

Mark Gottlieb

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Hello from Indianapolis! If you're reading this column on the day it comes out, I am, like 25,000 other people, at Gen Con. If you're not reading this column on the day it comes out, I am very, very disappointed in you. Slacker! But, of course, you'd have a good excuse for not reading it if you were at Gen Con too. Of course, many of you are reading it while at Gen Con and are no doubt overcome with the vapors at the thought of being in the same building as me. Don't swoon! OK, swoon. I can wait.

Done swooning? I won't be at the Wizards of the Coast area at Gen Con. Rather, I'll be manning the Gen Con Time Warp booth. The Time Warp is a convention-wide, 36-puzzle megapuzzle that I helped construct. Feel free to stop by and say hi, but don't expect a chat or a game. I'll be busy with the giant puzzle event. However, as interesting as that is, it has nothing to do with Hunted Wumpus.



I love Hunted Wumpus. In the first sanctioned Constructed tournament I played in, I ran a WumpusGeddon deck. People told me I was nuts: WumpusGeddon had a fundamental design flaw. The point of playing a fattie and following it up with Armageddon was so your opponent couldn't get a reasonable answer into play. Wumpus counteracted the "I'm blowing up your lands so you can't play anything" strategy. I didn't care; I liked how the deck played. It also featured Argothian Wurm, Yavimaya Elder, Groundskeeper, and Arrest and I piloted it to a decently mediocre finish. You see, Hunted Wumpus's drawback sometimes isn't a drawback at all—and that was the gamble I rode to (some) victory!

In an environment (and this can be a tourney environment or the environment around your coffee table) where no one is packing huge creatures, Hunted Wumpus's ability is negligible. Who cares if your opponent gets a free Raging Goblin? You have a 6/6 beastie on (quite possibly) turn 3. Unfortunately,

it's not always that simple. Your pal might be struggling mightily with a deck designed to hardcast Bladewing the Risen . . . until the Wumpus makes the concept of mana development unnecessary. At a time when the pros are running Akromas and Silvoses, counteracting the Wumpus's drawback by crossing your fingers isn't quite going to cut it.

Now You See It . . .

So how can you complement our poor, hunted friend? Lots of ways! Perhaps the easiest is with bounce. Your opponent gets to transfer a creature from hand to table? You get to transfer a creature from table to hand. And let's not forget the major improvement that Hunted Wumpus made on its way to *Eighth Edition*: All of a sudden, its creature type (Beast) is a huge benefit.

Bouncy Beasts *Lite!*



Main Deck

60 cards

10 Forest
10 Island
2 Lonely Sandbar
2 Tranquil Thicket

24 lands

2 Aquamoeba
3 Canopy Crawler
4 Hunted Wumpus
4 Krosan Tusker
4 Krosan Warchief
2 Snarling Undorak
3 Thought Eater
4 Wirewood Savage

26 creatures

4 Aether Burst
4 Boomerang
2 Repel
10 other spells

If you're not in the mood for a Lite deck, there are plenty of good rare Beasts you could swap in: Riptide Mangler goes well with the Wumpus, Thought Eater and Thought Devourer go well with Canopy Crawler and Krosan Warchief, and Hystrodon and Ravenous Baloth go well with everything.

Attempting Tempting

If you're going to play with Hunted Wumpus, your deck has to be prepared to deal with free, scary permanents plopping down on the other side of the table. And if your deck is prepared for that, you might—*might*—be able to handle Hunted Wumpus's younger cousin, Tempting Wurm. (They're related by marriage.) The Wurm is a lot riskier: Your opponent gets multiple permanents; lands, enchantments, and artifacts (not just creatures) could magically appear; and on turn 2, when you *really* want to play the Wurm, you are just not able to handle the consequences.



Long, long ago, when I first started writing this column, (Huh? It's only been a few months? Yikes!) some of my reader mail either contained or requested ideas for how to make Tempting Wurm playable. It's huge, it's cheap, it's neglected, and its drawback is intangible (in your mind, when you fantasize about playing the Wurm, your opponent just puts a tapped Forgotten Cave into play and meekly passes back to you, the all-powerful Magicmeister, who has telekinetically willed all other permanents to cower at the bottom of the deck). In short, it's so, so tempting. And bad. It's so, so bad.

Dana Costa pretty much hit the nail on the head about how to play with the Wurm. He mailed me two different strategies, both of which are compelling. And he had this to say about Tempting Wurm itself: "I think the card is hilarious and horribly unusable. Therefore I traded for four of them and are trying to put them to good use." Now *that's* the spirit!

Idea #1 is to put the Wurm into a discard deck. Once you help your opponent out by relieving the burden of having to hold those heavy, heavy cards, neither the Wurm nor the Wumpus has a drawback anymore.



Main Deck

60 cards

3 Barren Moor

11 Forest

10 Swamp

24 lands

4 Birds of Paradise

3 Cabal Interrogator

3 Hollow Specter

4 Hunted Wumpus

1 Lhurgoyf

1 Mortivore

4 Tempting Wurm

20 creatures

3 Ambition's Cost

4 Blackmail

1 Haunting Echoes

4 Mind Rot

4 Unburden

16 other spells

Bait & Smash

Dana's other idea is to use Tempting Wurm as bait. You play Tempting Wurm on turn 2 or 3, then see what kind of goodies appear across the table. If your opponent doesn't have much to play out, you're in good shape with your 5/5 Wurm. On the other hand, if your opponent is too greedy and plays out a bunch of creatures for free, you wipe them all out (along with your lone Wurm) with Wrath of God. You *need* your opponent's creatures to come into play—if they didn't, how could you smash them?



This next deck expands on that theme. Once again, it's a fine Hunted Wumpus strategy. Follow up a Wumpus with a Pacifism and you've easily neutralized your opponent's scariest threat. Beloved Chaplain can block the free creature all day unless it has evasion. And if you've got an Intrepid Hero in play when you play Hunted Wumpus . . . well, that's just delicious.

The rest of the deck centers around the massive amounts of mass destruction you've got. Nantuko Monastery and Elephant Guide let you survive the apocalypses with some creatures intact. The Guide also makes a great combo with the Hero: Make the Elephant ride piggyback on any of your opponent's creatures and it becomes a big enough target for the Hero to knock off—then *you* get the Elephant token! And Lhurgoyf and Genesis both interact well with the full graveyards you should provide.

Come Out and Play



Main Deck

60 cards

4 Elfhome Palace
7 Forest
3 Krosan Verge
3 Nantuko Monastery
7 Plains

24 lands

3 Beloved Chaplain
2 Genesis
4 Hunted Wumpus
2 Intrepid Hero
3 Krosan Tusker
1 Lhurgoyf
4 Tempting Worm

19 creatures

4 Akroma's Vengeance
3 Elephant Guide
4 Pacifism
2 Ray of Revelation
4 Wrath of God

17 other spells

Until next week, have fun with Wumpi!

Mark

Mark may be reached at houseofcardsmail@yahoo.com. Send rules-related **Magic** questions to ask@wizards.com.

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