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Did you just realize that all your friends suck? Don't feel bad, it happens to everyone. Are you ashamed that everyone in your **Magic** play group is a hideous loser—uh, except you? Hey, me too. (No offense, guys.) But what can you do about it? Until now, nothing! You'd have to continue hanging out with them forever. That's all about to change, though. I'm here to help.

Current sever-yourself-from-your-play-group technology is weak at best. The oldest method, dating back to the days *Homo sapiens* learned to talk, is the Lie™. It's cheap and effective, but it's not foolproof. Well, I suppose it is *foolproof*, but it's not reasonably intuitive personproof. There are only so many times you can use the Lie™ system before the lie-ees develop a tolerance to the product and its effectiveness wears off. "My car's in the shop." "My great-aunt was kidnapped by space monkeys." "I have a date." You can only stretch credibility so far before it snaps people.

The second most popular unpopularizer is the Raging Tirade™. This seems promising at first. As a Raging Tirade™ user, you'll finally explode during a game, flail your arms about in a haphazard manner, and decry the failings of each friend in sequence at the top of your screechy lungs. You get maximum drama for your dollar, and the product's short-term effectiveness is through the roof. But what the Raging Tirade™ marketing department doesn't tell you is that the effects wear off—two weeks later, you'll sheepishly slink back into your play group, worse off than before.

What to do? Are you trapped? Is it impossible to permanently alienate your friends? It was... until now. My amazing breakthrough looks at the problem from a whole new perspective. You won't have to break free of them—they'll get rid of *you*. Forever. No matter how much you beg and plead to come back. Top defriendifiers have tried this before by bringing permission decks to their casual play groups. When unsuccessful, they escalated to land destruction decks. But while Stone Rain and Pillage are annoying, they aren't "Get out of this house now and never come back!" annoying. That technology has just become available to us. Permanent, irrevocable mana denial that lasts the rest of the game. Get ready for your friends to hate you.

Lattice Pray

The problem with old-skool land destruction was that it required sorceries. For each land your opponent drew, you'd need to have a fresh Reap and Sow or Lay Waste. Even if you took out a bunch of lands at once with Armageddon or Death Cloud, the effect was a one-shot deal and your opponent could immediately start to rebuild. Now there's an Armageddon effect that sticks around on the table, ready to blow up each new land as it comes into play with the speed of a state-based effect—so fast, the land can't even be tapped for mana before it's sent to the graveyard. Even better, this "Armageddon" can beat down for 10 points of damage a turn. Presenting March of the Machines & Mycosynth Lattice.



Was that a yawn from you? Sure, many of you have seen this combo by now. (Don't worry, things will get more interesting.) But it's still a nightmare. For those who haven't seen it before, March turns all artifact lands into 0/0 creatures that are immediately put into the graveyard. (I can't even say they're "destroyed" because that's not technically correct. This will hit indestructible lands too!) The Lattice turns all lands into artifacts. Pow! The Lattice turns everything else into artifacts too, including the March, and the March animates all artifacts, including the Lattice and itself, so they're pretty sizable creatures. Unless you've gotten the combo into place too slowly, the game should end soon after it hits the table.

The combo will leave you landless too, so you probably want other mana sources, such as the *Mirrodin* Talismans. Hey—those things will help you play Mycosynth Lattice faster! And after March comes down, they'll be 2/2 beaters as well! Did you ever think the Talismans would be major combo synergy providers? Your biggest obstacle will be dealing with permanents your opponent put into play before you could deploy your combo. Time for the Echoing cards to shine: Echoing Truth can be irrevocable removal here; once all the lands are gone, any bounced permanents probably aren't going to come back. If you've got a Lattice but no March, Echoing Ruin can get rid of a bunch of lands while you wait for a March to show up. And Echoing Decay can deal with pesky critters in the early game.

Of course, you need to find your combo. All of a sudden, there are a ton of 3-mana selective blue card drawing spells. Which ones should you use? Fabricate to fetch the Lattice (but not the March)? Thirst for Knowledge to dig three cards deeper? Pulse of the Grid to dig only two cards deeper, but potentially for multiple times? Beats me. I included some of each.

The only victory condition in this deck is walking, talking, stomping artifacts, so to that end I included Darksteel Ingot and Shield of Kaldra. You can do worse than an indestructible 3/3 for 3 and an indestructible 4/4 for 4—with March of the Machines in play, of course.

Landlocked



Main Deck

60 cards

13 Island
5 Mountain

0 creatures

4 Darksteel Ingot
2 Echoing Decay

4 Swamp	4 Echoing Ruin
22 lands	4 Echoing Truth
	2 Fabricate
	4 March of the Machines
	4 Mycosynth Lattice
	2 Pulse of the Grid
	2 Shield of Kaldra
	4 Talisman of Dominance
	4 Talisman of Indulgence
	2 Thirst for Knowledge
	38 other spells

It's a land! And an artifact! And a creature! Uh-oh...

Why blow up everyone's lands when you can just blow up your opponent's lands? That seems better, right? A friendly anonymous tipster called holysword_27 sent me the combo that will do it. It's much the same as the March of the Machines-Mycoynth Lattice combo, except that it replaces the Lattice with Myr Landshaper. Once the March is marching, if you tap the Landshaper to artifactize a land, it becomes a 0/0 creature, and away it goes. But holysword_27 wasn't done: Add Dross Scorpion, friend to combo lovers everywhere, and the Landshaper can knock out all of your opponent's lands at once. Thanks to the Scorpion, each artifact land that bites it will untap the Landshaper so it can do its groove thang all over again.

Is this a better combo than the first one? Unclear. It takes three pieces, not two (though you're still in pretty good shape without the Scorpion). But the pieces are cheaper: nothing costs 6 mana. But the pieces are more fragile: they include two creatures with 1 toughness. After it's in place, you'll still have all your lands, but you won't have a 4/4 March and a 6/6 Lattice. So I don't know if it's better. But is it *meaner*? Oh yeah. There's nothing quite like sitting across from a permanentless, locked-out-of-the-game opponent, who should be seething in frustration for your enjoyment.

The support for this deck is similar to the first one. Bounce is still good. Searching is still necessary. Darksteel Pendant helps you search for combo pieces, and generously volunteers to block giant creatures all day once you animate it. As long as you're setting yourself up to be an LD pariah, some early-game permission can't make you *less* popular, so Annul and Mana Leak should help keep things under control in the early going. I added some Trinispheres because unlike the March-Lattice deck, your opponent can play a land and tap it for mana before it gets nuked. If everything costs at least 3 mana, one lonely land won't help too much. And after the combo hits, it's the biggest creature in the deck. Beat up by Trinisphere? How embarrassing.

The Shaper of Things



Main Deck

60 cards

19 Island	4 Dross Scorpion	3 Annul
4 Lonely Sandbar	4 Myr Landshaper	2 Boomerang
		3 Darksteel Pendant

23 lands

8 creatures

4 Echoing Truth

1 Fabricate

3 Mana Leak

4 March of the Machines

3 Pulse of the Grid

4 Thirst for Knowledge

2 Trinisphere

29 other spells

Holysword_27 recommends that additional lockdown can be achieved through another Scorpion, an Isochron Scepter, and a Snap. Well, since you're preparing to be thrown out of your play group anyway...

Strands of Night

As I was combing the *Darksteel* spoiler, looking for interesting black cards to break for Black Week, Burden of Greed caught my eye. A 4-mana instant that might do absolutely nothing? That seemed breakable. I quickly paired it with Mycosynth Lattice to make sure my opponent had lots of artifacts, then added in other black artifact-dependent pain disher-outers like Emissary of Despair and Relic Bane. While the Lattice-Emissary combo was solid, I wasn't satisfied with Burden of Greed yet. I could guarantee my opponent had lots of artifacts. How could I guarantee they were all *tapped*? Metal Fatigue didn't occur to me... but Kill Switch did, and the deck turned into a whole different monster.

Kill Switch is a doozy. Assume you've got Mycosynth Lattice on the table. You throw the Switch, and every single permanent taps down. Now all of them—including the ones that were already tapped when you activated the Switch—are held under its sway. Any artifact that comes into play after the activation is free and clear, so you have to keep switching the Switch to keep the board locked down... and that's more difficult than it seems. You activate the Switch on your turn. On your opponent's turn, nothing much happens. On your turn, Kill Switch untaps. But your lands don't. Tapping the Switch by some other means doesn't help, because as soon as it untapped, its ability's effect ended. You've got to activate it again, which costs 2 mana—2 mana you don't have. So you do nothing. Pretty soon, you'll have to end your turn no matter how much you whine, plead and stall. Then your opponent untaps all his permanents, while you sit there with your pants down. With your pants off. With your pants in the other room. And you get run over.

Maybe that doesn't faze you. If you keep the board clear enough, you won't get too savaged, and Kill Switch would essentially just tell each player to skip every other turn. And it could still work with the black cards I was trying to use. Tap six mana, activate Kill Switch with 4 mana floating, then play Burden of Greed. Deliciously painful! But not painful enough. (Did you forget today's theme?)

So, to keep everything tapped forever, you need 2 mana a turn. Mana you can't get by tapping permanents. Mana that must be produced by triggered abilities. Eladamri's Vineyard comes to mind, but giving your opponent mana as well is hardly the desired result. No, the answer is the otherwise



unplayable Thran Turbine! Go ahead, look it up. Custom-made for this situation and no other (when else do you direly need a triggered ability that produces 2 colorless mana during your upkeep?), it's the third part of the lock.



We're done locking the board. We're not done winning the game. After the lock, you can expect to have one mana from a freshly played land on any given turn. But now what? Standard creature combat won't help, since your creatures will be tapped. Nothing that inflicts damage via tapping can help. This is a perfect opportunity to use one of my all-time favorite terrible cards. In fact, it's the best opportunity for Sleeper Agent I've ever seen. It only costs 1, and after its initial defection, it'll be tapped down, unable to get back at you for (presumably) insulting its mother. Sleeper Agent doesn't like its controller—but it *really* hates you.

Creatures that untap themselves could run rampant over an empty battlefield. Morphling, Horseshoe Crab, Locust

"This is a perfect opportunity to use one of my all-time favorite terrible cards."

Swarm(?!)... Black Carriage is actually pretty enticing in this situation, but you can't expect to have too many other creatures out. Eater of the Dead is the best bet. Its untap cost is quite feasible, and you can get it into play after the lock via either Reanimate or a 1-cost mana generator. But that's not the direction I chose to go.

There are some spicy mana generators for 1, but most (Songs of the Damned, Culling the Weak, Sacrifice, the super-Sacrifice Burnt Offering) require creatures. One of them, Blood Pet, *is* a creature, and though it was in the deck for a while, it was pushed out by Rain of Filth. Once the Kill Switch-Thran Turbine combo is online, your tapped lands are completely expendable. (Unless your opponent is packing Oxidizes to bust up your combo. Which is likely. But what a killjoy that would be!) Rain of Filths will actually enable a Burden of Greed or two late in the game when your opponent has plenty of helplessly tapped permanents. They'd also let you add a Megrin or a Relic Bane to the board to hasten the hurt. (I suppose you could use Dark Ritual instead of Rain of Filth—but aren't you already being cheesy enough?)

Switch Off



Main Deck

60 cards

24 Swamp

4 Sleeper Agent

3 Burden of Greed

24 lands

4 creatures

2 Diabolic Tutor

4 Howling Mine

4 Kill Switch

2 Megrin

4 Mycosynth Lattice

4 Rain of Filth

3 Relic Bane

4 Thran Turbine
2 Vampiric Tutor

32 other spells

By the way, Seedborn Muse is nuts with the Lattice-Switch combo. On *your* untap step, all of *my* stuff—and *only* my stuff untaps. But even I have my limits.

Everyone Out of the Mana Pool

Naw, I was kidding. I don't have my limits. All of the above decks have tiny little loopholes for your opponent to generate mana. The first deck is vulnerable to artifact mana sources. The second and third let your opponents play 1-mana spells by laying a land and tapping it before you can do anything about it. Unacceptable! The lockdown must be total, complete, and infinite! I must be banned from my playgroup FOREVER!!!



I only had to go as far as my inbox to find the harshest mana-denial combo I had ever seen. Coilean (aka PackCat according to the email) suggested pairing Mycosynth Lattice with Null Rod. It's the end of mana as we know it: All lands turn off permanently! Birds and Elves turn off permanently! Artifact mana turns off permanently! If this combo pops up on a clear board, just about the only thing that could generate mana for the rest of the game is Elvish Spirit Guide.

Get the combo out when you have a tiny board edge (say a 1/1 creature), and the game's pretty much over. Creatures can still attack, but that's the end of the action. Who can do anything after this point? But Coilean/PackCat wasn't done preventing every possible game action from occurring. Worried about Basking Rootwallas or Pyrokineses, he suggested Trinisphere. That way, even if you do run into the oddball opponent packing a full complement of Spirit Guides, she could cast only one spell the entire rest of the game. PackCoileanCat suggests bringing the game home with self-reanimating creatures such as Ichorid or Nether Shadow, or even by good, old-fashioned, I-have-a-62-card-deck-hah! decking.

Those are fine methods. They'd probably work, and they'd certainly get you thrown out of wherever you are for being the most annoying **Magic** player in history. (Based on decks, not personality. The uber-annoying personality is up to you.) But I think it's very unlikely that whomever you play has a grip filled with alterna-cost spells—she's probably done playing spells altogether once the Rod-Lattice combo hits. So let's use the countermeasures ourselves! I chose a green-black build, though blue and red also have some compelling choices.

Null and Void



Main Deck 60 cards

11 Forest

1 Elvish Spirit Guide

3 Contagion

2 Llanowar Wastes

11 Swamp

24 lands

4 Llanowar Elves

1 Nether Shadow

4 Skyshroud Cutter

3 Vine Dryad

13 creatures

2 Diabolic Tutor

4 Howling Mine

4 Mycosynth Lattice

4 Null Rod

1 Reverent Silence

3 Snuff Out

2 Vampiric Tutor

23 other spells

The Llanowar Elves won't help under Rod-lock, of course, but they can power out a Turn 5 Lattice, and the deck needs green cards to pitch to its Vine Dryads. And remember: A 1/1 critter can go the distance once the mana pool has been drained bone dry.

And you thought Black Week was evil.

Until next week, have fun getting kicked out!

Mark

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