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Gleemax



Adrian Sullivan · *Single-Card Strategies*
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For those of you who know me pretty well, I'm pretty sure that you're laughing a bit as I look at my Preview card this week (and not just because I have a big head). Here it is:



What I'm looking at here is a card that costs a million.

A million.

The mind boggles at a million. Take a calculator at 0, add 1, press equals. You've got one. Do it again. You've got 2. Do this constantly at work or school for two and a half weeks and you've got a million. A million seconds? Well, that's about 12 days. A million pieces of paper would stack up 35 stories high. A million mana? Well, for a million mana you can get a **Fireball** at 999 players for 1,000 damage each. Or, if you prefer, you can have one Gleemax.

Between you and me, if you can get a million mana, I think the **Fireball** might be a bit better. Or at least a **Kaervek's Torch**. So, I think, maybe getting a million mana isn't the way to think about what Gleemax does.

What it does

Gleemax simplifies the game a lot, against all but the worstest opponents. Spells that your opponent might want to point at something probably won't do the job that they want. If they are lucky, they can get to actually "make" you target something. Here are some examples:

- A **Counterspell**, when the only spell on the stack is your **Horned Turtle**. Oh, well, I guess they got ya. One "dead" **Horned Turtle**.
- They cast **Duress** in a two-player game. **Duress** says "Target opponent". Well, I guess that will have to be you.
- **Viashino Heretic** is out, and the only Artifact or Enchantment in play is, uh-oh, *your Gleemax*. Better do something about that guy before he messes up everything!

A Gleemax will happily turn every **Lightning Bolt** against the creature or player you want, fix any complex counterspell war, and turn many special abilities to your whim.

It also, in case you forgot, costs a million mana. (*A thousand thousand...*)

Dealing with what it doesn't

It may cost a thousand thousand mana, but a Gleemax in play isn't an auto-win by any means. It is, however, very very good, and a whole lot of fun as well. Clearly, it would generally be good against me – I'm prone to enjoying playing the odd burn-based deck. However, changing all the targeting doesn't do much about creatures simply getting into play and attacking. So, make sure you have a decent amount of cards that will help you defend the fort. **Wrath of God** is great, of course, but even having point-and-click elimination like a **Glacial Ray** is good. Even having a decently big *creature* is good. It's not like they are going to be able to target it with anything once your Gleemax is out.

Getting it out

Oh, let me count the ways. The most obvious method is also the most restricted method: **Tinker**. Using a **Tinker** means that you're probably playing with people who don't much mind such powerful cards in their games. When it comes to casual groups, no two are alike, so if your group allows **Tinker**, have at it!

For those without access to **Tinker**, **Goblin Welder** and **Beacon of Unrest** are another great pair of ways to cheat. You'll need to get the Gleemax into the 'yard first, but that shouldn't be too hard. Anything from **Careful Study** and **Intuition** to **Artificer's Intuition** will do the trick. **Gamble** and **Wheel of Fortune** can take care of things for you in Red. **Fleshgrafter** and **Cabal Therapy** (on yourself) can do it in Black. **Wild Mongrel** and **Dawnstrider** can do it in Green. I bet you there are more than a few ways to do it in White, but White is my least favorite color, so I'm going to leave them off the list. And once you've got it in the graveyard, there are many, many ways to bring it back out.

Another great way to get Gleemax into play is by playing cards that simply let you dump it right into play, such as **Show and Tell**. **Show and Tell** ends up being a lot like a **Tinker** in many ways, cheating on the actual casting cost at a small amount of risk. Similar options include **Eureka** (with one of my favorite pieces of card art) and **Incoming!** from *Unglued*. All three of these cards do the same thing, just plop the card into play. You may have to worry about what your opponent might plop out, but hey, you've got Gleemax, who cares!

One final method to get it out is the "get lucky" with a flip method. A lucky **Mind's Desire**, **Gate to the Aether**, or **Temporal Aperture** can get a Gleemax into play as well. The Gate is the only one of these things that you can actually have some degree of control with, combining with tons of cards, including **Scroll Rack** and **Brainstorm**, among others.

Once the card is out there, it's time to exploit it. One great way is to make it into a creature. That would mean, of course, that you have a 1,000,000/1,000,000 creature out. **Titania's Song**, **March of the Machines**, **Karn's Touch**, and good ol' **Karn** himself can do the trick here. Give him some evasion or some trample, and you're probably in great shape. **Fling** and friends also work quite nicely here.

While you're at it, since you already have a 1,000,000/1,000,000 creature, why not make a 1,000,000 mana? Use an **Energy Tap** on the animated Gleemax and you've got it. It's a few cards to pull it off, but if you get a million mana, I bet you can do something abusive with it...

Or rather, *not* getting it out

Of course, getting it out might be exciting and all, but what about *not* getting it out instead. One of the most exciting things about Gleemax is that it costs a million to get out – even if you're not planning on casting it!



The easy and maybe the best way to abuse this is **Erratic Explosion** and **Kaboom!** **Erratic Explosion** was already one-half of a Red/Blue combo deck that finished things off with **Draco**. By **Erratic Explosioneing** a **Draco** at someone's head, they would only be *mostly* dead. There's a big difference between mostly dead and all dead. Mostly dead is slightly alive. If it was a **Gleemax**, well, then there's usually only one thing they can do: shuffle for the next game.

This same idea holds true for **Pyromancy**. The big difference here is that you probably have a bit less control over hitting a random card in your hand than you do milling the top of your library. Still, **Pyromancy** can be a bit of fun on its own.

If we go back to **Prophecy** though, I think we actually strike gold. Black gold. **Infernal Genesis**, that is.



With an **Infernal Genesis**, we can accomplish much the same task as an **Erratic Explosion** or **Kaboom!** but rather than getting a million damage out in one single blow, we get a million creatures. If your group is a multiplayer group, you can expect that this will mean that you're the new "kill that guy" target. If you have an Anger in the yard or a **Concordant Crossroads**, it probably won't matter anyway.

If you go to **Scourge**, you get to take advantage of the "converted mana cost" craze that R&D must have been going through at the time. Sure, **Rush of Knowledge** won't work too well if you have a Gleemax out (unless you really *do* have a million-plus cards in your deck), but **Torrent of Fire**, **Accelerated Mutation**, and **Ancient Ooze** should do you just fine. In a group game, well, one million life for you and all of your teammates would probably do the trick, right?

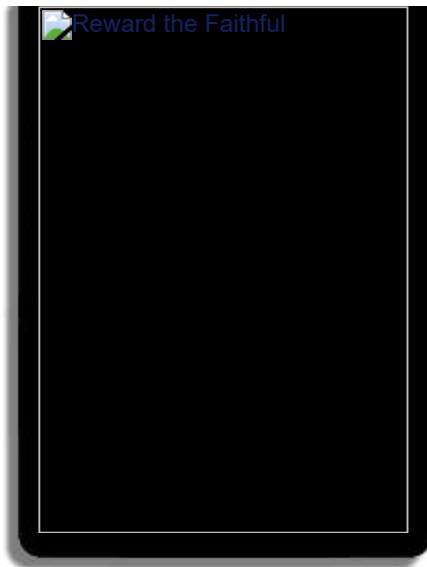
Wrapping Up

So, all that said, here's my take on a sample deck with Gleemax. It makes use of a pretty big smattering of the ideas I've brought up already:

Glee with Gleemax (for group play)		
60 cards		
3 Temple of the False God	4 Karn, Silver Golem	4 Gleemax
4 Cloudpost	4 Toymaker	4 Scroll Rack
3 Plains		4 Vampiric Tutor
7 Swamp	8 creatures	4 Gate to the AEther
4 Caves of Koilos		4 Infernal Genesis
4 Grand Coliseum		4 Reward the Faithful
25 land		1 Test of Endurance
		2 Beacon of Unrest
		27 other spells

The deck has quite a few ways to get something rumbling. If you get Gleemax out (either with a **Beacon of Unrest** or a **Gate to the Aether**), **Toymaker** or **Karn** can make it into a huge creature. **Toymaker** doubles as a decent way to get a Gleemax into the 'yard for your Beacon. **Infernal Genesis** and **Gate to the Aether** both trigger off of the top of the library, and a **Scroll Rack** or a **Vampiric Tutor** can put the card you most want there on top of your library. Even without a Gleemax in play, a **Reward the Faithful** can bring in a decent amount of life for either your team, or just playing politics with a free-for-all game. For that matter, **Infernal Genesis** and **Gate to the Aether** can also make a lot of the table happy, and many people might step up to keep you from being killed just so they can keep out the appropriate card.

All in all, this is just one approach that you could take, and there are many, many others.



Last week, I asked everyone if they would like to have this *coming* week be another Reader Challenge, this time focusing on the card **Psychic Vortex**. Here are the results of that poll:

Should Psychic Vortex be the subject of a Reader Challenge?		
Yes	2814	59.1%
No	1946	40.9%
Total	4760	100.0%

The readers have spoken!

Send me your e-mails with *your* **Psychic Vortex** decklists. As always, these decklists will be judged in the following manner:

- Decks that focus on doing something and do it well
- Decks that have that little extra creativity or innovation
- And, in a pinch, whichever person gets me the e-mail first

Some of you have already sent in decklists, so you guys are going to have a bit of a head start on that last tiebreaker. Well, to the early bird goes the worm. Make sure that you put "Psychic Vortex Deck Challenge" in the subject line.

Have a great rest of the week, and I hope you enjoy seeing the new *Unhinged* cards.



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