Magic: Forget the Fish (Dandanless Dandan)

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Do you like Forgetful Fish/Dandan games that come down to who has to draw from an empty deck? That's every game with this variant of the variant. This Magic: the Gathering variant is designed for two players who both play out of the same deck.

The deck contains no [Dandân](#)s or any source of damage. You don't track life totals at all. It's just about who draws the last card and forces his opponent to draw on an empty library. This variant is intended for those already familiar with the Forgetful Fish or Dandan variant, and is in many ways an advanced version. This document describes how to turn virtually any Dandan deck Dandanless and provides a curated deck that makes play more interesting and dynamic. This variant is consistently quicker than Forgetful Fish as there is a builtin clock that makes sure the game ends quickly. The number of cards in the shared library.

RULE CHANGES — Forget the Fish is played like a standard game of Magic with these simple rule changes.

• The two players share a library and a graveyard placed between them so that both players can reach them with ease. A card that refers to the "owner" of a library or graveyard or refers to "your library" or "your graveyard" refers to the singular library or graveyard. The "owner" of a card is the person who played that card from his or her hand.

• Instead of the special Dandan mulligan rule you might be familiar with where players get a free mulligan if they don't have two land in their opening hand, this variant makes the "**In The Mind's Island**" Forgetful Fish optional rule, standard**.** Players remove four islands from the deck before dealing opening hands. Each player begins with two untapped islands in play, and play begins with the first player's first main phase. Each player begins play with an opening hand of seven cards as normal and the standard Magic mulligan rules are in effect. Instead of providing for Dandan usage in this variant (there are none), it's so that players get a jump on their available mana providing better spell wars, and it also reduces the deck by four additional cards.

• Because every game reveals the whole deck to both players before the end of the game and deducing what your opponent is holding in hand as that time draws near is a huge strategic advantage, before opening hands are dealt, exile six cards from the deck, **face down.**

• For starting hands and anytime both players must draw cards from the same effect, the cards should be dealt from the top of the deck, one player than the other, as though dealing a standard card game. The active player deals. This can be an important rule to keep in mind with certain cards that cause both players to draw multiple cards from the same effect (see the last entry in the Strategy section below).

• There is no need to track life totals. They won't change and don't matter at all.

• The stack works as normal, but can get quite complex. Players should allow time for their opponent to respond and make sure their opponent passes priority before beginning resolution of the stack, each time a spell resolves, and before drawing a card from the top of the library.

Conversion

These steps will convert virtually any Dandan build to a Forget the Fish variant by cutting many cards from the deck. This will work as a good impression of a game of Dandan using that deck that comes down to who draws on an empty deck.

This assumes starting with an 80 card deck and cuts it to 50 cards, though because of the rules above, the deck will be reduced to 40 cards and then dealing opening hands will begin the game with a mere 26 cards in the deck.

I will use my standard Forgetful Fish list as the example.

1. Cut all Dandans (usually 10 copies)
2. Cut any card that would normally target a Dandan for removal. This includes any targeted removal such as Mind Bend, Crystal Spray, Magical Hack, and Piracy Charm for instance. In my stock list just Mind Bend and Crystal Spray.
3. Cut any spell that can target only creatures. In the stock list Dance of the Skywise, Ray of Command, and Supplant Form. Metemorphose can target lands so it stays. Unsubstantiate can target spells on the stack, so it stays.
4. Vision Charms stay due to their Mill mode. And in the advanced deck below, its mode targeting artifacts can be relevant (see the curated list below).
5. Cut lands to a total of 18 making sure there are at least six basic Islands remaining. Four are then set aside for the In the Mind's Island.
6. Finally, cut the deck further to reach 50 cards as you see fit. Cutting a pair of Memory Lapse is often an option.

Decklist - 50 Cards	2 ~~Mind Bend~~	2 Izzet Boilerworks
10 ~~Dandân~~	2 Mystical Tutor	2 Lonely Sandbar
8 Memory Lapse	2 Mystic Retrieval	2 Halimar Depths
4 Accumulated Knowledge	2 Predict	2 Mystic Sanctuary
2 Brainstorm	2 ~~Ray of Command~~	2 Remote Isle
2 ~~Crystal Spray~~	2 ~~Supplant Form~~	2 Svyelunite Temple
2 ~~Dance of the Skywise~~	2 Unsubstantiate	2 Temple of Epiphany
2 ~~Diminishing Returns~~	2 Vision Charm	4 Island
2 Metamorphose		10 ~~Island~~
		4 Island (set aside)

So when the four starting Islands are taken out and opening hands are dealt that leaves a library of 26 cards in the shared library. Because of the card draw and mill remaining in the deck, the 13 turns each player might get will be significantly cut short as players try to collect cards that can remove or add cards to the library to make sure they have a card to draw and their opponent does not when the deck is depleted. The final couple of turns often involve instant speed spell wars that can be very entertaining.

Strategy
   The game really comes down to the last few turns when the deck is empty and the upkeep before a player is forced to draw on their draw phase. Everything else is a build-up to that moment, or often those few turns that provide those moments.

   In the early game Accumulated Knowledge, Brainstorm, Predict (or similar) are very good to try to set your hand up for the end game, but once the deck gets to ten cards or fewer, they are a liability and players must be very careful any time they put spells or effects on the stack that draw cards on resolution. You may suddenly find there are no cards to draw.

   Making sure you have plenty of mana to play your spells once the deck is depleted is crucial. This is why both players start with land in play in this variant. Play plenty of lands and mana rocks if you draw them. Cycling lands are very useful when the fight over the last card is in action, but sometimes having them in play is better so you can play your hand and activate abilities.

   Any card that can steal a card off of a single card library is important, but be careful if you are trying to draw that card, because it might disappear before you have to draw and you die. Be patient. Trying to force drawing on an empty library can often backfire.

   Memory Lapse can put a card on top of an empty library so you can draw it but only if you, or your opponent, plays a spell to be Memory Lapsed. Trying to stop your opponent from casting a spell that will give him a card to draw with Memory Lapse is generally self defeating. They'll just be able to draw the spell they were trying to cast.

   If you feel like your opponent has likely built a better end game hand than you, try resetting the hands by getting through a Diminishing Returns, the aftermath side of Commit // Memory, or the like in your particular deck.

   In this variant, the "dealing rule" (the fourth Rule Changes above) can be quite important when a spell forcing both players to draw new hands is cast and the number of cards in the hands, library and graveyard is fewer than 14. Diminishing Returns, because players can choose how many cards they wish to draw should not be able to force someone to draw from an empty library as it resolves, but other spells, such as the aftermath side of Commit // Memory forces both players to draw seven. Due to the "dealing rule," resolving such a spell with fewer than 14 cards means someone loses. Since the active player (who likely cast the spell) deals and starts with the opponent, an odd number of cards fewer than 14 means the caster/dealer will lose when he deals himself (draws) the non-existant even numbered card. So, before you cast one of those spells, count the total number of cards to be dealt upon resolution and make sure it is an even number. If it is, and barring any cards moving from the battlefield to one of those three zones (hands, library, or graveyard), you won't immediately lose, and maybe your opponent will.

Advanced Forget the Fish

Decklist - 50 Cards	4 Memory Lapse	2 Halimar Depths
4 Accumulated Knowledge	2 Metamorphose	2 Hedge Maze
2 Commit // Memory	2 Natural Obsolescence	2 Mystic Sanctuary
2 Defabricate	2 Reclaim	2 Sequestered Stash
2 False Memories	2 Scrabbling Claws	2 Shelldock Isle
2 Fellwar Stone	2 Vision Charm	2 Slippery Karst
2 Letter of Acceptance	2 Wand of Vertebrae	2 Island
2 Memory's Journey		4 Island (set aside)

Strategy and Rules Clarifications by Card Advanced Deck
Strategy in italics

Accumulated Knowledge: The count is made when the spell resolves and does not include the card that is currently resolving. The card does not go to the graveyard until after it is done resolving.

This card is very good early in the game to help curate your hand for the end game and helps deplete the deck. But once the deck gets down to 10 or so cards, they become a dangerous liability while on the stack, as any spell or effect that draws a card on resolution can be deadly if the cards in the library suddenly disappear. Casting an Accumulated Knowledge and Memory Lapsing it to give you a card to draw on the library might be an option, but if there are enough Accumulated Knowledge in the graveyard (like just one) and your Memory Lapse is countered (even my another Memory Lapse) you may be forced to draw more cards than the library contains.

Commit // Memory: If Commit's target's owner's library contains no cards, the target spell or permanent will be put into that player's library as the only card. If a spell is put into its owner's library, it's removed from the stack and thus will not resolve. The spell isn't countered; it just no longer exists. If you cast Commit during your turn, you'll have priority immediately after it resolves. You can cast the half with aftermath from your graveyard before any player can take any other action if it's legal for you to do so. If another effect allows you to cast a split card with aftermath from any zone other than a graveyard, you **can't** cast the half with aftermath. A spell with aftermath cast from a graveyard will always be exiled afterward (like a card cast with Flashback), whether it resolves, it's countered, or it leaves the stack in some other way. Once you've started to cast a spell with aftermath from your graveyard, the card is immediately moved to the stack. Opponents can't try to stop the ability by exiling the card with an effect such as that of Scrabbling Claws.

The "dealing rule" (the fourth Rule Changes above) can be quite important when this spell resolves and forces both players to draw cards and the number of cards in the hands, library and graveyard is fewer than 14. Since the active player (who likely cast Memory deals and starts with the opponent, an odd number of cards fewer than 14 means the caster/dealer will lose when he deals himself (draws) the non-existant even numbered card. So, before you cast Memory, count the total number of cards to be dealt upon resolution and make sure it is an even number. If it is, and barring any cards moving from the battlefield to one of those three zones (hands, library, or graveyard) or to exile, you won't immediately lose, and maybe your opponent will. Just remember "Even good, Odd bad." And also, you should be prepared to change the number of cards to be dealt multiple times to guarantee the number remains even before Memory resolves. Memory can also be cast just to reset the hands if you feel like your opponent has built a stronger endgame hand than you have.

Defabricate: Activated abilities contain a colon. They're generally written "[Cost]: [Effect]. Triggered abilities use the word "when," "whenever," or "at." They're often written as "[Trigger condition], [effect]."Turn-based actions and special actions like the normal card draw, combat damage, or turning a face-down creature face up can't be targeted. Mana abilities also can't be targeted.

Countering Scrabbling Claws or Wand of Vertebrae is probably the best use of this card, but countering the abilities of those cards in an endgame situation might also be a play that keeps you in the game. The triggered or activated abilities of other cards might also be a strong play in the end game. Countering the Hideaway triggered ability of Shelldock Isle is also a good use in the early to mid-game..

False Memories: The Oracle text for this card reads: "Mill seven cards. At the beginning of the next end step, exile seven cards from your graveyard." This spell sets up a delayed effect that triggers "at the beginning of the next end step." This spell does not target anything. Not when it resolves nor when its delayed trigger triggers. The cards being exiled can not be interacted with when this triggered ability begins to resolve.

Casting False Memories during an end step, where "the begging" has already passed means the caster will not exile seven cards until the beginning of the next turn's end step. You should cast it after the beginning of the end step if you want the extra cards in the graveyard for the whole next turn or at the end of the second main phase before the beginning of that turn's end step if you want to exile seven cards from the graveyard shortly after False Memories is cast (there may be reasons for either). When it resolves you Mill your own library, which is shared in Forget the Fish, and when the delayed trigger resolves and seven cards are exiled, the caster chooses and exiles them immediately.

Fellwar Stone: Fellwar Stone only produces one mana even if the land can produce more than one. It works even if the opponent's lands are tapped. It only checks what kinds of mana can be produced, not if the abilities that produce them are usable right now.

Halimar Depths: The ability is triggered when it enters the battlefield and goes on the stack like other triggered abilities.

Memory's Journey: You don't have to target any cards when you cast Memory's Journey, but you must target a player. Any of the targeted cards that are illegal targets by the time Memory's Journey resolves aren't shuffled into their owner's library. If no cards were targeted by Memory's Journey or if all the targeted cards are illegal targets by the time Memory's Journey resolves, the targeted player will still shuffle

their library. If you cast Memory's Journey with flashback, it won't be in the graveyard when you choose targets. It can't target itself. "Flashback [cost]" means "You may cast this card from your graveyard by paying [cost] rather than paying its mana cost" and "If the flashback cost was paid, exile this card instead of putting it anywhere else any time it would leave the stack." A spell cast using flashback will always be exiled afterward, whether it resolves, is countered, or leaves the stack in some other way. You can cast a spell using flashback even if it was somehow put into your graveyard without having been cast. If a card with flashback is put into your graveyard during your turn, you can cast it if it's legal to do so before any other player can take any actions. In the shared library/graveyard format you must have priority to cast a card with flashback from the shared graveyard. Once a player with priority declares they are casting the flashback spell, the active player has lost their chance to cast it first.

You should almost always target more than one card if you target any cards at all to make sure at least one card winds up in the library for you to draw..

Memory Lapse: Memory Lapse has a self-replacement effect that replaces the spell going to the graveyard before any other effect can replace that event. If the spell was cast using flashback, however, flashback will change the spell's destination from its owner's library to exile.

Note that casting a Memory Lapse to try to counter a spell that is attempting to put a card on the library so that an opponent has a card to draw can be self-defeating as the countered spell will end up there. You should be ok with that or have a play to stop that card being drawn.

Metamorphose*:*
A powerful card in the deck to be sure, removing a land or artifact from your opponent's battlefield and providing a card for you to draw from an otherwise empty library. You might consider holding a permanent in your hand in anticipation of your opponent using it against you and you suddenly having an artifact they were not expecting to interact with the graveyard or library.

Natural Obsolescence*: Players should be sure to remember what artifacts were put on the bottom of an unshuffled library with this card because those bottom cards will be the top cards soon enough.*

Reclaim:
A powerful card that is rendered useless by both a Scrabbling Claws and Wand of Vertebrae. You need a plan to render those artifacts moot, if only momentarily.

Scrabbling Claws*: The first ability of this card targets a player, but not a card. The targeted player chooses the card to be exiled upon resolution of the effect.*

You should always target yourself with the first ability so you can choose the card to exile. Along with Wand of Vertebrae, Scrabbling Claws is the most powerful card in a game of Forget the Fish. There is often a tug of war for these cards. If your opponent has one you should prioritize getting rid of it. Consider activating Claws during your opponent's end step to exile a card in the graveyard you might not want to see again or to make Accumulated Knowledge usable. Though the second ability does not require tapping, it is not without a cost in risk since it draws a card and with it on the stack you might find the library has no cards.

Sequestered Stash*: The activated ability of this land is expensive, but remember that it has two uses. Putting an artifact on the library is a "may" ability so you can just use it to mill the library and leave your opponent without a card to draw. Note that this does not target the artifact in the graveyard so you choose the artifact when the ability resolves.*

Shelldock Isle: The Oracle text for this card reads: "Hideaway 4 (When this land enters, look at the top four cards of your library, exile one face down, then put the rest on the bottom **in a random order**.)
Shelldock Isle enters tapped.
🅒: Add 🅤.
🅤, 🅒: You may play the exiled card without paying its mana cost if a library has twenty or fewer cards in it."

Note the rest of the cards are now put on the bottom in **random** order. Activating the ability allows you to play the exiled card ignoring any timing restrictions it might have based on card type.

A very powerful card in Forget the Fish though you have to get lucky in drawing one and hitting a good card in the top four for you to Hideaway. If your opponent plays a Shelldock Isle, you can Defabricate the Hideaway trigger or Metamorphose the Isle back to the library leaving the exiled card facedown in exile and possibly drawing the Shelldock yourself. You can also Defabricate the activation before your opponent reveals the card that is exiled by Hideaway, but unless the game ends they can just try again after it untaps. Also, if the library is

close to the 20 card threshold you could put multiple cards back in the library, with Memory's Journey for instance, to counter its activation one time.

Vision Charm: While a permanent is phased out, it's treated as though it doesn't exist. It phases in before its controller untaps during their next untap step. This means Vision Charm can be used to phase out an artifact (Wand of Vertebrae for example) to force its use or make it unavailable for use for the turn.

In an endgame scenario phasing out certain artifacts at a key moment, usually before manipulating the graveyard or library can come in handy, though milling four cards is probably the most common mode chosen. The changing lands mode is probably never used. I was always a little frustrated that one mode of Vision Charm was unusable in Forgetful Fish. In this variant, it can be relevant. Yay!

Wand of Vertebrae*:*
Along with Scrabbling Claws, Wand of Vertebrae is the most powerful card in a game of Forget the Fish. There is often a tug of war for these cards. If your opponent has one you should prioritize getting rid of it. Consider activating the Wand during your opponent's end step to mill a card and get closer to the endgame or try to make Accumulated Knowledge better before casting one. Both abilities are good in the endgame. The first to mill a card your opponent was going to draw and the second ability to throw cards into the library so you have a card to draw. Note they both require tapping and the second ability requires two mana to activate. Like Memory's Journey you are often better off putting more than one card in the library.

Forget the Fish Designer's Notes

When I designed the first Dandan deck in '96 I put proxy Timetwisters in partially to reset the deck. I hated the idea of the game coming down to who had to draw from the shared library when it was empty. One of the first friends I played it with loved that option and would often try to force that game ending by refusing to cast Timetwister. But of course the first Dandan deck was only 60 cards. Once I upped it to 70 and then to 80 cards, I was more ok with it. And the switching Timetwister for Diminishing Returns made games more interesting however they ended.

Since I discovered the variant had taken off I've seen some interesting games ending with no cards in the library and thought what if I built a Dandan deck with no Dandans that just ended every game like that? Could I strip any Dandan deck down to make that happen? And could I make a more interesting version with other cards that stressed a deck-out game ending? Turns out I could. This variant plays faster than Forgetful Fish just by its nature and is fun and exciting.

Maybe you could invent ways to quickly convert your Dandan deck Dandanless so that if time is short you could still play quickly converting it Dandan-less. It's too bad not all the cards were printed in white borders or in foil. Proxy just the cards to cut with a different look? I'll leave that to you.

If you found this document in some other way than my YouTube channel, and don't know, I have a YouTube channel! It is called [Magic Story Time](#) or [Nick's Magic Story Time](#). It is not all about Dandan or other variants but there will be videos about that. It is about sharing stories about playing Magic over its three decade life. It's strong in nostalgia for the early years of the game. I've been playing since nearly the beginning and I have some great stories to share, but I hope to share other's stories too someday. It is in its early stages and I hope I can improve it as time goes by.