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# Heartbeat of Spring

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Welcome to a brand new year of [Single Card Strategies](#). New Year's isn't just the time to stay up incredibly late with a good collection of friends and have a swell time. It can also be a time of self-reflection and growth. Right now we're living in a kind of almost-Golden Age when it comes to the **Magic** cards we see when they get out of Research and Development's high security walls and into our booster packs out in the real world. Each year, with a nudge here and a nudge there, we see the direction that the game takes become more refined and more purposeful.

With all that in mind, I see a set like *Champions of Kamigawa* as a real triumph for Wizards of the Coast. Now you might be saying to yourself, "Hey, this guy writes for them, so they're just paying him to praise them." Well, neither my editor nor any of Wizards of the Coast's yakuza enforcers have threatened me or offered me bribes to say such things, and I'd be just as happy saying them in some of the other places I write about **Magic**. *Champions* not only has a look and feel that is just a real aesthetic pleasure, it combines a lot of my favorite things in **Magic** sets: as a set, *Champions* is not overly dominated by any of the new mechanics like Soulshift or Arcane, and as a set it also appeals to the old fogey in me by revisiting old ideas.

One of those great old card ideas that they've revisited is the new **Mana Flare**, [Heartbeat of Spring](#).



**Heartbeat of Spring** is one of those great cards that asks you to take big risks but can also truly offer a big reward in return. Jamie Wakefield used to joke to some of us that Green was the "color of sharing", and **Heartbeat** definitely is about sharing the love. Doubling *everyone's* mana is a risky proposition. Usually it's going to be some *other* player who gets the first crack at using all of that extra mana. In group games, you might become everyone's friend (at least for a second), but things could quickly swing out of control before you get a chance to get in on the fun of all of that extra mana. In one-on-one games, you'd better have a pretty big plan on how to march back into the game after giving your opponent that much mana...

## A bit of Magic psychology (for the mana rich)

Maybe it is just human nature, but something really funny happens when you give a **Magic** player a lot of mana: they usually empty their hands. If they are a combo deck, this can be a very scary thing, but thankfully combo deck players are meanies and you can pick up your cards and find a new opponent if they're going to be jerks like that.

So, there you are. Your opponent has just emptied their hand of every spell that they have that is not a counterspell, and now you're going to have to find some way to deal with all of these new threats. What on earth should you do?

One of the very convenient things about **Obliterate** is that it only requires four land in play to cast it if you have a **Heartbeat of Spring** in play.

**Obliterate** carries one of the most powerful effects in **Magic**, and the fact that it can't be countered is just more gravy. If you live in a world where a counterspell isn't something that you actually need to worry about, you can take a step back and play **Jokulhaups**. There, you get the added benefit of only needing to spend 6 mana. Given the chance, this is

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actually a really big difference: you can cast a **Jokulhaups** on turn four and then still lay a land and cast a spell that costs 2 with the **Heartbeat of Spring** out.

Whether you run with **Obliterate** or **Haups**, most of the time the only card that will survive is the **Heartbeat of Spring**. Most people don't play as many enchantments. A little research will show just how true this is. Take the recent [State Championship Tournaments](#) in the United States, for example. 4 **Phyrexian Arena**, 4 **Glorious Anthem**, 3 **March of the Machines**. That's it in the main decks of winning decklists in the entire United States.

Trust me, **Heartbeat** is going to be one of the few cards to survive.

## Truly divine



**Obliterate** is a restrictively expensive spell, but overcoming mana as a barrier is one of the things that is possible with **Heartbeat of Spring**. In fact, there are loads of fun and expensive spells that end up being avoided just because of cost. If you're going to spend a lot of mana on something, it had better be impressive though.

With all of the new cards out there, the first ones that come to mind are the ones that can actually survive an **Obliterate** or a **Jokulhaups**: the Myojin. The Myojin are spirits so powerful that they are almost godlike in their abilities. When you're spending between eight to ten mana on one of these spirits, getting that divinity counter and being indestructible is a great bonus. All of the Myojin can expend this divinity counter for a big effect, but two of these are pretty quickly discarded as not being all that impressive. Removing the divinity counter from a **Myojin of Life's Web** lets you put all of your creatures into play from your hand, but with that much mana at your fingertips, generally that isn't going to be all that amazing. Using a **Myojin of Infinite Rage** is also a bit disappointing, if only that you'll often want to be able to make use of all of the mana that **Heartbeat of Spring** provides, and turning your Myojin into a very killable 7/4 seems like an untrustworthy plan; remember your opponent is likely to have cast a few spells of their own on the previous turn.

From there we get to step up to more powerful effects in **Myojin of Cleansing Fire** (**Wrath of God** everything else) and **Myojin of Night's Reach** (empty all opponents' hands). **Myojin of Night's Reach** is especially powerful in a group game, but again, how many cards will people have left in their hand after you've doubled their mana?

The real gem is **Myojin of Seeing Winds**. When you remove the divinity counter, you get to draw a card for every permanent you control. The blue Myojin weighs in at a small 3/3, but that hardly matters. When you draw cards, you can generally expect to draw a minimum of seven, but oftentimes you'll draw much, much more with it. With double the mana, it won't be that big of a surprise if you simply win the game right there with all of that card draw.

You don't need to just look to the Myojin for your big creatures. Anything expensive and ridiculous will do. **Darksteel Colossus** survives nearly anything too. With only four mountains, a **Dragon Tyrant** will kill an opponent in one blow, and that is after paying the **upkeep**.

## Other magical spells

When the more expensive and more powerful **Mirari's Wake** was printed, people would say that if you could untap with this in play, you would win the game. This is one of the key things to try to do with any deck that you plan on using to take advantage of the **Heartbeat of Spring**. Remember that most people are not going to be prepared with cards that will outright win the game when they achieve big mana, but *yours* should be. The reason a card like **Obliterate** is so good with **Heartbeat of Spring** is that you can punish people for making use of all the mana that you've given them.

So what are some other ways to take advantage of all this mana by planning ahead? One of the first things you can do to reward yourself is play a card that went very well with **Mirari's Wake**: **Time Stretch**. Taking one turn extra turn is amazing, especially with so much mana. Taking two is really, really ridiculous.

In a similar vein, a card like **Uyo, Silent Prophet** can be especially deadly. If you *don't* win the game by using **Uyo** to copy some spell repeatedly (very repeatedly, with that much mana), you're likely to be in a heap of trouble, but I bet that on turn 6, an **Uyo** copying a spell up to three times can cause a heck of a lot of trouble.

In fact, Blue seems to have a huge collection of completely mean things to do with a lot of mana. Besides **Time Stretch**, there is also **Denying Wind**. **Denying Wind** can be a bit of a knockout punch for a deck that you've



already dealt with. Sure, it doesn't solve any problems you already have, but what it does do is take care of any problems that you *might have*.

Then, again in Blue, we come across the ever-wonderful "untap" mechanic. **Cloud of Faeries** and **Snap** have already found their place in Extended, but when you're talking about what you can accomplish with **Heartbeat of Spring** out, why think small? Think big! **Palinchron** and **Heartbeat of Spring** make infinite mana at a mere six lands. With six or seven lands cast a **Palinchron** and return it to your hand. Every time that you do this, you net mana. Toss in a **Stroke of Genius**, **Fireball**, **Kaervek's Torch**, or nearly anything, and you're likely to get a game win right there.

For the less comborific player, simply building up card drawing can be nice. Back in the day, players tried to abuse **Mana Flare** with **Browse** in a deck usually called "Turbo Book". The basic idea is that for a mere two lands, you can find a really great spell and quickly overwhelm your opponent with your answers. At some point a recursion mechanism like **Soldevi Digger** could be used to recycle your spells. Nowadays, you wouldn't need a dedicated recursion element... **Beacon of Destruction** can do the job nicely all on its own.

One Standard legal variant you could use would be **Call of the Wild**. While oftentimes not as powerful as a **Browse**, sometimes it can be incredibly explosive. I used to term the **Mana Flare/Call of the Wild** combo "The Jungle Book" in homage to the original Turbo Book, and it can really make some excellent things happen. In a **Heartbeat of Spring** deck, you are often already full of slightly overpriced spells, and if they are creatures, you can pop them out at a discount, and very rapidly. A third turn **Heartbeat of Spring** can be followed up by a fourth turn **Call** (and an activation). For fun, every time you try to activate that **Call of the Wild**, whistle like you're calling for a dog. It makes tapping your two lands more fun, and also serves to unnerve your opponent. The creatures you run in your **Call of the Wild/Heartbeat of Spring** deck don't have to be all expensive, sometimes they can just have abilities that work better with more mana. In my deck, I used to run **Orcish Settlers**. Activating a **Call of the Wild** at the end of your opponent's turn and finding a **Settlers** waiting for you is a true pleasure, let me tell you.



## Wrapping Up

All this talk of Jungle Book makes me nostalgic for the good old days when I used to play with **Call of the Wild/Mana Flare**. Let's revisit this fun archetype!

Jungle Book		
60 cards		
4 <b>Shivan Oasis</b>	4 <b>Sakura-Tribe Elder</b>	4 <b>Heartbeat of Spring</b>
2 <b>Pinecrest Ridge</b>	4 <b>Budoka Gardener</b>	4 <b>Call of the Wild</b>
11 <b>Forest</b>	4 <b>Eternal Witness</b>	3 <b>Obliterate</b>
6 <b>Mountain</b>	4 <b>Viridian Zealot</b>	3 <b>Sensei's Divining Top</b>
23 land	2 <b>Duplicant</b>	14 other spells
	2 <b>Shivan Dragon</b>	
	3 <b>Kumano, Master Yamabushi</b>	
	23 creatures	

Essentially, this deck has a lot of good ways to get out mana. Between **Gardener**, **Tribe-Elder** and **Heartbeat**, you should be able to get to 4 mana on turn three fairly often. The **Sensei's Divining Top** keeps the deck flowing smoothly and will help you either complete a combo with **Call of the Wild** or help you find a timely **Obliterate**. The **Shivan Dragon** and the **Kumano** are both really fairly ridiculous once you've got a **Heartbeat of Spring** out, but you can always just pop them out of the deck if you prefer something like **Fireball**. Sure, you'll weaken the **Call of the Wild**, but you'll also at least have a way other than **Kumano** and **Obliterate** to get rid of creatures. Overall, I think the deck is a really fun one, and I hope you enjoy it. I don't think it is nearly as good as the original Standard **Mana Flare** deck I built [way back in 1997](#), but that's only because it doesn't run **Orcish Settlers**.

Have a great New Year!



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