

Feast or Famine

The overarching theme of Rhastakhan's Rumble (hence The Rumble) to me is the concept of Feast or Famine. Synergy cards are in general cards that function this way, and there are plenty of Elemental/Dragon synergy cards in this expansion, but it goes a lot further than a few cards having these synergies, as most of the cards in the set are heavily based around this.

To illustrate this, the new set mechanic, Overkill, is the perfect example of this. Using Ticket Scalper, it's a 4 mana 5/3 when played, which is poor stats because most 3-drops and many 2-drops can trade up into it. Yet, if it lives, and if it hits something with 4 or less health, it will draw two cards. The gap between the two effects is drastic, and you will lose games, on both ends, depending on how the effect goes. Most overkill cards are like this, where the upside of hitting it is massive, and the downside is rather poor.

Extending beyond overkill, there are the Spirit mechanics as well. Outside of Mage, all of the spirits are dependent upon having a condition met, be it a board state or having a certain kind of card in hand or a certain type of deck for the Spirits to function. Otherwise, they are worthless. While the bucket system makes getting these kinds of decks easier, it's still hard to guarantee enough of a certain kind of card for it to be able to go off reliably, so most Spirits will end up being weak, except when they're not

These Spirits, in turn, have other class cards that are printed to synergize with these spirits, which similarly have powerful effects if they go off and are rather tame and below average if they don't go off. An example of this is Bloodscale Strategist in Hunter, a simple 3 mana 2/4, but if you have a weapon equipped discover a spell. There is an extremely large gap in power level between those cards. As an example using Heartharena, Blink Fox is an 88 for a random opponent's classcard, so a 3 mana 3/3 that always discovered a spell, which is a lot higher in value, likely would be around 100-110, compared to a simple 3 mana 3/3 that's scored at a 50.

Throughout all classes, these cards exist. Personally, I am fine with the Overkill mechanic. With Overkill, in general, there is skill involved in both setting up an Overkill, choices to be made whether or not it is worth it to go for an overkill or how to overkill, as well as decision making once an Overkill card is placed on the board. What I'm not necessarily fine with, is all the high-roll cards that have massive effects, that are completely dependent on draw RNG. As an opponent, you will never play around your opponent having Savage Striker + Pounce, yet that combo is bound to cost you games in Arena. Those kinds of combos exist for most of the classes, and I'm worried it might be prevalent enough to become infuriating rather than just a random thing that happens.

In any case, it makes rating the cards rather difficult, because you have to account for the fact that sometimes these cards can just win you the game outright. The majority of the

cards I have rated around the 6th/7th bucket, mostly because they are conditional effects and other cards that are similarly condition fall into those buckets as well. The ratings are based on my thoughts on all decks though, and in many cases, if you happen onto a deck where a certain card would be great, then you likely should take that card.

Because of the Bucket/Micro-adjustment system, there is no real reason to have a class tierlist because the classes will end up in roughly the same spot anyways. Instead, I included a tier-list here of which classes I thought got the best overall sets of cards.

1: Warlock: All of Warlock's cards point to a zerg Zoo playstyle and benefit from it. In addition, the new Discard the lowest cost card mechanic also changes how you draft, which could benefit warlock. Now if you have a bad bucket, there is value in taking the lowest cost card as discard fodder for Shriek/Diretroll, and effectively improve the value of your worst bucket cards. I feel this internal synergy that's not dependent on one card is the best in the set.

2: Mage: Mage got 3 cards that interact with its Hero Power, which is widely considered the best hero power in the game. They are all good cards by themselves, yet when paired together can be insanely powerful. While I'm not sold on the Elemental synergy cards, the rest of their set has a solid secret and a potentially super-powerful AoE + Card draw,

3: Druid: Blizzard wants to push a Big Beast Druid, which I don't think will work all that well even if you get the cards for it. I think the Ironhide Direhorn, while certainly a good card, is one of the most overrated cards in the set by the community, which is why it's Overkill has such a strong impact. But, Pounce is real good, Mark of the Loa is real good, and Direhorn will hit sometimes, so I think overall their set, while a little flawed, is still real strong.

4: Rogue: Serrated Tooth is my pick for the sleeper good card of the expansion, because having a mass Rush effect on demand opens up a new dynamic to how Rogue's play, and lets them have something most classes don't, a way to flip a board when you're behind. The potential power there is something that should not be slept on. Otherwise, they got an ok set, a little reliant on Pirate synergy and powerful Battlecries and Combos, but I don't see anything that's really bad from Rogue, even Cannon Barrage which is playable if you have Sharkfin Fan.

5: Warrior: Warrior's overall set is horrible. Warrior got two insanely good cards though, in Dragon Roar and Sul'Thraise. Dragon Roar makes dragon decks work, and is honestly more value at 2 mana than Omega Assembly is hitting for 3 at 1 mana when you factor in how few bad dragons and how many big dragons there are. Sul'Thraise has a lot of potential as another non-Warpath card to use to clear off boards, or to just push face repeatedly. While the rest of their set is bad, the power of these two top-end cards will keep them top-tier.

6: Priest: Priest got a lot of cards we've seen before, only better. None of them really stand out as making huge waves in Arena, outside maybe Mass Hysteria, but the fact that most of their

cards are perfectly fine and not things you'd feel sad putting in your deck puts them in a solid place.

7: Hunter: My Hunter problem is that so many of their cards are Feast or Famine. Their cards look to be highroll cards, and decks built around highrolling won't do well once they start lowrolling. I think their cards are definitely powerful, but not reliable enough to say that they got a great expansion overall.

8: Paladin: A New Challenger is my pick for card of the set, with the power and high-roll in that card being extremely high. Otherwise, Paladin's set was pretty mediocre. All their good things to trigger their spirit are in the top buckets, healing isn't really a thing in Arena, and their weapons aren't really that amazing as one is overcosted and one really becomes questionable once you hit the mid-game.

9: Shaman: I have no idea what Blizzard's going for with Shaman. Their cards aren't bad, but there's nothing broken, and their cards really have the lowest high-roll potential of all classes considering how Arena is. There's just nothing in the set which makes me want to play Shaman this expansion.