

A Light in the Darkness

Again, things begin to calm. There is simply no one left to kill, and you and yours remain quite probably the last vestige of not just civilisation but life on Erebus. All that remains is to pick over the choicest treasures left in the ruins and wait for your passage elsewhere.

Mountains of gold and gems are heaped before you. Stacks of Mithril taller than a man, artifacts from the Age of Rebirth and the High First Age both. The hordes of dragons and kings alike.

The Books of Kylorin himself are uncovered. The lost Crown of Akharien, crown of the Kings of Patria, an artifact that holds both the accumulated memories and statecraft of the royal line of the first civilisation but also grants the wisdom to wield them. The Godslayer.

You will never forget holding the blade that slew Mulcarn in your hand and hearing it explain how it came to be.

"I was born to end an age of destruction. Dragons, angels, leviathans, the mighty armies of the gods clashed as they struggled for advantage. Below, the earth trembled, and man was locked into a terrifying existence he could not hope to comprehend.

The gods agreed on but one thing-that should they continue their struggle in the same vein all their work would be lost. The spoils of their war, those sentient beings born of their cooperation at the time of creation, would be destroyed if an agreement was not made.

So they came, one by one, to a distant corner of Erebus, until all twenty one were assembled. The agreement was made, spelled out to the letter. I was the manifest symbol of that covenant, and its enforcement. The Godslayer.

The oath each god made in turn bound their fate to me. As they spoke their agreement, their name became etched onto my surface. Then they left, never to set foot personally in creation again, on pain of death. I was left in the care of a human warrior. Centuries past. My purpose was forgotten-the Godslayer was used in battles and wars as any other blade. My pieces were split apart from use and time, but my nature cannot be destroyed."

Many things were forged in the High First Age though, and not all of them could be called wonders. Some were fantastic, some were terrifying, unspeakable.

Only one was ever forbidden though. In a time where spells that could scour a kingdom free of life were common, where the souls of thousands at a time were used as fuel, one thing was still dreadful enough that all the great mages agreed. Anyone who sought to use it would be destroyed. All other mages would unite against them.

This artifact was the Lightless Lantern.

The premise of the lightless lantern is that it shines outside, into the regions of existence that cannot be seen normally, allowing the user to see firsthand the secrets of the world, and of magic.

However, horrors live in the astral regions, and may catch sight of the lightless lantern's beacon. The horror's have no sight, no sense of smell or hearing. They are drawn by signs of the real world, as sharks are drawn across an ocean by the scent of blood - as they are beings beyond physical comprehension, they do not wander, nor do they hunt. It would expend too much effort, and could destroy the stability of their forms.

Instead, they are built so that they are drawn inevitably towards primal incursions into the Outer realm, whereupon they unleash their full power, and feast upon the existence that they find there. Not simply the body, but the soul, every second of fear they experience, and the horror at the things own nightmare appearance.

As such, the Lightless Lantern, could be seen as a something that projects a tiny portion of the target's existence into the unseen realm, like a beacon for whatever hell would descend upon them.

Nothing that is drawn to a Lightless Lantern is EVER any good for anyone to have to deal with. And to make matters worse, if whatever was Marked by the unlight of the Lightless Lantern survives, their Mark is strengthened, increasing their odds of attracting The Thing Which Should Not Be.

It's such a shame nobody told you this before you tried to use the Lantern...

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Roll 1d6.

On a 1, fight Scabiel, Maker of Ruins.

On a 2, fight Kurgi, Slave to Unreason.

On a 3 fight Hruvur, Abomination of Desolation.

On a 4 fight Emrakul, the Aeons Torn.

On a 5 fight Kozilek, Butcher of Truth.

On a 6 fight Rarku, Eater of Heroes.

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Scabiel, Maker of Ruins

A grotesque, titanic thing that dwarfs most mountains, the Maker of Ruins resembles a sinister tick formed of some dark metal, though unsettlingly this is simply the form your mind superimposes, for the true form of the thing is too terrible even for you to witness and remain. The aura of The Maker of Ruins is such that no construction can exist in the same plane it walks. Construction and chesion are its meat and wine, and it will leech them away. Buildings will collapse, walls will come tumbling down, the greatest castles will sag and collapse in on themselves as though made of so much sand. Within days of the arrival of Scabiel, industry becomes impossible. The ability to manufacture has simply been scoured from the fabric of Erebus. Civilisation is ended, for there can be nothing new.

Facing The Maker of Ruins in combat is challenging, to say the least. The most durable of all the Things Outside bar one, Scabiel will ignore attacks that would slay entire pantheons as a man would ignore the attacks of a fruit fly, and should you close enough to strike the thing, you shall do so naked, for nothing will be allowed to remain, no weapon, no armour, no tool can survive his hunger.

Kurgi, Slave to Unreason

The Slave to Unreason appears as a vast, amorphous thing, a mountain sized globule of partially solidified blood surrounded by nine massive, curved black fangs that jut almost fifteen kilometers straight up. Somewhere within the partially translucent core of the thing, something pulses, some monstrous mockery of a heart beats. What the thing truly is, you shall never know. Instinctively your mind shies away from it, protecting you. Coherency is the favoured meal of the Slave to Unreason. By its presence it feeds, and as it feeds sanity is eroded. There can be no defence against this, for there is nothing to defend against. There is, it seems, now a finite amount of reason, and order and sanity here, and now that amount shrinks by the day, the hour and the second. Within days of the arrival of Kurgi, coherence becomes impossible. Rational thought has simply been scoured from the fabric of Erebus. Civilisation is ended, for sanity is no longer a concept.

Challenging the Slave to Unreason is challenging, to say the least. Capable of absorbing more punishment than all other of the Things Outside bar one, the elastic form of the abomination deforms in the face of attacks and simply springs back. This will be a problem, for the thing has more than once simply endured the attacks of entire pantheons, the damage inflicted comparable to the damage a man can do to an ocean when he tries to empty it with an egg cup. You shall have one chance to slay Kurgi, for if it lives it will simply consume all that allows you to be sane, and insane as well. You shall dwell forever in the court of the Slave to Unreason, something beyond broken or damned.

Hruvur, Abomination of Desolation

The form your mind superimposes over the reality of Hruvur is of a giant head akin to some deep sea horror, a vast thing the size of a mountain that appears as the face of the most vile, unspeakable denizen of the deep, dark places beneath the sea where light cannot go, the titanic and horrible template for all Angler Fish, the first from which all others are but pale, pale echoes. Empty eyesockets a mile wide regard you with alien emotion as a fanged maw big enough to swallow cities silently mouths vile secrets none were meant to know. Within days of the arrival of Hruvur, ambition becomes impossible. The idea that things can improve has simply been scoured from the fabric of Erebus. Civilisation is ended, for aspiration is no longer a concept.

Hruvur hungers for hope. Around the abomination spins a great invisible maelstrom that drains even the concept of things being better from Erebus. Those that come near the beast simply come to a stop, staring vacantly at a thing they cannot conceive of challenging. The Abomination is, and those that come within sight of it cannot understand that it may be possible for things to be otherwise. Not the most durable or the most enduring of the Things outside, Hruvurs great maw means it is the second most vicious, the bite of the Abomination of Desolation capable of obliterating gods by the score.

Emrakul, the Aeons Torn

Emrakul bears the form of a titanic jellyfish, when seen from a distance. Closer, and the mind of the viewer rebels, superimposing something merely impossible in place of something far, far worse. The bloated float chamber of Emrakul is actually a mountain range, several colossal floating islands linked together by a mass of miles long red tentacles that grow from the underside of the islands. Surrounding these tentacles is a massive cyclone, a bizarre backwards storm that oozes from the underside of the things 'head' and rolls in reverse to the tentacle mass, there to spins around it, a hurricane of incredible proportions trapped and worn as armour.

Each of the things outside consumes something, scouring it away from reality completely, and Emrakul is no exception. The things name is more a description, for it hungers for linearity. Soon yesterday becomes tomorrow and next week is down and the future is otherwise. The closer one moves to the thing, the more terrible is this effect, till parts of a person are ten thousand years old and other have yet to be born, and others are from timelines that have never been, or have yet to be. Ultimately all will sink into a morass of pure chaos. If death can still exist in such a place, the luckiest will die.

Facing Emrakul is difficult, to put it mildly. The twisting mass of storm that circles the thing, and the writhing mass of tentacles behind mean it is incredibly agile, perhaps the most difficult of the Things Outside to even strike, bar one.

Kozilek, Butcher of Truth

Kozilek is, as far as anyone can tell, a monstrous torso with two colossal three clawed arms jutting from massively overdeveloped shoulders. The thing may have legs, but if it does, the sheer size of the abomination means it has sunk to the waist and is pushing its way through the earth like a man wading through waist deep water. While the size of the thing is utterly titanic, the head of the thing is a tiny, dessicated, mummified lump not much bigger than a man. Of course, the reality may be very, very different, for what you see is not what is truly there, merely something thrown together by a mind trying frantically to protect itself from something utterly insane.

While the feeding aura of Kozilek isn't as outright deadly as other horrors, it is still capable of ending civilisation utterly, for it leaches away the ability to communicate. Within hours of the things arrival language is gone forever, and civilisation with it, for how can there be a society when there is no exchange of information? The problem here is threefold, for other turnwise rebendible sausage mountain?

[illegible]

Rarku, Eater of Heroes

Rarku, the Hunter of Heroes, is a Doom Horror, an astral being that feeds on the emotions of suffering, lamentation and fear. The Hunter of Heroes primarily targets well known and mighty heroes as they provide more emotional sustenance than ordinary men. The Hunter has emerged several times in history and slain the mightiest heroes of the time. It has strangely distorted perceptions and will primarily attack heroes marked out by the devotions of many. The more people sing a persons praises, the more likely Rarku is to hunt them.

The form of the Eater of Heroes is something like a vast, decaying cuttlefish. The top, the body of the thing is a vague brow mess of liquifying, supurating meat. Below that protrude two grotesque eyes on stalks, something like a snails. Hanging below those are the things mouthparts and its two tentacle hooks. These serve as the Horrors greatest and indeed only weapons, for both do not bother to comply with things like 'size' or 'length'. The twin

tentacles are used to hook onto an unsuspecting heroes soul, and the mouthparts are then driven into the delicious soulstuff, to drain it of all emotion and reduce it to a withered, violated scrap of torment. The problem with fending off Rarku is thus - you can not know it seeks you till it is already feeding, and it need not remain near you to feed. Once it has bitten into a soul, it can happily (if such a thing can have an emotion we could relate to as happiness) sit on the other side of a world and feast. To the Horror, there is no distance between it and its prey, while the unfortunate hero must strike at something literally half a world away.

Compounding this, Rarku is by far the fastest and most mobile of the Things Outside. Smallest and weakest yes, but also one almost impossible to bring to battle.

Umor, The Godflayer

A name. A description. A hobby.

Unlike the others, you have seen the Godflayer. All that lives has. The image, the concept of the thing is so terrible it is seared into the minds of all that draw breath. Why else would so many cultures, so many races, so many unique civilisations who have never met all have a Death bear the same form? An indistinct figure bearing a scythe and hidden in a black robe.

You know Umor. And now Umor is aware.

Strongest. Most durable. Most enduring. Most powerful.

Perhaps not the fastest, but that in itself is a weapon. How many can remain sane knowing the Godflayer is slowly, ever so slowly creeping towards them?

Strike the Godflayer down.

If you can.

See it rise up, more terrible than before.

It may fight. It may not.

Does it matter?

It rises again.

Witness the true form of Umor.

The Spoils

The Crown of Akharien, First King of Patria

The First and most beloved king of the first kingdom, Akhariens crown bestows incredible wisdom on any that wear it, and the memories of the first High King. Suffice to say, to be a mortal man without any skill at magic and still manage to trick, manipulate and outwit the most powerful mages ever to live as well as the gods themselves on a daily basis, this artifact is more powerful than it first seems.

The Godslayer

Where to begin? The sword is intelligent, and powerful enough to slaughter any god who breaks the compact, the blade is still titanicly powerful, more so than almost any other weapon, especially when wielded against the avatars of gods. The weapon renders the wielder almost completely immune to magic, as well as a host of elemental attacks.

The Books of Kylorin

Not just the spellbooks of Kylorin, the first and gretest mage ever to live on Erebus, but also the books of theory he scribed, the secrets of magic itself, handed down to him from the Godess of Magic herself, and the manuals to construct every artifact created on Erebus and a list of every spell ever cast.

The Lightless Lantern

Reveal the hidden secrets of the outer realms. Shine a light into the realms outside existence. Try not to lure more of them back.