

INTRODUCTION

This world to me is like a lasting storm . . .

– William Shakespeare, *Pericles*

Welcome to Yrth – the world of the Banestorm. Here humanity and a dozen other races, orphans and authors of the storm alike, wield swords and spells in a struggle for survival and glory. Although trolls and dragons lurk in the dark places, the worst dangers of all may be found in the verdant forests and great palaces . . .

ABOUT THIS BOOK

GURPS Banestorm is a guide to fantasy RPG adventures on the world of Yrth, particularly the continent of Ytarria. Yrth largely resembles our own world save that magic works there and none of its original sapient or semi-intelligent races are human. However, an ancient dimensional vortex known as the Banestorm has periodically transplanted humans and others to Ytarria from Earth . . . and elsewhere.

This book is a supplement for *GURPS Fourth Edition*, and Yrth-based games can be run with nothing more than this and the two volumes of the *GURPS Basic Set*. However, many gamers may wish to mine the extensive list of spells and rule guidelines in *GURPS Magic* as well as the general campaign concerns found in *GURPS Fantasy*.

Most of *GURPS Banestorm* is intended to be read by both GMs and players. However, GMs may ask players not to read Chapter 3, which details Ytarria's cultures; there are one or two secrets revealed there. On the other hand, some GMs might prefer to treat some of what's said there as old wives' tales, uncorroborated rumors, or complete falsehoods, just to keep players who "cheat" uncertain and off-balance. We definitely encourage such stratagems. Chapter 6 is mostly aimed at GMs but provides suggestions and outlines rather than details. Players may find this section useful when constructing their characters' backgrounds.

Publication History

The *GURPS* fantasy world of Yrth is actually older than *GURPS* itself. It first appeared in 1985 as the setting for *Orcslayer*, by Warren Spector and Steve Jackson; this adventure focused on the region of Caithness and worked with the core combat system for *GURPS*, published the following year.

In 1986, a larger world-rendering appeared in the first edition of *GURPS Fantasy*, by Steve Jackson. A general guide to running fantasy games in *GURPS*, it also outlined Yrth as a sample setting, still focusing on Caithness. That land reappeared in 1988 as the location for Aaron Allston and J. David George's *GURPS Fantasy: Harkwood*, a campaign setting and scenario based on a feudal fief. In 1989, Alexander von Thorn's *GURPS Fantasy: Tredroy* looked at the "City of Three Laws." Kirk Tate and Janet Naylor wrote a completely new 1990 edition titled *GURPS Fantasy: The Magical World of Yrth*, which plumbed the mysteries of Ytarria even further.

Yrth was the official "default" setting for *GURPS* fantasy games, but after 1990 it was only lightly developed, notably in the 1991 anthology *GURPS Fantasy Adventures*, which featured scenarios by Chris W. McCubbin, David Dunham, Walter Milliken, and David L. Pulver. *Pyramid* authors continued to discuss Yrth;

it also received passing mentions in various "generic" fantasy-oriented *GURPS* supplements over the years.

This book returns to Yrth, advancing its history 15 years from its last substantial depiction and bringing game mechanics in line with *GURPS Fourth Edition*. We've broadened the general scope in some spots, explored more detail in others – and taken the opportunity to change a few things.

Ytarria

This book, like its predecessors, focuses on the continent of Ytarria. Located in Yrth's northern hemisphere, Ytarria spans roughly 3,000 miles. Local climes range from parched deserts and subtropical forests in the south to chilly subarctic regions in the north. Humans have settled a number of outlying islands but maintain contact with mainland cultures. Some nonhuman races dwell under the waves themselves.

Although other continents exist on Yrth, ocean travel is difficult. Ships are likely to be beset by powerful currents, wild storms, monsters, and supernatural strangeness. GMs may view the lack of development of Ytarria's neighbors as an invitation to design and populate these places themselves; however, *GURPS Banestorm* is explicitly written to provide plenty of adventuring opportunities as it stands.

About the Authors

Phil Masters has been playing RPGs since 1978; his first professional writing appeared in 1980, his first RPG book in 1990, and his first work for Steve Jackson Games (*GURPS Arabian Nights*) in 1993. Since then, he's worked on many more *GURPS* books, including the *Discworld* and *Hellboy* RPGs (the latter also with Jonathan Woodward). He's also written for White Wolf, Guardians of Order, and Eden Studios, among others. He lives in the U.K., runs a biweekly game, and sometimes helps organize RPG conventions.

Jonathan Woodward, a freelance writer and computer professional, is the author or co-author of *GURPS Ogre*, *GURPS Magic Items 3*, the *Hellboy Sourcebook and Roleplaying Game*, and *Transhuman Space: In The Well*, all for Steve Jackson Games. He has also co-authored several books for White Wolf Publishing. In addition to roleplaying, he collects books and deconstructs maps. He lives in Massachusetts, with a summer home in Sahud.