

## Infinite Blues: A Cold War Fever Dream

**Gerald Brennan**

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The fate of Earth hangs in the balance in Gerald Brennan's alternate history novel *Infinite Blues*.

The year is 1968, and the Cold War is in a deep freeze. An astronaut arrives at a space station orbiting Earth. He is there on a secret mission to spy on the Soviet Union by photographing military targets from space. Soon after he arrives, he realizes that there is more than meets the eye to the job that he has been hired to do: his investigation reveals a plot that threatens the existence of the entire planet.

Returning to Earth, the astronaut struggles to fit in with his family life, even as the plot he stumbled onto draws him further and further in. Everyone is spying on everyone. The situation between the United States and the Soviet Union escalates at a steady pace. Still, no one seems to know who is pulling the strings; and, if no one can be held accountable, how do you stop a nuclear apocalypse?

The unnamed astronaut, by remaining anonymous, becomes a stand-in for everyday people. Because the astronaut is placed at the center of the tale, which is made to unravel at a slow but steady pace, and because everything takes place in an alternate timeline following World War II, the danger of real-life nuclear weapons is brought to the fore; all it takes is one person to make a decision, and Earth will be destroyed. No answer to the question of how to deescalate a nuclear threat is provided; instead, the ending becomes a choose-your-own adventure to decide the ultimate fate of planet Earth.

*Infinite Blues* weaves a playful intrigue about the threat of mutually assured destruction into a story set in an alternate Cold War America.

ERIKA HARLITZ KERN (March / April 2021)

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