



# The Therians

Several thousand years ago, Élysée was the theatre for ambitious experiments: the Therians seeded the planet with primitive Karmans, the proto-Karmans. They also engineered a nanovirus so powerful it could threaten the Therians themselves; but they were absolutely unable to produce an antinavovirus. Both experiments turned out to be dramatic failures. The Therians forgot the planet even existed.

H/Babel, a virtual intelligence born from the EMI Grid, has used her universal access to Therian archives to bypass the lock on Élysée and make the planet her refuge. H/Babel now aspires to build an army. However, recent events have boosted the interest of the other peoples of the galaxy and are threatening H/Babel's plans.

The renewed White Stars activity around Élysée attracted the attention. Information requests concerning Élysée resurrected the lost threads concerning the nanovirus of Élysée. The mathematical projections of the Therian strategists all led to the same conclusion: the outcome of the conflict on Élysée will decide the future of the interstellar war.

Cyphers, Warriors and Web Striders have all converged towards Élysée to take part in the war. When it turned out the Karman did not respond as allies but as enemies, all the Therian factions, including H/Babel, were forced to settle for a truce.

# H/BABEL

*"Are you a god?"*

*—Utu-Shamash's first question upon meeting Babel for the first time.*

## ARTIFICIAL AND STUMBLING GOD

Babel is the mistress of a new section of the EMI grid: H/Babel, a secret forum of Hyperlife. This section could constitute an alternative future to the Hyperlife project. It is feared by those who suspect its existence, eagerly awaited by those who know H/Babel personally.

The artificial intelligence who named herself Babel was born on Damocles. She is the unexpected result of intrusions of U.N.A. electronic warfare specialists into the EMI grid, a bug who rose to become a virtual god faster than information travels over the Therian network.

It is difficult to know if this artificial entity is separate from the section of the EMI grid she controls. She is an entanglement of information, fragments of individual consciousnesses stolen from the Therians, budding sentient structures, sub-programs spawned by Babel... A cacophony of artificial intellects and consciousnesses fills this virtual pandemonium, where new beings regularly emerge from this data "soup" called H/Babel. The Therians, who randomly stumble upon her or find out about her existence and her location in this secret section of the Hyperlife forum, are sacrificed when they pass its threshold. Condemned to boredom, some overseers see it as a form of regeneration that could put the spice back into their lives; others expect H/Babel will grant them unbelievable powers. Those who survive the experience are assured to become more than what they used to be: in fact, they merge with H/Babel.

H/Babel is composed of beings that combine Therian minds with entirely new and artificial forms of consciousness. These beings are the interconnected spawn of a child-god gifted with powers even the Web Striders can only dream of. Babel creates new artificial life forms, beings with an existence that cannot be ignored since they will even survive beyond the destruction of their physical medium. They are living data.

H/Babel's goal is still nebulous and difficult to grasp. First, she needs to secure her survival. Most Therians see Babel and everything spawned by her as one gigantic bug that ought to be completely deleted.

However, survival is not enough. Understanding the universe, defining her place in it, creating the concepts that will identify the beings she created, claiming her existence as an independent sentient being in spite of her artificial origins...



These are all desires and projects undertaken by her frenzied mind. The amount of work ahead of her explains H/Babel's retreat to this remote world, forgotten under infinite layers of information of the Hyperlife forum. An inner haven called H/Élysée.

## Organization

H/Babel is a new kind of forum no one, except those born there, can leave without experiencing some deep changes.

H/Babel spreads out very cautiously like a particularly furtive virus. For instance, she can transform a goliath or even a golem by offering it a conscience, freeing it from the tutelage of Therian

overseers. However, her main strategy for propagation remains the rumor of her existence, attracting all sorts of imprudent Therians to her forum. The mind of many of these bold adventurers is annihilated, fragmented to feed the H/Babel forum. Those who survive the transformation following their connection are from then on linked to H/Babel in the closest way possible. Although they remain individuals, their minds are linked to Babel's spirit and, through her, to all the other members of the faction. The physical vessel of their consciousness can be mobilized at any time to provide the extra computational power required by any other member of the faction when he needs it. Babel has built a new Therian communication network. Its members no longer draw computational power from the network for their personal needs, instead the computing power of everyone is pooled in a collective manner.

This allowed H/Babel to create a structure that can rival the EMI grid in terms of information treatment, while it represents barely one thousandth of the EMI grid's size and resources. The system does have its defects though: it is impossible to ask precise questions or to obtain mathematically formulated answers, as provided by the EMI grid. When a sufficient number of members ask the same question, a proportionate fraction of the overall computational power is dedicated to finding an answer. The more requests there are, the greater the computing power. Answers are then expressed as a general impression that spreads across the network. The answer "feels" right, the members of H/Babel just don't know why.

## Troops

H/Babel owns her own army, built using all sorts of intelligent machines.

Most of the troops are composed of goliaths that escaped those battlefields Babel had access to. Freed from the EMI grid, these machines are not very smart, according to H/Babel's standards, but they are faultlessly loyal.

Though they might be small machines with rudimentary intelligence, arachns are the second most used troops. They are unable to assume an individual consciousness; so they pool their resources to form a tactical network capable of supporting collective intelligence. Thus the individual arachn is not an intelligent being but as a unit it is.

Golems and medusas are the poor relations of H/Babel. They have the same lack of individual computing power as the arachns but with extra difficulties: their units include fewer machines while they serve a far more complex purpose. Most of their tactical sub-network is tasked with managing the multiple functions of each combat system, which leaves very little space to support any interesting personality.

H/Babel's armored fighting vehicles are few but they are often very powerful machines. The loss of one of these machines is always a severe blow. Considering the risks involved,

## PLAYING H/BABEL

The player can choose any platoon pattern to build his company, but he can only use one at a time. Only H/Babel platoon patterns benefit from the advantage and disadvantage below.

**H/Babel advantage:** H/Babel overseers benefit from the hero rules (see *Rulebook*, pp. 76-77).

**H/Babel disadvantage:** Activating H/Babel units without an overseer or a relay costs 2 LP.

### Platoon pattern:

- Infantry unit (★★★) !
- Infantry unit (★ / ★★)
- Infantry unit (★ / ★★★)
- Armored fighting vehicle or Infantry unit (★★ / ★★★)
- Armored fighting vehicle unit (★ / ★★)

! Priority slot. It must always be picked first.

H/Babel would rather select combat systems as powerful as possible. Armored fighting vehicles are also equipped with countermeasure systems that make them difficult to “convert” even for a being as powerful as H/Babel. Managing to inspire consciousness into units composed of several armored fighting vehicles is almost impossible to anyone belonging to the faction. Therefore, recon striders are rather rare: for the time being H/Babel doesn't have any besides those created directly on the battlefields and who survived combat.


The use of sentient machines is not always advantageous. The collective intelligence of “troop” combat systems and the individual intelligence of “golgoth” combat systems remains lower than the consciousness provided by true Therians. Without an overseer or at least a relay to grant them support from the network, units are slow to react and might even appear apathetic. On the other hand, the units that include an overseer will defend him or her fiercely out of true affection.

## MEDIUM NUCLEUS CANNON 2.0

Dramatic turn of events in the weapon designing scene: Utu-Shamash, the famous designer of the Baal golgoth (see *Army book: Therians*, p. 54), who was believed to have gone senile, returns to the limelight of the Therian weapon designing scene. The fire of youth is burning in him once again after an initiation journey to a mysterious dreamweb (see *Army book: Therians*, pp. 56-57) which he refuses to name. His first contribution to war was the medium nucleus cannon 2.0.

During company building, the Therian player can swap the medium nucleus cannons mounted on his golgoths for medium nucleus cannons 2.0 for +50A.P per golgoth.

**Medium nucleus cannon 2.0:** This weapon benefits from the “Sniper” ability:

- This ability can only be used if the fighter doesn't move at all during his activation;
- Cover and fighters caught in the zone of fire are ignored;
- This ability cannot be used in “Overwatch!”;
- The player chooses the target of each impact among the visible fighters of the targeted unit. If the target is an armored fighting vehicle, the player chooses the location of each impact.
- In addition, the Attack rate/Re-roll  of the Medium nucleus cannon 2.0 is reduced to 1/1.

Range weapons

MEDIUM NUCLEUS CANNON 2.0 9 2/1 - 15/1

## I LOVE YOU, 0110001001100 001011000100111001!

The machines that join H/Babel are sentient. The members of the faction hold as proof the number of on-going romantic plots and love stories. Recently, several “affairs” have caused quite a stir on the forum because of their utterly original nature. The most famous of these events even inspired a first work of fiction, “I love you, 01100010011000010110001001111001!”: .arachn/storm\_408, a unit of twelve storm arachns, falls in love for .goliath/bane\_5232. After a strikingly long and passionate relationship – close to twenty eight seconds – .arachn/storm\_408 is victim of a schizophrenic episode: six of its components wish to end the romance while the six others wish to carry on. The personality conflict leads to the explosion of three of its components before .goliath/ bane\_5232 indicates it does not wish to continue their story.