

CZ0529. IN THE 99: MARCH OF THE MACHINE

- 1) UPKEEP STEP
 - 2) MAIN TOPIC
 - 3) TO THE LISTENERS
 - 4) CLEAN-UP PHASE
-

CLAP AND SLATE

- 1) INTRO JIMMY & Rachel

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We continue our coverage of March of the Machine with a look at the new cards from the set that cannot be your Commander. Which ones do we think will make a splash in the format? Let's find out. BUT FIRST:

****CARD KINGDOM** **ULTRAPRO #1** **PATREON: MARK AKERS****

- 2) MAIN TOPIC: **IN THE 99 ANALYSIS - MARCH OF THE MACHINE**

We're not going to cover every card, just the ones we think are interesting and may have an impact in the format. I.e. You will likely see them on the battlefield in the coming months/years. We'll be going through the cards we've selected alphabetically.

BREACH THE MULTIVERSE

CLOSEST COMPARISONS

- Ghoul's Night Out; Command the Dreadhorde; Sepulchral Primordial
- *Is it worth 7 mana?*
 - You're only playing this in a deck that wants to mill huge chunks of the deck and has great targets
 - Your opponents creatures are just gravy
 - Notably this gets **any** creature in all graveyards, not just from the 10 cards milled, so this works very well after a big board wipe or in a deck that consistently mill others
 - *Do you run this over any other reanimation spell though?*
 - Reanimate; Animate Dead; Dance of the Dead; Stitch Together; Life // Death; Victimize; Dread Return

CAUTION: MILLING

- Pairs well with Command the Dreadhorde; Rise of the Dark Realms; Dredge the Mire;
- Pairs poorly with Living Death; Exhume
- In the 99 of: Kroxa and Kunoros; Sidisi, Brood Tyrant; Phenax, God of Deception; Anowon, the Ruin Thief

CHANDRA, HOPE'S BEACON

STATIC ABILITY

- Powerful, but it better be.
- You REALLY want to be able to double spell the turn you cast Chandra
- Only triggers once *each* turn, so Instants are far more powerful in this deck
- Combo potential with Storm-Kiln Artist; Birgi, God of Storytelling; new Urabrask
- Play a card like Bonus Round to get even more copies on that big explosive turn
- Play Mana Geyser before Chandra (to play her early game), and after Chandra to really blow the world up with an X spell

+2: MANA

- Great! This helps you double spell when you tap out for Chandra
- Puts her up to 7 loyalty

+1: IMPULSE

- The key word here is *end of your next turn*
- I can see casting this just to draw the 2-3 cards you hopefully hit off of this
- Obviously want a high density of Instants and Sorceries in the deck naturally
- Puts her up to 6 loyalty

-X: BURN

- Up to 5 damage to two targets the turn it comes down
- Can go face if necessary
- This represents two removal spells that leave a planeswalker behind.

CHROME HOST SEEDSHARK

CLOSEST COMPARISONS

- Shark Typhoon; Deekah, Fractal Summoner
 - Lower CMC than both, on a better body
 - Makes worse creatures in most situation
 - Could be better in a deck that runs a lot of board wipes or likes to hold mana open?

SHARK-IFACTS

- What if we look at this like Sai, Master Thopterist?
 - Galazeth Prismari; Urza, Chief Artificer;
 - Rise and Shine; Cyberdrive Awakener
 - Flux Channeler
 - Krark-Clan Ironworks

CITY ON FIRE

FIERY EMANCIPATION 2

- They have exactly the same text except one costs 8 mana and has convoke, the other costs 6 mana and doesn't.

CONVOKE

- Convoke is a huge deal for helping you double spell, especially in spellslinger/burn decks.
 - But you do need creatures in play to help do that...
- Seems worse than Fiery Emancipation in aggro decks that want to cast it and attack with creatures immediately.

- Commanders that don't mind getting a little extra damage: Krenko, Mob Boss; Zurzoth, Chaos Rider; The Locust God; Brudiclad, Telchor Engineer
- Seems better than Fiery Emancipation in decks that can cheat this out 2, 3 turns earlier
- Fiery Emancipation is one of the most "remove on sight" cards in Commander - you have to be able to use it ASAP or be in a very disadvantaged situation when you're tapped out both mana and creatures and this gets taken out

DUSK LEGION DUELIST

WHITE DRAW

- Not as powerful as Esper Sentinel; but still great like Archivist of Oghma; Welcoming Vampire; Tocasia's Welcome
- Conditional on +1/+1 counters
- Reminds me of Kor Spiritdancer; Sram, Senior Edificer
 - Only works in certain decks but going to be strong in those decks.
 - Is this worth it in multi-color decks like Ghave that already have access to good colors for card draw?

MAXIMIZE DRAW

- Feast on the Fallen; Obsessive Skinner; Helioid, Sun-Crowned; Breena, the Demagogue; Kenrith, the Returned King; Yotian Dissident; Leinore, Autumn Sovereign; Felidar Retreat; You also play value creatures like Trelasarra, Moon Dancer in this deck

FAERIE MASTERMIND

COUNCIL OF ONE

- Ledger Shredder, Spectral Sailor
- Council of Four
 - Draws a ton of cards and only counts cards drawn during their turn
 - Faerie Mastermind counts second draws during each turn.
- Infinite mana sink that allows you (and your opponents) to draw their whole deck - a wincon for milling out opponents (as long as you have a way to reshuffle your library or a Jace, Wielder of Mysteries / Thassa's Oracle)
- This card's great. There's not much to say other than that. This is arguably the best World Champion card ever made / card made for a winner of a tournament. Did you know Solemn Simulacrum was originally designed by Jens Thoren for winning the 2002 Magic Invitational?

HALO FORAGER

SNAPCASTER FAERIE

- Snapcaster Mage
 - No flash, but gets around timing restrictions if you can give it flash
 - Has flying
 - Don't have to pay actual mana cost, casts it for "free"
 - From *a* graveyard

- Casts suspend cards for free
 - Living End; Profane Tutor; Wheel of Fate; Ancestral Vision; Inevitable Betrayal
- Obviously very good in any deck that mills opponents, but will just pick up tons of value in almost any game
- Flicker this to great effect

HALO FLEET DAREDEVIL

- Dire Fleet Daredevil
 - Can cast your own spells
 - Casts from graveyard vs. Exile
 - Gets around timing restrictions if you can give it flash

HOARDING BROODLORD

TUTOR WITH WINGS

- Rune-Scarred Demon; Burning-Rune Demon; Sidisi, Undead Vizier;
- You could run this card for just the tutor and ignore the convoke ability, but what if you wanted to build around it?

CAST FROM EXILE *How often do you cast stuff from exile in black?*

- *Commanders* > Prosper, Tome-Bound; Florian, Voldaren Scion; Gonti, Lord of Luxury; Hidetsugu, Devouring Chaos; Tibalt, Cosmic Impostor; Tasha, the Witch Queen; Passionate Archaeologist;
- *In the 99* > Dream Devourer; Murderous Rider; Hostage Taker; Hurl Through Hell; Draugr Necromancer; Brainstealer Dragon

BLACK CONVOKE

- Black is actually fairly good at making a lot of little bodies
 - Endrek Sahr, Master Breeder; Szat's Will; Abhorrent Overlord; Underworld Hermit (Notably green bodies)
- Could see this card in Rakdos sac decks like...
 - Lagomos, Hand of Hatred; Judith the Scourge Diva; Hidetsugu, Devouring Chaos
- Could see this in Orzhov token decks like
 - Teysa Karlov; Thalisse, Reverent Medium; Shadrix Silverquill

HOW GOOD IS CONVOKE?

- *Remember that Convoke doesn't require haste.*
- Wand of the Worldsoul; Flockchaser Phantom; Caetus, Sea Tyrant of Segovia;
- Close reference: Inspiring Statuary
- *Do you have to be a token/aristocrat deck to make this worth it?*
- *Is it easier to make a lot of mana or a lot of creatures?*

MIDROLL POINT *We have a lot more cards to talk about, including all of the cards of a BRAND NEW CARD TYPE: Battles.*

LET'S TALK ABOUT BATTLES.

At time of recording, we haven't played much with the new card type. We've never played it in multiplayer. So perhaps we'll revisit some of these evaluations after we know more about how battles will play out in the future. For now, we'll evaluate the front and the back as cards and do our best to anticipate the power level of Battles in Commander.

*There are **36 Battles** being introduced in MOM. 20 Uncommon, 11 Rares, 5 Mythic. We are talking about 4 today. To search for the others, type T:Battle into Scryfall. They're more situational (eg: one that cares about graveyards and Zombies, cares about exactly two color spells;*

Battles play a little like Planeswalkers in that they create an attackable permanent, and instead of Loyalty counters, these are "Defense Counters". They're different in that you give them to another player, and anyone at the table can attack it. When the defense counters are all taken off (any damage dealt can do it), the card will flip, exile itself, and then come back transformed on its other side, dragons, etc.)

In general, the better a Battle is on its front side, the better it is overall. You may not reliably be able to flip a battle in every game, so how effective it is on its front side will affect its playability. Also, Battles on their front side are much harder to interact with - only things that specifically target Battles or nonland permanents. Once it flips into something like a Creature or Enchantment, it will be easier to remove.

INVASION OF IKORIA // ZILORTHA, APEX OF IKORIA

Closest Comparisons

- Green Sun's Zenith; Finale of Devastation; Chord of Calling;

Search Targets

- Can still go get Dryad Arbor
- Get Vampire Hexmage for 4 mana to immediately flip the battle.
- Get Glissa Sunslayer to attack it next turn to attack it for 3 and remove 3 counters from it.
- Can get any number of "win the game" cards in green like Craterhoof Behemoth or Pathbreaker Ibex

Zilortha

- Siege Behemoth (5,657 decks); Proud Wildbonder
- I think you flip this if it's easy.
- Not every deck necessarily wants the back side of this card, but it provides an alternate win con against decks that have endless blockers

INVASION OF KALDHEIM // PYRE OF THE WORLD TREE

Closest Comparisons

- Valakut Awakening; Wheel of Misfortune; Reforge the Soul; Showdown of the Skalds, Escape to the Wilds

How close is this to just doubling the number of cards in your hand?

- Sea Gate Restoration
- Not all the way, but in a deck with a low curve... It's pretty close.

- You will pay 4 mana for this when it lands, which means you should only play it on curve if you really want to see a fresh new batch (or have a land heavy hand). This gets better the later the game goes

Cast from Exile Synergy

- Prosper, Tome-Bound; Faldorn, Dread Wolf Herald; Passionate Archaeologist; Keeper of Secrets

Pyre of the World Tree

- Seismic Assault; Tectonic Reformation; Harnfel, Horn of Bounty
- Lands being discarded?
 - Lord Windgrace; Borborygmos and Fblthp; Soul of Windgrace
- Discard Synergy
 - Glint-Horn Buccaneer; Archfiend of Ifnir; Containment Construct; Bone Miser

INVASION OF SEGOVIA // CAETUS, SEA TYRANT OF SEGOVIA

This is the first Battle we're talking about that is really here for the back of the card. The front is fine. Helps give you the board to bring down the Battle (you gotta pump em up though). But the back is what we're here to talk about.

We've already talked about giving non-Convoked spells Convoked.

- This doesn't have the same stipulation the others do. Not limited to exile or a single spell.
- This helps solve the problem of convoking at sorcery speed and helps you attack and defend?

Blue and Red has many effects that make creatures when you cast noncreature spells

- Deekah, Fractal Theorist; Docent of Perfection; Third Path Iconoclast; Saheeli, Sublime Artificer; Young Pyromancer; Goblinslide
- Murmuring Mystic; Shark Typhoon; Sai, Master Thopterist;
- *Where does this go?* > Ovika, Enigma Goliath; Kykar, Wind's Fury; Alela, Artful Provocateur; Talrand, Sky Summoner; Locust God; Baral and Kari Zev

INVASION OF THEROS // EPHARA, EVER-SHELTERING

Remember the color identity of this card is White and Blue because of the backside.

Search Targets

- Imprisoned in the Moon; Darksteel Mutation; Curiosity; Freed from the Real; Gift of Immortality;
- Helioid, Sun-Crowned; Purphoros, God of the Forge; Thassa, Deep-Dwelling; Locust God; The Scarab God

Ephara

- Basically has Constellation > Draw a card
 - Historically more powerful than similar enchantress effects
- Often going to be indestructible and lifelink.
- Really only flipping this thing if you're in an enchantress deck
 - *How capable are enchantress decks of flipping this thing?*
 - Sigil of the Empty Throne; Historian's Boon; Alela, Artful Provocateur; Rabble Rousing
 - Unless you have evasive creatures, might be difficult

OZOLITH, THE SHATTERED SPIRE

HARDER SCALES

- Hardened Scales; Winding Constrictor; Conclave Mentor
- These effects are popular and powerful
- Love that it also puts counters on stuff, in case you haven't found a counter ability - sometimes these decks just need a single counter going
- You can put a counter on the original Ozolith!
- Don't forget - Resourceful Defense is now a card!
- New Commanders for this: Shalai and Hallar; Ezuri, Stalker of Spheres

Oddly, there is a second Hardened Scales effect in this set...

KAMI OF WHISPERED HOPES

- This card seems solid in a dedicated +1/+1 counter deck as well.
- Gyre Sage; Heronblade Elite; Marwyn, the Nurturer
- Also good in a deck like Raggadragga, Goreguts Boss

How many of these effects do counters decks want?

PILE ON

CLOSEST COMPARISONS

- Lethal Scheme;
 - In 8,856 decks, largely decks from New Capenna
 - Looting + counters is better than Surveil
- We've talked about black's ability to convoke, especially at instant speed (Hoarding Broodlord)

CROWDED SLOT

- I think this card has solid homes, but it's fighting with SO many efficient removal spells.
 - Jimmy go-to removal spells
 - Snuff Out; Eat to Extinction; Bloodchief's Thirst
 - Josh go-to removal spells
 - Curtains' Call; Deadly Rollick; Infernal Grasp; Go for the Throat;
 - Rachel go-to removal spells
 - Baleful Mastery; Feed the Swarm; Murderous Rider
- Is Pile On better or worse than our go-to spells?
- You don't always have to cast this spell for free - even doing so for 2 mana at Instant Speed makes it quite powerful in the right builds.
- You would play Pile On in the same decks that you'd run Hostile Negotiations in:
 - Mishra, Tamer of Mak Fawa or Claimed by Gix; Chainer, Nightmare Adept; Bladewing, Deathless Tyrant

REALMBREAKER, THE INVASION TREE

Feels slow to just ramp, you have to be getting something out of the mill.

DASH OF SYNERGY

- Use Opponents' Graveyard
 - Geth, Lord of the Vault; Lazav, Dimir Mastermind; Captain N'ghathrod; Lorcan, Warlock Collector; The Mimeoplasm
- Mill decks
 - Bruvac the Grandiloquent; Anowon, the Ruin Thief
- Again, careful with Mill
 - Pairs well with Command the Dreadhorde; Rise of the Dark Realms; Dredge the Mire;
 - Pairs poorly with Living Death
- Theft decks
 - Agent of Treachery; Arvinox, the Mind Flail; Cosima, God of the Voyage//The Omenkeel
- If you are in non-ramp colors like Mono White or Mono Red, is this worth it?
 - Notably this is not "Activate only as a sorcery" as many other new cards are these days
 - Bears some similarities to a card like Treasure Map

PRAETORS?

- *Do you have to run Praetors in the deck? Is it worth it without them?*
- If you have at least 1 Praetor in the deck, would you run Realmbreaker? (Is a 10 mana Instant speed Elesh Norn OG worth it?)
 - How often in your playgroups have you seen The World Tree be a win con? This is notably colorless to activate, but 10 mana is a lot
- If Praetors are your win condition, do you run this no matter what?

SEE DOUBLE

8 or more is conceivable without extra mill support, but really can't be counted on. Get used to seeing "This spell can't be copied" text. This might be one of the strongest cards in the set.

NOTE: First half of the card isn't doubled by token doublers, second half is doubled by token doublers.

- Rules Magic Players Keep Getting Wrong (Ep. 521)

CLOSEST COMPARISONS

- Stunt Double; Mocking Doppelganger; Sakashima's Protege; Cackling Counterpart; Theoretical Duplication;
- Narset's Reversal; Fury Storm; Refuse // Cooperate

THIS IS A META SPELL

- This can target almost anything. There are no typical clauses "nonland", "you control", "opponents control", "artifacts and enchantment", "unless they pay 3 mana".
 - In your playgroup, if this doesn't have a good Creature to target at least once, I would be amazed
- Blue is known for Counterspell effects and denial effects in general, however this card implies using it to create rather than stop / destroy
- You can still use it to copy a Counterspell an opponent plays, so that option is always there
- But if you're looking to double, then two types of decks fall into it:

- Copy Spells - Spellslinger, Storm - Any deck that wants to cast and copy a bunch of times. Commanders are: Kalamax, the Stormsire; Niv-Mizzet, Parun; Ovika, Enigma Goliath; and synergies are: Chandra, Hope's Beacon; Storm-Kiln Artist; Archmage Emeritus
- Copy Creature - Token, Creature-based, Flicker decks, Meta decks. Commanders are: literally most Commander decks that have creatures. ETBs with Solemn Simulacrum; Baleful Strix; Dockside Extortionist, value pieces - Enchantress creatures; Beast Whisperer; Professional Face-Breaker; Tireless Provisioner; Aristocrats - Blood Artist; Zulaport Cutthroat

SWORD OF ONCE AND FUTURE

The culmination of the beloved Sword of This and That cycle! Who's gonna write the rap.

ONCE *Surveil 2*

- Meh. Fine. But you have to have a HIGH density of instants and sorceries in your deck to hit one you want to cast for free
- Surveil 2 can also act as Scry 2, but better - it's in your graveyard
- If you have a Swords to Plowshares on top of your deck, do you put it in the bin to cast right now? Or do you want to draw it to cast once now and again with the sword?
 - You probably can afford to draw it because you will just cast a See Beyond or Preordain from the graveyard instead

WHATEVER YOU NEED *Cast cheap instant or sorcery for free.*

- Very flexible because there are good spells in every category now - Removal: Path to Exile; Infernal Grasp; Ramp: Growth Spiral; Three Visits; Draw: Preordain; Ponder; Tutors - Demonic Tutor; Mystical Tutor; etc.
- What does this mean - you're probably running enough in a good % of decks that this is an easy card to add to smooth out a draw (and sometimes be a wincon because of the ...)

PROTECTION

- *Protection from Blue* > Pongify; Rapid Hybridization; Reality Shift; Resculpt; Imprisoned in the Moon; Oko, Thief of Crowns;
- *Protection from Black* > Feed the Swarm; Terminate; Deadly Rollick; Putrify; Infernal Grasp;
- Black is the highest percentage color to appear in Commander decks, followed by Green with Red and Blue very close behind

WHERE DOES IT GO?

- Tetsuo, Imperial Champion; Zethi, Arcane Blademaster; SBaral and Kari Zev; Gandalf the Grey; Veyran, Voice of Duality
- Sunforger decks

HOW DOES THIS SWORD RANK?

- Not as 'universal' as Feast & Famine, Fire & Ice, Hearth & Home, Forge & Frontier
 - These are all generically good abilities that live comfortably in any deck that wants equipment.
- On par with Light & Shadow, Truth & Justice
- EDHREC Listing

- Hearth & Home (a little harder to get going than we originally thought)
- Feast & Famine (my goodness)
- Truth & Justice
- Fire & Ice
- Light & Shadow
- Sinew & Steel
- War & Peace
- Body & Mind
- Forge & Frontier (probably just because it's new)

TRIBUTE TO THE WORLD TREE

Love the GGG cost. Really rewards you for having uncomplicated mana bases. Although this may be a card worth bending your mana base around. It's got Great Henge vibes.

CLOSEST COMPARISONS

- Triggers on ETB, not cast - flicker decks, copy decks
- Works with tokens - doesn't say noncreature!
- Adds value to your little creatures as well
- Compare to:
 - Guardian Project; Elemental Bond; Garruk's Uprising; Beast Whisperer
- If you can cast it, put it in your deck (with Creatures)

OUR FAVORITE "IN THE 99" CARD FROM MOM?

Jimmy = Invasion of Kaldheim // Pyre of the World Tree

Rachel = Invasion of Segovia

MOST POWERFUL "IN THE 99" CARD FROM MOM?

JLK = See Double

Rachel = Faerie Mastermind

3) **TO THE LISTENERS**

What do you think about this set? Are you excited about it? What new cards slot in perfectly to your existing commander decks?

****CARD KINGDOM #2** **ULTRA PRO #2****

4) CLEAN-UP STEP

Big thanks to our amazing team here at The Command Zone! **Craig Blanchette, Damen Lenz; Arthur Meadowcroft; Ladee Danger; Manson Leung; Josh Murphy; Jake Boss; Jordan Pridgen; Sam Waldow; Gaurav Gulati; Jamie Block; Mitch Trafford; Evan Limberger; Gabriel Pozos; Megan Yip; Eric Lem; and Josh Lee Kwai.**