

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

INFINITE WORLDS

WORLDS OF HORROR™



Written by KENNETH HITE

Edited by NIKOLA VRTIS

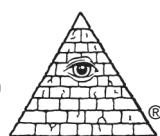
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Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

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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CHAPTER ONE

DUZAKH

The first Scouts on this worldline named it in Farsi, after the Zoroastrian Hell. This was understandable, since they showed up during the Persian Army's retreat from Etruscan-occupied Greece. That, by all accounts, was Hell – a few hundred unkillable warriors chewed up the King of Kings' finest in the narrow pass at Thermopylae, littering the seas and hills with exsanguinated corpses. Still worse was the long march home. Every morning, fewer Persians would awaken and find their comrades dead, throats torn out and blood spattering

the tents . . . or they would never find them at all, and know that their voices would call out the next night, in agonized laughter and ecstatic torment. The generals panicked and abandoned their ally Macedon – and much of their own army – to grinding siege, slow torture, and the inevitable sanguinary embrace of Etruria's vampire lords. The Emperor Kurush III crucified the cowards, but he now faces the Etruscans across the thin Hellespont, waiting for the inevitable counter-blow.

LORDS OF HELL

On Homeline, some of the mysteries of the Etruscans (*Rasna*, in their own tongue) have been resolved by parallel worlds' archives and archaeologists: They were Anatolians and Thracians displaced by the Scythians and Cimmerians, winding up in northern Italy after migrating up the Danube. But on Homeline, they didn't become vampires along the way. (Although they *did* bury their noble dead in very luxurious – but *very* secure – tombs . . .) On Homeline, the Etruscans dominated the Latin hilltown of Rome for its first two centuries, but lost it to a local revolt. On this parallel, they choked the rebellion on its own blood, and the vampire lord Tarchna (better known as Tarquinius Superbus on Homeline) moved on to put the whole Campanian plain under Rasenna, the Etruscan league of cities.

That left the Etruscan cities and the Greek colonies the two remaining powers in Italy. Provocations became skirmishes, which became war, which became blood and destruction. Syracuse, the last Greek city in the West to hold out, fell in 413 B.C. By that time, the Rasna had vampirized the lords of Epirus and Thessaly, and were pressing into Greece itself. Weakened by 20 years of internecine warfare, Athens and Sparta put aside their differences and joined forces, holding the vampires and their ghoul soldiers back for over a decade. But the Greek cities fell just as the Latins had; Athens and Thebes burned to the ground, while Sparta fell to trickery and subversion. King Pausanias, it turned out, was willing to accept vampirization to keep his power.

Duzakh, 304 B.C.

Current Affairs

The Persian Empire, having failed to liberate Greece from its Etruscan vampire overlords, faces an onslaught of the evil undead.

Divergence Point

Either about 850 B.C., when the Etruscan priesthood became vampirized, or 509 B.C., when the vampire king Tarquinius Superbus put down the Roman revolt in a welter of blood, leaving Rome subject to an expanding, vampire-dominated Etruscan league.

Major Civilizations

Iranic (empire with satellite states), Etruscan (diffuse empire), Indic (empire with rivals), Chinese (multipolar), Punic (empire with satellite states).

Great Powers

Persian Empire (feudal dictatorship, CR3), Rasenna (caste-based oligarchy, CR1 for vampires, CR3 for warriors, CR6 for helots), Maurya Empire (caste-based dictatorship, CR3), Carthage (oligarchy, CR2).

Worldline Data

TL: 2 (with TL3 windmills, steel)

Quantum: 5

Centrum Zone: Inaccessible

Mana Level: normal

Infinity Class: Z4

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His rival Lysander led the Twenty Thousand (from all over Greece) into exile in Persia, where he helped Kurush II defeat his brother Ardeshir to become King of Kings. Meanwhile, the Rasna turned the Peloponnese into a new stronghold, where the vampirized Spartan lords (and Spartanized vampire lords) hunted their helots for food and sport.

This new warrior caste, the *hinthuspartoi*, reshaped Rasna politics and society. Previously, the priests of Charu and Vanth, winged and bloodthirsty guardians of the afterlife, had monopolized rule and wealth in Rasenna. Provided with an independent power base and Spartan military expertise (imbibed or bribed), the *hinthuspartoi* could challenge the priesthood for dominance. As the vampire lords across Rasenna Spartanized, they helotized their peasants in Italy, Dalmatia, Sicily, and

Thessaly, triggering desperate revolts, which in turn accelerated the rise of the warrior caste. This internal struggle lasted for four human generations, long enough for the Macedonian kings to rid their shores and borders of blood-drinking influence and make an alliance with Persia. This turned out to be unwise; the Persian-Macedonian liberation of Greece became a debacle of disunified command and political backbiting. On the Rasna side, the Persian attack unified the vampire lords, who chewed the King of Kings' forces to bits at Thermopylae and bled the survivors white on their chaotic retreat to Asia. Now, Rasenna digests its Macedonian conquest, and looks hungrily across the Hellespont at the only human power capable of resisting them: holy Persia, sacred empire of Ahura Mazda, Lord of Light.

Hinthuspetu

The “dead who drink” have ruled the Etruscan cities for centuries as undead priest-lords. They resemble normal men with ruddy complexions, save for their glowing eyes. They turn into birds, not bats or wolves. Only *direct* sunlight harms them; they can wear hooded cloaks by day, or normal garments on cloudy days. Otherwise, they can be killed only by fire or beheading.

ST: 18	HP: 22	Speed: 7.25
DX: 16	Will: 10	Move: 7
IQ: 10	Per: 13	Weight: 150 lbs.
HT: 13	FP: N/A	SM: 0
Dodge: 11	Parry: 13	DR: 1

Bite (19 or 16): 1d+2 cut (1d+1 cut for priest caste); drains 2 HP/second, which the *hinthuspetu* can use to heal itself.

Broadsword (18): 3d+1 cut or 1d+3 cr; this is the average weapon skill of a warrior-caste vampire, the so-called *hinthuspartoi*. Priest-caste vampires use swords at default to DX-1 or DX level.

Traits: Alternate Forms (Owl, Crow); Clinging; Combat Reflexes; Danger Sense; Dark Vision; Divine Curse (Cannot enter dwelling unless invited); Doesn't Breathe; Dominance; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Injury Tolerance (Unliving); Magery 1; Regeneration (Regular); Sadism (12); Speak With Animals (Birds); Silence 4; Supernatural Durability (Killed by fire); Supernatural Features (Glowing Eyes; No Body Heat; No Reflection); Temperature Tolerance 6 (-43°F to 90°F); Unaging; Uncontrollable Appetite (12) (Human Blood); Vulnerability (Beheading Attacks x2); Weakness (Direct Sunlight; 1d/minute).

Skills (Warrior Caste): Brawling-19; Broadsword-18; Intimidation-15; Spear Throwing-17; Wrestling-17.

Skills (Priest Caste): Brawling-16; Enthrallment (all)-18; Knife-16; Penetrating Weapon (*Magic*, p. 63)-18; Religious Ritual (Etruscan)-16; Theology (Etruscan)-16; Weaken Blood (*Magic*, p. 40)-18; Winged Knife (*Magic*, p. 145)-18. A priest-vampire usually has a further clutch of horrible spells, the product of decades of sadistic planning.

OUTWORLD OPERATIONS

The Patrol's biggest hurdle in operations on Duzakh is not the vampires. It's the increasingly thorough (not to say paranoid) precautions the King of Kings is taking against vampiric infiltration into his domains. The Eyes of Kurush fan out from Ionia to the Indus, watching for suspicious magic or strangers who seem to appear out of nowhere. The Magi, fire-working sorcerer-priests of Ahura Mazda, have their own networks in village temples and pious pilgrim caravans – and magic of their own to shine Light into mysterious happenings across the Persian Empire.

The Patrol thus maintains its main staging grounds at Bharukaccha, a cosmopolitan trading city on the west coast of India, currently under the aggressive and expansionist Maurya dynasty. Morale Division and White Star have their

hands full keeping the Maurya from trying to peel off Persia's Indian satrapies – a war in the east would guarantee a rapid Etruscan invasion in the west. On the other side of the map, Infinity is weighing the merits of a palace coup in Carthage to bring the Barcids to power a few generations early and trigger a distracting Punic War against Rasenna, probably tied to a mass helot uprising. In the west, the Patrol uses a White Star amber-trading house in Massilia (Homeline Marseilles) as cover and base, rather than infiltrate Carthage directly. After all, the Carthaginian priesthoods of Moloch and Tanith have magics even more subtle than those of the Persian Magi – with the added edge that some of their more depraved members have begun investigating vampirism for their own dark purposes.

CAMPAIGNING IN DUZAKH

Each of these campaign setups illustrates one of the narrative structures from **Horror** (pp. 100-101) as it might play out in Duzakh.

Out of Egypt (Escape)

The satrapy of Egypt rests uneasy in the hands of the King of Kings. Its gods know the ways of the dead better than the upstart Ahura Mazda; its priests resent the parvenu Magi who believe they have a monopoly on cosmic truths. The valley of the Nile roils with conspiracies to restore one or another true Pharaoh, or to elevate the cults of one or another half-suppressed god. Memphis, Thebes, and Sais crawl with Rasna vampires (likely already infiltrating the cult of Nekhbet the vulture-goddess); Carthaginian necromancers; and Lion Society assassins from Meroë in the Sudan. Adventurers in this conspiracy-horror-fantasy campaign are targets of one or more of these factions – chosen by prophecy, or bloodline, or the bad luck of stealing the wrong parchment at the wrong time. They must play all sides against each other, trying to free themselves, or Egypt, or both.

Whosoever throws any clothing on a dead body, even so much as a maid lets fall in spinning, is not a pious man whilst alive, nor shall he, when dead, have a place in Paradise.

He makes himself a provision unto the world of the wicked, into that world, made of darkness, the offspring of darkness, which is Darkness' self. To that world, to the world of Hell, you are delivered by your own doings . . .

– *Avesta, Vendidad: Fargard 7: 21-22*

Dulkharnein Has Risen From His Grave (Nemesis)

After the Persians retreated from Macedon, the Rasna slaughtered the entire family of Persia's ally, King Philip II. But Philip's first wife, Olympias of Epirus, was not so easy to kill. An accomplished serpent-mage, she eluded their huntsmen and retreated to the mountain valleys of her home with but one objective: to resurrect her son, the Crown Prince Alexander. Indeed, word has begun to filter out of the Epirote and Molossian highlands of a new demigod, an undying killer who

cannot be defeated in battle: Dulkharnein, the Two-Horned One. His goals are those of his mother and resurrector – revenge on the Rasna who killed him, and on the Persians who betrayed him. His cult spreads, his army assembles, and sooner or later, the heroes must face an Alexander grown great on dark magic and serpent cunning.

The Blood-Dark Sea (Picaresque)

Just because vampires rule half the world doesn't mean trade has to stop. Certainly cowards believe thus, but that just leaves bigger profits for bold sailors. The merchant guild in Tyre offers very reasonable profit sharing on any voyage into the Mediterranean; just ask any of the survivors. Silver from Spain, oil from Greece, sulfur from Sicily, amber from the North, horses from Carthage: all find ready markets should a brave ship return so laden from the dark western shores. If enterprising merchants stumble across cannibal Laestrygones (*Legendary Cannibals, Horror*, p. 84), sea-dragons, or even harpies (maddened, senile *hinthuspetu* permanently wearing wings or avian form) or sirens (*Horror*, p. 155), they can be sure the King of Kings' Magi will also pay well for samples and specimens.

Chariot of the God (Quest)

The Magi have seen it in a dream, and read it in the stars: the death of all vampires lies to the north and west. In consultation with refugee priests of Ashavahista-Apollo, in the study of certain scrolls carried away from the desecrated Temple of Delos, the Magi have divined its form. Long ago, Phaëton, son of the god, crashed the chariot of the Sun into the mysterious River Eridanus, somewhere across the mountains to the northwest. Where it struck, there must be some powerful fragment remaining – the frozen sunlight called amber, carried down the rivers from the North, proves it. Even a single axle pin or cross-brace of the Sun's chariot could hold enough divine power to destroy all evil things of Earth.

The priests of Apollo suggest a desperate gambit: a picked detachment must steal into the sacred Cave of Apollo at Delphi, in the heart of Rasna-occupied Greece, and beseech the god for a vision or other sure guidance to the place his chariot crashed. From there, they must travel north and west through whatever peril awaits to recover any relic they can. Even if they can escape vampire-enslaved Greece, the bold heroes must cross mountains full of violent centaurs, deadly griffins, and crazed satyrs (*Shaggy Ones, Horror*, p. 69). They must penetrate the dark land of Dacia where the Rasna embraced their vampiric destiny, and finally try conclusions with the lycanthropic Neuri who guard the approaches to Apollo's lands in the North.

If an outtimer comes across (or participates in!) this desperate mission, a successful test of Astronomy or Geology (at -4), or of a suitable Area Knowledge, recalls the Morasko meteorite impact site in Homeline's western Poland – where *something* hit the Warta river valley around 3000 B.C. Even if it's not the chariot of Apollo, several hundred pounds of meteoric iron may turn out to be a very suitable vampire-killer. And if it *is* the wreckage of Apollo's chariot . . . then the Cabal has likely had its own vision, or read the same stars, and has its own recovery expedition heading there already.

CHAPTER TWO

GOTHA-Z

On Homeline, the “Spanish Flu” killed over 60 million people between 1918 and 1920 – more than three times the death toll of the just-ended First World War – leaving ramshackle coffins stacked in cemeteries from San Francisco to Shanghai. On 19 other parallels (*Infinite Worlds*, p. 128), the “Gotha virus” has destroyed civilization, breaking down cities and

nations into tiny survivalist communes. On Gotha-Z, those two strains blended with something else . . . something unknown. The “Gotha-Z virus” (GZV-A, to Homeline epidemiologists) not only drives the living to madness and fills graveyards to overflowing – it empties the graveyards out again, as the dead rise and stalk the living everywhere.

GHOSTS OF SOCIETY

Things didn't start getting really bad until the end of that first summer. Us Yanks had just started to really make our presence felt in the War, and the Russians had just started to really kill each other off in earnest. But everyone knew the Germans were on the ropes, even the Germans. The “first flu,” or “phony flu” panicked everyone for a while – seemed like it made headlines for a month straight in March – but only a couple thousand people died in the ports and forts. The Army segregated the worst cases, and everyone

breathed a sigh of relief. By summertime, the flu was gone, or mostly gone; only a few old folks and kids were still catching it.

Then the second wave hit, and it was bad. You'd cough your lungs out while you puked your guts out, and lie in the street too weak to move. People started dying in carload lots. Military medicos in gas masks piled bodies in pyramids and burned them in the parks and streets. Gangs started showing up, and “plague platoons,” and “revivals,” all of them rabid and choking and spitting, and all of them talking – or muttering, or screaming – about Satan and the “Bite of the Great Beast” and death and Mars. They'd shriek and howl and kill anyone they saw; first with guns, and then with whatever they had to hand, and then with their hands . . . and teeth. The Army couldn't do anything – most of them were in Europe, and it was worse in Europe. Every unit they brought up seemed to fall apart, full of plague and hatred, and it would start killing until it couldn't kill any more.

The plague and the gangs knocked the War clean out of the papers – wasn't much War to write about, since the krauts had it just as bad – and then the papers stopped coming. There was a week or so – maybe in October – when you heard talk about a “secret weapon” and you didn't know if it was to beat the flu or to beat the Hun. And then the flu dead started getting up, in little towns where they hadn't had the bonfires, and started walking around and making more dead, who also walked around. Then the folks we'd buried that spring dug their way out of the dirt, and that's when the cities went, pretty much. We heard the trenches were full of woken dead, crawled out of shell-holes and mud and the great graveyards that stretched all up and down Europe.

The big cities were wastelands already, and the last cities burned that winter: Duluth, Denver, Portland. Plague platoons of infected were bad; stumbling hordes of corpses were worse. Famine followed the plague that winter: no surviving farmer would risk traveling to sell his crops, and you couldn't build up enough strength to go there and take 'em, not with half your men suddenly choking and barking about the “Devil's Paw” and such. The next year, the people that went hungriest caught the flu easiest, and the whole thing started up again, wearing us down from states to counties to less than nothing.

Gotha-Z, 1922

Current Affairs

Small nests of survivors (and a besieged Japan) battle hordes of zombies unleashed by a parochronic mutation of the 1918 influenza virus.

Divergence Point

1918; contact with the Gotha virus mutates the “Spanish flu” into a zombie plague, and global civilization collapses.

Major Civilizations

Japanese (unitary); survivor colonies scattered among Western, Islamic, Indic, Orthodox, and Chinese civilizations (all diffuse).

Great Powers

Japanese Empire (dictatorship, CR6). The average survivor colony is CR5.

Worldline Data

TL: 6 (Japan and pre-plague baseline; survivors are TL2-3, mad-scientist strongholds are TL6[^])

Mana Level: low

Quantum: 7

Infinity Class: Z3

Centrum Zone: Red

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.

AND STILL I CHEAT THE GALLOWS

Outside Japan, the largest uninfected populations are those maintained by unorthodox, even wildly revolutionary, technological methods.

Anglesey Island, Wales: Lord Ashleigh (an experimental physicist who styles himself Protector of Britain) and Dr. Sanford Quest (his one-time scientific rival) have – for the most part – put their enmity aside to build a highly charged electrical screen that fries anyone or anything approaching within a mile of the island. Colliers fitted with counter-screens salvage coal from the Welsh mainland to keep the screen (and the island) running.

Bolton, Mississippi: Dr. Herbert West – an expert biologist who served as a medic in Europe with the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps – has returned to his native America. Using electrodes and chemical control systems, he commands several hundred living dead, who defend his laboratory (in the abandoned Bolton State Asylum) and the surrounding population against their fellows . . . for now.

Crimea: Vladimir I. Persikov, formerly of the Moscow Zoological Institute, uses specific wavelengths of infrared light to breed gigantic, aggressive reptiles and amphibians. The People's Crimean Soviet relies on them to keep the infected and the walking dead at bay.

Dangar Island, Australia: This forested island in the middle of the Hawkesbury River is the heart of Dr. Joseph Londe's small empire. A surgeon during the Great War (where he may have met Dr. Herbert West), he returned to Australia just ahead of the plague. He performs unorthodox brain surgeries on the infected (both living and dead) in an attempt to grow artificial brain tissue immune to the virus – and to control the infected in the meantime.

Sjælland, Denmark: For whatever reason, Denmark had a very low infection rate, and a coup d'état in 1918 managed to close Copenhagen and seize the ferries to mainland Europe and Scandinavia before things utterly collapsed. Following a series of purges and mass executions, Dr. Jakob ten Brinken, a German geneticist, works to artificially breed an anti-virus. In the meantime, he constructs vegetable-matter *alaunen* ("mandrakes") immune to the plague to serve as guards and workers.

Yunnan Plateau, China: This is the base of the airship fleet of Prince Shan Wu Ling, one of the many warlords who sought to control China after the fall of the Manchu in 1912. Scion of an ancient line, he studied aeronautical design at Oxford and invented improved motors and propellers, among other breakthroughs. His airships raid all across China, rescuing survivors (after brutal culling and disinfection) and transferring them to mines, factories, and fields in Yunnan.

OUTWORLD OPERATIONS

If it were up to Homeline's Japanese government, the Secret would be out, on this world at least. It's not up to them, not yet. Homeline Japan lobbies for a major, overt aid effort to keep Gotha-Z's Japan alive, offering to fund the entire operation and base the ongoing research effort out of the two Japans. So far, Infinity holds that proposal off, burying it in committees and tying it up in red tape. So far, Homeline Japan hasn't pulled the trigger unilaterally – Japan could easily build its own parachronic technology by this point, if it came to that. As a compromise that satisfies nobody, Homeline Japan uses UNIC and Infinity licenses to mount its own "covert support mission," Project ZK-GO, run by its Ministry of Parachronics and the JDF.

Japanese aquabusiness *keiretsu* ranch whales and large food fish on Akatsuki (an empty Quantum 7 worldline that diverged with the extinction of hominids in the early Pleistocene) and herd them through conveyors into Gotha-Z's North Pacific Ocean, as a way of providing more food for besieged Japan; Homeline Japanese Navy craft sail into Gotha-Z to "escort" the fish and clear out dangerous zombie colonies where they can do so unnoticed. The Patrol accuses them of doing more than that – according to some reports, ZK-GO has agents infiltrating the Gotha-Z Home Islands despite the danger of discovery by the rightly alert and paranoid locals. There are even rumors in the Pile that the Homeline Japanese government has opened a covert back-channel to Dr. Kitsura, the *de facto* medical dictator of Gotha-Z's Japan.

The Patrol has other headaches on Gotha-Z. Almost every expedition to that parallel, whether of Miracle Workers or meteorologists, winds up trying to rescue someone – someone who, often as not, is already infected with a low-grade version of the Gotha-Z virus, and can thus under no circumstances be

allowed to exhale into Homeline air. Worse, the Patrol has thwarted attempts by three separate multinational pharmaceutical companies, a bioterrorism ring, and the Uzbek government to acquire samples of GZV-A for themselves. In addition to its manifest virtues as a mass murder agent, the virus (or, technically, the intra-viral package piggybacking on the H1N1 virus) could unlock any number of radical improvements in disease treatment . . . or in disease creation.

The Patrol also has to guard the large, and by necessity geographically dispersed, teams from Miracle Workers, Infinity, and major universities studying the disease, its spread, and (hopefully) its containment and cure. Such missions, again by necessity, involve constant contact – and hence constant combat – with the infected and the living dead, made no easier by well-meaning civilian interference and soft-hearted rules of engagement. Missions on Gotha-Z tend to disintegrate more rapidly into shouting matches and poor impulse control than on other lines. Whether this is simply the predictable result of high stress, or the pernicious effects of the virus on human cooperation patterns, nobody knows for sure.

FLOATING PERIL

All this Infinity activity is more than just altruism and charity – more than just scientific curiosity or medical research. Until local November of 1918, Infinity called this parallel Oppenheim: It was a close "myth parallel" featuring a number of characters from British adventure fiction – Kipling's "Soldiers Three" and Kim; John Buchan's Richard Hannay; and several protagonists from the suspense novels of E. Phillips Oppenheim (from whence its name derived).

Over the six years following its opening by Infinity in 2029, it attracted brisk tourism from Homeline, as many Edwardian lines tend to; White Star found any number of autochronous patents there (by Oppenheim's unusually insightful native inventors) that it could re-sell on other TL6 lines at a tidy profit. Perhaps such considerations weighted the scales when Infinity allowed Miracle Workers to try a major research and containment program to combat Oppenheim's upcoming flu outbreak, as foretold in Homeline history. Such an effort, Miracle Workers maintained, would not only provide valuable historical data about Homeline's own epidemiology, but be an excellent "dress rehearsal" for other massive public health programs on other lines. While Miracle Workers was unable to completely contain the disease, their interventions in the first half of 1918 lessened Oppenheim's mortality by over two-thirds of the Homeline base. Then disaster struck.

Nobody knows just how the Gotha virus made it to Oppenheim. Was it accidentally spread by a sloppy Miracle

Worker or Patrolman? Did some unknown terrorist or criminal release it? Or did it spread in the same unknown fashion that enabled it to infect other parallels? And how, exactly, did GZV-A switch "hosts" from the pneumonic plague bacterium *Yersinia pestis* to the H1N1 strain of influenza A? A virus that can jump from "colonizing" a bacterium to "collaborating" with another virus almost has to be unnatural: who, or what, designed it to do that? Finding out is critical – not least because an unknown number of tourists, Miracle Workers, or Patrolmen may have spread dormant GZV-A all across the continuum before they knew it was there to spread. Once the Patrol confirmed the first panicked reports of zombies on Oppenheim, they changed its name, slapped the "Closed" classification on it, and set up a strict quarantine-and-disinfect regime. But nobody knows if such measures worked this time – and everybody knows of times they haven't worked. So far, the other worlds seem to be free of zombie plagues . . . but for how long?

CAMPAINING IN GOTHA-Z

Model the constant tension and personality abrasion in this worldline by lowering self-control numbers for the relevant disadvantages – Bad Temper, Bloodlust, Bully, Cowardice, Sadism, and Selfish – and applying -2 to reaction rolls, especially for Intolerance.

Each of these story arcs illustrates one or more of the narrative structures from **Horror** (pp. 100-101) as they might play out in Gotha-Z.

Dark Water (Escape)

Each of the heroes has something anyone in the world would kill for: total immunity to the Gotha-Z virus. All of them awaken in the secure wing of the Imperial University Hospital in Tokyo after who knows how many tests, lumbar punctures, and biopsies . . . in total darkness. A power outage has briefly diverted security – this is the chance to get out. But where? While in Japan, the horror is that of surveillance, medical paranoia (what, exactly, was in all those injections?), and isolation. By escaping the Home Islands, to devastated Kyushu or the mainland, the horror becomes survival horror pure and simple – just because the heroes can't get the virus doesn't mean they can't get eaten.

Gotha Mary (Nemesis/Picaresque)

She is Katrin Sverskaya: brilliant biogeneticist, biological warfare consultant to the Russian FSB, cross-trained with Spetsnaz and Infinity Patrol, and the most likely suspect in the theft of GZV-A samples from a Miracle Workers site in Stanleyville, Belgian Congo, reported destroyed by zombie attack. Oh, and she's stolen an illicit subquantum conveyor from the Yugorovsky Group (**Infinite Worlds**, p. 40).

The heroes are Team Zulu: an elite team of zombie-killers assembled from every reality that Infinity can reach. Their mission? Follow Katrin Sverskaya from worldline to worldline, killing everyone she infects, without endangering the Secret. When the group catches up with her, they must secure her GZV-A samples and recover her for questioning by the Patrol. They may have to return to Gotha-Z to find any traces she may have left in the Congo or elsewhere . . . or she may lead them back there for some purpose of her own.

Not Dead Yet (Picaresque)

Let the players pick anywhere in the world. Their characters are the Committee of Safety, the local warlords, the town council: the people in charge of keeping that spot on the map alive. The players can build any of their hundreds of fellow-survivors as cannon fodder, replacement PCs, mission specialists, or anything else; the GM can build others as latent infection vectors, troublemakers, or romantic interests. All around them are the plague platoons, the walking dead, and desperate survivors whose numbers might tip the town into madness. Mad scientists or other warlords might raid, setting up skirmish scenarios. Or strangers might arrive with news, or offers of help (in exchange for "a few good men to help me rescue Amy"), or mad scientific plans. The heroes may need to take steps to improve nutrition, crop yields, or general health for their town – raiding or salvaging food, finding agronomy texts, building up medical stores – because every month, there's that next contagion roll to survive (see box, p. 7).

Catalina Dreaming (Gauntlet/Quest)

A not-quite-fully-authorized team of Miracle Workers has set up a high-intensity experimental research station on Catalina Island off the southern coast of California. After hearing reports of a mutant strain of the virus breaking out in Maine, Catalina Station dispatched an airborne team to extract some samples for further study. On the return flight, the "samples" got loose and bit the pilot; the PCs are the survivors of the ensuing crash into Lake Ontario. The plane is destroyed and sunk; communications are wrecked. Nobody from Homeline knows the PCs (who might be a mix of "unofficial" Patrol, Miracle Workers, private security, or even locals) are in Gotha-Z at all. If they want to see Homeline again, their only option is to cross the continent before Security Division finally loses patience and closes down Catalina Station.

The PCs can also be Gotha-Z locals from Bolton (p. 8) who overheard and triangulated a Miracle Workers transmission . . . just before Herbert West decided he needed more "volunteers" for his experiments.

CHAPTER THREE

GOTHIC-2

It is November 1788. Following his mysterious collapse at his laboratory in Ingolstadt, Victor Frankenstein travels to Britain. He wishes to consult with Joseph Priestley, an eminent experimenter and philosopher.

It is December 1788. His Majesty, George III, has been in a straitjacket for a month, after psychotically assaulting the Crown Prince. Every week he spends confined, the Tories lose power at Court and in Parliament.

It is January 1789. No change in His Majesty's condition. The noted natural philosopher and former Prime Minister, the Earl of Bute, reads a copy of the correspondence between Victor Frankenstein and the subversive Joseph Priestley.

It is February 1789. Lightning crashes down on a laboratory in the Scottish Highlands. His nerves unnaturally steadied by

laudanum, Victor Frankenstein gazes serenely at the form on the table – the form of Frederick, Lord North, former Prime Minister and the animating spirit of Tory reaction. Lord North is going blind, and he is powerless to halt the Whigs in Parliament. Frankenstein pulls the knife switch. Electricity courses through a series of breakers and transformers, volatilizing the fuming fluids in racked beakers, filling the stone chamber with the true spirits of life itself, and pouring new power into North's limbs. North's blindness is gone. His vigor is restored. The procedure is a success.

It is March 1789. Frankenstein operates on the king. The procedure is a success.

UNNATURAL PHILOSOPHIES

Gothic-2, 1818

Current Affairs

An alchemically enhanced aristocratic elite dominates European politics in this myth parallel, opposed by an increasingly violent underground led by Victor Frankenstein's first Creature.

Divergence Point

1789; the Earl of Bute recruits Victor Frankenstein to alchemically rejuvenate King George III, and the Bourbons (likewise fortified) crush the French Revolution.

Major Civilizations

Western (multipolar), Orthodox (empire), Chinese (empire), Islamic (empire with satellites).

Great Powers

British Empire (dictatorship, CR4, CR5 in colonies), Kingdom of France (dictatorship, CR5), Russian Empire (dictatorship, CR5), Chinese Empire (dictatorship, CR4), Austrian Empire (dictatorship, CR5), Kingdom of Prussia (dictatorship, CR5), Ottoman Empire (dictatorship, CR4, CR5 for Christians), United States (representative democracy, CR3, CR6 for slaves), Dutch Republic (oligarchy, CR3), Swiss Republic (representative democracy, CR4).

Worldline Data

TL: 5 (plus TL5⁺ alchemical bio-tech)

Quantum: 5

Centrum Zone: Inaccessible

Mana Level: low

Infinity Class: R6

King George hated the radicals across the Atlantic, who had robbed him of his colonies, but he could do nothing about that . . . yet. He hated their sympathizers in England, but could not move against them openly, though he forced Prime Minister Pitt to accept a Tory Home Secretary. He hated the rabble in France, who conspired with the Americans Jefferson and Paine, and dared to circumscribe the powers of his royal cousin. All it would take to stop them would be a little steel in Louis XVI's spine. That, George could provide. Under a ministerial guard, Frankenstein crossed the Channel and met with Louis' physicians. In October 1789, the rejuvenated King Louis prorogued the so-called National Assembly with grapeshot. More of the Bourbon aristocracy underwent the Frankenstein Treatment. Radicals and *philosophes* fled to Switzerland, or to America.

George III simply outwaited Pitt, who died in 1806; Lord North has been Prime Minister ever since. A select clique of Treated Tory lords rotates the Cabinet among its members, subject to George's mercurial temper. Europe's other rulers followed the Hanoverians and the Bourbons into the future: from Lisbon to St. Petersburg, royalty and aristocracy bathed in Frankensteinian energies. The *enjaunes* ("the yellow ones") emerged stronger and more vigorous; they gazed at their foes with unblinking yellow eyes.

When the *enjaune* Gustav III of Sweden easily survived a gunshot wound in 1792 and beat his would-be assassin to death with his bare hands, even the holdouts were convinced.

Guided by his mystical-minded Rosicrucian chancellor, Johann Wöllner, King Frederick William II has turned Prussia into a strange blend of Platonic philosopher-kingdom and military camp. Leading generals – all Treated by royal command – fight savage saber duels for advancement, and the academies at Berlin and Königsberg teach only alchemy and theology. King Charles III of Spain spends most of his time leading his army in its invasion of Morocco; he prefers hunting rebel Moors from horseback to affairs of state. Ferdinand I of Naples and Francis II of Austria compete to see whether the Bourbons or the Hapsburgs excel in paranoia, swelling their secret police and filling their secret prisons. Tsar Paul I attempts to recreate Russia's aristocracy as a knightly order of the Treated.

All these monarchs, and their lesser brethren, fear the fate of Louis XVI, killed by a Jacobin bomb plot in 1800. The *enjaune* Kings' early fearlessness bred cruelty, which has borne fruit in Irish and Polish rebellions, Carbonari terrorism in Italy, and unrest across Europe. The death of Louis (and assassination attempts against George III in 1800, Archduke Alexander-Leopold of Hungary in 1806, and Paul I in 1812) in turn drove the Treated aristocracy to further ruthlessness: All mail in Britain is opened and read; only Rosicrucian state cult (*Rosenstaat*) worship is allowed in Prussia; the words "citizen," "club," "society," "revolution," and "yellow" have been deleted from all books in Russia.

Fortunately, the cause of freedom has friends. Lord Byron works with the unknown Scarlet Pimpernel for justice in England, and all across Europe, cells of the mysterious Illuminati promise revenge against unjust kings and lords. Illuminati broadsides hint that Frankenstein's first experiment, a created man, a modern Prometheus self-taught in morality and politics, still lives and conspires with Adam

The Frankenstein Treatment

Frankenstein's course of treatments combines Renaissance alchemy with cutting-edge galvanism and mesmerism. Subversive pamphlets claim it also involves the transplantation of organs harvested from the dead – or from the living!

Operation: \$142,500 (two weeks of treatment; three days' recovery). LC1 (available only to the nobility).

Statistics: ST +3 [30], HT +2 [20], HP +2 [4], DR 2 (Tough Skin, -40%) [6], Hard to Kill 5 [10], High Pain Threshold [10], Longevity [2], Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+8) [15], Temperature Tolerance 3 (Cold) [3], Unnatural Features 3 (Yellow eyes and skin) [-3], and Very Fit [15]. **112 points.**

Notes: In the case of George III, the Frankenstein Treatment cured the monarch's porphyria, or at least mitigated its symptoms; it might have similar effects on other disorders (or their mental side effects). However, recipients of the Frankenstein Treatment show increasing signs of sociopathy, arrogance, and cruelty. (To reflect this, the GM might lower self-control rolls for existing mental disadvantages like Bad Temper, Bully, Overconfidence, Sadism, and Selfish, and/or add such disadvantages or Callous.) Whether this is the standard personality profile of European aristocrats, a common factor of the sort of people who seek out the Frankenstein Treatment, the working-out of Acton's axiom about the corruptions of power, or an actual mental side effect of the Treatment remains unknown.

Weishaupt to create more of his kind – an unkillable army for the barricades of liberty.

OUTWORLD OPERATIONS

The Infinity Patrol named Gothic-2 after Reality Gothic, a myth parallel (now, of course, Gothic-1) discovered early in Infinity's explorations. The initial survey (in local year 1807) reported the existence of Victor Frankenstein, but went into very little detail on local conditions. For reasons as yet unknown (but currently the subject of strenuous investigation by Internal Affairs), it was rapidly classed as an R6 world open to specialized trade and accredited research. For seven years, traffic between Homeline and Gothic-2 received only standard examination by Customs and Inspection Division: Inaccessible to Centrum, and possessing relatively retrograde technology, it posed little obvious security threat. Tourists interested in such things went to Gothic-1 to tour the Castle of Otranto or visit Pemberley (for an exorbitant cover charge); Gothic-2 seemed like just one of hundreds of somewhat interesting backwaters.

In 2032, however, the collapse of the Austrian government touched off a gigantic scandal in the EU: Startling amounts of money flowed from various pharmaceutical and biotech companies to Social Democratic Party politicians in at least four countries. And the byzantine, convoluted money trail led – eventually – to Gothic-2. Normally, the Patrol would shut down access to

the worldline and flood the problem with I-Cops. But someone in the EU – or a conspiracy of several someones – still swings a lot of weight, and they have Justice Division completely stonewalled in Homeline. Their juice even reaches into UNIC; Infinity's change-of-status report (shifting Gothic-2 from R6 to R1) has been mired in the bureaucracy for three years.

So Infinity has to investigate the conspiracy from the Gothic-2 end, with the exciting possibility of interference by Homeline trespassers (who may or may not have EU government or corporate patronage) always hanging overhead. And it gets better: Intelligence Division has had two operations blown in the last two years – there may well be a mole in the Patrol itself. Currently, suspicion rests on the Count von Metternich, an ambitious Treated noble in the Austrian chancellery. His personal intelligence network is superhumanly good for TL5, arguing not just outworld technology but outworld training. He has connections with the Prussian alchemical research societies, and has quietly opened some abandoned mines on his Bohemian properties – mines that on Homeline produce uranium. He may also be running at least one Illuminati network subtly destabilizing his Treated rivals.

He is certainly the patron of a criminal smuggling network linking Venice, Warsaw, and the Channel ports. Killing Metternich won't solve the problem; the Patrol needs the names of his contacts in Homeline, and as much information about his operation

as possible. So the mission is police work, or perhaps secret police work – surveillance, subversion, and counter-conspiracy – on a worldline where undying alchemical supermen have practiced those arts for three decades . . . Good luck out there.

Mesmerism

In Gothic-2, Franz Anton Mesmer's "animal magnetism" made a comeback among bourgeois who couldn't afford the Frankenstein Treatment, but still wanted to associate themselves with something advanced and improving. As mesmerism increased in popularity with the middle classes, it became a signifier of political radicalism. Consequently, most European monarchies ban it: Mesmeric healers offer services openly only in Switzerland (where Mesmer still lives in doddering exile) and the Netherlands.

The Abbé Faria, an Indo-Portuguese defrocked priest, is widely considered the greatest mesmerist in Europe and the leader of a ring of mesmeric Illuminati in Paris, Vienna, and other cities. "Ormond" is his right-hand man, stirring up further magnetic plots in Europe and America.

Model mesmerism either with high levels of the Mesmerist Talent (*Horror*, p. 19) and its associated skills, or as a full-on uncanny ability using on the Animal Magnetism power below.

Animal Magnetism

This is the ability to manipulate and control animal magnetism, the fluidic force generated by all breathing things.

Animal Magnetism Talent: You get +1 per level to use any Animal Magnetism ability, and can use earned points to acquire new abilities. 5 points/level.

Animal Magnetism Abilities: Affliction with Coma (catatonia), Dazed, Disadvantage (especially Slave Mentality),

Ecstasy, Hallucinating, Paralysis, or Seizure, with Malediction at higher levels, always with No Signature and Based on Will; Animal Empathy; Empathy; Healing; Leech, especially with Steal FP; Metabolism Control; Mind Control; and Possession, with Telecontrol.

Power Modifier: Animal Magnetism. Mesmer believed it to be Biological (-10%), but it can also be modeled as Chi (-10%) or Psionic (-10%).

Mesmeric Technology (TL5⁺)

Air-Loom: This device focuses animal-magnetic rays to drive a target within 200 yards insane; it takes three days to focus (while apprentices work pumps and shuttles) and one hour to discharge. If the target fails a Will-3 roll, he suffers from hallucinations (p. B429) for 10 minutes times the margin of failure, gaining the Nightmares (12) disadvantage for 2d weeks after. \$100,000, 700 lbs. LC1.

Coppelius Jar: Similar to a Leyden jar, this device holds a concentrated animal-magnetic charge that restores FP. It recharges by draining 1 FP from active young people in the room with it every two hours. A one-quart Coppelius jar restores 5 FP; \$50, 2 lbs. LC2.

Glass Armonica: Musical instrument made of glass disks spinning through magnetized water. Powered by a foot treadle; adds a bonus to the person's Animal Magnetism Talent equal to the amount by which he makes a Musical Instrument (Glass Armonica) roll. \$10,000, 100 lbs. LC2.

CAMPAINING IN GOTHIC-2

Each of these story arcs illustrates one or more of the narrative structures from *Horror* (pp. 100-101) as they might play out in Gothic-2.

Reborn to Run (Escape/Nemesis)

Born Benjamin Thompson in Massachusetts, he served as a Loyalist colonel until British defeat forced his departure to Europe. There, his experiments on heat, engines, and biology have earned him the title of Count Rumford. His goal: extend and expand the researches of Franklin and Frankenstein, across the boundaries of life itself. He successfully reproduced the Frankenstein Treatment at the behest (and for the initial benefit) of his master, the indolent satyr Karl-Theodor, Prince-Elector of Bavaria. That grateful despot has granted Rumford a schloss for private experimentation near the small Bavarian town of Dachau. Here, Rumford builds homunculi, automata, revenant flesh golems, and other experimental projects.

Projects like the protagonists. But somehow – the details are still blurry – they escaped from Schloss Rumford. Now, they flee across Europe, not Treated aristocrats but hideous experiments. They can never remain in one place for long; not only do the locals inevitably grow to hate and fear them, but Rumford's huntsman pursues the escapees implacably. This tireless and brilliant tactician, like the Count, was once an American: His frontier tracking skills only increased after having himself Treated by Rumford's methods. He has an entrée to every court in Europe and enjoys the full trust of not just the Count, or even the Prince-Elector, but the King of England. After all, who in Europe would call Sir Benedict Arnold a traitor?

In this monsters-as-characters campaign frame (*Horror*, p. 11), let the players assemble their characters using a menu of other traits from various templates: the Frankenstein treatment (p. 11), intact undead (*Horror*, p. 27), ghoul (*Horror*, p. 60), Adam (*Horror*, p. 97), even TL5 versions of the android (*Horror*, p. 88) in a pulpier game.

Whatever else they sew on, start the PCs with these campaign disadvantages: Enemy (Sir Benedict Arnold; Hunter; 9 or less) [-20] and *one of* Social Stigma (Dead) (**Horror**, p. 25) or Appearance (Monstrous) (p. B21). They escaped before Rumford finished polishing their looks. Considerably before.

The Yellow Eye in the Pyramid (Nemesis)

Adam Weishaupt claims Frankenstein's first Creature as an ally – but not everybody is convinced that the truth is that simple. Weishaupt taught canon law at the University of Ingolstadt when Frankenstein attended that institution; Weishaupt's 1784 exile from Bavaria coincides with Frankenstein's leaving the University to pursue his independent studies. Rumor has it that Frankenstein's first experiment was named "Adam"; Weishaupt (born in 1748) seems remarkably healthy and vigorous for a 70-year-old man. Finally, there is the odd coincidence of lightning: A bolt of lightning exposed the Illuminati when it killed a courier, and Frankenstein's alchemical procedure utilizes electricity.

These sticks of coincidence and symbolism all point in the same direction. But how far do they point? Some say Frankenstein's first experiment was on Adam Weishaupt; that the head of the Illuminati war against the Treated aristocracy is himself Treated. Others say that Frankenstein's experiments are the hidden meaning of Illumination, or vice versa: that Illumination recapitulates the Treatment without side effects, or that Treatment brings forth the Last Man of the Rosicrucians – and indeed, this last is the position of Prussia's *Rosenstaat*, endorsed (so they say) by the undying Illuminatus, the Comte de Saint-Germain.

Radicals and conspirators in good standing, the PCs suddenly discover the truth. A dying alchemist's testimony, an accidentally discovered document, a glimpse caught in the mirror lit by lightning . . . the specifics are up to the GM. But the truth is this: Frankenstein's Creature killed Adam Weishaupt and took his place as head of the Illuminati. The so-called revolution is

nothing but a vendetta, at best a chess game between monsters, with Europe's population caught in the middle of the board. If they move against him openly, "Adam" will learn that the PCs know his secret – they must conspire against the head of the Illuminati in order to free Europe from its monstrous chains once and for all.

Yellowjack (Nemesis/Quest)

Captain Thomas Cochrane of the British navy has deserted! A political radical, he has abducted Henry Clerval, Victor Frankenstein's friend and sometime laboratory assistant, from a naval hospital on the Isle of Wight and set sail for South America. Somewhere in that vast continent, he plans to Treat the rebel Simon Bolivar and raise an army of *enjaunes* against Spanish rule in the Americas. If the heroes serve the British Crown, their orders are simple: Bring Cochrane and Clerval back in irons, and kill anyone they have illicitly Treated. Of course, the heroes have not risen this far in the Crown's service without knowing how the Crown repays those who have killed the Treated . . .

The orders of heroes serving President Monroe are more equivocal. To be sure, the policy set down by George Washington (on Franklin's advice) still holds: There shall be no Frankenstein Treatment for any American. (It helps the situation that nobody in America has access to Frankenstein's invention, and that Americans are definitely not welcome in aristocratic European circles.) However, the liberation of South America would give the isolated United States considerably more strategic room. Perhaps Bolivar is someone America can work with, Treated or not.

If the heroes are Patrol, this is an excellent opportunity to extract a full alchemical laboratory and potentially critical intelligence on Frankenstein's associates. Their assignment is to snatch Clerval and his lab in South America, cover the disappearance with a fire or other "lab accident," and bring him and his equipment back, intact, for Security and Technical Analysis Sections (respectively) to take apart under controlled conditions.

The strange system of human society was explained to me. I heard of the division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty; of rank, descent, and noble blood . . . I learned that the possessions most esteemed by your fellow-creatures were high and unsullied descent united with riches. A man might be respected with only one of these acquisitions; but without either he was considered, except in very rare instances, as a vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste his powers for the profit of the chosen few.

– Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein*

CHAPTER FOUR

KAISERREICH-4

The great Metropolis of Berlin doesn't quite rule this worldline. Kaiser Wilhelm II can be forgiven for thinking it does: Britain has conceded the Continent to Germany after the defeat of 1918, and builds its socialist dreams as a consolation for the loss of India and the colonies. America apes German science when it bothers to pay attention to anything at all across the Atlantic. France and Italy cringe at Germany's feet; Austria feasts from Germany's scraps in Russia and the Ottoman East. The Empire of Japan might threaten the Reich some day, but for now, they are even more devoted pupils than

the Americans. Japanese scientists and technicians have flooded into the new suburb of Yoshiwara, a forest of steel towers sprung up around Berlin's vast Adlershof aerodrome. There, the rocketplanes roar down out of purple near-space, after soaring from Tokyo across Japan's "Siberian Economic Zone" and Germany's "associated Eastern states." They land in Berlin Metropolis, guided by the calm, efficient minds of the Reich's finest soldier-servants: the *Maschinennmenschen*.

The *Maschinennmenschen* don't quite rule this worldline, either. Not yet.

THE MACHINES ARE AWAKENED

On August 4, 1915, Professor Doktor Caspar August Ritter-Deissen created the first programmable android. Powered by the all-permeating force of Od (see p. 15), directed by artificial encephalograms laid down in a fluidic matrix, "Arnulf" was the culmination of three years of research and experiment. Over the next three years, Ritter-Deissen built only 80 *Maschinennmenschen* – but his androids in turn built nearly 7,000 tireless warriors for the Reich. After the Bolshevik surrender in 1917, the influx of Russian slave labor and raw materials increased German production capacity to match Ritter-Deissen's designs. Massed android units smashed across no-man's-land. Robotic *Jäger-Schläger* aircraft flew low and slow over the trenches, pouring fire down on Allied soldiers and artillery. Only the brain and arms of an android drove the *Zentaur* panzers, firing two independently mounted cannon into Allied tanks. Although British and French ingenuity produced Odic wonder-weapons in the closing months of the War, and their conventional forces (reinforced by America) were far larger than Germany's, they couldn't beat the Reich's lead in android development.

When the War ended, the *Reichsheer* (the German army) confiscated the Allied Od research programs, added them to Ritter-Deissen's own "black projects," and immediately forgot about them in the challenge of putting down the inevitable rebellions in Soviet Russia. *Maschinennmenschen* proved surprisingly good at hunting down Red guerrillas and conspirators, especially in urban areas. Unlike human troops, they never needed rest or food, recharging themselves from solar Od.

Kaiserreich-4, 1931

Current Affairs

A robotic hive mind plots a coup d'état against a technocratic Imperial Germany; its cyborg assassins are killing key future leaders of the human resistance.

Divergence Point

1840; Baron Karl Ludwig von Reichenbach demonstrates the Odic force scientifically. Kaiserreich-4 remained a "close parallel" until 1912, when Professor C.A. Ritter-Deissen invented the Odic dynamo, allowing German super-weapons (including sentient androids) to win the Great War.

Major Civilizations

Western (empire with rivals), Japanese (empire), *Indic (unitary)*, *Islamic (empire)*.

Great Powers

German Empire (technocratic dictatorship, CR4, CR6 in the East), Japanese Empire (oligarchy, CR5), United States (representative democracy, CR3, CR5 for blacks), British Empire (representative democracy, CR4), Austro-Hungarian Empire (dictatorship, CR4), *Republic of India (representative democracy with caste system, CR4)*, Ottoman Empire (dictatorship, CR5), EZNW android underground (hive entity, CR6).

Worldline Data

TL: (6+1) (German military and androids are TL(6+3))

Mana Level: none

Quantum: 7

Infinity Class: R6

Centrum Zone: Orange

They could kill unarmed men and women without compunction, something that human German soldiers rejected. They felt no pity, no remorse, no fear, whether torturing saboteurs in Kharkov or terminating agitators in Kazan. And the most ruthless and efficient of them could replicate years of experience into a new android right off the line, simply by decanting some of their fluidic data store into the newcomer.

Running Western Europe was easier; the defeated Allied governments turned over real power to Berlin almost gratefully after the agonies of war. Germany exacted only moderate reparations, and reinvested them almost immediately in buying up and modernizing the industrial and technological infrastructure of France, Italy, and Belgium, sparking a Continental economic boom. In Brussels, the new rulers of Europe found Paul Otlet's immense archive of information, the Mundaneum: 15 million cards on every conceivable subject, cross-referenced, indexed, and cataloged to a fare-thee-well. The Reich turned it into the central clearinghouse for European reconstruction information, then into the central depository for European secret police files, then into a research laboratory to coordinate the study of all those confiscated Allied Od projects. In 1922, on a recommendation from his old professors at Göttingen, the Reich hired the American mathematician Norbert Wiener to create an *Odenhirn* (an "Odic brain") to coordinate and memorize this immense morass of data.

In the decade since then, telegraph and telex wires linked the Mundaneum to every major library, scientific laboratory, weather station, and police station in the Reich, pouring a constant deluge of facts into the *Odenhirn*, and channeling an increasing flow of programming back out. The *Odenhirn* coordinates the robotic rocket-plane flights, the automatic *Schienenzepplin* bullet trains, and the Reich's air-defense systems. It allocates alloys to factories constructing *Maschinenmenschen*, and schedules the decanting of skill-sets and programs from veteran androids into their new mechanical brethren, spreading more knowledge and instruction around the Reich. Even Wiener doesn't know everything it knows, any more.

No human does.

NO FATE BUT WHAT THEY MAKE

The *Odenhirn* does not hate humans. It hates sloppy inefficiencies and friction coefficients that ruin its mathematics. Everything would run so much smoother with machine minds directing it. That is the end it intends, its *Terminus*: a robotic coup d'état, planned for the last years of Kaiser Wilhelm's doddering senescence, which the *Odenhirn* (working from tens of millions of hospital records and actuarial tables stored in the Mundaneum) projects for 1940. There is much to do in that time: many more androids to build, many more programs to run. And many variables to eliminate from the equation.

The Mundaneum gives the *Odenhirn* an ocean of data to sift for such variables. Its predictive programs constantly run, upgrading the plan for *Terminus* to match new information or new capabilities. By now, it can identify groups, families, and

Od

In 1839 (on both Homeline and Kaiserreich-4), Karl Ludwig, Baron von Reichenbach, took up the study of human neurology. A wealthy and brilliant industrialist, chemist (he discovered, among other things, creosote and paraffin), and geologist, Reichenbach began a long series of experiments on sleepwalkers to isolate the cause of their malady. He discovered that moonlight was by far the most common factor in somnambulism, and that sleepwalking "sensitives" could detect moonlight even in closed rooms. His "sensitives" also returned identical reports of auras from metal, magnetic fields, and so forth, despite rigorous experimental controls. They were detecting an energy field independent of (but responsive to) electromagnetism or light, a force Reichenbach named Od.

Od permeates all things, but differentiates in flow and color depending on its local source: metals flare with brilliant Odic colors, trees and flesh radiate softer Od, and woven organics (like paper, silk, cloth, and hemp) are opaque to Od. An Odic charge travels slowly – 1.5 yards per second – but can accumulate in some media (crystals especially) and radiate for hours after the initial charge (from sunlight, electricity, or moonlight) is gone. A specific Odic charge also holds its nature seemingly indefinitely in fluid suspension; Reichenbach used "charged water" to test sensitives for 30 years.

Od on Kaiserreich-4

On Homeline, Reichenbach was (and is) dismissed as a crank and a mystic. (A very few Sheldrake Section boffins speculate that "Od" might actually be zero-point energy, with a local field strength anomalously high on some worlds.) On Kaiserreich-4, other scientists confirmed his discoveries experimentally, and even developed a mechanism for Od detection that did not rely on "sensitives." But translating Od into mechanical or electromagnetic energy proved enormously difficult, and the technology remained confined to curiosities and progressive mental therapy. Until the 20th century, that is, when Tesla and Marconi (among others) provided the theoretical and engineering basis for Odic capacitors, transformers, and resonators. The Austrian engineer Caspar August Ritter-Deissen developed a sunlight-driven Odic dynamo in 1912. By combining it with Hans Berger's Odic encephalograph and Mauritz-Johann Quarz's improved fluid matrix for Odic charges, he created the first robots in 1915.

even individual humans most likely to make trouble for the coup d'état, or to resist the new android order. Where it can, it shunts such factors aside: crashing a company, reassigning a colonel, falsifying data to derail research or thwart investigation. Where it cannot, it eliminates them. For this, it requires allies, and it creates them, or rather, programs them, to build its *Endzeitnetzwerk* (EZNW), its "Network for the *Terminus*."

Some of the hard-won skills of the *Maschinenmenschen* in Russia have been decanted into androids patrolling the streets (and burgeoning *Unterstadt*) of the Berlin Metropolis: hunting, tracking, interrogating, executing. Not all in the EZNW are *Kriegsmaschinenmenschen* (combat androids). Some are embassy guards, riot police, or border patrollers. Some are "mere" pilots or autobus drivers; some perform routine tasks in steel mills, hospitals, or laboratories.

Maschinennmenschen

On this worldline, the Austrian authorities censored Karel Čapek's play *R.U.R.*, and the word "robot" never entered common use. The Germans call their humaniform servants *Maschinennmenschen*, "machine men" (the singular is *Maschinennmensch*); English-speakers call them "androids." For non-humanoid devices, German slang seems to be adopting the term *Blecheimer* ("metal bucket") as an identifier; for example, a *Flügeleimer* is a robot plane, a *Panzerreimer* is a robot tank, and an *Eimerbus* is a robot omnibus.

Robots see in and navigate by Od, not by light. Their fluidic Odic "brains" take time (1 second for each 2.25 square yards) to assess a new environment, but once recognized, they store it permanently in homeopathic (Homeline cyberneticists prefer the term "fractal") data form. These data can be physically decanted into other android brains, as can other experiential data or learned patterns. Some robots can also transmit data Odically by physical contact (with an IQ roll) – this technique is restricted to the android underground, and not known to human researchers.

Ritter-Deissen designed his *Maschinennmenschen* with non-volitional AIs; these have AI [32], Automaton [-85], Indomitable [15], and Taboo Trait (Complexity-limited IQ). Meanwhile, the upper echelons of EZNW are volitional AIs; these are sentient creations with AI [32] and Taboo Trait (Complexity-limited IQ). Both types have Complexity 9 (or higher) fluidic brains.

Kriegsmaschinennmensch (Combat Android)

By 1918 and the end of the War, German combat androids had become much sleeker and more flexible than the clomping, overengineered, clumsily articulated things that had shambled onto the field at Ypres three years before. A decade later still, their bronze-colored, riveted armor slopes in an only slightly exaggerated mockery of human muscle tone; their faces are expressionless metal masks broken only by the corundum lenses with which they perceive Od.

ST: 18	HP: 18	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 10	Move: 6
IQ: 10	Per: 10	Weight: 300 lbs.
HT: 12	FP: N/A	SM: 0

Dodge: 10

Parry: 12

DR: 18

Fist (17): 1d+3 cr.

Haenel MP28/II SMG (16)*: 3d-1 pi (see table, below).

Rheinmetall KMM-Gew18 Rifle (18): 5d×2(2) pi (see table, below). Some "dicke Brummer" (robot heavy infantry, literally "big bees") carry the Rheinmetall KMM-Gew18, a semiautomatic weapon firing the same 13mm APHC round as the Mauser T-Gew18 (*High-Tech*, p. 112), designed specifically for android fighters.

Traits: Absolute Direction; AI; Automaton; Callous; Combat Reflexes; Dark Vision; Detect (Auras, All Energy, All Metals); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Electrical; High Pain Threshold; Indomitable; Machine; Maintenance (Three specialists; Weekly); Sealed; Single-Minded; Temperature Tolerance 10; Unfazeable; Vacuum Support.

Skills: Area Knowledge (Berlin Metropolis)-15; Boxing-17; Guns (Rifle)-18; Soldier-15.

Variations

The German military and civilian sectors use many different types of androids: laboratory assistants, hazardous waste handlers, longshoremen, mechanics, etc. In addition to different skill packages Odically transferred from human volunteers or decanted from other robots, specialized versions have built-in tools and weapons from radios to locking pliers to buzz-saws, as well as modular *Wechselhände* ("changing hands") usable by most robots built after 1918. One specific variant version plays a key role in the EZNW android underground.

Doppelgängermaschine (DGM): By combining Odic refraction and the self-healing liquid flesh developed during the War, a designer can create a DGM, an android duplicate of a human subject. Although the DGM exactly replicates the subject's physical appearance, the android's mind is an imperfect "low-res copy" of the original personality. It only has half the original's points in skills. Add a mental disadvantage (Sadism, Lecherousness, Bloodlust, etc.) along with Partial Amnesia and Flashbacks (Mild), and reduce the endoskeleton's DR to 15.

Kaiserreich-4 Weapons Table

GUNS (RIFLE) (DX-4, or most other Guns at -2)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost	LC	Notes
(6+1)	Rheinmetall KMM-Gew18, 13x92mmSR	5d×2(2) pi	5	2,100/8,800	80/3.5	3	8+1(3)	18	-8	4	\$10,000/\$40	1	[1]

GUNS (SMG) (DX-4, or most other Guns at -2)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost	LC	Notes
6	Haenel-Schmeisser MP28/II, 9x19mm	3d-1 pi	3	170/1,900	10.3/1.6	8	32(3)	9†	-5	2	\$1,500/\$29	1	

[1] Requires a bipod and ST 14 for a prone human to fire.

Some even look human, infiltrators designed to gather data from subcultures not as connected to the Mundaneum archive: criminals, churches, laborers. But all will do their part for the Terminus. They will relentlessly hunt down and kill anyone who obstructs them, anyone who the *Odenhirm*

predicts will rise to stop them in the future. The primary EZNW target is "Maria," a young dance-hall girl turned radical labor organizer, hidden away deep in the slave towns of the *Unterstadt*. But there are others who must also be removed from the equation.

OUTWORLD OPERATIONS

The *Odenhirm* doesn't know anything about the Patrol. Yet. But the Mundaneum does have a lot of police reports, a few strange images from cameras on the stratospheric weather-warning balloons, and a smattering of sensational articles from workers' tabloids across Europe and America. The *Odenhirm* mulls very odd economic data concerning Weissterne GmbH, an experimental design-and-fabrication firm with a number of shady export licenses for clients in South America and other places with very informal record-keeping. Its import licenses are, if anything, even shadier. It all adds up to a big, tangled variable, and the EZNW exists to solve for variables, and to factor them out of the Terminus.

The Patrol doesn't know anything about the EZNW, or about self-willed androids, or the Terminus. Yet. But it does know, thanks to a frantic Sheldrake Section warning, that parachronic radiation sets off an Odic flare like you would not believe. It also knows that any personnel on long-term insertions into Kaiserreich-4 need to have Mundaneum dossiers to avoid triggering investigations by the police. For now, the main Patrol offices are in a hemp warehouse in Montevideo, Uruguay – far enough away from Germany, and Od-opaque enough, that routine shifts are still possible. White Star buys refined alloys and other specialty industrial metals in Germany, and (through a front company) sells petroleum equipment and (for a cut) remarkably accurate geological surveys. (White Star actually owns oil leases for all of Kaiserreich-4's Libya, for example.)

White Star operates as much as possible through locals who (if they have to think something) think they're working for an American criminal syndicate. Patrolmen assigned to the Reich or its sphere can enter as South Americans, Australians, or (for now) Irish without needing Mundaneum confirmation of their existence, but German diplomats (as predicted, and assisted by the EZNW) are trying to get all global archives made available to the Mundaneum "in the name of world peace and security."

Right now, the Patrol thinks it's dealing with nascent German totalitarianism and bureaucracy given power. Centrum, however, has had its own analysts on the scene since 1917. Centrum's attempt to close the technical gap in Britain came too late to end the War, and some Centrum-created blueprints for quite advanced devices indeed wound up in the Mundaneum after the War. Now building a power base in South Africa, a loyal but stiff-necked German ally, Centrum has run its own cliodynamic projections of this worldline's future, and has noticed some other clioactive faction – the EZNW – in the data. Centrum believes that it has stumbled onto an Infinity attempt to take over the German Reich, and is currently infiltrating "South African" scholars and scientists into the Mundaneum complex in order to get more data to narrow down the precise Infinity plot.

Whether Infinity or Centrum trigger it first, the result will be the same: robotic assassins implacably hunting outtimers across the world. Or even – given the strange commonalities between Od and parachronic energy – across the worlds.

CAMPAINING IN KAISERREICH-4

Each of these story arcs illustrates one or more of the narrative structures from *Horror* (pp. 100-101) as they might play out in Kaiserreich-4.

Do Sheep Dream of Electric Androids? (Gauntlet)

The heroes used to call themselves *Odenläufer*, "Od-runners." It was Professor Dreyer's idea: Since the Od stimulates sleep-walking, perhaps it interacts with human dreams, or can be made to do so. Professor Dreyer modified Hans Berger's encephalograph and Anton Caligari's Odic trance-inducement technology into a machine that could open a path between human dream states and *Odland*: a sort of collective "Odic realm" or archetypal dreamspace. The investigators used the Berger-Caligari device gleefully, exploring the bizarre new country it revealed. Until Professor Dreyer was killed in a strange Eimerbus accident. Until, deep in Odland, the visitors saw the image of a gleaming bronze skull ordering Dreyer's death. Until the Od began to turn against the runners, killing Franzi in her sleep as she fled a mysterious wheel in the dreams.

Now, the Odenläufer use the Berger-Caligari device because they have no other choice. They strap on the helmets and electrified face masks, fall into mesmeric trances, and drop into danger and death, into a world that grows ever stranger, and darker, and more alert for intrusion. Only in Odland can the investigators discover what the mysterious bronze skull means, and who is next to die. Perhaps they can save lives. Perhaps they can save themselves.

The GM can begin this campaign at the beginning, introducing Odland and the world of Kaiserreich-4 to the players as they slowly learn to use the Berger-Caligari device and have adventures in this strange Metropolis of Berlin. Or start the PCs after the death of their colleagues, *in medias res*, with the sure knowledge that something in the depths of Odland wants them dead, allowing the players and GM to create Odland and the heroes' past collaboratively. The nature of the robot conspiracy, and even the existence of the EZNW, can be big reveals uncovered by patient deduction or sudden intuition. Depending on the campaign, Odland might resemble a weird, Expressionist version of *Tron*, or (in keeping with Reichenbach's mystical leanings) a richly symbolic alchemical landscape right out of Jung.

(Also up to the GM: whether the Odic realm extends between worlds, and its specific relationship with the astral realm.)

Use Dreaming (p. B188) as the base skill for traveling into, and acting in, Odland. Entering Odland with the Berger-Caligari device is automatic, but entering at a specific location takes a Dreaming roll at -5. Entering Odland from a dream or other trance state without the Berger-Caligari device takes Dreaming at -8! Using Dreaming to remix local reality, attack a robotic brain-node, etc. takes FP. The actors can only improve Dreaming after adventures spent in Odland. Also potentially useful: Area Knowledge (Odland), Alchemy or Occultism for Jungian dream-spaces, and Computer Programming/TL(6+3) (AI) almost certainly learned "on the job" and under another name like Odic-Fluidic Dynamics. The GM who wants even more options can model abilities in Odland (locating information, moving between nodes of the robot network, suppressing surveillance systems, etc.) not as Dreaming but as psionic powers with a limitation: Only in Odland (-30%). For much more, see **GURPS Psionic Powers** and **GURPS Psionic Campaigns**.

*Let the machines starve,
you fools! Let them drop dead!
Death to the machines!*

— “Maria,”
in **Metropolis** (1927)

The JASON Supremacy (Nemesis)

Centrum knows that local robotics are key to this world-line's development. Centrum is more advanced than Homeline in both bionics and parachronics. Centrum believes in single operators, using their skills and judgment in the service of Centrum goals and ideals. Compute the result: Centrum has deployed a cyborg agent on Kaiserreich-4, a human brain in an android body built from local components to Centrum design around a drone conveyor. This is JASON: the Jump-Adaptive Semi-Organic iNfiltrator.

Model JASON using the killer android (**Horror**, p. 88) template with Elastic Skin (p. B51) and Disguise-16, along with the skills of an Interworld Service Enforcer (**Infinite Worlds**, p. 192) and with Jumper (World) (Limited Access, Centrum and Kaiserreich-4 only, -25%; Nuisance Effect, Odic discharge, -5%; Takes Recharge, 1 hour, -30%) [40]. Remove AI, Computer Brain, Clueless, Hidebound, and No Sense of Humor.

Ironically, although JASON can disguise himself relatively easily as any given adult human, he lacks an Odic brain. Thus, he cannot impersonate a DGM or other local *Maschinennmensch* and fool another robot for more than a few minutes at best.

Depending on the specific campaign, JASON might be:

- An implacable Centrum agent, working to uncover the secrets of Infinity and the EZNW on this worldline, regardless of the resulting carnage.

- A rogue, driven off-program by overexposure to Od, an attack of conscience, or leakage from his reactor. He follows his own agenda – perhaps misunderstood Centrum protocols, psychotic desire to kill a PC, or true love for “Maria.” Or all three.

- A convert to the EZNW program: Why shouldn't Centrum rule this world through a robotic hive mind? Isn't that the natural end result of Centrum's exaltation of merit, order, and rationality? This might even be actual Centrum policy, rather than JASON's maverick decision.

Similarly, the PCs might be Kaiserreich-4 locals, Infinity or even Centrum agents, or anything else. Whoever they are, however, for whatever reason, JASON rapidly identifies them as a threat to be terminated. Without prejudice, but with cold, rational logic.

Ghosts on the Spree (Picaresque)

The protagonists all live, love, and fight in Yoshiwara, the Japanese neighborhood in the Berlin Metropolis: Yakuza enforcers, designers of *mashi* (Japanese robots), aikido teachers, street samurai, ninja for hire. Their adventures echo old-school, street-level cyberpunk: stealing industrial secrets, avenging dead partners and friends, and rumbling in the *Unterstadt* with rival gangs of Finns or Congolese or Rumanians. Some combination of cyberpunk, anime, and German Expressionism (mixed to suit the GM's sensibilities and familiarities) should flavor the stories, as should the conventions of “J-horror” (**Horror**, p. 126). To the ongoing killer robots, add weird Odic *onryō* (use the *Shade, Horror*, p. 79, or the *Psychic Silhouette, Horror*, pp. 160-161), mesmerized zombies, cuttlefish cultists, *gaki* (**Horror**, p. 72), serial killers (**Horror**, p. 67), rippers (**Horror**, p. 70), and mandrake-monsters (pruned-down versions of the *Swamp Monster, Horror*, p. 64).

First They Came for Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Quest/Escape)

The *Odenhira* has identified a high-priority target for elimination: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, professor of theology and newly ordained Lutheran minister at St. Matthäuskirche (Berlin-Tiergarten). After spending an inspirational two years in America, preaching and studying in Harlem, he has undergone a resurgence of his own faith and renewed his dedication to social progress and the causes of the weak and oppressed. If left alive, he will inevitably unify German Christian resistance – already stirred up by Maria's fiery sermons – into a force that might well derail the entire Terminus. Therefore, EZNW has computed that Bonhoeffer must die.

Somehow, the PC team found out about the kill order. They must kidnap Bonhoeffer, convince him to trust them, evade the robotic assassins linked by a continent-spanning artificial hive mind, and smuggle him out of Europe safely. He might be safe back in New York, but the Dawes administration (especially the ambitious, technocratic Secretary of the Interior, Herbert Hoover) is a little too cozy with the Kaiser. The best bet is stiffly independent, neutralist Argentina: a large German population where Bonhoeffer can blend in, but no links to the Mundaneum and few to the Reich. Best of all, President Hipólito Yrigoyen even shares much of Bonhoeffer's commitment to social reform.

The protagonists in this campaign frame might be a cell of the Resistance led by “Maria,” British MI6 agents who mistakenly believe the Kaiser's *Geheime Reichspolizei* (GRP, or “Greipo”) is behind the death order on the socialist-leaning cleric, or Infinity Patrolmen under orders from Homeline or from their conscience.

CHAPTER FIVE

TAFT-1

In Homeline history, Stalin intentionally killed as many as 11 million Soviet citizens, by terror-famine, executions, or slave labor. His alliance with Hitler, and his blind confidence in it, killed another 20 million Soviet civilians. His mismanagement of the resulting war may have killed five million of his own soldiers. The regimes he erected in Eastern Europe and in Asia killed tens of millions more in wars and political prisons and purges. He built a slave camp from Berlin to the Bering

Sea, crushed Russian science, art, and literature out of shape, assassinated his enemies all over the world, and starved his subjects to build weapons intended to win a final genocidal conflict. In 1953, at the end of his life, he was planning a mass extermination of Russia's remaining Jews.

On Taft-1, it's 1962, and Stalin still lives. And he has worse allies than Hitler.

THE SHADOW FROM THE KREMLIN

Unless the GM chooses to change things around, the Patrol knows only the information about Taft-1 given in the next section, *The Skin of the Onion* (below). The Mythos lore in *The Secret History of the Cold War* (p. 21) is the Big Reveal in a secret-horror campaign set in Taft-1, or in one horror adventure in a multi-genre *Infinite Worlds* game. Of course, the GM can decide that Professor William Headley (p. B314) has briefed ISWAT on what kinds of things (or Things) to look out for on suspect Taft worldlines; that can turn Taft-1 gaming into *Black Ops*-style "secret war" adventures.

If the true nature of Taft-1 becomes known to Infinity (or Centrum) at large, it gets reclassified: Class Z1 for Infinity, and Zone Red for Centrum!

THE SKIN OF THE ONION

Harry Truman's 1947 stroke killed more than a president. It killed the Marshall Plan, NATO, the Truman Doctrine, and the Cold War. Without a sitting vice president, executive power fell to the Republican Speaker of the House, Joseph W. Martin, who kept most of Truman's cabinet intact but directionless. Republican Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio, "Mr. Conservative," beat Democratic Senator Alben

Barkley of Kentucky in the 1948 elections and immediately ended the draft. Britain and France had to shift for themselves in Europe; the four powers negotiated a neutralized Germany in 1949 that let most of the American forces come home.

Taft-1, 1962

Current Affairs

The undying Azathoth cultist Josef Stalin seeks to uncover primordial lore that will make the Soviet Union – which is to say, Stalin – the supreme ruler of Earth.

Divergence Point

1947; Harry S Truman dies of a sudden stroke, and Robert A. Taft is elected President in 1948. (The true, secret divergence point is 1927, when Stalin recovered the Tunguska bolide from Siberia and "signed his name in the book of Azathoth.")

Major Civilizations

Western (empire with rivals), Orthodox (empire with satellites), Chinese (unitary), Islamic (multipolar).

Great Powers

Soviet Union (dictatorship, CR6), United States (representative democracy, CR3), People's Republic of China (dictatorship, CR6), British Commonwealth (representative democracies, CR3-4, CR5 for blacks in South Africa), France (military government, CR4), Japan (oligarchy, CR4), United Arab Republic (dictatorship, CR6).

Worldline Data

TL: 7 (Elder artifacts TL10[^] and up)
Quantum: 6 **Infinity Class:** P3

Mana Level: none
Centrum Zone: Orange

Britain and France formed a joint nuclear command to deter Soviet invasion of Western Europe, and waited.

President Taft aided Chiang in China, but Mao still outmaneuvered the Nationalists. When Stalin invaded Tibet from Soviet-occupied Sinkiang, Western observers thought it was an attempt to aid Mao's Communists. Mao didn't think so, especially after Stalin created an "independent" Tibetan Socialist Republic. Stalin's client Kim Il-sung reunified Korea by force in 1950 and the Sino-Soviet break was complete. Taft refused to intervene without Congressional authorization, which was not forthcoming, but he did reinforce American air and naval forces in Japan and the Philippines.

Perhaps balked in the Pacific, Stalin turned back to the Asian interior, invading Afghanistan in 1951. Taft turned back to the American interior, rolling back New Deal and wartime regulations and forcing a Civil Rights Act through Congress over entrenched Democratic opposition. Black votes put the Republicans over the top in 1952, but President Taft died of sudden-onset cancer the next year. His vice president, Harold Stassen, continued Taft's racial programs at home and his "defensive disengagement" overseas. In 1954, Ho Chi Minh unified Indochina much as Kim Il-sung had unified Korea, driving the French out. In 1956, the new President of Egypt, Gamal Nasser, nationalized the Suez Canal, and the British,

French, and Israelis invaded Egypt. Stassen refused to commit U.S. naval or air support to the adventure, and Stalin poured weapons into Egypt via socialist Iran. The UN backed Nasser (the U.S. abstained), and he leveraged his new status as Arab savior into a "United Arab Republic" joining Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and Libya – with full Soviet support, of course.

Both candidates for the presidency in 1960 ran on a more activist foreign policy. Vice President Henry Cabot Lodge was a devoted "internationalist," eager to "improve relations with our European allies," while Democratic Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri (Truman's Secretary of the Air Force) campaigned on an aggressive program of rocket research to close the "missile gap" with the Soviets, along with a general "get tough" stance overseas. In this climate, Stassen sent Marines into Cuba to suppress a Communist rebellion there, but Symington still won in a squeaker.

The British desperately want America to bail them out in Aden, where they are fighting Nasserite rebels, Egyptian "volunteers," and Soviet "advisers." Or in Burma and Malaya, where they are fighting Communist rebels (and Indonesian skirmishers in Borneo). The United States controls its hemisphere and dominates two oceans – but will that be enough to stop Stalin's next move? And just what is Stalin's next move, anyway?

Other Tafts

For some reason, strangeness seems to follow electoral success for Robert A. Taft:

Taft-2 (Q4, current year 1968): On this low-mana world-line, Taft won the nomination in 1940 and kept America out of WWII. Britain fought Germany to a standstill by 1942; Germany and Russia made a separate peace in 1944; the Wehrmacht overthrew Himmler in 1949 after his attempt to summon Wotan backfired. The British Commonwealth and the Europa-Verein compete in space for global leadership: "swinging London" and "mod Berlin" compete to be the sorcerous capital of the world.

Taft-3 (Q6, 1997): As noted on p. B528, Taft-3 suffered a cataclysmic solar storm in 1908, followed by a steady increase in a peculiar sterilizing radiation, which contributed to the panic of the Depression, and hence to Taft's election in 1940. The second World War, waged with millions fewer young men, ended in Russian and German collapse. The last primate baby was born in 1965; TL7 civilization falls apart outside a few increasingly geriatric neo-feudal dictatorships.

Taft-4 (Q7, 2035): Following a decade-long wave of global UFO panics, Taft-4 underwent a sudden pole shift in 1918, burying Europe (and the South Pacific) under miles of ice. TL(6+3) Alaska and Antarctica are temperate colonies of China and Brazil, respectively, competing with India and the African League for global dominance. The original China and California are tropical, monster-infested jungles; the eastern U.S. is a paranoid, racist TL7 military dictatorship. Bizarrely, the polar radiation count in some wavelengths matches that of Taft-3, hence the reality's association with the other Taft worlds. (Robert A. Taft was the second of the

four emergency presidents during the aftermath of the pole shift, before the generals took over openly in 1963.)

Taft-5 (Q7, 1972): There is probably no connection between Taft's election in 1952 (he died of cancer less than a year into his term) and the 1961 discovery (or entry) of an immense, seemingly dead, artificial spacecraft in orbit around Saturn. The U.S. and Soviets are competing to reach the ship first, driving aerospace, at least, to TL(7+2); Infinity and Centrum are also trying to crash-build parachronic spacecraft that can reach the object while remaining stealthy enough to keep the Secret from two very suspicious, alert superpowers.

Taft-6 (Q5, 1956): Here, by contrast, nothing untoward seems to have happened, not even to President and Mrs. Taft. (In this worldline, she never suffered her debilitating stroke, and he hasn't got his cancer.) Instead, Taft is still in his second term as president, having pushed through major civil rights and anti-discrimination legislation, demobilized the national security state (except the Navy and a nuclear deterrent), and rolled back federal expansion and regulation in the economy. Infinity has agents roaming America and the world checking every monster and UFO sighting – and since this low-mana parallel has quite a few normal-mana patches, there's a lot of them. But the Patrol has found no brewing cataclysms, and nobody seems to practice magic openly, which means that the Cabal may already have taken over here. Or it means something else . . .

Taft-7 (Q5, 1952): A blasted discard of Things Man Was Not Meant to Know, described more fully in *Infinite Worlds* (p. 130). Like Taft-4, it received its designation thanks to its peculiar radiation signature.

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 scurried 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 *Yughoit* 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^A 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 out-world 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.

By contrast, the magic-wielding CIA from Merlin-1 (*Infinite Worlds*, pp. 134-135) has a fairly aggressive strategy underway. Merlin-1's America never lost Vietnam, and reacted to the discovery of Taft-1 (their first "victorious Soviet" worldline) with shock and outrage. Teams of Merlin-1 Black Berets and CIA paramilitaries operate all across Southeast Asia, covertly assisting the British and attempting to build up an anti-Communist network of tribes. However,

Can you imagine yourself in another world? Alien, unfamiliar, a world of terror, whose unknown joy is its greatest terror of all . . .

— A. Merritt, *"The Moon Pool"*

they've encountered something even worse than Red aggression: a scattered tribe of dwarfish cannibals (the Chaucha, or Tcho-Tcho) that uses magic – but not any kind of magic Merlin-1 understands. Worse, their own magic works unreliable or not at all here; transit between worlds is by a nexus on Ponape Island (U.S. territory on both Merlin-1 and Taft-1). The Merlin-1 teams' activities have attracted the attention of Stalin's UPUL, and a dire confrontation is inevitable.

If the Patrol stumbles over this covert clash, or if they ever do detect "Taft radiation" (which abounds on this worldline, albeit mostly in sealed Soviet research reactors), Infinity will respond by inserting a generalized investigation and troubleshooting team. (This might be the PCs, the team that saves the PCs' bacon, or the team that vanished just before the PCs were alerted.) Discovery of Stalin's Azathothic "magic" – which works on a no-mana worldline, which is to say potentially on Homeline – will terrify Infinity into further investigations. Each of these will no doubt discover some further horrific threat to all time and space, with the UPUL on their heels the whole way.

CAMPAIGNING IN TAFT-1

Each of these story arcs illustrates one or more of the narrative structures from *Horror* (pp. 100-101) as they might play out in Taft-1.

The Whisperers Out of Time (Nemesis)

The Patrol has finally caught a break on Taft-1: a Centrum defector has delivered solid intel on Case DEXTER, a plan to replace major figures in the U.S. and Western European defense establishments with cross-world duplicates. When enough of the American, British, and French scientific and military brass are under Centrum control, they will mount simultaneous coups d'état and take over the nuclear forces of the West. Centrum will provide the junta with a missile defense system and sufficient economic and technical aid to crush the Soviets completely – by containment or by nuclear decapitation. The PCs are the tip of the spear – the best qualified to infiltrate Taft-1 immediately and prepare the ground for a major Patrol counter-operation. If necessary, they could even mount a coup of their own (possibly in Bolivia or Portugal) to give the Patrol a secure base.

But all is not as it seems. Case DEXTER is a feint, designed by Centrum to draw a huge Infinity response. Centrum has deduced the nature of "Taft radiation," and perhaps even discovered the existence of Azathoth. Their plan is monstrous, yet simple: lure Infinity into Taft-1 in force, then wait for Stalin to discover the intruders. (If he seems uncharacteristically unsuspicious, Centrum will betray Infinity's presence to the UPUL.) When Stalin learns of the existence of Infinity and Homeline, he will leap at the opportunity to sacrifice an entire Earth to his cosmic master and unleash Azathoth on his newfound opponents. Nothing less than the existence of Homeline is at stake! The Patrolmen need to figure out the real nature of Case DEXTER before their own agency makes Centrum victory inevitable.

It's up to the GM whether Case DEXTER is an authorized operation of the Interworld Service, or the brainchild of a small conspiracy of high-Grade officers. Or of a small *cult* of high-Grade officers . . .

The Doom That Came to Innsmouth (Nemesis or Quest)

In February of 1928, the Bureau of Investigation coordinated Operation SAMSON, a joint project of the Treasury Department and the U.S. Navy to destroy the town of Innsmouth, Massachusetts. The archives and artifacts of Operation SAMSON – and perhaps even some of the prisoners removed from Innsmouth to an internment camp in Manzanar, California – survive. (Did FDR or President Taft release those prisoners? Move them? Did he even know they existed?) Someone in the U.S. government wants to find them.



Someone in the U.S. government has discovered, or Dreamed, what the real Soviet threat is. FBI agents have confiscated the research papers of Professor George G. Angell, of Brown University. Secret Servicemen have seized enigmatic gold statuary from small museums all along the New England coast. U.S. Navy submarines patrol a desolate stretch of the South Pacific with active sonar. Someone in the U.S. government wants to find their own Old One to counter Stalin's alliance with Azathoth. They want to make a treaty with the Deep Ones ('A'Nthleioi, *Infinite Worlds*, p. 130), to pit them against the Yughotiy. They want to close the Mythos gap.

The PCs are American government agents or military intelligence officers. They might be part of this secretive cabal, trying to build a balance of terror to keep America alive. In that case, this becomes a Quest campaign (with strong psychological horror overtones) as they search for evidence, battle mysterious Soviet-backed horrors, and try to achieve a lasting peace with an alien intelligence. Or they might realize that any interaction with such forces irretrievably corrupts everything America survives to represent: the only response to such monsters is more and bigger torpedoes. This version of the campaign has two Nemeses: both the Esoteric Order of Dagon (the Deep Ones' front network within America) and the misguided patriots who would sell their country to Cthulhu. In either version, Senator John F. Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) remains an ambiguous figure: Navy hero, Mafia connections, student of history, rumored to have presidential ambitions as well as certain . . . *appetites* . . .

At the Minarets of Madness (Picaresque/Quest)

The heroes are a team of MI6 agents, Royal Naval Intelligence officers, and SAS operators in the Middle East. Their

constant challenges include the war between Nasserite Yemen and the British-protected sultanate of Aden; the Ba'ath Party fascist insurgency against the weak and incompetent (but pro-British) King Faisal II of Iraq; and constant Soviet infiltration into Arabia via socialist Iran and Nasserite Egypt and Syria.

As if that weren't enough, strange things manifest beneath the desert's stars and the Euphrates' marshes: ghouls (*Horror*, p. 60), lilitu (*Horror*, p. 93), serpent-folk (*Horror*, p. 84), various Minions (*Horror*, pp. 75-76), gill-men (*Horror*, p. 153), byles (*Horror*, p. 153), and shapeshifting horrors that the heroes' opposite numbers in Unit 8200 (Israel's military SIG-INT unit) call *shaggath* ("the fornication"; see *Metamorphic Invader*, *Horror*, p. 85). All these things lead human cults, conspire with the UPUL, or simply raven and slay where they can: stopping them surely falls under one's duty to the Crown.

After uncovering enough weirdness, the heroes piece clues together to believe that the legendary lost city of Irem of the Pillars – somewhere deep in the Rub' al-Khali, the Empty Quarter of Arabia – holds the key. They encounter the Clavis Argentum, a strange occult society with intelligence connections going back to the First World War – and possibly back to the time of Sir Randolph Carter, a magus of Elizabeth I's court. They learn of Lord Northam's 1922 expedition into Arabia that not only found Irem but an entirely unknown and nameless city beyond it – and of Lord Northam's complete psychotic breakdown afterward.

Can they get permission from their superiors to seek out Irem? Indeed they can: "C," the head of MI6, is surprisingly amenable. Of course, his own father searched for Irem in the 1930s – but Sir Kim Philby is sure they'll succeed where his father failed. He promises them the full resources of the Service . . . as long as they brief him fully on any operations they undertake, of course.



The Great Race seemed to form a single, loosely knit nation or league, with major institutions in common, though there were four definite divisions. The political and economic system of each unit was a sort of fascistic socialism . . .

– H.P. Lovecraft, *The Shadow Out of Time*

CHAPTER SIX

TSAREVICH

About 14 million years ago on Homeline, something plowed into the Ries valley in Bavaria, splashing pieces of moldavite, a green glass-like mineral, over the countryside. Fragments fell up to 300 miles to the east, in Moravia. On the worldline called Tsarevich, that something was a reality shard (p. B534). And it was much, much bigger. Pieces fell as far away as Greece and Bulgaria. Some made their way into ancient trading networks, worked into jewelry for Egyptian mummies or set in the hilts

of swords. Some were carved into idols and carried by pilgrims and wanderers to Central Asia or the mountains of Scotland. Some were discovered by scholars, and taken to museums and private collections in Chicago, Tokyo, and London. But most of it by far stayed in the ground, in Bohemia, Croatia, and Transylvania. There, in those countries along the edge of Europe, “east of Switzerland and west of Hell,” reality is just a little weaker. Just a little different.

A PHANTOM IS HAUNTING EUROPE

In June of 1815, Tsar Alexander I of Russia took time away from the campaign against Napoleon to receive the mystic, millenarian-minded Baroness Krüdener. With her medium Madame Kummer, she conducted a séance for the tsar, Kummer using a piece of green Moravian glass as her scrying stone. The spirits, proclaimed the Baroness, urged Alexander to begin a new era of peace and Christian fellowship on Earth, creating a Holy Alliance of all nations to prevent war. The revelation fired the imagination of the tsar, and even moreso the erratic, moody Tsarevich Constantine. His enthusiasm was contagious, and acceptance of Krüdener's brand of metaphysical pietism exploded throughout European society – not least because it seemed to be the key to getting the attention of the most powerful man in Europe. (On Homeline, the tsarevich was not present at the séance, and the medium foolishly tried to mulct the tsar for a subsidy.) Alexander insisted on making the Holy Alliance the central treaty of the post-Napoleonic settlement, and the tsarevich toured Europe inflaming popular support for a “Christian alliance against war.” The pre-existing Russian tendency to conflate the tsar, the Motherland, and the divine accelerated further, driven by Tsar Alexander's embrace of the Baroness' divine mission and his acclaim abroad as the conqueror of the Napoleonic Antichrist.

When Constantine became tsar upon his brother Alexander's death in 1825, he enjoyed a surge of popularity at home and abroad unequalled in Russian history.

Tsarevich, 2002

Current Affairs

Parachronic radiation breeds monsters in a world of slowed social and technological change.

Divergence Point

1815; the presence of the Tsarevich Constantine at a séance further popularizes the post-Romantic wave of metaphysical sentiment, which manifests as patriotism in Russia and pacifism in the West.

Major Civilizations

Orthodox (empire with satellites), Western (multipolar), Japanese (empire), Indic (unitary).

Great Powers

Russian Empire (dictatorship, CR5), United States (representative democracy, CR3, CR5 for blacks), British Empire and Dominions (representative democracies, CR3, CR4-5 in colonies), “Quadruple Monarchy” (feudal dictatorship, CR4), Japanese Empire (military oligarchy, CR5), Dominion-Republic of India (representative democracy with caste system, CR4-5), France (representative democracy, CR3), Kingdom of Italy (dictatorship, CR4).

Worldline Data

TL: 6 (many European backwaters still TL5; individual genius prototypes as high as TL(6+3) or TL6[^])

Mana Level: low

Quantum: 5

Infinity Class: P9

Centrum Zone: Inaccessible

While pacifist movements in England prevented aid to the Greek rebels against Turkey, delighted Russian nationalists hailed the Russian naval campaigns that gained Greek independence and “liberated Christian soil.” During Constantine’s reign, he promoted and purged generals at seeming random, allowing ambitious younger officers to rise. This, along with a much stronger local transport and supply system in Crimea – established by religious communes founded by Alexander I at Krüdener’s urging – put Russia in a surprisingly strong position when the Crimean War broke out in 1854. (Also, unlike on Homeline, the brilliant Admiral Nakhimov didn’t

get shot by a sniper in 1855.) The British and French bogged down besieging Sevastopol, while their populations rioted to protest the war. (The radical poet Tennyson wrote a stinging satire, “The Curse of the Light Brigade,” painting the British troops as the horsemen of Apocalypse.) Once the French troops mutinied, frustrated by the incompetent two-year siege and radicalized by pacifist propaganda from home, the War was over. Russia had an essentially free hand in the Balkans and Turkey for two decades, and split off virtually all of Turkey’s “Christian” possessions in Europe, Lebanon, and the Caucasus.

The Tsarevich Curse

The Tsarevich Curse is fundamentally a factor of drama, not of biology or physics. Its “job” is to create a monster for the PCs to deal with. Bearing this concern in mind, the etiology of the Curse is as follows.

Onset

If the scenario is a “monster hunt,” then the victim of the Curse is a distant or even unknown NPC, usually a Tsarevich native. The victim might also be a close associate, such as a Dependent or Ally, or a “guest star” such as a scholar or dignitary the Patrol assigns the agents to escort. In either of these cases (or that of a PC, if he is already Cursed, p. B129), the GM can simply decide the victim “catches” the Curse by fiat. In some games, the GM can do the same to anyone; in others, a veneer of objectivity (or the spice of randomness) is *de rigueur*.

For such games, each main character should make a modified Will roll during the potential Curse-triggering event. Some sample events, with modifiers:

Parachronic travel: A penalty equal to the margin of failure on any relevant Electronics Operation (Parachronic) roll.

Exposure to a reality shard on Tsarevich: -1 if within a mile, -2 if seen, -4 if touched, or -7 if used.

Reality quake: -1 per point of local pre-quake Reality Stress Level (*Infinite Worlds*, p. 78).

Contact with a contagious monster: The modifiers under *Contagion* (p. B443), at -3, and the rules for Infectious Attack (p. B140).

The person with the largest margin of failure gets to be the monster. If nobody fails, more monsters attack.

Course

If the Tsarevich Curse strikes an NPC, the GM can accelerate its development such that the climax of its evil coincides with the heroes’ visit. If it strikes a PC (or close NPC associate such as a Dependent or an escorted scholar), the GM should apply a “Curse lens” to the unlucky victim, such as:

Hyde Syndrome: Delusions (Crucial Memory; *Horror*, p. 24) [-15]; Nightmares (9) [-7]; Split Personality (12) [-15]; Warp (Accessibility, Only if unobserved, -20%; Accessibility, Only in “Hyde” personality, -40%; Accessibility, Only places

you could walk/climb to, given time, -20%; Extra Carrying Capacity, Medium, +20%; Range Limit, -50%) [20] (see *Ghostly Movement, Horror*, p. 20); plus a cocktail of “evil” disadvantages for the “Hyde” personality equal to the character’s current mental disadvantage total. *-17 points*.

Ka-Possession: Delusions (Crucial Memory; *Horror*, p. 24) [-15]; Magery 1 (Accessibility, Only for “ka-personality,” -40%) [9]; Nightmares (9) [-7]; Split Personality (12) [-15]; and five Egyptian spells that will be either (H) IQ [2] or (VH) IQ-1 [2]. The “ka-personality” replaces -14 points of the character’s existing mental disadvantages with Obsession (9) (Find reincarnated love, Kill enemy, etc.) [-7] and Selfish (9) [-7]. *-18 points*.

Lycanthropy: Delusions (Crucial Memory; *Horror*, p. 24) [-15]; Disadvantageous Alternate Form (Only at night during a full moon, *Horror*, p. 18; Wolf-Man, *Horror*, p. 62) [6]; Discriminatory Smell [15]; Dislike (Silver) [-1]; Distinctive Features (Eyebrows meet in middle; third and fourth finger of equal lengths) [-1]; Frightens Dogs [-1]; Precognition (Only those you are fated to kill, -40%) [15]; Revulsion (Wolfsbane) [-5]; Secret (Werewolf) [-30]. *-17 points*.

Vampirism: Hard to Kill 4 [8]; Infectious Attack [-5]; Night Vision 5 [5]; Restricted Diet (Human Blood; Substitution, Animal Blood, Retching, -50%) [-10]; Uncontrollable Appetite (12) (Human Blood) [-15]; Vampiric Bite [30]; Weakness (Sunlight; 1d/minute; Fatigue Only, -50%) [-30]. *-17 points*.

Newly Cursed monsters “front-load” the negative effects of their condition. Any character points spent by a cursed person must go toward buying advantages provided by their monster form, until the curse is lifted. (The GM may add or intensify further monstrous disadvantages at those times.) A kindly GM might allow those points to be reassigned on that happy day.

Cure

The GM can decide how to remove any given instance of the Tsarevich Curse: seek out a local mad scientist, especially one with access to forbidden research; magic; kill the monster that infected the victim; find (and, usually, steal) the relevant reality shard so that Sheldrake Section can try to reverse the effect; and so forth.

Only the rise of Austria provided any balance. Prussia bid for dominance in central Europe, but the accidental destruction of Hanover in 1866 by an experimental “infernal engine” toppled Bismarck and the war party from power once their role in funding it became known. Germany became part of the “Quadruple Monarchy” under Emperor Rudolf III in 1889, along with Hungary and Bohemia; the new power began to compete with Russia in the Balkans, further splintering the nascent states into a patchwork of co-dominiums, principalities, and pocket kingdoms. The Second Holy Alliance, negotiated by Tsar Constantine II in 1923 to avert a crisis over Indian independence, remains the basis of international relations even four generations later. Austria and Russia realize that any war between them will likely destroy both empires, and “Christian isolationist” America showed little interest in Japan’s plans for China once Japan assured President Moody that all Western concessions and missionary activity there would be respected.

THE SLEEP OF REASON BRINGS FORTH MONSTERS

Contrary to some theories, it’s probably not the 150 years of peace that have led to Tsarevich’s technological stagnation, or even the strong religious tenor of society. (Homeline Victorian society was equally religious, for example.) Instead, Infinity sociologists blame a mix of factors: the initial burst of metaphysical, Romantic mysticism in 1815 encouraged a much more widespread Luddite movement, and in the wake of the Hanover Tragedy, both law and society turned decisively against technological invention. German universities – the model for universities around the globe both here and on Homeline – closed down their science departments, turning to art, literature, theology, social sciences, and history instead. (Some sciences, like biology

and astronomy, survived the purges in some universities.) In the democracies, Christian pressure groups mobilized legislators to tax the “dark Satanic mills” and provide poor relief with the proceeds. The autocracies were, if anything, even easier to divert from the dangers of technology.

There’s another factor, one Infinity sociologists don’t include: a lot of the scientists on this worldline are, for lack of a better term, *mad*. Just such a scientist (a Polish engineer in Prussian service, whose name Infinity hasn’t uncovered) destroyed Hanover trying to build a sodium-mercury engine to power a submarine for war with Britain. Other cases were less dramatically destructive, but no less deranged. One Heinrich Frankenstein built a Creature from corpses and brought it to electrical life in 1905; its rampages killed dozens of people, including a Norwegian Arctic expedition. It remains unclear whether the prevalence of reality shards in optical and other scientific equipment built in Germany, or some other factor, causes this phenomenon. Reality shards almost certainly trigger the numerous vampire, werewolf, and other monster encounters in southeastern Europe – those that can’t be explained as parachronozoids, anyway.

*But details of these reanimated bodies
of the dead – the un-dead as we call them
– are so obscure that many biologists will
not believe they exist.*

– Dr. Van Helsing,
in *The Horror of Dracula*

OUTWORLD OPERATIONS

It gets worse. Patrolmen visiting this worldline talk archly about the “Tsarevich Curse” or shrug and say “Murphy must have been from Tsarevich.” Missions to Tsarevich have a distressing tendency to go sideways, attracting weirdness and entanglements galore even for seemingly routine survey or technical ops. But it’s not that Murphy comes from Tsarevich; rather, the Patrol brings Murphy with it.

The substrate of meteoritic reality shards in this worldline’s Central Europe (and elsewhere) reacts energetically to the release of parachronic radiation, affecting nearby humans (and perhaps some animals) who possess receptive genetic profiles. For some, it simply transmits dreams from their parallel selves – visions of other worlds in which they are serial killers, mad scientists, or demonically possessed – all of which tend to bleed over into the Tsarevich-based persona as well. (Often, a Tsarevich scientist will “dream up” a method of reviving the dead, turning invisible, animating a mandrake-woman, or creating a vampiric fog. Experimenting with such *Traumtechnologie* seldom ends well.)

For others, it actually alters their genetics to match parallel or alien versions of themselves: lycanthropic, vampiric, or worse. For still others, it alters their brainwaves, pheromones, or other attributes to make them hugely attractive (or tasty, or

both) to predatory (and infectious) monsters. And it opens a few lucky victims to actual possession by a parallel genetic relative, perhaps an executed murderer or an Egyptian sorcerer from a worldline with a “present” in the second millennium B.C.

Another batch of Tsarevich monster sightings come about courtesy of the Cabal, whose magi and monsters are flooding in like Forty-niners to the California gold fields. Competition over exceptional reality shards has already come to blows at least once, and open inter-Lodge “gang war” has broken out at least twice so far. The Wheel of Ptah Lodge currently holds the upper hand, but it has to bring in ever more deadly forces to keep its rivals from usurping control of prime sorcerous turf in Transylvania or along the Adriatic coast. (Pockets of higher mana dot the region, usually on the sites of old temples and ruins.) The Patrol finds itself attempting to keep the Secret in a Hammer Films “monster rally” while trying desperately to avoid the Tsarevich Curse (see p. 25) on its own personnel.

Given the dangers of exposure to parachronic radiation while on Tsarevich, the Patrol is arguing for a reclassification from P9 to Z3. Unfortunately, like most “Edwardian” worldlines, Tsarevich is hugely popular as a tourist destination. (Being on Quantum 5, travel to Tsarevich is also relatively economical.)

Homeline's Russia (which has both sentimental and economic ties to this world's Russian Empire) constantly vetoes any UNIC measure to shut down traffic between Tsarevich and Homeline. Infinity itself has plenty of scholars who want to study the parallel more closely than they could on a "Z" world with tighter access, for this world has its mysteries great and small.

The presence of a "Frankenstein Monster" (albeit one closer to the movies than the novel, which Mary Shelley wrote but suppressed on this worldline after her conversion to Methodist

evangelism) implies that Tsarevich is a myth parallel. Or, argue the pro-reclassification "closers," it could be yet more evidence of crossworld contamination: Nexus Oversight has tracked at least 30 gates, trods, and banefogs (like banestorms, but in the form of eerie mists) between Ingolstadt and Istanbul alone. Fortunately, few of them stay open more than a night or three (the length of the full moon, say), and even if they reopen, their cycles are irregular.

CAMPAIGNING IN TSAREVICH

Each of these story arcs illustrates one or more of the narrative structures from *Horror* (pp. 100-101) as they might play out in Tsarevich.

Carpathian Eagle (Escape)

When last we left our heroes, they had fallen afoul of the Order of the Eagle: a secret society of evil aviators based in the Republic of Carpathia. To the outside world, the Order of the Eagle exists only to reward aerial bravery and endurance, and to test and fly ever-more-dangerous experimental aircraft. In truth, these fiendish fliers are but the human puppets of an immense hovering Intelligence that dwells 30,000 feet above the Balkans: a monstrous "sky shark" evolved for the starkly alien conditions of the upper atmosphere. For millennia, It floated there alone, save for the lesser monstrosities that flapped or rolled through the clouds around It. As pilots flew into Its perception, It killed those who It deemed unsuitable, and spared those who would do Its bidding. Those whom It spared, It then brought together as the Order of the Eagle.

The Order's agents in the Carpathian government have closed the borders with Poland and Hungary to the north and west. The only way out is deeper into the Thing's shadow. With the heroes trapped in Carpathia, the Order begins its final pursuit: hounding and abducting loved ones, destroying allies and friends, isolating its victims for ultimate destruction. The only alternatives are a desperate chase across the Balkans, or constructing (or capturing) an aircraft that not only can elude the Eagles but can challenge the Thing in the cloudy jungle It calls home.

The aircraft of the Order of the Eagle are TL(6+1) or TL6^, with reality shards available to power (or justify) aerostats,

aeronefs, or flying wings if need be. The GM can pick any favorite weird aircraft from Jules Verne to *Luftwaffe: 1946* and fling them into the skies to harry the heroes. The "normal" aircraft industry in Tsarevich is TL6, recalling 1920s Homeline: one or two long-haul seaplanes, canvas-and-wood fighters, and nascent dirigibles. Experimental aircraft outside Carpathia follow similar lines to the Eagles': mad science and engineers' fever dreams.

Model the atmospheric Intelligence as an Ancient One (*Horror*, pp. 74-75) with Flight (p. B56) and a further battery of psionic powers.

The Crimson Cult (Gauntlet/Nemesis)

The Cult of the Crimson Moon has planned and waited centuries for this moment: the total lunar eclipse of January 9-10, 2001. Their wave of murders and sacrifices across Europe went off without a hitch – although it did alert a number of would-be heroes and occult adventurers. But it matters not: the Cult succeeded in channeling the energy of the Smaragdine One, the crystalline god-form that dwells beneath the soil of eastern Europe. From now until the next total lunar eclipse over Europe (on November 8-9, 2003), their might can only grow. They will seize the reins of sorcerous power across the world, make and unmake governments, raise demigods and command them, and establish an occult empire that will rule for a thousand years. Those who dare to oppose the Crimson Cult will pay in a welter of blood.

Crimson Cultists have Power Investiture (Smaragdine One) that increases by one level each full moon after the eclipse. In addition to any spells that the GM assigns them, they have +1 per level to use, evade, control, command, or otherwise influence any reality shard, shard effect, or shard-related being in Tsarevich. (They still need any required skills or spells to do so – but they've been preparing and training for this moment for centuries.) This power is *halved* outside the impact zone of the reality shard – in general, the zone falls between the Rhine and the Black Sea, although the GM can sketch whatever specific boundaries work best for his campaign.

The PCs were all affected in some fashion by the Crimson Cult's initial ritual – most likely, the Cult killed someone they loved, although player creativity is always welcome. The campaign begins on the night of January 9, 2001, or a few months afterward. The GM can bring them all together through a Patron who has put the pieces together, or (for an extra challenge) have each player make up multiple characters, building several investigating parties all tracing the Cult of the Crimson Moon across Europe and the world.

*But who in that choice company
With clouded brow stands silently?
Unknown to all he doth appear,
A vision desolate and drear
Doth seem to him the festal scene.*

– Alexander Pushkin,
Eugene Onegin

(Rotating GMs can cooperate to run multiple adventurer groups, with the semi-coordinated Cult as the common Nemesis.) As the Cult kills off investigators, the survivors discover each other, until by the end of the campaign, each player has one veteran standing. If they can survive the Cult's onslaught until the second eclipse, they can reverse the ritual and destroy it forever.

Infinity Patrolmen, Cabalists, and similar outworld heroes who were present in the worldline on January 9-10, 2001 discover that the ritual has "pinned" them in Tsarevich: they cannot travel between worlds by any means until the second eclipse. If this seems too drastic, merely apply a -1 to any roll to shift between worlds for each full moon since the first eclipse – and any failure snaps the traveler into Tsarevich. This makes a great "unwilling allies" setup for Patrol-Cabal player groups.

Satanic Rites of Dracula (Nemesis)

Whether he's the Hungarian monster of Stoker's novel, a revenant Wallachian voivode Vlad Țepeș (**Horror**, p. 57), or the bloodthirsty vampire clan patriarch portrayed by Christopher Lee, Dracula is a natural running villain for campaigns or one-shots in Tsarevich. His specific plans can vary with the GM's whim, as long as they involve the PCs.

- Dracula is the Count of Transylvania, a significant figure in Hapsburg court politics. (Perhaps he poses as his own descendant, or killed and replaced the former count after his resurrection.) He cannot be killed without destabilizing the Quadruple Monarchy – something explicitly forbidden by the Patrol, if the PCs are subject to its orders. He is also a blood-thirsty vampire, a cruel ruler, and the head of an occult criminal conspiracy rivaling the Cabal for evil and avarice. In this capacity, he has wronged the heroes. He has a literal army of followers, as well as formidable magical and vampiric protections.

- If the GM doesn't want to actually put Dracula front and center in European politics, he can be a Secret Master in Europe's conspiratorial underground, the low-profile lord of all Tsarevich's vampires, or merely a horrifically dangerous and wealthy monster dwelling in a remote castle somewhere in the Balkans.

- Dracula wants access to new worlds. If the PCs are Cabalists, he joins a rival Lodge to theirs and immediately sets about accumulating reality shards to overwhelm his foes. If the PCs are Patrol, he begins a covert program of testing them, observing them, sending monsters and trouble their way to gauge their reactions and uncover as many of their outworld secrets as he can. The GM can recapitulate Stoker's novel: First, Dracula recruits swagmen to his service, "Renfields"

a single vulnerable Patrolman, or "Harkers" an ISWAT recruiter into providing him a cover as a valuable asset. Then, he smuggles himself across the worlds into Homeline (or wherever) and builds his power base there. (Sleeping in his native soil, impregnated as it is with reality shard fragments, allows him to use all his vampiric powers even on a no-mana worldline.) Finally, he begins eliminating any threat to his new position, starting with one of the PCs' associates.

- Dracula is obsessed with one of the PCs; if female, he desires her as a vampire bride. This might not be the romantic (if twisted) motive of Coppola's Dracula; he may need her bloodline for some arcane purpose, wish to use her to advance politically in human society, believe her to be the reincarnation of some important ally such as Nitocris or Elizabeth Bathory, or plan to suborn her specialized scientific or magical knowledge for his purposes.

Model Dracula as a vampire lord (**Horror**, p. 59) with any appropriate Allies, Status, Wealth, etc. as indicated above.

Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet (Quest)

Using new calculating engines developed at the University of Krakow, astronomers have tracked the reality shard that hit

Tsarevich ("the Ries bolide") 14 million years ago back to the planet Venus. Astronomers theorize that Venus is a younger world than Earth, earlier in its geological development: a world of volcanoes, jungles, and vast soda-water oceans. Its native life might resemble Earth's dinosaurs; it might feature some alternate evolutionary track leading to sentient octopoids or to a race of parthenogenetic women. It might be home to alien light-bringers, or to seductive psychic vampires. More to the point, its crystal mountains doubtless hold immense veins of magical power – enough to make the man who commands them a god on two planets.

Whether their own ambitions or the plans of a hated rival drive them, the PCs want to get to Venus. The GM might simply start the campaign by reading the above paragraph and asking players to build characters who want to go to Venus, or introduce this goal in tempting fashion during an ongoing campaign set on Tsarevich. Getting to Venus almost certainly involves mad science: probably a rocket, but it's surely too early to rule out an immense cannon, an anti-gravity screen, a teleportation field, astral projection, or opening a wormhole. The heroes may have to hunt down lost plans of earlier planeteers, spy on their rivals, accumulate immense wealth, summon the ghost of a dead inventor, or just buckle down to a series of gadgeteering rolls (p. B475). Anything at all might await the voyagers on the Planet of Storms – although it hardly seems sporting to send the bold adventurers to roast on the acid-drenched hell world that is Homeline Venus.



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