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# Teme, Legende

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 House of Cards  
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

In a week dedicated to nostalgia, I turn to theme decks.

Admittedly, I hadn't started playing **Magic** when *Legends* first hit the shelves. When, exactly, I *did* start playing is a bit of a mystery even to me. I think that I bought my first pack during *Ice Age*, entering constructed tournaments much later. In those early years, my wife, friends and I created constructed decks only during our vaunted "theme parties."

The rules for theme parties Ye Olde Moldenhauer-Salazar Household are fairly straightforward. I first mentioned them during [Nightmare Week](#), but here's a refresher:

1. Normal constructed guidelines apply (maximum 4 of each card, 60 card minimum, etc.).
2. You can use any card printed for **Magic**, including *Unglued*, *Starter*, and *Portal* cards, although certain cards can be banned or restricted for a particular theme.
3. The deck must be playable (it needs to have at least an outside chance of winning games).
4. Every card except **basic**, **dual-**, and **pain-lands** must fit the theme.

As I have previously mentioned, theme decks are more about aesthetics than competition. Or, rather, they are about a competition for aesthetics. Think of them as deck beauty pageants.

Because it's *Legends Week*, I felt the need to throw a *Legends* (the set, not the creature type) theme party at our house. My hope was to bedazzle you with the weird and wonderful decks to make an appearance during the festivities -- all decks built around at least one card from the *Legends* set.

Unfortunately, my three month old baby caught his first flu. Then he generously gave it to my wife. Ye Olde M-S Household became Ye Olde M-S Convalescent Home for nearly two weeks, killing all opportunity for parties of any kind. Thus "*Legends Theme Night*" is on indefinite hold.

Pre-influenza, I did manage to pore over the *Legends* spoiler and make a few decks. Here are ten feature cards I considered, along with the top three decks I might have played. When looking over the list, keep in mind that we banned the most broken cards from Brokenville (e.g. *The Abyss*, *Moat*, and *Mana Drain*), and I personally avoided the challenge of the most loser cards from Losertown (e.g. *Great Wall* and *Seafarer's Quay*).



## #10: EVIL EYE OF ORMS-BY-GORE

Since the Eye appeared in *6th Edition*, copies are easy to find. The black/blue deck is chalk full of cards like *Eye of Ramos*, *Wandering Eye*, *Seer's Vision*, *Foresight*, and *Sorcerous Sight*, with *Cuombajj Witches* thrown in for that "evil eye" feel. I have no idea what "Orms-by-Gore" means well enough to incorporate it into the theme.

## #9: THUNDER SPIRIT

It is almost too easy to make a Storm Deck in **Magic**. Focusing on thunder and lightning focuses the choices a bit, including cards like *Thundermare*, *Lightning Elemental*, and *Thunderbolt*. The trick, really, is to fit enough white into the deck to justify *Thunder Spirit*, which is where more recent cards like *Orim's Thunder* and *Lightning Angel* fit in.

## #8: KILLER BEES

I'm still a little bitter that my Bees Deck didn't make it into the Auction of the People in last year's [Magic Invitational!](#) I probably played it more than any of the creature theme decks I've made. Besides being able to use both *Bee Sting* and *Unyaro Bee Sting*, cards like *The Hive* and *Drop of Honey* make it -- I think -- superly fun.

## #7: ALL HALLOW'S EVE

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I already used *All Hallow's Eve* in a black/green Halloween theme deck during an interesting night in which everyone built decks around a different holiday, and the deck translates perfectly here. Think *Cackling Witch* and *Penumbra Bobcat* (the only way I found to get a black cat into the deck).

## #6: MASTER OF THE HUNT

*Howling Wolf*, *Lure of Prey*, *Hidden Stag*, *Pit Trap*, *Serrated Arrows*, and *Elven Warhounds* make a terrific monogreen deck focused on the Master. This deck also revealed to me what a dearth of "rabbit" cards exist in *Magic*. (subtle "You Make The Card" hint inserted here).

## #5: AISLING LEPRECHAUN

What an odd little fellow... not much of a combat champion, but he sure can turn creatures green! I'm not exactly sure why, but the idea of a Leprechaun deck makes me extremely happy. Something with *Rainbow Crow*, *Rainbow Efreet*, *Golden Bear*, and *Venarian Gold*, along with a clever way to play with color-changing creatures.

## #4: STANGG

A *Stangg* theme deck? Think instead of a *Twins Deck*, complete with *Llanowar Sentinel*, *Two-Headed Dragon*, *Bifurcate*, and *Double Deal*, to name a few. I wish I knew the backstory to several of the Legends from *Legends*, and *Stangg* is near the top in terms of piquing my curiosity.

And now, on to the decks of which I am most enamored...

## #3: KOBOLDS

I know "kobolds" is not a single card. I know, alright? I get it. *Crimson Kobolds*, *Crookshank Kobolds*, and *Kobolds of Kher Keep*, however, are essentially identical except in name so it seems silly to play favorites. With all three, I can have TWELVE 0/1 red critters for 0 in the same deck. Yeehaw!

My only prior experience with kobolds came on a theme night several years ago. John Henry, the guy who taught me how to play *Magic*, showed up one night with a deck full of 0-cost creatures and bunches of creature-enhancers like *Giant Strength* and *Unholy Strength*. He called it his "Steroids" deck, which to this day cracks me up.

*Legends* was the first set to introduce a self-contained creature theme in it. As a result, a kobolds theme deck practically builds itself. What's left is to find a way to deal with those situations when I have three kobolds, a *Kobold Drill Sergeant*, and a *Kobold Overlord* on the table with no *Kobold Taskmaster* in sight. These situations, not surprisingly, come up frequently.

I think cards like *Mob Justice* and *Reckless Charge* are probably in flavor with a kobolds theme deck. Here is a stab at it:



### Kher Keep

Kobolds theme deck

- |                     |                         |                    |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 9 Mountain          | 4 Crimson Kobolds       | 4 Panic            |
| 4 Badlands          | 4 Crookshank Kobolds    | 4 Reckless Charge  |
| 4 Sulfurous Springs | 4 Kobolds of Kher Keep  | 4 Maniacal Rage    |
|                     | 4 Kobold Drill Sergeant | 4 Mob Justice      |
|                     | 4 Kobold Overlord       | 2 Reckless Abandon |
|                     | 4 Kobold Taskmaster     |                    |
|                     | 1 Rohgahh of Kher Keep  |                    |

## #2: SOL'KANAR THE SWAMP KING

He is the Swamp King, he can do *ANYTHING*. From the silly to the stalwart, *Sol'kanar the Swamp King* is one serious dude. Blue/black/red clearly received the most efficient Legends in the set with *Sol'kanar*, *Gwendlyn di*

Corci, and Tetsuo Umezawa, not to mention the most famous elder dragon in Nicol Bolas. But it is both the art and title that draws me to Sol'Kanar.

If you include near-synonyms for "swamp" like bog, marsh, mire, and moor, there are far too many choices to figure out an appropriate theme deck. Since Sol'kanar is the Swamp King, I decided he probably wouldn't want to sacrifice Swamps à la Marsh Lurker. In fact, I decided to only use cards that really celebrate the presence of Swamps in the world. The result is a fun -- if not mucky and oozy -- deck:

The King Sol'kanar theme deck		
10 Swamp	4 Bog Imp	4 Bubbling Muck
4 Badlands	4 Sedge Troll	4 Befoul
4 Tainted Peak	4 Dirtwater Wraith	3 Blanket of Night
4 Underground Sea	4 Mire Kavu	1 Mind Sludge
2 Tainted Isle	4 Moor Fiend	1 Dregs of Sorrow
	3 Sol'kanar the Swamp King	



## #1: EUREKA

I love Eureka. I have always appreciated the art of the Foglios, which is one point in the card's favor. My great desire is that Hypnox worked with Eureka in an obscene way, but alas -- "played it from your hand" really means "played it fair and square by tapping your lands." Oh well.

Still, the opportunity to actually create a theme deck around Eureka makes it probably my leading choice for the whenever-it-happens Legends theme party. But what kind of theme?

After looking into an "exclamatory" theme deck to no avail, I decided an exploration/research theme deck would work as long as only a single copy of Eureka existed in the deck (Plus, who owns more than one?!). The goal, I decided, would be to find the lone Eureka and yell "EUREKA!!!!!" as loudly as possible when playing it. For added effect, I also decided to make the deck huge so discovering the Eureka would feel like a real accomplishment.

Although Hazezon Tamar; Molimo, Maro-Sorcerer; and Cognivore are not truly in theme, I couldn't find a better way to use Eureka. Cognivore makes some vague sense, and Hazezon is at least in Legends. Molimo, on the other hand, would get booted out of the theme party. If you have a better idea as a finisher that fits the theme, let me know.

Eureka! Eureka theme deck		
21 Island	4 Veteran Explorer	4 Careful Study
6 Forest	4 Quirion Explorer	4 Exploration
4 Skyshroud Forest	4 Talas Explorer	4 Obsessive Search
4 Tropical Island	4 Archivist	4 Accumulated Knowledge
4 Yavimaya Coast	4 Talas Researcher	4 Frantic Search
2 Reflecting Pool	4 Benthic Explorers	4 Inspiration
2 Undiscovered Paradise	4 Wall of Wonder	3 Volrath's Laboratory
1 Wizard's School	1 Academy Researchers	2 Private Research

- |                         |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Hazon Tamar           | 2 Rhystic Study     |
| 1 Molimo, Maro-Sorcerer | 1 Stroke of Genius  |
| 1 Cognivore             | 1 Eureka            |
|                         | 1 Well of Discovery |

Yay theme decks! Here's hoping that influenza, colds and **The Abyss** don't keep *your* theme parties down!

Next week: Down with rich people!

By the way, hordes of you e-mailed me about where you could get your meaty grip on some Squirrel token cards. The answer is: Two places. First, you can check out [the Player Rewards Program](#) for the specific tokens pictured last week. Different squirrel tokens also made their way into the uncommon slot of *Unglued*, so they should be available wherever *Unglued* singles/packs are sold. You crazed Squirrelmongers, you.

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