

Quest for the Mirari

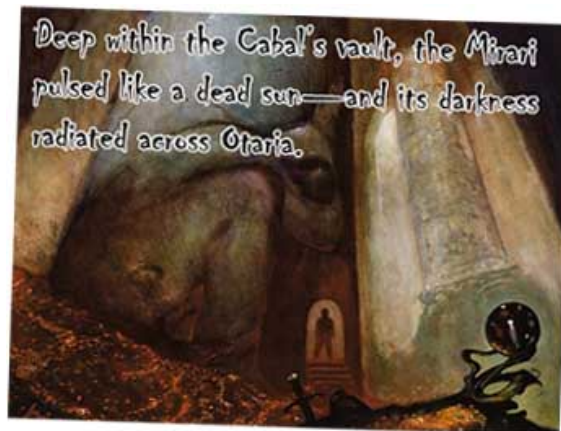
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 House of Cards
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[Several months ago](#), I wrote about the wonderful flavor text in *Fallen Empires* and ways you can play out the story of the set. Unfortunately, when the complex storyline began centering around *Gerrard* and the *Weatherlight* became increasingly difficult to use the cards in this way. In fact, as I said in my earlier article, "I think most people aren't aware that they *could* be playing out pieces of the story as they play the game."

Things have changed since *Apocalypse*. The *Odyssey* Block offers a fairly straightforward scenario that you can recreate in a small tournament. Unlike *Fallen Empires*, you actually need to read the novels to largely understand this scenario. Or you can simply sidle up to someone else who has read them to explain it to you. Someone like me.

Below I outline a variation on an *Odyssey* Block tournament. This variation changes some of the game rules, but I think it offers an opportunity for a fun night of card-flipping. After all, it's not often you are encouraged to use cards like *Kamahli's Sledge* and *Patriarch's Desire* while banning *Ray of Distortion*.



THE CONCEPT

For the tournament, gather up a group of your friends. The tournament will be round robin, meaning each person plays each other person once. Keep score as follows:

- The winner of the game receives 2 points.
- If the game ends in a draw, each player receives 1 point.
- The player who ends the game (whether winning or losing) with *Mirari* on his or her side of the table receives 3 points.

In the end, the player with the most points wins the tournament and receives some arbitrary prize like a bowl of Doritos.

Yes, in this tournament it pays more to find the *Mirari* than it does to reduce your opponent's life to zero. That's because the entire *Odyssey* Block plotline is that an ancient artifact of great power--the *Mirari*--is being hunted by every mage on the continent. Throughout the three novels, the *Mirari* passes from hand to hand, always pretty much ruining the life of whoever uses it. But forget about that whole "ruining your life" business for the moment. Win or lose, you must find the *Mirari*. And once you've found it, you must protect it.

In addition, the rules of Magic change slightly for the tournament:

- At any time when a player will deal four or more damage to an opponent, that player may choose to destroy an enchantment controlled by that opponent instead of dealing the damage.
- At any time when a player will deal six or more damage to an opponent, that player may choose to destroy the *Mirari* controlled by that opponent instead of dealing the damage.

In other words, if you have enchanted my *Aboshan* with *Kirtar's Desire*, I can have my two unblocked *Cephalid Looters* blitz you for no damage in order to kill it. If you have managed to find and play the *Mirari* (remember that it's a legendary artifact, so only one can sit on the table at a time) it will take a pretty monumental effort, but I can still gather my forces for a big attack and cause you to "drop" it.

THE DECKS

Each player brings a deck that represents one of the various factions looking to possess the *Mirari*. For the rest of the article, I will describe these factions and how I might make a set of decks. But first here are some deckbuilding guidelines:

- Each deck should contain one copy of the *Mirari* and one copy only.
- All enchantment or artifact destruction spells like *Frantic Purification* and *Nullmage Advocate* should be banned.
- Include ways for each deck to *use* the *Mirari*.

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RULES

- Keep in mind that no matter how many players there are, the idea is to have a balanced set of decks. You can achieve this by having one person design all the decks or by adding in additional restrictions to deckbuilding. For example, I didn't use any cards that could recycle the **Mirari** from the graveyard (once you lose it, you lose it) and restricted powerful spells like **Kirtar's Wrath** and **Traumatize**. I also decided not to use any non-**Mirari** artifacts for simplicity's sake.
- Finally, remember that what you're hoping to do here is approximate the *Odyssey* story. Thus while you want each deck to be competitive, these are essentially **THEME DECKS**. For this reason, you won't find powerhouses like **Shadowmage Infiltrator**, **Psychatog**, **Wild Mongrel**, or the **Incarnations** in the decks below.



THE FACTIONS

Here are some examples of ways you can assign factions in search for the **Mirari** and a brief description of each:

THE ORDER

Pretty much every white card in *Odyssey* Block falls under the militaristic organization called The Order. Led by a combination of nomad warriors and avenge, The Order sees its job as upholding the law on Otaria. Whereas white has always been the "good guys" in past stories, here they are kind of a pain in the *tuchus*...

The Order OBC theme deck		
Main Deck 60 cards		
2 Nomad Stadium 22 Plains 24 lands	2 Angel of Retribution 2 Aven Flock 1 Commander Eesha 1 Lieutenant Kirtar 1 Major Teroh 3 Mystic Zealot 1 Pianna, Nomad Captain 3 Teroh's Chosen 3 Teroh's Faithful 17 creatures	4 Battle Screech 2 Chastise 3 Gallantry 4 Kirtar's Desire 1 Kirtar's Wrath 2 Lead Astray 1 Mirari 2 Vengeful Dreams 19 other spells

The deck: This deck seeks to stall the ground while pecking away at an opponent through the air. Because it can slow things down with lifegain and creature control, it has a reasonable shot at digging through its library to find the **Mirari**. I thought **Divine Sacrament**, while fitting thematically, was too powerful a card. In fact you'll see that I avoided using any global enchantments at all, though you may decide to do otherwise.

THE MER EMPIRE

Emperor **Aboshan** and his wife **Llawan** rule everything beneath the sea. Sadly, they hate each other. In fact, the two spend most of their time plotting against one another and tolerating land-dwellers only when necessary. When the **Mirari** appears, their squabbles take on new energy as they search for the powerful artifact...

Mer Empire - Aboshan OBC theme deck		
Main Deck 60 cards		
2 Cephalid Coliseum	1 Aboshan, Cephalid Emperor	4 Aboshan's Desire

22 Island	2 Cephalid Broker	2 Deluge
24 lands	3 Cephalid Inkshrouder	3 Fervent Denial
	3 Cephalid Looter	3 Keep Watch
	3 Cephalid Retainer	1 Mirari
	3 Cephalid Scout	2 Persuasion
	15 creatures	3 Plagiarize
		3 Turbulent Dreams
		21 other spells

Mer Empire - Llawan		
OBC theme deck		
Main Deck 60 cards		
2 Cephalid Coliseum	2 Cephalid Broker	4 Aether Burst
22 Island	2 Cephalid Inkshrouder	3 Churning Eddy
24 lands	3 Cephalid Looter	4 Immobilizing Ink
	2 Cephalid Retainer	3 Keep Watch
	2 Cephalid Sage	1 Mirari
	3 Cephalid Scout	2 Persuasion
	1 Llawan, Cephalid Empress	4 Touch of Invisibility
	15 creatures	21 other spells

The decks: The decks are functionally pretty similar, since both Aboshan and Llawan employ half the Mer Empire. Llawan's deck is focused a bit more on bounce while Aboshan's focuses more on tapping. Yes, Llawan singlehandedly slaughters other blue decks, but then this fits the novels somewhat. Against a non-blue deck, each deck will need to use its card drawing to find the **Mirari** because their creatures will have a hard time competing.

THE KROSAN FOREST

The Krosan Forest is the most identifiable geographic feature of Otaria, a seemingly endless stretch of trees that takes up much of the continent. The insectlike Nantuko and forest druids see the **Mirari's** danger and rally the creatures of the forest to destroy it, all under the direction of **Thriss**...

Krosan Forest		
OBC theme deck		
Main Deck 60 cards		
2 Centaur Garden	2 Centaur Restorer	3 Call of the Herd
22 Forest	2 Krosan Archer	2 Grizzly Fate
24 lands	3 Krosan Wayfarer	1 Mirari
	1 Nantuko Cultivator	3 Overrun
	2 Nantuko Disciple	3 Roar of the Wurm
	1 Seton, Krosan Protector	4 Seton's Desire
	2 Seton's Scout	3 Sudden Strength
	2 Springing Tiger	19 other spells
	1 Stone-Tongue Basilisk	
	1 Thriss, Nantuko Primus	
	17 creatures	

The deck: No subtlety here, just lots and lots of creatures--twice the number of some other decks--and mana to cast big, impressive spells. This deck should have no trouble overcoming enchantments and destroying opposing **Mirari**. It has no card-search, however, to find its own **Mirari**--it just beats things up hoping the artifact will show up.

PARDIC TRIBES

The *Odyssey* storyline has **Kamah** as its protagonist. The barbarian from the Pardic Mountains isn't very complex--he wants to show the world that he is the best pit fighter ever and seeks the **Mirari** to fulfill his own dreams of glory. **Jeska** is his sister, **Balthor** their childhood trainer. After that it's a bunch of barbarians running around breaking stuff...

Pardic Tribes

OBC theme deck		
Main Deck 60 cards		
2 Barbarian Ring	1 Balthor the Stout	3 Blazing Salvo
22 Mountain	3 Barbarian Bully	1 Breaking Point
24 lands	2 Barbarian Lunatic	3 Browbeat
	2 Grim Lavamancer	2 Devastating Dreams
	3 Hell-Bent Raider	4 Fiery Temper
	1 Jeska, Warrior Adept	2 Infectious Rage
	1 Kamahl, Pit Fighter	4 Kamahl's Desire
	2 Pardic Lancer	1 Kamahl's Sledge
	15 creatures	1 Mirari
		21 other spells

The deck: Like the Krosan Forest deck, this deck has no way to search out the **Mirari**, which is too bad since Kamahl holds the **Mirari** for almost an entire novel. With plenty of creature removal and solid creatures, though, it should have no trouble with opposing **Mirari** and winning a lot of games. I think Kamahl would be proud.

THE CABAL AND DEMENTIA SUMMONERS

A foil to The Order, the Cabal is akin to the mafia in Otaria and is led by The First (**Cabal Patriarch**), whose very touch means death. The Cabal also trains and employs dementia summoners, black mages who can conjure their nightmares into being (often at a cost to their sanity), to fight in the Cabal's tournaments. Although it's possible to combine both factions into one deck, there are two reasons to do otherwise: 1) **Chainer**, a powerful dementist, battles The First for the **Mirari**, and 2) there are just too darned many cards to include.

The Cabal OBC theme deck		
Main Deck 60 cards		
1 Cabal Coffers	3 Cabal Inquisitor	3 Afflict
2 Cabal Pit	1 Cabal Patriarch	2 Cabal Ritual
21 Swamp	3 Cabal Surgeon	3 Cabal Therapy
24 lands	4 Cabal Torturer	2 Diabolic Tutor
	4 Nantuko Shade	1 Haunting Echoes
	1 Sutured Ghoul	1 Mirari
	16 creatures	2 Morbid Hunger
		4 Patriarch's Desire
		2 Sickening Dreams
		20 other spells

Dementists OBC theme deck		
Main Deck 60 cards		
2 Cabal Pit	1 Balthor the Defiled	4 Chainer's Edict
22 Swamp	1 Braids, Cabal Minion	3 Ghastly Demise
24 lands	1 Chainer, Dementia Master	1 Insidious Dreams
	2 Childhood Horror	1 Mirari
	1 Cursed Monstrosity	2 Mutilate
	1 Face of Fear	4 Unhinge
	2 Faceless Butcher	15 other spells
	1 Frightcrawler	
	1 Grotesque Hybrid	
	1 Hypnox	
	1 Masked Gorgon	
	2 Mesmeric Fiend	
	2 Painbringer	
	1 Shambling Swarm	
	2 Soul Scourge	
	1 Stalking Bloodsucker	
	21 creatures	

The decks: The Cabal's creatures except **Nantuko Shade** (included because of flavor text) are fairly weak. However, the Cabal deck is chock full of creature removal and has a good ability to tutor for the **Mirari**. Meanwhile, the Dementists are full of creatures and is probably the scariest deck to face despite its inconsistency. It may need toning down a bit although every card is thematically appropriate.

LAQUATUS

Finally, there is **Ambassador Laquatus**, who schemes and plots and two-times and brainwashes and yearns and backstabs for the **Mirari** every which way imaginable throughout the entire storyline, usually unsuccessfully...

Laquatus		
OBC theme deck		
Main Deck 60 cards		
4 Darkwater Catacombs	3 Ambassador Laquatus	1 Chamber of Manipulation
18 Island	3 Balshan Collaborator	2 Envelop
2 Swamp	2 Cephalid Broker	2 Grip of Amnesia
24 lands	2 Cephalid Scout	2 Laquatus's Creativity
	1 Laquatus's Champion	1 Laquatus's Disdain
	4 Puppeteer	1 Mirari
	15 creatures	3 Obsessive Search
		2 Persuasion
		2 Repel
		2 Syncopate
		1 Traumatize
		2 Turbulent Dreams
		21 other spells

The deck: There are three copies of Laquatus for a reason: The guy shows up everywhere and refuses to die. Beyond that, there aren't many creatures although his **Champion** (named Burke in the story) will destroy a **Mirari** with one attack. The Laquatus deck seeks to win by countering threats and searching for the **Mirari** while milling an opponent to death. I wished I could include Laquatus' first champion Turg (**Anurid Brushhopper**), but a 4-color deck was too daunting.



GO FORTH AND QUEST

In future **Magic** sets, the flavor of the story will approximate **Fallen Empires** more and more and the *Weatherlight* saga less and less. That is, expect a focus on world-building and context-setting more than intricate plots full of drama. Story-based nights of **Magic** will become increasingly possible as a result.

This article has been longer than most because I've tried to cram in not only a variation on **Magic** but also a load of theme decks. Hopefully one or the other has inspired you. I encourage you to create your own house rules for thematic tournaments or to tweak the ones I've outlined here. And if I've piqued your interest about the *Odyssey* story, you can read more about it from [Will McDermott](#).

Without stepping on Anthony's toes too much, I must say that this idea would be just as fun in an all-out multiplayer game. I can only imagine the massive hot-potato game of **Mirari** that might ensue. Mr. Alongi is the better person to judge what kind of rules-changes would be necessary to make this a fun multiplayer format, but I can imagine keeping score by counting the player who holds the **Mirari** for the most consecutive turns as the winner.

Have fun!

Next week: I'm going nuts.

-j

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