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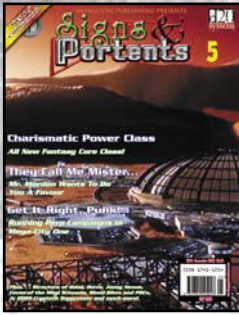


Karl Haas is with the UN Forces in Kabul and when he goes out on patrol, he likes to take a copy of our Babylon 5 game with him. Go figure.

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**On The Cover:** Mars Dome from Babylon 5. Look out for the B5 Companion, coming soon!

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## Editorial



Hi all,

Here we are with our first ever Christmas issue of S&P, and I find myself writing the editorial in October! That tells you a bit about the publishing business. I'm sure sometimes people think that the magazine is produced a few days before its release. If only!

Things are pretty much settling into a nice rhythm in the Signs & Portents department at Mongoose Hall now. By now I guess you are all familiar with the team of writers we have, although I am always keen to see new submissions, so if you have something in mind and would like to share it, why not get in touch. You can find my email address on the Write For The Mongoose page. We like a variety of styles here, as you can probably guess from the approach taken by two of our regular columnists. Shannon Kalvar is continuing with his discussion on Good and Evil in gaming Symposium while Jonny Nexus provides advice on how to rob Santa. It doesn't get much more diverse than that. We've even got a *girl* writing in this issue! Yes, I know, calm down. Lucy Bond is going to address issues pertinent to the ladies amongst us, which will probably be something of an eye opener.

There is plenty going on in the Editorial Department as well. Senior Editor Paul Tucker is lording it over the rest of his team, fleshed out now by new boy Ian Belcher, who has been busy 3.5-ing everything in sight. In fact, there are so many people here now that the weekly gaming group has split into two groups, one playing a Dredd campaign and the other erupting into the Star Wars universe. You'll all be thrilled to know that the next Mongoose Hall series will focus on our attempts to destabilise the Republic, and will include flying layabout Canaan Banana and his partner Volo Solarin, along with a gang of inept young Jedi including the first Gungan padawan, Tona Boles. Who can say Dark Side points? Rich Neale is penning this one, so I'd better get ready for some of my own medicine...

Continuing with our theme of servicemen using Mongoose games, we have a very interesting shot of Karl Haas from Germany in Kabul. This took some doing, but thanks go to Mongoose Can-Do Guy Ted Chang who has been in contact with Karl.

Well, I've got all this way without hardly a reference to Christmas, but I couldn't end without wishing all of you a very merry Christmas. Special thoughts go out to the guys in the Headhunters, 4/3<sup>rd</sup> ACR, and Karl and his people in Kabul. Spare a thought for the guys who won't be home for Christmas.

Here's hoping that all your characters survive the festive season and that the experience points flow freely.

Have a good one,

*Ian*



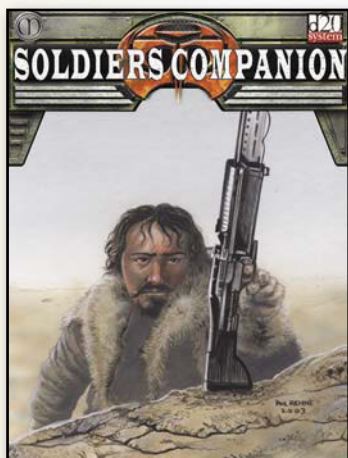
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(s03)

Babylon 5 created by J. Michael Straczynski



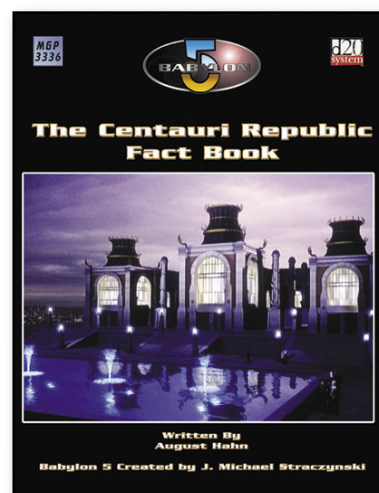
# EYE ON MONGOOSE

## New Releases This Month



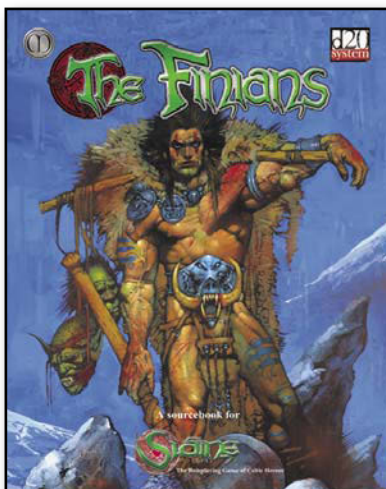
While displaced from the spotlight by officers who command the might of war vehicles – from tanks and aircraft to the WarMeks themselves, – soldiers are still an indispensable force in any army, national, private, or mercenary. WarMek pilots consider infantry the bottom rung of the military ladder, used to squashing them like bugs under the tonnage of their machines and watching their manoeuvres as those of insects. But soldiers know better. They know that they are no match for a Mek in direct confrontation, but they also know that Meks just cannot do some of the tasks they carry out with their eyes closed. A WarMek may deal with difficult terrain, but it will never beat the mobility of rangers; they can infiltrate enemy positions, but not with the proficiency and sheer inconspicuousness of an advance recon squad. A WarMek's sensors may collect a lot of electronic information, but it will never beat the infiltration specialists in the depth of his discoveries. A team of WarMeks will flatten an enemy building, but it lacks the finesse of the special forces that will get inside to rescue the hostages, disable anti-mek and anti-aerial defences and leave none-the-wiser.

This 128-page rules supplement is a comprehensive collection of options for infantry-type characters in the Armageddon: 2089 roleplaying game. The characters may be soldiers or officers from any branch of the military, but they have one thing in common: they face combat face to face, unprotected by tons of armour and weaponry. Whether working for a nation, a corporation or as part of a mercenary company, soldiers are the very definition of versatility, choosing their careers in different fields of warfare, including covert operations and military intelligence as much as special forces and demolitions training.



Spanning 200 sumptuous, full-colour pages, this hardback book is the very latest in the Babylon 5 line, providing everything players and Games Masters need to know about setting scenarios or characters within the Centauri Republic. The Centauri Republic is a decaying civilisation, filled with decadence and a race whose expansionist policies changed the shape of the galaxy forever. Centauri Prime, the homeworld of the Centauri, and its many minor colonies are all fully detailed in this sourcebook. Here, fans of Babylon 5 will learn the complete history of the Centauri; their rise and fall from power, the intricacies of their hierarchy and the intrigues of their court. Players will also gain access to hundreds of new prestige classes, feats and items of equipment. Also fully detailed are the military forces of the Centauri Republic, as well as an entire social system for playing the great game on Centauri Prime. It's time to put on your best coat, brush your crest and plan the demise of your closest friend.



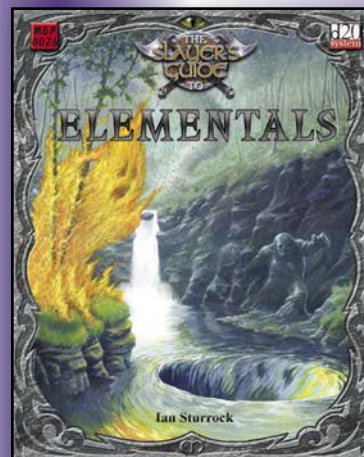


The Finians are a somewhat mysterious tribe, not so much due to deliberate efforts at obfuscation as in the case of the Tribe of the Shadows, but simply because of their geographic isolation in Alba to the far north of Tir Nan Og. What the other tribes know for certain is that the Finians are as fierce and valiant as even the Sessair in battle. This mighty Alban tribe is also noted for the dourness of its members and their relative indifference to what the other tribes regard as the essentials of life, such as fodder, fire, flax and frigg (as Sláine puts it). It is said that a Finian warrior could last a week without loving a woman, a month without food, a winter without a fire or a year without clothes such as his astonishing fortitude.

For this reason the Finians are also known as the Tribe that Endures. The Finians would sooner starve to the last man, woman and child than give in, and due to their unmatched endurance it is likely that any besiegers would run out of food or fall victim to ice-cold winter long before even the first Finian died of starvation.

This much awaited 32 page release is the fourth in Mongoose Publishing's series of Tribe books for the Sláine RPG. The Finians book concentrates especially on new character options and spells, because of two strong Finian traditions – their famed military academies and the legends of the Second Sight.

The Slayer's Guide to Elementals focuses on one of the most enduring and under-utilised of all d20 monsters – the elemental. Detailing their nature, physiology, sub-races and far more, this 128-page sourcebook continues the tradition of the Slayer's Guides to Undead, Dragons, Demons and Giants in comprehensively studying one of fantasy's most iconic images. Written by award-winning designer Ian Sturrock, the Slayer's Guide to Elementals takes a stylish look at the worlds and powers of elemental creatures.



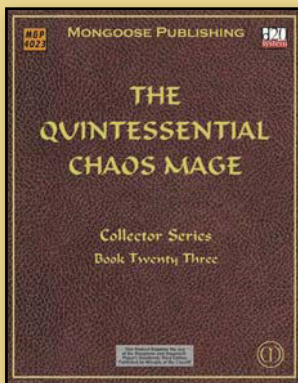
They are the likes of the moon-pale, merciless ice witch in her far-off palace of snow, whose word can open vast crevasses into which the unwary can fall and who can call up the ravaging frost worm from its lair simply by an act of will. The suntanned wanderer of the plains, in appearance a harmless old dodderer, is one of them; if he willed it, the clouds would gather heavy as ink and lacerate the earth with lightning. The aged mountain dwarf who sits quietly alone, surveying the rocks and crags of his home, could speak a handful of syllables and cause the whole side of the mountain to come hurtling down into

the valley beneath. The muttering, obese sorcerer of the swamp is more than he appears; the bones of an entire army lie beneath the placid surface of his marshes, and if asked they would tell a nightmare tale of bloodsucking insects, tangling roots and marsh mud that came alive and engulfed them.

These gentlemen and ladies are the sovereign mages, those who have learned the rare art of entering the soul of the land and binding their personal power to it. Not content with merely moving upon the face of the earth, they seek to become one with it; some to conquer, some to protect. By infusing their very essence into the country around them, they become partakers of the energies of the land, drawing upon it to achieve legendary and miraculous results. Whether they serve as governors, custodians or power-mad conquerors, they are a more potent magical force than any ordinary spellcaster could hope to be.

This 64-page volume gives players and Games Masters alike all the information they will need to integrate sovereign magic into their campaign. Full guidelines are given for the establishment of a sovereign mage's dominion and the expansion of territory, as well as a complete list of territory spells, the incantations only available to those who have this magical power of governance. Specific help is also provided for the Games Master, showing how to use these awesomely powerful beings in support of game balance and campaign drama, rather than upsetting it.





The chaos mage is the wild child of fantasy magic. A loose cannon willing to chance everything on a twist of fate. No risk is too great for a chaos mage, and no type of spell is out of bounds. This 128-page addition to the Collector's Series of Quintessential books expands the possibilities of chaotic magic to a previously untapped degree.

Written by Patrick Younts, author of *Quintessential Monk* and *Quintessential Sorcerer*, this book includes fascinating new Character like The Wild Avatar, The Philosopher Unchained and Halfling Vagabond, along with Prestige Classes such as the Chaos Architect, Chaos Alchemist, Chaos Emissary and Twister of the World's Flesh.

Burn your spellbooks and sell your familiars, it's time to just feel it.

## Caption Competition #2 Winner!



This month's competition has been one by Max September from London with:

***'Eee, you don't sweat much for a fat lass!'***

A copy of the Book of Dragons is winging its way to him.

Honourable mention for Simon Belcher of Swindon who came up with:

***'Even the greatest heroes cannot escape the readers digest prize draw troll!'***

Close, Simon, but no cigar.

## Caption Competition #5



Elvis meets B5 this month - a copy of *Macho Women with Guns* as an extra special Christmas present.

Mail your answers and details to:

[ibarstow@mongoosepublishing.com](mailto:ibarstow@mongoosepublishing.com)

or post them to:

Caption Competition #2  
Signs & Portents  
Mongoose Publishing  
PO Box 1018, Swindon  
Wiltshire SN3 1DG  
UK

Closing date: December 30th 2003

## Mongoose Hall Competition Winner

Congratulations to Sam Vail of Cambridge in England who was the first to correctly identify the adventure being used by Matt in the current Mongoose Hall debacle as *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*.

Monty The Mongoose, our very own office mascot, is now residing in his bedroom.



EYE ON MONGOOSE

New Releases This Month

## Feature RELEASE

# OGL Horror

I jumped at the chance to write the Horror corebook. I've been running horror games (primarily the classic *Call of Cthulhu*) for years, not to mention sticking mysteries, bizarre events and twisted eldritch horrors into other games. My intent when writing this book was to take everything I'd learned from all those games and pull it all together.

The basic engine for the game is similar to *d20 Modern*. The game is class-based, but the four classes are archetypal characters in horror movies and books. There is the Ordinary Person, who wanders into the horror without any clue about what is going on. There is the Combatant, with a focus (obviously) on taking the fight to the enemy. There is the Scholar, who specialises in science or esoteric knowledge. Finally, there is the Investigator, who has the mental fortitude to deal with the things he encounters. (Each of the other classes is especially vulnerable to a particular sort of horror.)

Every horror game needs psychological mechanics to model terror and madness. *OGL Horror* uses a Horror save, which is broken into Panic, Fear and Madness. Failing each sort of save has both short-term penalties – you run like hell, start drooling, or worse – and long-term drawbacks, measured in Shock Points. One of my goals was to avoid a death spiral, where the characters grow more and more vulnerable to insanity, while also ensuring that even experienced characters still have to worry about getting scared. It also offers more options for reflecting a character's traumas in mechanics – you have to buy off your accumulated Shock Points, but there are more ways to do that than just taking various derangements and phobias.

One of the big problems with a lot of horror games is involving the characters – why me? Why not let the police handle it? – So every *OGL Horror* character has to have a number of emotional ties. These can be to people, to institutions (and there are special rules for handling organisations, conspiracies and so on), or to ideals. These ties do more than just provide a hook for the Games Master to drag your character into the horror, you can get bonuses to your rolls when fighting for your daughter's life, or to preserve the Ancient Temple of Mars, or for freedom from vampiric tyranny.

For Games Masters, *OGL Horror* has a set of rules for building monsters, as well as a nice menagerie of existing beasts. There is a long chapter on Games Mastering,

We are so excited about the release of *OGL Horror* that we asked the author, Gareth Hanrahan, to introduce it himself. It's time to head out for the graveyards, bark at the moon and consume the neighbours...Bwahahaha!

covering everything from the different types of horror and how to invoke them to designing a mystery and keeping the players on track. It describes different sorts of campaigns and plot seeds, how to hook the characters and how to hook the players, how to build atmosphere... twenty-five pages of nothing but Games Mastering advice. If you don't want to run a horror game after reading that chapter, I haven't done my job properly.

Special powers, such as magic or psychic abilities, are described in a separate chapter. Mechanically, they are based on feats and skills, but whether or not the players get access to such powers is up to the Games Master. In some games, the characters will be able to banish demons through the power of faith alone or call up the dead to aid them; in others, the characters will be all alone in the dark with nothing more than their own wits and skills.

The book closes with a set of ready-to-play settings so you can jump straight in or else raid them for ideas to build your own nightmares. The whole system is as modular as possible, so while the main thrust is modern-day horror and investigation, you could use basic *d20* magic, or transplant the Horror save system to Mongoose's *CyberNet* game, or use the organisation system for a secret cabal of wizards or order of paladins.

After all, if there is one thing that this book shows, it is that Horror can be everywhere. It is not a genre, it is the twisting of any genre into something darker and scarier, something that is fundamentally *wrong*...

Goodnight out there, whatever you are.

256 pages of full colour  
hardback terror! Just don't  
bleed on the carpet.