

Budget Deck Series: 5 New Builds with Dark Frontier

What's up everybody! I am proud to present an update to my Budget Deck series featuring Dark Frontier*, where you will find five budget builds of successful decks.

If you are new to the game or missed the first two installments of this series, Four Budget Decks that Really Work and The Budget Deck Article - Defiance Update, the goal of this series is to provide decklists to players on a budget that make use of the rares and legendaries in them as they build into competitive lists. That is to say that you won't have to spend 800 (or 3200) shiftstone to craft a card for one of these budget lists, only to discard it in the process of upgrading your deck (for the most part, anyway).

As new sets release, I find myself becoming more lenient with my restrictions for budget decks. The first article limited each decklist to 8 rares, but as time has gone on I have developed a more nuanced appreciation for which cards new players can easily get their hands on. The restrictions for these decks may seem convoluted at first, but I promise it is just a clever use of resources!

Each of the following decks contains cards limited to:

- Cards granted to new player accounts (eg. 1x Xenan Obelisk)
- Cards from the Jekk's Bounty campaign (and if you do not already have it, you can get it for *free* [here](#))
- Cards obtainable from purchasing theme decks for 3,000 gold from the store (eg. 1x Tocas, Waystone Harvester)
- Cards from one additional campaign, listed along with each deck
- No more than 13 additional rares to be crafted, where a legendary card counts as 4 rares and promos are 3/4 of a rare each, again listed along with each deck

There are five lists here, each with a distinct feel and archetype! We've come a long way from the Defiance metagame, and there are more viable play styles than ever before. We have aggro, combo, ramp, control, and relic synergies represented in this article, so hopefully you will be able to find the perfect style to suit yourself.

Also, I should note that I did a rundown of these five decks on my stream prior to this article, which you can find below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87Ol4sEmOWU>

- **Budget Decks!**

Deck 1: Praxis Pledge

Archetype: Midrange/Ramp

Campaign: Homecoming

Rares in this deck (Source): 4x Amaran Stinger (Craft), 4x Auralian Merchant (Craft), 4x Moonstone Vanguard (Craft), 1x Xenan Obelisk (New Account), 1x Tocas, Waystone Harvester (Theme Deck "Twist of Tocas"), Gunrunner (Homecoming), Apex Predator (Homecoming)

EWC Link

Upgrade to: EWC Link

Praxis Pledge! This has been one of my favorite decks for a while now. The basic strategy is to pledge a unit on turn 1 (redrawing if necessary to find a unit with pledge), then take advantage of the payoffs of Glasshopper and Gunrunner in order to get ahead of the game. The ideal draw is to lead with an Initiate of Sands, follow up with Glasshopper or Devotee of the Sands, then play a turn 3 Gunrunner and start picking off the opponent's units before they can establish themselves. Alternatively, a fast Moonstone Vanguard can bury the opponent in card advantage (and damage!) quickly. This build is going to be more ramp-centric than the aggressive full build, with Cykalis and Teacher of Humility being legends, but you still have access to some of the same blistering fast starts. The biggest limiting factor is the need for pledge units 9-16: in order to consistently turn on the pledge payoffs, you want around 16 pledge units if possible. Gunrunner and Moonstone

Vanguard are units you are happy to play, but past those the options are not the best. This is why the deck does bit of a transformation from an aggro deck to one that plays multiple Eternity Cores with the hope of dropping an Apex Predator. That 9 in the cost of Apex Predator is surprisingly manageable in this deck, and once you play it the card is good against just about everything**!

Those of you with keen eyes may notice that the Auralian Merchants do not align with the East Annex Smugglers from the full build. While that is true, the smugglers were a metagame call for that specific weekend, and can easily be swapped out for Auralian Merchants. When upgrading this deck, the priority of cards to craft are Cykalis -> Darya -> Eclipse Dragon -> Teacher of Humility -> Tocas. Certainly not an easy path to upgrade the deck as the full build can have 16+ legendaries , but if it appeals to you hopefully this budget version will do for now.

Deck 2: Auralian Rats

Archetype: Synergy-based Aggro

Campaign: Homecoming

Rares in this deck (Source): 4x Cryptic Master (Craft), 4x Great Valley Smuggler (Craft), 1x Vault of the Praxis (Craft), 1x Bazaar Stampede (Craft), 1x Xenan Obelisk (New Account), Severin, the Mad Mage (Homecoming), Clock of Stolen Hours (Homecoming)

EWC Link

Upgrade to: EWC Link

Move aside, Praxis Tokens, there's a new Xenan Obelisk deck in town! In many ways Rats behaves as an aggro deck, flooding the board quickly with cheap units then using relics like Xenan Obelisk or Clock of Stolen Hours to buff them and swarm the enemy, but it also has a lot of nuances that make its gameplay unique from other aggro decks we have had in the past. The plan here is to lead Rat Cage into more relics (hopefully more Rat Cages), add in a few extra units, then go to the market for a Bazaar Stampede and swing for the win. Adding Severin into the equation allows for some interesting lines to be aware of; with Severin on the board, Pitfall Trap is free to play *and* activate,

and its condition of requiring a unit to be played is fulfilled automatically if you already have a Rat Cage. This allows the player to activate Pitfall Trap each turn for free, quickly churning through the top of their deck to find just the right card for the situation, granting powerful card selection to an archetype that rarely has such a thing. What's even better is that Lethrai Courtier also provides you with extra powers in hand when you play relics, giving you cards to discard to the pitfall trap. This deck is definitely a blast and worth trying if you've never had a pleasure before.

The biggest difference between this build of the deck and the full build is the inclusion of Equivocates, so obtaining the Dead Reckoning campaign may be the first priority. After that, favor Teacher of Humility -> Crests -> Xenan Obelisk.

You can find ManuS talking about the full version of the build [here](#).

Deck 3: Evenhanded Katra

Archetype: Combo

Campaign: Into Shadow

Rares in this deck (Source): 4x Evenhanded Golem (Craft), 4x Katra, the Devoted (Craft), 4x Memory Dredger (Craft), Vara, Vengeance-Seeker (Into Shadow), Azindel, Revealed (Into Shadow)

EWC Link

Upgrade to: EWC Link

I really have to give Tangellos a lot of credit for this one; the original build only contains 4 Desecrates and 4 Crests which don't fulfill the "budget" criterion, and the Desecrates can be acquired from the "Homecoming" campaign. This deck is pretty straightforward from the outside, as you are trying to find an Evenhanded Golem and recur it as many times as possible to bury your opponent in cards and eventually combo your opponent. The combo itself wins on the spot -- Stained Honor, Katra, and Razorquill on the field all at the same time allows you to twist Razorquill infinitely and drain your

opponent out -- but is easily disrupted if any single piece is removed. Fortunately, partial combos in this deck are still quite potent and are often enough to pull ahead, such as Katra + Razorquill, Razorquill + Azindel, or Memory Dredger recurring Evenhanded Golem.

This deck really takes advantage of the fact that Eternal retains card modifications across zones! Katra's buff is permanent, so if you manage to build a large unit, those stat buffs are reflected when you use Memory Dredger or Last Chance in order to return your units to the field.

Make sure to check out Tangellos' explanation of the deck here, as it goes pretty in depth into most of what the deck has to offer.

Deck 4: Hooru Control

Archetype: Control

Campaign: Homecoming

Rares in this deck (Source): 4x Ice Bolt (Craft), 4x Harsh Rule (Craft), 4x Svetya's Sanctum (Craft), Korovyat Palace (Homecoming), Stormhalt Knife (Homecoming)

EWC Link

Upgrade to: EWC Link

In the past it has been challenging to build a budget pure control deck, but fortunately Dark Frontier and the Homecoming campaign have given control inexpensive ways to thrive. This deck really tries to maximize the power of Svetya's Sanctum -- play spells to draw cards and kill enemy units, drop a Sanctum, then continue cards and killing enemy units as the relic generates units for you. On its own, Korovyat Palace (*Gasp* a site! Fortunately the Homecoming campaign provides 4 of them!) is another Wisdom of the Elders that distracts attackers for a turn or two, but when paired with Svetya's

Sanctum it ends the game in an absolute hurry. Withstand creates a 5/5, Sack the City creates a 5/5, Wisdom of the Elders creates a 3/3, and you get one for free each turn that the palace survives.

There's really not much else to say about this deck except that if you feel threatened, you should kill your opponent's units, and when you don't feel threatened, you should play Svetya's Sanctum if possible or else draw cards. There's definitely a lot to learn in how to do that in the most efficient manner, but that's the gist of it. Also, keep in mind that discarding Privilege of Rank off of Honor of Claws plays Privilege for free.

This deck is difficult to upgrade, unfortunately. Vision of Austerity and Hailstorm come from two separate campaigns (The Tale of Horus Traver and Dead Reckoning, respectively) and there are a handful of legendaries to craft. I think the priority should be Hailstorm > Merchants (and the appropriate market cards) > Martyr's Chains > Pristine Light.

Deck 5: Mono-Fire

Archetype: Aggro

Campaign: None!

Rares in this deck (Source): 4x Censari Brigand (Craft + 1x from New Account), 4x Eclipse Dragon (Craft + 1x from Theme Deck "Chancellor's Onslaught"), 1x Obliterate (Craft), 4x Seal of Devotion (Craft)

EWC Link

Upgrade to: EWC Link

Finally, Eternal has a viable mono-faction aggro deck that is inexpensive to put together! Many people were skeptical when ddddd brought their Mono-Fire deck to the ECQ showdown, only to be shocked when the deck made it all the way to the finals. The formula is timeless (at least, it certainly

is if you are coming from MtG): cheap units to apply early pressure, spells that double as removal and burn, and a couple ways to finish the opponent off once they begin to get their footing.

You may notice that my build is quite a bit different from ddddd's tournament build. This archetype has had less exposure than any of the others, and thus has had less time for the community to tune the list. I suspect that Eclipse Dragon is preferable to Ghodan; if that is the case Seal of Devotion becomes a viable addition, and in my testing was a card I was happy to be playing. The deck definitely has a lot of room for iteration still in it as people try out various builds. Fortunately, the key cards are easy to acquire, and yet this deck packs quite a punch.

That's all for me today! I certainly hope you enjoyed these budget lists, and look forward to another installation in the series whenever set 7 comes out. All of these lists and any others I come up with will be stored in the "!budget6" command on my Twitch channel. I stream Eternal regularly at 8am Pacific on weekdays, and you can find me at www.twitch.tv/Sunyveil. You can stay up to date with everything I'm up to, Eternal or otherwise, at www.twitter.com/Sunyveil. See you next time!

Cheers,

Sunyveil

*Three articles definitely counts as a series, right?

**Except deadly. Apex Predator hates deadly.