roll; being bitten by a Gotha-Z zombie adds -5!

Communities exposed to the virus (any community on a Gotha worldline unprotected by oceans, biohazard protocols, or mad science) risk outbreaks if they grow over a certain number, as the disease apparently flares based on group size. The GM should make a contagion roll once per month for such communities against an average of HT 10 (less for a community suffering famine or other blights), modified as on p. B443. Apply the modifiers generally: if the community fought off zombies during that month, that's +1 ("touched briefly") if it was a minor skirmish or -2 ("prolonged contact") if many in the community fought or died. Add a further -2 for the disease's virulence, and an additional -1 for every 100 people in the community over 1,000.

The Infected

The "infected" are living people suffering from the Gotha-Z virus; they present similarly to "normal" Gotha zombies (***Infinite Worlds,*** p. 128) with enhanced speed and reflexes, as their short-circuiting brains accelerate their metabolism. Bright light hurts their eyes (-5 to Vision) and feverish skin; the infected suffer 1d fatigue per 30 minutes exposure.

ST: 11	**HP:** 11	**Speed:** 6.25
DX: 11	**Will:** 8	**Move:** 9
IQ: 8	**Per:** 12	**Weight:** 125 lbs.
HT: 10	**FP:** 10	**SM:** 0
Dodge: 9	**Parry:** 9	**DR:** 0

Axe (10): 1d+3 cut; Reach 1.
Bite (12): 1d cr.

Traits: Bad Smell; Bad Temper (6); Berserk (6) (Battle Rage); Bestial; Bloodlust (6); Delusion (Chosen by death); Ham-Fisted 2; High Pain Threshold; Less Sleep 4; Night Vision 5; Striking ST 4 (Bite only); Temperature Tolerance 3 (5°F to 90°F); Unfazeable; Weakness (Bright Light; 1d/30 minutes; Fatigue Only).
Skills: Axe/Mace-10; Brawling-12; Forced Entry-13; Guns-7.

The Living Dead

The "living dead" are those victims of the Gotha-Z virus who have died and "come back." This mutation of the Gotha virus somehow triggers nervous and muscular activity in tissue that has been dead for as long as a year. This takes a considerable toll on the host's cerebro-nervous system, so they continually seek more living brains to replenish their own energies. Naturally, they do not have the speed or cognitive faculties of a living organism. They no longer suffer exceptionally from bright light or daylight.

ST: 11	**HP:** 16	**Speed:** 4.00
DX: 10	**Will:** 8	**Move:** 3
IQ: 8	**Per:** 8	**Weight:** 125 lbs.
HT: 10	**FP:** N/A	**SM:** 0
Dodge: 7	**Parry:** 8	**DR:** 0

Bite (10): 1d cr.

Traits: Automaton; Disturbing Voice; Doesn't Sleep; Infectious Attack; Rotting Undead (***Horror,*** p. 27); Single-Minded; Striking ST 4 (Bite only); Uncontrollable Appetite (6) (Human Brains); Unfazeable; Unhealing (Total).
Skills: Brawling-10.

The Secret History of the Cold War

Stalin had long known that there was no God. It wasn't, however, until he correlated some of the wilder tales from his Georgian hill-country home with the results of the 1927 Tunguska expedition and the secret diaries of Rasputin that he knew that there were, nonetheless, gods. Gods who offered great power to those who signed their name "in the book of Azathoth." All it required was cruelty and will – and Stalin had those in abundance.

A secret directorate (the "Ultraviolet Directorate" *Upravlenie Ultravioletovie,* or UPUL) of the OGPU fanned out across the Soviet empire, looting libraries and museums, torturing Siberian shamans and elderly monks, stealing what they could from foreigners, always looking for hints of the elder mythology that now obsessed their steel tsar. In the aftermath of World War II, this trickle of data became a flood, as the Ahnenerbe archives of Nazi occult research fell into Soviet hands along with Berlin. Stalin now knew the Names to call on when the stars were right, the places of power where They scrabbled at the edge of space, the truth that mankind was, just as Marx had promised, the puppet of vast, impersonal forces. And he knew how to bend those forces to his implacable will.

Truman might have stopped him, but Alger Hiss painted a certain hexagram in the Oval Office that killed the Cold Warrior. Stalin gladly offended Mao by holding Sinkiang and adding Tibet to his prizes in the confusion of 1949. With the invasion of Afghanistan in 1951, he completed his conquest of the earthly gates to Leng; in 1957, the Vostok Antarctic colony secured the approaches to Kadath in the Cold Waste. Egypt, older than human history, fell to Nasser, who built his "United Arab Republic" in Cairo, Damascus, and Sana'a – cities where Alhazred studied – on Soviet rockets and bayonets.

A hundred doors slowly crack open, all across the Soviet sphere. Surgeons captured in Treblinka probe the brains of political prisoners and Red Army volunteers, seeking the gateways in pineal space. Armies of slaves work gulag mines to supply the fungoid, alien *Yughotiy* with rare Siberian minerals. Thousands die in screaming agonies to placate Nyarlathotep. Antarctic explorers dig up Elder technologies; physicists in isolated Siberian laboratories go mad trying to utilize them. Certain inquisitive strangers with unlikely knowledge of the past and future answer insistent questions in their turn in the Lubyanka basement. Over them all, Stalin's will drives forward. The New Soviet Man will be the next Great Race on Earth. It will be the only Great Race.

Magic on Taft-1

The "magic" on this worldline is not magic, even as the Cabal or the Sheldrake Section know it. It is, rather, the hypergeometrical manipulation of extradimensional forces: TL12^ superscience, with no technological infrastructure. It does not depend on mana, does not register with Detect (Magic), and cannot be countered or blocked by anti-magical effects or spells. Psionic races find "magic" easier, but even an anti-psi shield will only weaken their efforts; it has no effect against (for example) a non-psionic human shaper of Azathoth-force.

All that said, from a rules perspective, it is essentially a Cosmic version of Path/Book magic (***Thaumatology,*** Chapter 5). The core skill is Ritual Magic (Azathothic), and the individual skills are the various Books – the *Necronomicon,* the Pnakotic Manuscripts, and so forth – containing psychic interface methods, memetic programs, and abstract mathematical expressions: which is to say, spells and lore. Ritual Magic (Azathothic) defaults not only to Religious Ritual (Azathothic)-6, but to Mathematics (Pure)-6. The GM can choose whether to model it with Effect Shaping (***Thaumatology,*** p. 122) or Energy Accumulating (***Thaumatology,*** pp. 134-137) – perhaps some rituals work one way, and others work differently. Beings with racial Talents for psionic powers get +1 to rituals per level of Talent; psis who belong to non-psionic races receive only half this bonus (round down). It does not require Magery (Path/Book), but the GM can decide to enforce a 20-point Unusual Background for (human) practitioners. "Signers of the Book of Azathoth" can get a break on that cost by taking extreme mental disadvantages, from Sadism to Killjoy – serving Things Man Was Not Meant To Know rapidly corrodes one's humanity.

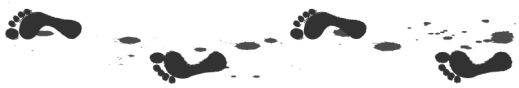
Outworld Operations

With little potential for either trade or tourism – Taft-1's resource crisis is beginning on schedule, and there's no market in Cold War paranoia tours – this worldline is something of a backwater for the Patrol. If Taft-1 weren't on Quantum 6, and thus potentially vulnerable to Centrum infiltration, there would likely be no Patrol station here at all. So far, Infinity has uncovered no sign of Centrum activity on this worldline; even they would probably draw the line at assisting Stalin in global conquest. Homeline Russia's FSB cooperates with the occasional Patrol insertion into the Soviet bloc, but moving outworld agents around in a paranoid totalitarian police state remains difficult. The main Patrol station on this line is thus in neutral Berlin, with a secondary Patrol station in Boston run by the Homeline CIA.

Someone higher up in Infinity does want the Patrol to check this worldline for "Taft radiation" as detected in Taft-3, Taft-4, and Taft-7; the station team thinks this is a fatuous assignment, even for the desk jockeys Outstairs. But orders are orders, so the Intelligence and Survey Divisions argue in desultory fashion about whether to infiltrate the local space programs or just insert a "UFO" satellite straight from Homeline. Bureaucracy being what it is, the Patrol pursues both plans in a halting and inefficient manner, subject to delays, retaskings, and budget cuts.

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