

# Laugh Last, Laugh Best

## Black's sick sense of humor

Anthony Alongi • *Serious Fun*  
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Readers of this web site may have noticed by now that, well, *Torment* kinda likes black. It's a great set for the re-release of [Sengir Vampire](#), and for a host of cards that run the gamut of black's strengths. We don't have any nonsense about favoring discard over recursion (*Mercadian Masques* block), or favoring recursion over discard (*Rath Cycle* or *Urza's* block), or doing none of it particularly well unless you use another color (Invasion block). Here in *Odyssey* block, and particularly *Torment*, we have recursion as good as [Chainer](#), [Dementia Master](#), discard as good as a couple of cards I can't tell you about...and [Pestilence](#)-style damage, more devastating than ever, in [Last Laugh](#).

Right before I got my first writing assignment for this site, Mark Rosewater called me and asked me if I had read the spoiler. He was interested to know if I would pick the same card he would for most intriguing multiplayer card.

I picked [Last Laugh](#), with [Radiate](#) a close second. He had them the other way. Once I thought more carefully about what kind of impact [Radiate](#) could have (see article two weeks ago), I agreed with him. But that doesn't mean [Last Laugh](#) isn't still an excellent card for group play.

One of the most exciting possibilities about [Last Laugh](#) is that it gives land destruction - which always had trouble dealing with those creatures that make it under the wire - a real shot at working in multiplayer. Black has a great deal of land destruction; much of it is equal to or better than red's. (Old school players will remember [Sinkhole](#), the most efficient land destruction spell, ever.) I encourage multiplayer groups to test this theory out, and let us know whether land destruction works any better than before.



But let's talk more generally, for the purposes of this article. Group players wanting a last laugh when they see this enchantment in play, or think about it for their decks, should ask themselves four questions:

### 1) How Do You Trigger It?

This one's easy to answer. Anything that hits a graveyard other than [Last Laugh](#) will start the fun. This includes an artifact under [Shattering Pulse](#), a [Legacy's Allure](#) that's grown large enough to sack for a fattie, the creatures you lose when you pay the alternative casting cost for a [Delraich](#), or that squirrel token over there that could die to just about anything.

### 2) How Do You Keep the Damage Flowing?

One very real question I have about this card is: will it work? And there could very well be a consistency issue in many games. I mean, if I have a two-toughness creature, and you have a four-toughness creature, and someone else has a six-toughness creature, then we've got some work to do in the gaps there.

There are several ways to make sure the damage flows when you want it to. First in line are those permanents that sacrifice themselves, like **Bottle Gnomes** or **Mogg Fanatic**. Next would be sacrifice facilitators, like **Claws of Gix**, **Mask of the Mimic**, or **Fallen Angel**. After that would be a progression of adjustable-defense creatures - maybe the flowstone set? And lastly, of course, would be any spot or global removal you wanted to pack. The most obvious way to blast through a horde of creatures has always been an **Earthquake**; with Last Laugh, you can take down flyers as the black enchantment's effects resolve.

### 3) How Do You Keep It on the Board?

A bit like Pestilence, Last Laugh goes away if there are no creatures left. You can, perhaps, find some obscure benefit in seeing it go away - perhaps you have some **Replenish** scheme up your sleeve; or perhaps you just want another black card in your graveyard so you can play the alternate casting cost on **Spinning Darkness** - but more often than not, you will want at least one creature to survive.



Pestilence, of course, has a long and storied history with white creatures that happen to have protection from black. That's a fairly mundane option, but certainly effective. I'd be more interested in something a bit bolder, in green perhaps: **Whirling Dervish**, **Darkwatch Elves**, **Spike Feeder**, and **Lhurgoyf**. (You could, I suppose splash white as a third color to get the super **Mystic Enforcer**.)

For something less cheese-flavored, you could simply go for high-toughness creatures that regenerate, such as **Rhox** or **Mortivore**. You might also find some fun timing tricks in letting the final fatal activation of Last Laugh go on the stack, followed by a perfectly-timed **Beast Attack** or **Simian Grunts**, so that Last

Laugh's sacrifice never triggers.

### 4) How Can You Make Sure You Have the Last Laugh?

Last Laugh is not only reminiscent of Pestilence; it is also reminiscent of one of the most glorious black multiplayer cards out there - **Grave Pact**. The key to the Pact's success is in making sure your creatures *outnumber* everyone else's. The key to Last Laugh is in making sure your creatures *survive* everyone else's.

The solutions here are wide open. In addition to the same steps you can take to keep Last Laugh in play (i.e., durable creatures), you can play with some blue tricks such as phasing with **Vodalian Illusionist**, bouncing with **Wizard Mentor**, or stealing with **Dominating Licid**. You can also pump **Volrath the Fallen**, bring back a **Shard Phoenix**, or bank on the invulnerable **Cho-Manno**, **Revolutionary**.

My card of choice, and what inspired part of the deck below, is **Parallax Wave**. (**Liberate** would also look nice.) As you begin to sense the entire board disappearing, wait as long as you can with damage on the stack. Then let up to four of your creatures slip away. At your convenience, let the **Bone Shredders** and **Mortivores** come flowing back.

Of course, having the last laugh is no good if you're not alive to enjoy it. We'll pack four **Subversions** in the deck, to give you life advantage. Your opponents can either let the Subversion do its work, taking a damage each turn...or they can kill it, and let Last Laugh to the damage anyway. (Note: they'll still **Disenchant** it. But that's why you have four, as well as **Null Brooch**, **Replenish**, and the eminently laughable **Cantivore**.)

## The Last Laugh

1 Kor Haven

4 Scrubland

13 Swamp

6 Plains

4 Mortivore

1 Cantivore

2 Quagmire Lamprey

3 Bone Shredder

4 Last Laugh

4 Subversion

1 Zuran Orb

3 Null Brooch

4 Parallax Wave

3 Karmic Justice

2 Aura of Silence

1 Replenish

4 Vampiric Tutor

Quagmire Lamprey, you ask? QUAGMIRE LAMPREY?!?! Listen, folks, I don't make the cards, I just use them. And all I know is, when a Lamprey attacks into a 3/3 blocker with Last Laugh out and dies, that Lamprey gets the last laugh.

The only card that may still require an explanation is **Karmic Justice**, which penalizes those players who go after your enchantments, artifacts, or lands. In return for an opponent's **Tranquility**, you can blast away her entire army, or land base. This card is what lets us play only ten creatures, and 17 enchantments.

And hey, check it out: if you add green to this deck, maybe you can actually use **Reclamation's** drawback in your own favor! (Plus, then you can run **Overgrown Estate**. I don't care if "Laughing Estate" never becomes a tier one Type II deck; it will still make your friends groan.) The possibilities are endless, and so are the laughs. Well, *your* laughs, anyway.



Comments and suggestions on caring for domesticated Quagmire Lampreys are most welcome at [lampreyfoodpellets'n'supplies@wizards.com](mailto:lampreyfoodpellets'n'supplies@wizards.com). Um, perhaps not. Instead, send 'em [toseriousfun@wizards.com](mailto:toseriousfun@wizards.com).