

Overview

Mage is in a kinda weird spot going into SOU. There are only 3 real amazing cards (Glyph, Meteor, Blast Wave) coming in, along with a couple other cards like Dragon's Fury and Pyromanic which, while real strong, are all Epic (Pyro aside) and thus not going to be offered all that much. Their SOU cards are not all that great either. 3 cards are Secret Synergy cards, and one is a Secret itself, but outside Arcanologist and Mad Scientist, Secret Mage has never really been viable in Arena. As powerful as these cards are, I can't see it working reliably. Their best card in the set I only have in the top of the 3rd bucket, Dune Sculptor, and that can be real powerful, but the loss of Ray of Frost and Magic Trick really hurt the potential for Sculptor to really go off, since outside Glyph, Mage doesn't really have that many pickable cheap spells (although Blast Wave will generate more than a few).

What Mage does have going for it, is its Hero Power, which with Reborn will be more powerful than ever, especially since healing will be around to bring a lot of those Reborn creatures back up to full health, so pinging immediately is much more important. That will be enough so that Mage is at least relevant in the meta. Blastwave, which I mentioned earlier, will also be real powerful, as while there won't be as many tokens, the Reborn 1 health procs will provide easy triggers for the Overkill. Mage might be brought down by the Secret Package if its bad, but their ability to exploit Reborn should lead to them performing decent at worst in SOU.

Cards

Cloud Prince (5-): Mage secrets are pretty bad, and most of them are fairly easily triggered, so for this to really work reliably you need to have a secret + this in hand on T8 to create a poor man's version of Fireland's Portal. There are other similar cards that have this effect, with much easier to trigger conditions (hold a dragon, have a 5+ mana spell in hand) that this card won't really matter in the long-run. That said, since this and Flame Ward are both commons with expansion bonuses, this could be enough for Cloud Prince to be pickable. Plus with Ancient Mysteries, having a 0 mana secret to combo this with makes it a little bit above average.

Ancient Mysteries (6-): This fucking card. This card is going to make Arena Secret Mage a thing, and I really don't want Arena Secret Mage to be a thing. Not only is this another Arcanologist that'll pull secrets encouraging you to draft them, the 0 mana cost means you can combo this with both Cloud Prince and the Flakmage. And I don't even think this is a good card. Its a 2 mana tutor for cards you in general don't want (although Runes and the new Flame Ward will be solid), and a dead card if you draw all your secrets, so you really want to get at least 3 for this tot be useful. Compare this to Mad Scientist, which puts a 2/2 body on the board and doesn't leave you with a 0 mana secret to combo with other cards, Scientist is clearly better, and that wasn't even an auto-pick when it was around. There's also the drawback of, if you have a 2-drop or this, what do you play on 2? There's so much I hate about this card that I can't rate it high yet I know it's going to hound me in Arena.

Flame Ward (5-): A 3 mana Explosive Trap minus face damage with almost the same conditions and such. Now, with Mage, you do have more powerful late-game tools than Hunter, but with Hunter, you have the superior hero power for chipping away at the opponent while they get scared of the possibility of Explosive Trap. Now, where this is real powerful potentially is with Cloud Prince, which I actually boosted up a lot because this secret exists. This works because Flame Ward is a secret the opponent does not want to trigger. Unlike Mirror/Ruins where you will trigger it immediately, or the various spell secrets where you want to try to trigger it fast, Flame Ward is something you want to hold off on triggering, and that opens an opportunity for Cloud Prince to have a reliable secret that will stay up so it's battlecry can go off, and that by itself might be a saving grace of both cards.

Arcane Flakmage (3-): Compared to Medivh's Valet, harder to play a secret after this is played rather than to play a secret first then play this, but obviously a much more powerful effect. The question that has always plagued Mage secret cards in Arena is, is it worth it to take secrets to justify these real powerful cards? And the answer, almost every time, has been no. There's a reason River Croc has a full 3% winrate on Medivh's Valet, and its cause its so hard to get the proper synergy that you end up with bad decks going for it. We in turn get the same problem for Falkmage where, it's too power when it does hit so it's going to almost always be overbucketed even when you have a deck that supports it because of how powerful it is in the decks where its broken, and even in those decks if your hand is nothing but secrets you might free-lose some games. Even with boosting it a little to account for Ancient Mysteries, I'm not going to be comfortable taking this card ever.

Dune Sculptor (3+): It's a 3/3 with a very easy to trigger upside, especially when Rise of Shadows rotates back in. This is another card you can combo Ancient Mystries with since that'll net you two mage minions. Now, on the other hand, Mage minions tend to be pretty bad compared to other classes, but it's still a card with high potential to go off that can function as an on-curve 3, so obviously real good card.

Naga Sand Witch (7+): Is this even a good effect? Mages tend to have a bunch of smaller spells (2-4 mana range), so I can easily see cases where this is not playable, which hurts it a lot. And, much as I'd like to get a 5 mana Puzzle Box or Pyro, I don't think that's worth dealing with the times where it hurts you badly.

Puzzle Box of Yogg-Saron (5+): Yogg was initially nerfed because at some point, it was effectively guaranteed to be a good effect at 10 mana, a guaranteed board clear + drawing cards + possibly summoning minions. With only 10 spells, this is not a guaranteed effect. This is still a Deathwing-esq card, not in tier score, but in effect, where its a card you hold until you're about to lose to just try to flip the game. The Bullshit Effect of the Puzzle Box makes it a decent card, certainly better than Deck of Wonders which doesn't do anything until the future (and is still sometimes a decent card), and I wouldn't be shocked if this was actually a decent card stats-wise.

FWIW: Stein's spreadsheet will be much more informative on how powerful this card is. There's 254 spells total, so with, say, 25 AoEs available, there's only a ~65% chance to get an AoE with this card. And there's always a chance you Cataclysm yourself and lose everything. The Lightforge or Stein will be better served to rate this properly, but from my just general intuition, I don't think this is as reliable as a 20 spell Yogg was at being a net positive effect.

Tortollan Pilgrim (6-): What's better than a 10 mana Puzzle Box? An 8-mana Puzzle Box. I think this is a bit worse than Tortollan Primalist from Ungoro, even with the deck building aspect. The reason is, that gave you a much wider berth of spells to choose from, and in that regard you had a good chance of finding something that would work. With Pilgrim, you're limited by what you drafted, so what you'd really have is AoE, AI, Glyph, Secrets, or Puzzle Box to be played from this. If you got the spells go for it, but to me, it just feels like because you won't be crafting a deck around this card, you'll run into problems with this card not pulling out something you want to play (Puzzle Box notwithstanding) rather than the chance to Bullshit Effect your way out of something.

Reno the Relicologist (1-/84): Like Volcano, but only for the enemy minions, without the overload, and a 4/6 body attached. That this is only minions makes this effect really insane, because in general when you use AoE you're using it to clear a few smaller minions. And, because this is a control card, you generally will be able to handle a few duplicates while waiting for this to activate. This is possibly the strongest Highlander card there is, maybe even better than Kazakus..