

## CZ0553: COMMANDERS THAT SHOULD BE MORE POPULAR

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### \*\*\*CLAP AND SLATE\*\*\*

- 1) INTRO GAURAV & RACHEL

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*Today we are talking about some of the commanders that failed to make a splash in the format. Whether they were initially hyped up but forgotten about or they never made it to the forefront of people's minds, these commanders failed to launch. Today, we're giving some of our favorite forgotten commanders a second look. BUT FIRST:*

**\*\*CARD KINGDOM\*\* \*\*ULTRAPRO #1\*\* \*\*PATREON: SARAH PISULA\*\***

- 2) **MAIN TOPIC: COMMANDERS THAT SHOULD BE MORE POPULAR**

*To do this episode, we pulled 10 commanders with less than 2500 decks in the last 2 years on EDHREC, and came out before 2023. Let's get into it!*

### **ESIX, FRACTAL BLOOM**

2306 decks

*Mystic Reflection-ish in the Command Zone is a powerful and interesting effect. Esix is obviously a token deck, but it plays more like a clone deck, turning any token producer into many clones all at once.*

*I run Esix as a finisher in my Sidisi deck and it always creates a cool puzzle to figure out. I played a budget brew of Esix on the Scrap Trawlers budget channel and it was EXTREMELY powerful, even on a tight budget.*

*If you like these, consider Esix: Adrix and Nev, Twincasters; Moritte of the Frost; Riku of Two Reflections;*

### **RAMP**

*Esix is expensive and so are a lot of its payoffs. You're going to want to cast Esix and use it the turn she comes down. That means RAMP.*

- *More synergistic Ramp > Growth Spasm; Titania's Command; Treasure Vault*

### **MANY TOKENS**

- *Normally you'd want stuff that triggers Esix every turn, but it's only during your turn.*

- *Creatures* > Ethereal Investigator; Deep Forest Hermit; Avenger of Zendikar; Hornet Queen; Occult Epiphany; Second Harvest; Koma, Cosmos Serpent; Curious Herd;

### **ERUTH, TORMENTED PROPHET**

1725 decks

*When Eruth came out, there was a lot of hype around, her but I think she got chalked up as \*just another storm commander.\* She also has a tendency to be a one big turn deck which can be daunting to certain players and unwelcome in certain playgroups. Still, she has neat play patterns, abuses cool, techy cards, and introduces cast from exile payoffs.*

*If you like these, consider Eruth: Niv-Mizzet, Parun; Kess, Dissident Mage*

### **CANTRIPS**

- *Eruth is a storm deck that turns cantrips into card advantage.*
- *1 mana* > Brainstorm;
- *Draw/Discard* > Careful Study; Burning Inquiry; Breakthrough; Faithless Looting; Frantic Search; Vindictive Flamestoker
  - *Eruth DUMPS her hand into one big turn, these are best after you've spent as many cards in your hand as possible.*

### **MANA**

- *With all the cards in the world at your disposal, you REALLY want mana.*
- Storm-Kiln Artist; Birgi, God of Storytelling; Urabrask; Goblin Electromancer;

### **PAYOFFS**

- *Cast from Exile* > The Lost and the Damned; Passionate Archaeologist; Mizzix, Replica Rider; Keeper of Secrets; Delayed Blast Fireball;
- *I&S* > Firebrand Archer; Kessig Flamebreather; Guttersnipe;
- Thassa's Oracle;

### **GRISMOLD, THE DREADSOWER**

1536 decks

*There's no deck like Grismold, this "group hug" commander can turn to group slug on a dime and is full of cool cards that don't get to shine anywhere else.*

*If you like these, consider Grismold: Phelddagrif; Kresh the Bloodbraided; Reyhan, Last of the Abzan;*

### **GIVE EM TOKENS**

- Slaughter Specialist; Clackbridge Troll; Hunted Troll; Tribute to Horobi; Genesis Chamber; Seed the Land; Tombstone Stairwell;

### **KILL THOSE TOKENS**

- Illness in the Ranks; Virulent Plague; Pestilence; Gulgari Charm;

## PAYOFFS

- *Punish You* > Blood Seeker; Sangromancer; Trespasser's Curse; Ezuri's Predation; Defense of the Heart; Deadly Tempest; Archfiend of the Dross; Black Market;
- *Dies = Good* > Poison-Tip Archer; Blood Artist; Morbit Opportunist; Species Specialist; Syr Konrad, the Grim; Glissa, the Traitor; Toshiro Umezawa; Grim Feast;
- *Not to mention Grismold himself will be huge*
  - Rishkar's Expertise; Greater Good; Cultist of the Absolute; The Ozolith;

## JHOIRA, AGELESS INNOVATOR

1467 decks

*Jhoira is an Elvish Piper for artifacts and there are some SWEET big artifacts. Combine untap effects and value artifacts to race up the chain to start sneaking huge artifacts into play at instant speed;*

*If you like these, consider Jhoira: Saheeli, the Gifted; Chiss-Goria, Forge Tyrant;*

## ADD COUNTERS

- *Untap* > Sting, the Glinting Dagger; Freed from the Real; Thousand-Year Elixir; Mirran Spy; Cerulean Wisps; Minamo, School at Water's Edge;
- *Proliferate* > Ichormoon Gauntlet; Throne of Geth;

## BIG ARTIFACTS

- *As always, with these kinds of decks, payoffs are to taste but there are some cool ones:*
  - Wurmcoil Engine; Blightsteel Colossus; Sharding Sphinx; Cityscape Leveler; Portal to Phyrexia; Mirrorworks; The One Ring; Wondrous Crucible; Machine God's Effigy;
- Encroaching Mycosynth makes all of your permanents artifacts
  - Artifact Lands are certainly worth the include
- The Ozolith stores counters for when she's answered
- Prioritize 2, 4, 6 drops

## \*\*\*MIDROLL POINT\*\*\*

## QUEEN KAYLA BIN-KROOG

1402 decks

*When Queen Kayla came out, it felt like people really liked her, but she didn't spell out a deck quite clearly enough for folks to latch onto her. But I still think she's a very cool source of card draw, self mill, and mana cheating in the Command Zone.*

*If you like these, consider Kayla: Winota, Joiner of Forces; Osgir, the Reconstructor;*

## CREATURE VERSION

- *This is likely some kind of hate bear deck. They are the creatures with mana value 1-3 that make the biggest impact on the board.*
- *1-drop hits* > Mother of Runes; Weathered Wayfarer; Serra Ascendant;

- 2-drop hits > Cathar Commando; Thalia, Guardian of Thraben; Conspiracy Theorist; Ethersworn Canonist;
- 3-drop hits > Archon of Emeria; Zirda, the Dawnwaker; Glint-Horn Buccaneer; Skyclave Apparition; Magus of the Moon;
- *Enhancer* > Preston, the Vanisher; Surly Badgersaur;
- *Recursion* > Feldon of the Third Path; Ascend from Avernus; Sun Titan

#### ARTIFACT VERSION

- *She's also a strong Boros artifact Commander, making sure you are churning through your deck and filling up your graveyard*
- 1-drop hits > Goblin Welder; Esper Sentinel; Sol Ring
- 2-drop hits > Containment Construct; Lightning Greaves; Oswald Fiddlebender;
- 3-drop hits > Mishra, Excavation Prodigy; Battlemage's Bracers; Thousand-Year Elixir; Scrap Trawler;
- *Recursion* > Osgir, the Reconstructor; Brilliant Restoration; Reconstruct History;

#### MAHADI, EMPORIUM MASTER

1122 decks

*Mahadi has so much going for him: cat devil, treasures, aristocrats. It's a wonder that he never took off as a Commander. I think he just got lost in the Baldur's Gate/Double Masters 2022 shuffle.*

*If you like these, consider Mahadi: Prosper, Tome Bound; Ob Nixilis, Captive Kingpin;*

#### DIES TRIGGERS

- *Edicts* > Plaguecrafter; Fleshbag Marauder; Innocent Blood;
  - *Doesn't say creature you control*
- *Fodder* > Jadar, Ghoullcaller of Nephalia; Loyal Apprentice; Anax, Hardened in the Forge; Zurzoth, Chaos Rider
- *Sacrifice Outlets*
- *Alternatively, Board Wipes + Indestructible or one-sided board wipes*
  - Mithril Coat; Gift of Doom;
  - In Garruk's Wake; Torment of Hailfire; Necromantic Selection;

#### MORE TREASURES

- Pitiless Plunderer; Gadrak, the Crown-Scourge;
- Xorn; Academy Manufactor;

#### TREASURE PAYOFFS

- *Damage* > Ingenious Artillerist; Reckless Fireweaver; Mayhem Devil; Nadier's Nightblade; Mirkwood Bats; Agent of the Iron Throne; Marionette Master; Hedron Detonator;
- Professional Face-Breaker

#### LULU, LOYAL HOLLYPHANT

1014 decks

*Lulu is adorable, but don't underestimate her. A Drumbellower effect in the Command Zone with the only stipulation being you sacrificed a treasure or blinked a creature is very powerful. At her worst, Lulu buffs your team and gives them vigilance, at her best she untaps all your utility creatures to use again!*

*If you like these, consider Lulu: Belisarius Cawl; Dynaheir, Invoker Adept;*

*General > Scholar of New Horizons; Mother of Runes; Mikaeus, the Lunarch*

### **SACRIFICE**

- Agent of the Iron Throne; Cultist of the Absolute; Street Urchin;
  - Thraben Doomsayer; Skyclave Shadowcat; Fain, the Broker; Felisa, Fang of Silverquill;

### **TREASURES**

- Guild Artisan;
  - Prosperous Partnership; Axcgard Artisan; Professional Face-Breaker; Filigree Vector;

### **CONVOKE**

- Feywild Visitor
  - Invasion of Segovia; Clever Concealment; Transcendent Message

### **BLINK**

- Far Traveler; Candlekeep Sage;
  - Gilraen, Dunedain Protector; Preston, the Vanisher; Loran of the Third Path;

### **COUNTERS**

- Master Chef
  - Kami of Whispered Hopes; Rishkar, Peema Renegade; Venerated Loxodon;

### **VEHICLES?**

- Sword Coast Sailor?
- Smuggler's Copter; Shorikai, Genesis Engine; Skysovereign, Consul Flagship; Prodigy's Prototype

### **STANGG, ECHO WARRIOR**

998 decks

*This one surprises me a lot. My partner has a Stangg deck and it is POWERFUL and a very cool twist on enchantress.*

*If you like these, consider Stangg: Calix, Guided by Fate; Xenagos, God of Revels*

### **WEAPONRY**

- *Equipment* > Skullclamp; Basilisk Collar;
- *Auras* > Sticky Fingers; Rune of Might; Cartouche of Strength; One with the Kami;

### **ENCHANTRESS**

- *Enchantress* > Verduran Enchantress; Argothian Enchantress;
- *Constellation* > Chishiro, the Shattered Blade; Nylea's Colossus; Setessan Champion; Composer of Spring;

## PROTECTION

- *Targeted* > Tamiyo's Safekeeping; Tyvar's Stand; Heroic Intervention;
- *Recursion* > Storm Herald;

## GROTHAMA, ALL-DEVOURING

947 decks

*Grothama is stompy at its best. Everything in this deck is big, green and lethal, including the card draw. Use power matters cards to do a ton of damage and draw a ton of cards. I know Grothama has a niche, devoted fanbase, headed by Bennie Smith of Star City Games, but it's not enough love for such a sweet deck.*

*If you like these, consider Grothama: Yargle & Multani; Kogla, the Titan Ape; Neyith of the Dire Hunt;*

## KEEP HER SAFE

- *Something important to note here, is most decks are NOT equipped to fight a 10/8, but of course... you do need to be careful about when you cast her.*
- *Protection* > Not of This World; Tamiyo's Safekeeping; Heroic Intervention;

## HIT HARD

- *Big things to fight her* > Multani, Maro-Sorcerer; Mossbridge Troll; Cultivator Colossus
- *Convert Damage to Value* > Stuffy Doll; Druid's Call; Witch's Clinic

## DRAW SOME CARDS

- *Leaves the Battlefield* > Sanctum of Eternity; Greater Good; Sword of Hearth and Home;
- *Return of the Wildspeaker*; *Momentous Fall*; *Last March of the Ents*;

## CADRIC, SOUL KINDLER

825 decks

*Cadric immediately found homes in the 99 of decks like Dihada, but never found purchase as a Commander and this effect is COOL whatever way you slice it.*

*If you like these, consider Cadric: Dihada, Binder of Wills; Feldon of the Third Path; Jaxis, the Trouble Maker*

## LEGENDS

- *Sweet Legends* > Djeru and Hazoret; Etali, Primal Storm; Ao, the Dawn Sky; Neyali, Suns' Vanguard; Adriana, Captain of the Guard;
- *Neat moves* > Flagstones of Trokair; Chromatic Orrery; Karn, Scion of Urza; Inspiring Leader; Zeriam, Golden Wind;

## TOKENS

- *MORE tokens* > Determined Iteration; Delina, Wild Mage; Mondrak, Glory Dominus;
- *Ephemerate*; *Harmonic Prodigy*; *Gandalf the White*;

## **LET'S BUILD!**

*To put our money where our mouth is, Gaurav and I are going to boost the EDHREC numbers of two Commanders from this list.*

**Gaurav Building:**

**Rachel Building:**

### 3) **TO THE LISTENERS**

What commanders do you think are underplayed? Do you have any of the decks we talked about today? Why do you love them?

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

### 4) **THE END STEP**

Something cool outside the world of Magic: Gaurav is having a baby!

### 5) CLEAN-UP STEP

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

**And to Gaurav Gulati!**