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Seek Ye the Darkness

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I was one of the many **Magic** players who, during the *Mirage* days, desperately tried to make a deck in which **Urborg Panther**, **Breathstealer**, and **Feral Shadow** united in sacrificial glory to bring **Spirit of the Night** directly into play.

Most of the graveyard recursion during those times was of the "Enchant Dead Creature" variety, like **Animate Dead** and **Dance of the Dead**—enchancements that would "conveniently" fall off of a reanimated protection from black **Spirit of the Night**. Getting the Spirit into play was not easy; the thrill back then was partly in finding the correct pieces of the puzzle and partly in the thematic idea of Nightstalkers heralding a nigh-unstoppable avatar of death onto the table. The Nightstalkers and **Spirit of the Night** have a huge coolness factor.

Coolness is back. And this time it's a heck of a lot easier to bring your omnipotent-manifestation-of-all-that-is-evil into play.

We begin with **Dark Supplicant**. A 1/1 for ♠ is nothing to crow about—in fact, it's worthy of disdain and pity. But the Supplicant can sacrifice itself and any two other Clerics (or three Clerics other than itself... sneaky little creep) to go find its dark master.



Spirit of the Night, from the Mirage set, can be put into play directly from your library by sacrificing Breathstealer, Urborg Panther, and Feral Shadow.



Even without knowing what this big nasty Scion fellow does, we have an intriguing proposition...

Turn 1, play swamp, play **Dark Supplicant** #1.
 Turn 2, play swamp, play **Dark Supplicant** #2, play **Dark Supplicant** #3, use **Dark Supplicant** #1's ability...

The Heir of Freakin' Evil has arrived. Turn 2.

Improbable? Surely. But also not so far-fetched.

Luckily for everyone who adores black, **Scion of Darkness** lives up to its ominous name. In fact it happens to be one of the coolest fatties to come along since, well, **Spirit of the Night**.



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It is pretty clear to me that you will rarely, if ever, cast **Scion of Darkness**. 5 4 4 4 is a lot to ask of any deck. I suppose on rare occasions you will find yourself on Turn 30, more than halfway into your deck, with access to eight mana and **Scion of Darkness** in your hand. It's nice to know it *can* be cast in a pinch. But unlike a **Crush of Wurms** or **Time Stretch**, it is unnecessary to pack your deck full of mana acceleration just to cast **Scion of Darkness** the good old fashioned way.

Instead, **Scion of Darkness** will enter play for one of two reasons: 1) You have activated a **Dark Supplicant**, or 2) You have somehow found another means of graveyard reanimation.

Which you use depends on a number of different factors. If your deck is built around graveyard manipulation—full of **Entomb**, **Cephalid Vandal**, and **Wild Mongrel** along with **Zombify**, **Exhume**, and **Reya Dawnbringer**—then all you care about is that **Scion of Darkness** is huge, it has trample, and it steals opposing creatures from their graveyards to join your own army. **Scion of Darkness** is bad-ass enough to warrant serious consideration for any deck that cheats its creatures into play.

Knowing nothing else about *Legions*, a Standard fattie-reanimator deck might look something like this:

Pitch Black		
Standard-legal Reanimator deck		
Main Deck		
60 cards		
22 Swamp	4 Withered Wretch	4 Smother
3 Cabal Coffers	4 Doomed Necromancer	4 Stitch Together
25 lands	4 Scion of Darkness	4 Buried Alive
	3 Laquatus's Champion	4 Zombify
	1 Balthor the Defiled	2 Insidious Dreams
	1 Dakmor Lancer	18 other spells
	17 creatures	

If you choose the **Dark Supplicant** route, your deck is based around Clerics. You are probably using **Rotlung Reanimator**, **Cabal Archon**, and **Doomed Necromancer**. Your deck is also probably either monoblack, black/white (taking advantage of white's excellent Clerics) or black/blue (taking advantage of blue's card-drawing and **Artificial Evolution**-type abilities). **Scion of Darkness**, in this deck, is likely the only non-Cleric creature, unless of course you also choose to include **Gangrenous Goliath** or some other silliness.



Sacrificing a Dark Supplicant and two Rotlung Reanimators will get you six 2/2 Zombie tokens and a Scion of Darkness.

Just as I was enamored with **Nightstalker-Spirit of the Night**, so too do I favor the Cleric-**Scion of Darkness** plan over basic graveyard manipulation. I am particularly giddy about the fact that monoblack Cleric beatdown is possible with something along these lines:

Simple Scion		
Onslaught Block Cleric deck		
Main Deck 60 cards		
23 Swamp	4 Dark Supplicant	4 Blackmail
23 lands	4 Disciple of Malice	4 Smother
	4 Withered Wretch	3 Patriarch's Bidding
	4 Cabal Archon	11 other spells
	4 Rotlung Reanimator	
	4 Scion of Darkness	
	2 Doomed Necromancer	
	26 creatures	

What makes **Scion of Darkness** truly superior is that it also has cycling. This means that if you draw it, you can toss it into your graveyard for another (hopefully Cleric or reanimation) card. Decks like the two above have always needed a plan for what to do if they—oops!—drew their big beasts that were never meant to be cast. Scion has a built-in answer to this problem. After playing with **Scion of Darkness** for awhile, I imagine I will become spoiled and expect all of my uncastable fatties to come with cycling.

I'll push this idea of cycling a bit further just because it's funny...

Chain Lightning		
Onslaught Block Cycling deck		
Main Deck 60 cards		
8 Mountain	4 Disciple of Malice	4 Lightning Rift
8 Swamp	4 Undead Gladiator	4 Starstorm
4 Barren Moor	4 Scion of Darkness	4 Dirge of Dread
4 Forgotten Cave	12 creatures	4 Swat
24 lands		4 Lay Waste
		4 Slice and Dice
		24 other spells

But wait, the story gets even better. Unlike **Spirit of the Night**, **Scion of Darkness** isn't a Legend. Combined with cycling, this means that there is absolutely no reason to avoid packing your deck with four copies.

No kidding, **Scion of Darkness** has everything in a scary fattie I could ever want. When you add **Dark Supplicant** to the mix, you have a combination that makes me giddy with possibilities. I wish there was more to say, but, well, there it is. Major coolness. Have fun.

This weekend, I hope you enjoy playing with **Legions** for the first time. If you pull off the Supplicant-Scion trick during the pre-release, *definitely* write and let me know.

-j

“A Card For doctorjay”: The Semi-Finalists

As I have continued to explain over the last two weeks, my “[A Card For doctorjay](#)” experiment is delayed until next week. In the meantime, I have been slowly counting down the results of the almost 21,000 votes for which card to make the focus of my next **Magic Online** deck.

Today's update includes the cards that received a ton of individual votes but that didn't make it into the Top 3. For me, it's interesting to note how many Legends and black cards (appropriate for today, eh?) made it high on the list.

I imagine many of you were pulling for at least one of these cards, and I truly would have enjoyed any of them as my deck centerpiece. Then again, I guess that I supplied the original list so I was bound to be pleased regardless.

Check in next week to find out which card received the most votes and help me decide what deck will begin my playtesting journey!

The Semi-Finalists:		
4.	Ixidor, Reality Sculptor	501
5.	Worldgorger Dragon	455
6.	Chainer, Dementia Master	445
7.	Jareth, Leonine Titan	431

8.	Book Burning	428
9.	Crush of Wurms	405
10.	Balthor the Defiled	389
11.	Wheel and Deal	376
12.	Hypnox	369
13.	Zombie Infestation	354

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