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**I**t's *Mirrodin* Block Hidden Gems Week! That means that this week, I'm supposed to pluck out some overlooked, underappreciated cards from *Mirrodin* or *Darksteel*—cards that have flown under the radar because they don't fit into cookie-cutter tournament decks like Ravager Affinity or Red Deck Wins—and build compelling yet twisted little decks around them.

This is different from what I do every other week how?

Well, I'm just going to have to make it different. I've gone through my share of Hidden Gems already... but I haven't used the Big One. The one Scott Johns is obviously challenging me to use. Enough of your taunting, Scott! I accept your dare! Yes, I've made or profiled decks in this column that use these otherwise neglected cards:

Blinkmoth Urn  
Burden of Greed  
Confusion in the Ranks  
Coretapper  
Drooling Ogre  
Dross Harvester  
Extraplanar Lens  
Fangren Firstborn  
Gate to the Aether  
Gemini Engine  
Geth's Grimoire  
Greater Harvester  
Jinxed Choker  
Karstoderm  
Krark's Thumb  
Leveler  
Lightning Coils  
Living Hive  
Lodestone Myr  
March of the Machines  
Mycosynth Lattice  
Myr Landshaper  
Nemesis Mask  
Nuisance Engine  
One Dozen Eyes  
Ornithopter  
Pentavus  
Power Conduit  
Psychogenic Probe  
Quicksilver Elemental  
Quicksilver Fountain  
Rust Elemental  
Second Sunrise  
Shared Fate  
Spawning Pit

Tangleroot  
Tel-Jilad Stylus  
Thought Dissector  
Timesifter  
Trinisphere  
Vermiculos  
Wall of Blood  
War Elemental  
Wirefly Hive

But none of them measure up to the Ultimate Hidden Gem of *Mirrodin!*

### **CHIMNEY IMP!**

I bet some of you out there think I'm kidding. Hey, have I ever lied to you? Chimney Imp is an excellent card. It is brokenness incarnate. It is THE Hidden Gem of the block: It never gets played, it's completely disrespected, it has its own anti-fan clubs... *and I've killed people with it.* For real. I can't understand why you people have a problem with the comboriffic lockdown/beatdown engine I like to call Chimney Imp. Crazy Goblin is irredeemable. But Chimney Imp isn't a chump—it's a champ.

### **Masked and Anonymous**

But you can't expect me to get to the good stuff right away. Chimney Imp is the headliner, not the opening act. No, you're just going to have to wait patiently. Or scroll down. I have some other Hidden Gems to cover.


First up is Death-Mask Duplicant. This snazzy number is a 7-mana artifact creature—like Pentavus! And it's got a 5/5 body—like Pentavus! But honey, this ain't no Pentavus, and that's why it's a *Hidden Gem* rather than a *Blatant Gem*. Pentavus can combo with a number of other cards to do more tricks than a magician-trained circus dog, but Death-Mask Duplicant doesn't do anything unless you've got much better creatures than it already rotting away in your graveyard. And that's usually a bad game state to be in unless you put yourself there on purpose. Luckily, that's not hard to do.

Death-Mask Duplicant needs to have crazy cards in your graveyard to live up to its potential. Spending seven mana to hardcast it is unfathomable. (Never mind that my next deck routinely hardcasts 10-mana spells.) So it's reanimator time for us. The basics are pretty standard *Odyssey* block fare: Buried Alive, Careful Study, Compulsion, Zombify, and Stitch Together. Put the cards into the graveyard, get the cards out of the graveyard. I borrowed the idea of Dragon Breath from Sutured Ghoul decks; it'll pop out to enchant any non-Angels in the deck you reanimate. I also borrowed the idea of Sutured Ghoul from Sutured Ghoul decks; it's a backup plan to the Death-Mask Duplicant idea. If you can reanimate something early, it's better to go for the artifact creature. If the game is running long, Sutured Ghoul becomes a better option as it can deal lethal damage with one hasty attack.

The ideal plan for Death-Mask Duplicant is to bring it back from the graveyard and imprint Akroma, Angel of Wrath and Dragon Tyrant. Now it has flying, haste, trample, double strike, protection from black, and protection from red, and can deal lethal damage in two turns. (It has first strike too, but





double strike makes that irrelevant.) If you can use Stitch Together, rather than Zombify, to do that on turn 4, you'll have mana open to imprint immediately. When you're in that position, a funny little thought will occur to you: Akroma's in my graveyard, I'm holding a reanimation spell, and I'm going for Death-Mask Duplicant??? Style, baby, style. Anyone can reanimate Akroma.

Murky Dyin' Masks			deck 
<b>Main Deck</b>			
60 cards			
6 Island	2 Akroma, Angel of Wrath	4 Buried Alive	
4 Polluted Delta	1 Devouring Strossus	4 Careful Study	
3 Salt Marsh	1 Draco	4 Compulsion	
6 Swamp	2 Dragon Tyrant	4 Death-Mask Duplicant	
4 Underground River	2 Iridescent Angel	2 Dragon Breath	
-----	3 Sutured Ghoul	4 Stitch Together	
23 lands	-----	4 Zombify	
	11 creatures	-----	
		26 other spells	

Notice the odd array of creatures. You can use whichever fatties you've got. Draco and the Strossus are there to help Sutured Ghoul; Iridescent Angel is there to help Death-Mask Duplicant. I once won a game by using Compulsion to cycle away Iridescent Angel, then imprinting the Angel on the Duplicant to thwart a removal spell. But what I want to point out is that the entire base of the deck, including the Duplicant, is common or uncommon; only the giant monsters are rare. You can swap in other alternatives: Skyhunter Patrol comes with flying and first strike, Beloved Chaplain provides protection from creatures, and Ridgetop Raptor brings double strike to the party.

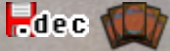
### It's a Soul Cleaner *and* a Dessert Topping!

A card I've seen very little from is Soulscour. I don't understand why: It's a gigantic sorcery that might do absolutely nothing, and it only costs twice as much as Chimney Imp! Aside from being completely wrecked by a Soulscour deck once online, I've never seen it used. I did have the card tucked away in my back pocket because it's within the realm of possibility that it just might potentially combo with a *Fifth Dawn* card to become a wrecking ball. But I wouldn't have any advance knowledge of that, would I? Still, it can be quite potent right now, so I deem it a Hidden Gem.

Talk about swingy.   for a card that might do literally nothing (against Affinity, for example, but who plays that? Everyone? Oh.) or might leave your opponent with zero permanents while you have a full board. Its symmetry is immediately broken by the fact that every permanent in your deck will be an artifact. Soulscour can't hurt you unless your opponent has a Neurok Transmuter. The only question is how many of your opponent's permanents it will take out. Believe me, it's a lot of fun to completely, totally, absolutely send your opponent back to the beginning of the game while you have the ability to cast anything you draw.

***"A gigantic sorcery that might do absolutely nothing, and it only costs twice as much as Chimney Imp!"***

Of course, most of the things you draw will be mana producers. You need lots of it to power out your giant spell sometime before the millennium is over. So, to that end, the deck packs Talismans, Ur-Golem's Eyes, Gilded Lotuses (the key to the deck), and Sculpting Steels. My favorite move is to tap five mana for a Lotus, then tap that to play a Sculpting Steel which copies the Lotus you used to play it. That's supported with card drawing, which doesn't leave much room for business spells—especially when four of your business spells can't be tutored for with Fabricate and can't be relied on to help you. When Soulscour hits, you will win the game. But when it's useless, it's useless. That's why I've seeded the deck with single copies of crazy artifacts that can also singlehandedly win the game. The deck plays out like mana, mana, mana, mana, POW! Or it sputters like a carburetor stuffed with Silly Putty. That's OK; it's easy to shuffle up for a new game.

**Scouring Bubbles**


**Main Deck**  
*60 cards*

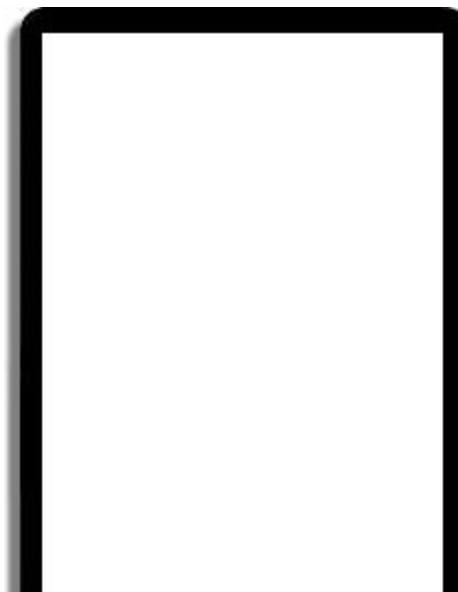
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 Ancient Den</li> <li>4 Darksteel Citadel</li> <li>4 Great Furnace</li> <li>4 Seat of the Synod</li> <li>4 Tree of Tales</li> <li>4 Vault of Whispers</li> </ul> <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>24 lands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Bosh, Iron Golem</li> <li>1 Darksteel Colossus</li> <li>1 Pentavus</li> <li>1 Sundering Titan</li> </ul> <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>4 creatures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Fabricate</li> <li>4 Gilded Lotus</li> <li>1 Mindslaver</li> <li>1 Myr Incubator</li> <li>4 Sculpting Steel</li> <li>3 Serum Tank</li> <li>4 Soulscour</li> <li>4 Talisman of Progress</li> <li>4 Thoughtcast</li> <li>1 Tower of Fortunes</li> <li>3 Ur-Golem's Eye</li> </ul> <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>32 other spells</p>
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## Bring on the Chimney Imp

Now it's time for business. Now is what you've been waiting for. Now is when I break Chimney Imp. I don't see what the big deal is. This dynamo was begging to be broken. It's so volatile the card practically vibrates. Why do you think it costs 5 mana, people? It's broken! It's bah-roken! It's so broken it makes Humpty Dumpty look like he's made of steel!

I like to take the worst card in a large expansion and build a deck around it. I have a reputation for it, having done so for one year in a row. If I could find something useful to do with Accursed Centaur, I could certainly put Chimney Imp to work.

The key to His Royal Chimney-ness is the leaves-play ability, because it can be exploited into a lock. Most discard effects throughout the history of the game take place at sorcery speed. This is to prevent you from using them during your



opponent's draw step. She draws a card, you cause a discard before she gets to her main phase: If your effect is repeatable, the game is pretty much over unless the card she drew was an instant—a *useful* instant. This explains the clunky “any time you could play a sorcery” clauses on Sadistic Hypnotist, Cabal Interrogator, and the like. A few cards skirt this restriction, but there's no good way to recur Funeral Charm or Necrogen Spellbomb at the moment.

*Cower in fear!*

The easiest combo to pull off a draw step lock is Chittering Rats in a Soul Foundry. This is even better than causing a discard every turn, because now your opponent can't topdeck a lock-breaker. No, this way, she's stuck looking at the same card for the rest of the game. It's harder to repeatedly trigger the Imp's leaves-play ability than the Rats's comes-into-play ability (and with good reason—otherwise the Imp would've probably been banned by now for being so busted). But we can do it. One combo is Imp + Spawning Pit + Oversold Cemetery. As long as there are enough creatures in your graveyard, you'll get the Imp back at the start of your turn, play it, and sac it to the Spawning Pit during your opponent's draw step. Another combo is Malevolent Awakening + Imp in play + Imp in your graveyard. I like this one because it requires *even more* Chimney Imps! During your opponent's draw step, sac the Imp in play to bring the Imp in your graveyard back to your hand, then play the new Imp on your turn. It takes eight mana to run the engine, but I've pulled it off. The deck will fail a decent amount of the time. But it's worth going through the hardships for the times it works. There's nothing quite so delicious as your opponent's mortified expression, pained humiliation, and soul-crushing shame as you beat her down, and lock her out, with Chimney Imp.

## Chimney Sweep

### Main Deck

*60 cards*

<p>3 Barren Moor</p> <p>3 Cabal Coffers</p> <p>17 Swamp</p> <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p>23 lands</p>	<p>4 Chimney Imp</p> <p>4 Chittering Rats</p> <p>2 Shambling Swarm</p> <p>2 Solemn Simulacrum</p> <p>4 Twisted Abomination</p> <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p>16 creatures</p>	<p>4 Diabolic Tutor</p> <p>4 Duress</p> <p>1 Grave Pact</p> <p>2 Malevolent Awakening</p> <p>4 Mutilate</p> <p>2 Oversold Cemetery</p> <p>2 Soul Foundry</p> <p>2 Spawning Pit</p> <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p>21 other spells</p>
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Until next week, have fun (how could you not?) with Chimney Imp.

Mark

