

FACTORIES, DEMONS, AND ORBS – OH MY!
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PART 1: THE DISCOVERY

In the heart of the kingdom of Dominaria, nestled between towering mountains and rolling hills, lay the unassuming village of Keldar. Its residents were humble miners, toiling away in the dark depths of the earth, seeking precious gems and metals to sustain their simple lives. The villagers believed that the mine would bring unimaginable wealth and prosperity to their burgeoning hamlet. They had attacked the earth with ferocity, trying to uncover all the secrets that lay hidden beneath their homes for thousands of years. And wealth did come.

Priceless artifacts of archeological interest were uncovered. Amazing devices that would mimic whatever tools they touched, jewels that sparkled even when the sky was overcast and the mirror that bore no reflection.... The mirror was what drew miners to the village from across the land to discover what purpose it served and why it had been buried deep within the earth. For months, hands passed across the mirror, words spoken at the opaque glass, and rituals performed to deduce the secrets that it possessed. These efforts were to no avail; the mirror remained, cold and menacing, a constant temptation to those with idle hands.

Among these miners was a man named Thrain, known for his determination and unyielding spirit. One fateful day, Thrain uncovered a hidden chamber in the mine, concealed behind layers of rock. In the center of the chamber, he discovered the mysterious mirror surrounded by five radiant stones. The stones shimmered with magical energy, their colors reflecting the power they held.

Intrigued by the allure of the stones, Thrain couldn't resist picking them up. As he held the moxen, an unnatural compulsion urged him to insert each one into the dais embedded in the mirror. The jet, in particular, seemed to have a will of its own as it guided Thrain's hand. The moment he placed the stone onto the pedestal of the mirror, it rippled with dark energy and the cavern went black. Thunder crashed in his ears and a roar bellowed from beyond deafening him and sending him to his knees, unable to release the stone. As the darkness peeled away, Thrain beheld giant leathery wings unfolding around what looked like the insides of a living corpse. The muscle and tissue were sinewy and gleamed with a slick, oily ooze that emphasized even the most subtle movements the beast made. Bone and tissue cracked and popped as the demon unfolded his limbs and stared straight into Thrain's soul. He could feel the beady eyes bore past his flesh as wiry tongue licked the fangs that lacked lips to cover them, showing every inch of bone and gingival tissue that held them in place.

A voice, even louder than the thunder that sent Thrain to his knees roared across his entire body.

"My summoning begins your debt, mortal. Open the portal and receive my gifts of destruction and death!"

Thrain quivered, crippled with fear. He willed his hands to release the stone but it stayed firmly grasped between his hands. Tears began to stream down his face, burning his cheeks and he continued to struggle against his hold on the stone.

Smoky hands emerged from the ripples of the mirror pulling the undulating surface apart revealing a wasteland of fire and stone. Small black fiends danced around the rocks as shapeless, wispy forms began to leave the mirror and drift into the finds room. A shadow lumbered closer to the threshold of the

mirror and as it came closer, it grew. Each step sounded like bones being ground to dust as the figure stepped through the mirror and entered the room.

Thrain looked up in horror, trembling from fear and pain. The figure wore a long black robe with gold symbols flowing up down the edges, changing shape and contour as the fabric shifted around its wearer. The face was a dark pool of blackness, features concealed completely by the edge of the hood which hung over the face of what lay beneath. With a flick of long gnarled fingers with nails sharpened into diabolical points, the hood was removed revealing a set of burning yellow eyes that sat like pools of molten gold. Twisted horns protruded from the crown of its head and a smug look of condescension curled the corners of its mouth downward. He extended his hand slowly toward Thrain, his palm open and his fingers spread wide. As the demon began to speak, Thrain could feel his mind twisting around the words that came from his lips.

“Chattel, I am Vorath. Life is ephemeral. We are eternal. Rise and prepare to serve the Lord a never-ending feast of flesh.”

PART 2: THE HERO

It is odd to think that darkness can emanate in the same way light can. The darkness from the cavern spread across everything. The ground, the air, those that the wisping spirits grasped and sent screaming into an unknown abyss. It did not take long for those fleeing the intervention to find those that mattered to them. People spread like wildfire from the base of the mine, taking whatever they could pack into the nearest vessel and fleeing the darkness that was spreading, like a pool of hot molasses engulfing all that it touched.

Elara felt drawn toward the center of the morass. She knew that unspeakable evil dwelled within but could not find the ambition to turn and flee the way the others had. Instead, she took shelter in an alcove, transfixed by the planar shift around her. The screams of his neighbors and friends being plunged into what he assumed was eternal darkness sent chills down his spine every time she watched one of them get lifted off the ground and disappear into a slit that was somehow darker than the essence spreading across outward from the mine. It was disconcerting watching them try and claw their way back into the world as they disappeared slowly and what was certainly painfully into the void.

After a while, the screaming stopped and a deathly quiet filled the void that once been the busy mine. Breathing in courage, she slowly crept toward the sanctum seeking a clear view into the theater of evil that was unfolding.

Standing in the center of the room a horned demon stood towering over the miner. He looked deeply in pain and unable to truly fathom the predicament he now found himself in. The demons' lips moved, but not words came out. He extended his hand and mechanically, the miner rose to his feet and locked his gaze into the demons' golden eyes. He drew a book from the sleeve of his robe, bound in hide from some unknown horror and opened the yellowing pages slowly. As the book opened fully, a small dome of impossibly bright light rose from the parchment, the glare causing the miners' features to curl in pain although he seemed unable to close his eyes. As the light melted away, a black flower, perfectly formed as if sculpted from glass replaced it, floating above the book, suspended in perfection. Elara could feel her fingers tingling as he fought the desire to reach out and try to touch it.

The demon looked to Thrain lying broken at his feet. Once again he spread his fingers wide and raised his palm murmuring silently. The body of the miner rose slowly and mechanically once again and took pained steps to join his master once again. Once returned, the demon turned on his heel and strode toward the exit of the mine. The remaining walls shook with the threat of a cave in sending Elara scrawling back to stay out of sight. The sanctum sagged as the demon, the miner and the orb emerged from the mine moving toward the edge of town, the mist bound wraiths following them circling overhead in swoops and dives.

With their departure, Elara's compulsion to return to the sanctum once again surged through her body. She did not know what, or why, but something was demanding of him to find to find it. As she clambered over the rubble, she began to push away the earth and debris. He scooped away rubble until the gleam of her compulsion was drawing him toward began to shine through the wreckage. She pulled the oversized pearl free from the ground and held it out feeling a renewed sense of purpose as energy seemed to flow into her from the stone.

Compulsion gripped her once again as he saw the image of an opaque mirror pass through his consciousness and the knowing feeling that it too was still within the wreckage of the sanctum. She placed the pearl carefully down and began to rummage for her second find. The mirror was covered with rubble and it took Elara what felt like an eternity to finally clear it all away. Once the mirror was revealed, just like the pearl, it showed no signs of damage from the destruction of the mine and Elara could have sworn that it projected a dull white glow that seemed to intensify as she got closer to uncovering it. As she finished, he stood over the mirror wiping dirt and sweat from her brow wondering how she was going to lift the artifact back up by herself. The frame looked as though it was carved from solid stone, or textured metal, or.... His thoughts drifted as he took in the enormity of the mirror and the intricate frame that housed it.

Entranced, she reached down and pulled with all her strength to return the mirror to its standing position. To her amazement, the mirror returned upright with little effort, and she stepped away feeling the pull between the pearl behind her and the mirror in front of her. She retrieved the pearl and stepped forward holding it outstretched, offering it to the mirror. A round, tear drop shaped pedestal unfolded from the frame of the mirror and it accepted the pearl gently and light blasted from every contour on the frame and the glass turned from opaque to a brilliant white. Horns sounded and the glass pulled apart like a curtain being drawn to reveal a celestial stage. Two luminous eyes, blue and gigantic—their retinas piercing and discerning. They looked out of no face, but, instead, from a luminous white shadow that seemed to delicately wend and wane as the eyes took her in.

“Let no child be without a sword. We will all fight, for if we fail, we will certainly all die.”

PART 3: THE JOURNEY

Elara felt an otherworldly force guiding her forward. The mirror rippled with energy as a figure materialized—a Serra Emissary with wings that shimmered like silver. The emissary's presence exuded an aura of divine purpose, and its eyes, pools of radiant light, met Elara's with a silent understanding.

"Elara," spoke the emissary, its voice a melodic whisper that resonated with ancient wisdom, "I am a servant of Serra, and I have been sent to guide you to the Library of Alexandria. There, you will find the knowledge and power needed to stand against the impending darkness."

With those words, the emissary extended a hand, and Elara, driven by a sense of duty and the urgency of the situation, accepted the guidance. The two figures stepped through the enchanted mirror, traversing a plane that existed between realms. The journey felt both surreal and timeless, with glimpses of distant landscapes and celestial bodies passing by like fleeting dreams.

As they approached the Library of Alexandria, exiting the portal, Elara marveled at the grandeur of the ancient structure. The library stood as a testament to a bygone era, its architecture blending seamlessly with the surrounding magical energies. Towers of ivory and gold reached towards the heavens, and the air was filled with the scent of aged parchment and the faint echoes of forgotten spells.

The emissary led Elara through ornate corridors adorned with tapestries depicting battles fought and victories won by champions of old. They ascended grand staircases, their steps echoing in the vast chambers, until they reached the heart of the library—a sanctum where the most sacred tomes were housed.

In the center of the atheneum, bathed in a soft, celestial glow, lay the Barrin's Codex. An immense book bound in ethereal materials, its pages whispered with the accumulated wisdom of centuries. The emissary gestured towards the codex, its wings folding gracefully.

"Elara, within the Codex lies the knowledge you seek. Learn the ancient arts, for you are destined to forge defenses against the impending darkness. Factories consecrated by priests shall be your bulwark, and artifacts that can assume any form at will, created with divine guidance, shall be your weapons."

Elara approached the Codex, her fingers brushing delicately against its pages. As she began to study the ancient texts, a flood of arcane knowledge surged through her. The Codex revealed secrets of magical craftsmanship, the intricacies of consecration rituals, and the art of creating indestructible constructs.

With newfound understanding, Elara set to work. The factories of Keldar became sanctuaries of divine craftsmanship. Priests consecrated the tools, and skilled artisans and assembly workers channeled their magic into the creation of artifacts. These tools were crafted in abundance, each a replication of the divine creations described in the Codex.

The Library of Alexandria, once a silent witness to the passage of time, now echoed with the sounds of labor and purpose. Elara's vision took shape as her fellow villagers rallied behind her. The sanctified factories, assembly workers and forged artifacts would form the backbone of their defense against the impending demonic onslaught.

Armed with the knowledge and power granted by the Library of Alexandria, Elara and her fellow defenders prepared for the inevitable clash with the demonic forces rampaging through the countryside. The consecrated factories glowed with divine energy, and the constructs stood tall and resolute. The

stage was set for the confrontation that would determine the fate of Dominaria—a battle that would unfold amidst the ruins of Keldar and leave an indelible mark on the history of the once-thriving kingdom.

PART 4: THE BATTLE UNFOLDS

The once-vibrant fields of Keldar now echoed with the groans of the undead and the clashing of magical energies. Elara, wielding the power of the Mox Pearl, led her defenders against Vorath's demonic hordes. The air was thick with tension as spells illuminated the darkened sky, each casting a glimpse of hope or despair.

Elara's factories, consecrated by priests, stood resilient against the onslaught. They replicated themselves, forming an unyielding wall that held back the tide of zombies. The Assembly Workers, enchanted by skilled mages produced constructs that rivaled the strength of the demonic minions. The Library of Alexandria, surrounded by an aura of ancient magic, provided a sanctuary for the defenders to regroup and strategize.

On the other side, Vorath reveled in the chaos he had unleashed. His demonic form towered over the battlefield; arms spread wide. The jet embedded in his flesh pulsed with malevolent energy, amplifying his power. The Abyss, now a swirling vortex of corruption, consumed everything in its path, and the Orb cleaved a path of destruction consuming everything in its path.

The clash between good and evil intensified, casting a surreal spectacle upon the war-torn landscape. Lightning bolts crackled through the air, fireballs erupted in bursts of flame, and the ground quaked beneath the weight of powerful creatures. The fate of Dominaria hung in the balance as each side fought with desperation.

In the midst of the chaos, a lone figure emerged—the miner Thrain, now a mere husk under Vorath's control. His vacant eyes reflected the malevolence of the demon who had enslaved him. Vorath, sensing an opportunity, directed Thrain to the front lines. The enslaved miner swung a twisted pickaxe, infecting those he struck with a dark curse that turned them into even more formidable undead minions.

Elara, witnessing the tragic transformation of her fellow villagers, felt a surge of determination. She raised the Mox Pearl high, channeling its pure energy to counter the darkness that threatened to consume her people. The consecrated factories glowed with an ethereal light, their indestructible forms pushing back against the relentless advance of Vorath's forces.

As the battle raged on, a rift in the fabric of reality began to form, a consequence of the immense magical energies colliding. The very land itself seemed to rebel against the forces that sought to control it. Cracks appeared, and torrents of wild mana erupted, adding an unpredictable element to the already tumultuous battlefield.

PART 5: THE UNRAVELLING CATACLYSM

The forces of good and evil clashed, their powers reaching a crescendo. Vorath, sensing the impending cataclysm, unleashed a final, desperate gambit. The demon's lips moved, bereft of sound, and the miner's hands reached out to remove the glass flower from the pages of his tome and raised it above his head. The demon lifted his eyes to the sky and bellowed a silent incantation, Elara could almost see the words roaring from his lips causing reality to quiver. As he finished his spell he looked back down at the miner and as soon as their eyes met, he opened his hands letting the lotus fall. Time seemed to stop as the flower dragged itself toward the ground. When it hit the earth, the sound was deafening. It shattered into an explosion of light throwing the miner back into a crumpled heap at the base of the wall. The ground slowly began to crack and from the gash rose a sphere of pure terror. As its diameter rose, the objects in the room began to move toward it, melting into its rocky carapace as they struck. The sphere continued to grow larger, its crevices widening and emanating a blood red glow that reflected at impossible angles as it began to rotate slowly, coming to a stop in front of the demon. Two slits opened slowly revealing two embers burning brightly as eyes and a jagged crevasse widened into a demonic smile as magma frothed from its maw.

The orb hovered in the air, and charged with devastating power.

Elara, recognizing the imminent danger, marshaled her remaining forces. The defenders rallied around her, their determination unwavering. In a desperate bid to counter the Chaos Orb, Elara tapped into the deepest reservoirs of mana within the Mox Pearl. The artifact glowed with an intensity that surpassed anything seen before.

The clash of energies unleashed a shockwave that rippled across the battlefield. Reality itself seemed to warp and twist as the opposing magical forces collided. The Chaos Orb, unable to contain the overwhelming energy, shattered into a million shards, each carrying a fraction of its destructive power.

The aftermath was catastrophic. The shattered remnants of the Chaos Orb scattered across the land, leaving behind pockets of volatile magic. The very ground quaked as mana surged uncontrollably. Elara's defenders and Vorath's minions were consumed by the unleashed energies, leaving only echoes of their once-mighty conflict.

In the wake of the cataclysm, the land lay in ruins. The once-prosperous kingdom of Dominaria was now scarred and desolate. The Library of Alexandria, once a beacon of knowledge, stood as a solitary monument amidst the wreckage. The moxen stones, depleted of their power, lay scattered and dormant.

As the survivors emerged from the rubble, the extent of the devastation became apparent. Villagers, once friends and neighbors, were lost to the chaos or transformed into twisted remnants of their former selves. Elara, holding the now-dim Mox Pearl, gazed upon the ruined landscape with a heavy heart.

The story of the Moxen's enigma, the clash of good and evil, and the catastrophic aftermath would be passed down through generations—a cautionary tale of the dangers that lurk within the pursuit of unimaginable power. Dominaria, forever changed, faced the arduous task of rebuilding from the ashes of its own destruction.