

## Will the new set be Dominaria's last stand? Scourge of Otaria

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The world of Dominaria has been the home base of the **Magic** game ever since its earliest days. Shiv, Llanowar, Lat-Nam . . . All of these names are well known and well loved. Prepare to leave it all behind. As you know from previous articles, the *Scourge* set will be the last expansion to take place on Dominaria for a while. After this, you'll be seeing whole new worlds, with entirely new inhabitants, which I think is pretty exciting. Though Dominaria always appears in the core set, we'll be saying a temporary good-bye to it as a story setting. Just hope we leave it in one piece.

The planet may well share the fate of the continent of Otaria as the *Scourge* set comes on the **Magic** scene. If you thought the **Phage-Akroma** war was nasty, that's nothing compared to what's in store. The reason: Karona. For those of you who didn't read the *Legions* novel (and shame on you if you didn't!), here's the skinny: **Akroma** and **Phage** met on the battlefield for their final confrontation. **Kamahl**, finally roused out of his meditation to deal with the serious events unfolding, attempted to strike **Phage** down and end the bloodshed once and for all. But something . . . happened. Think of it this way: **Akroma** is a white character created by a blue mage. **Phage** is a black character that was once red. And in the middle of all this is a character bursting with green magic (not to mention the green mana being pumped out by the **Mirari**). Put it all together, and what do you get? A battlefield that contains all five **Magic** colors. **Kamahl's** interference, and the **Mirari's** power, fuses **Akroma** and **Phage** into an awesomely powerful being encompassing all five colors. Karona, as this fledgling god calls herself, brings most of Otaria to its knees. Every race sees her as one of its own gods: to the soldiers and clerics, she appears to be the Ancestor; to the elves, she is the ultimate avatar of nature; and so on. Her Decrees to these races are short and sweet: wage war for her. And they do, with gusto. The entire continent is engulfed in one huge civil war, and due to his role in her



creation, **Kamahl** stands alone as one of the only beings unaffected by Karona's commands. His only hope is to reach out to Ixidor, still imprisoned from the events of the *Onslaught* set, and together the two of them must try to stop Karona before her power grows to unstoppable proportions. Of course, in a battle this big, with the stakes so high, not everyone is going to get out of this alive.

There's a little more to it than this, but I'll let you read **J. Robert King's** novel to find out what else is going on behind the scenes. Hint: It has something to do with the Cabal's patron god (See? The Cabal always has something to do with it!).

What else is happening while Otaria burns around us? How about the last step in mutations? As I explained in my article about the *Legions* set, the **Mirari's** magic has been altering Otaria's beings, reshaping them into new forms. The creative vision for each creature type in the *Onslaught* block has three steps to it: normal, mutated, and supermutated. You saw the normal versions in the *Onslaught* set and the mutated versions in the *Legions* set. Now you'll see the supermutants in the *Scourge* set. The elves are even more treelike, the goblins even more feral. The wizards have changed into beings made completely of magic, and the soldiers are the ultimate faceless, silent killing machines. Although all creatures have been mutated, some are just more mutant-y than others. These extra big or extra special creatures get the Mutant creature type, and they'll be scattered all around *Scourge* as they were in *Legions*. Expect even more twisted and unusual abilities, especially from mechanics you thought you knew. In fact, thanks to the presence of Dragons (drawn to Otaria by Karona's aura of majesty and power), you can be sure *Scourge* will bring a lot of cards that are big in a lot of ways!

Speaking of mutants, they're the big reason behind the resolution of one of the threads you saw in *Legions*. The slivers have taken over the Riptide Project completely. The few remaining wizards are hiding out or are on the run. Slivers don't play as large a role in the *Scourge* set as in they do in the *Legions* set now that they're firmly entrenched. But they still have their big gain in this set—a Mutant of their very own. This card will draw inevitable comparisons to another mighty Sliver printed years ago.

And while we're on the subject of mighty cards, the good folks at Wizards have always been kind enough to allow me a card preview along with my story mutterings, and this is no exception. Sure, there are plenty of things to talk about with the *Scourge* set: huge dragons, new mechanics, cards that do everything from shutting down key strategies to getting rid of more cards at once than I ever thought possible . . . But if you've been paying attention to the article so far, you might have realized that, story-wise, one figure sticks out more than any other: Karona herself. And where would the **Magic** game be without its share of impressive Legends?



**Karona, False God** is perfectly powered, considering her role in the story. She is the first Legend since Gerrard without additional creature types (because what could you call her? A Goddess?), yet she is the ultimate "tribal" card, able to rally anything from Zombies to Squirrels to Ferrets and whip them into a frenzy. All this comes with a pretty beefy power and toughness of her own! But because she wants *everyone* fighting, she switches sides and gives the same boons to your opponents' creatures! Obviously terrific fun in multiplayer, Karona really shines if you have a way to negate her advantage for your opponent, such as a tapper like **Whipcorder** or type-changers like **Imagecrafter** to reduce the opposition's tribal advantage. Personally, I envision her in a Mistform deck, perhaps with either **Cryptic Gateway** to avoid her five-color mana cost or with Elves that have no problem getting around mere color problems.

So there you have it: The new set in a very large nutshell. The *Scourge* set brings the saga of Otaria and the **Mirari** to a close with a big bang. Of course, we'll just have to see if anything is left standing when the dust settles . . .

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