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--Faeries--

Faeries is a mid-range/control/tempo deck. No two decks are the same, and it's very easy for a good Faeries player to transition quickly into different decks/playstyles. This post isn't focused on any single core deck: Faeries changes as the meta changes. It's well placed to beat whatever deck you want, but it's your job to make the right calls. Choosing the right cards to overwhelm your opponent with.

Instead, this post focuses on describing the Faeries meta toolkit— indicating what is good against what, and what to do and not do with certain cards.

Why Faeries?

Faeries is a nonlinear highly interactive deck. Every victory is earned, and every loss deserved. This is the deck you want, if you like being rewarded for playing smart. Faeries is a highly skill centered deck with a low margin for error. Furthermore; it's highly adaptable and often changes its playstyle mid-game. If you're looking for an easy win, this isn't the deck for you.

Where to Start?

Faeries adapts to the meta, and changes greatly from FNM to FNM, Pro Tour to Pro Tour. No one list is perfect. You won't find a best decklist here, just options and suggestions to help you craft your own. The following is a good starting point to get you going. You can start with that, and tweak it depending on what feels right. Don't be afraid to deviate from the tried and true, just because something works for one person doesn't mean it will work for another. Experiment! If you try something that you think is powerful, feel free to post here. We're always happy when others help the deck live and grow.

Standard U/B Shell:

12~16 Creatures

4 Bitterblossom

4+ Counterspells

2+ Cryptic Command

5~7 Creature Removal

3~6 Discard Spells

0-4 Ancestral Vision

24-26 Lands

--The Cards--

-Faerie Kit-

These cards are the reason you're playing faeries. Cards like [c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c], [c]Mistbind Clique[/c], and [c]Scion of Oona[/c] are your main source of synergy; everything else just sweetens the deal.

[c]Bitterblossom[/c]

This significantly powers up [c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c], [c]Scion of Oona[/c], and [c]Mistbind Clique[/c]. On its own it can kill an opponent in 7 turns. And although central to the deck, keep in mind the clock that this puts on yourself. If not managed properly this can and will kill you, especially against decks like burn/aggro. Sometimes siding this out is the right play.

[c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c]

If you can counter a spell with this, you usually want to. If you know what your opponent has in hand, you can time this more precisely. If you have a high Faerie count on the field, all bets are off. If this is a hard counter, treat it as such. If you can get extra out of it, great; but know when to toss it on the battlefield with no targets. Sometimes you just need a chump blocker or a Faerie for [c]Mistbind Clique[/c] (or another [c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c]).

[c]Mistbind Clique[/c]

Assume you're walking this into removal, since you probably are. Casting this turn 4 with no knowledge of your opponent's hand is risky, and will probably lead to a 2 for 1. If you have an alternate Faerie on board, things get a little safer. Keep in mind this is non-targeting, your opponent has to kill all your Faeries (or Mistbind Clique itself) to prevent this from championing. Otherwise, this is a highly versatile spell. It can protect your Faeries, save you from Bitterblossom, or used to recast another Faerie when paired with a kill spell. The pseudo [c]Time Walk[/c] effect is good unless your opponent is running a lot of non-land mana sources. Of important note: It can't be bolted or decayed, blocks favourably with Kalitas and Restoration Angel. Casting it in combat can catch your opponent completely by surprise.

[c]Vendilion Clique[/c]

A superstar in mana control/tempo lists. Thanks to our synergy, we get even more use out of him. You can target your opponent to screw up their game plan, or target yourself to 'cycle' a dead [c]Bitterblossom[/c] or other card. Or you can flash him in and start the beatdown. He's also great as a surprise blocker. Proper use of Vendilion Clique is key. Make sure to make the right choices for cycling, both you and your opponent get a draw. Don't let this lead to bad decisions though, don't be too afraid of your opponent's top deck. A good rule of thumb is whether or not you can win the game judging from your hand and your opponent's hand, do your best to make the correct decision and preventing your opponent from getting ahead.

[c]Scion of Oona[/c]

You're walking this into removal as well. Functionally it is good protection for your Faeries, but it also is under risk of being destroyed if used as a counterspell. If your opponent tapped out to cast a kill spell, you're usually safe. But be mindful of the risks. This card lends itself to a more Midrange build, which could be good if you're expecting to face a lot of late-game-centered decks. Getting 2 on the field is a great softlock that is difficult to disrupt.

[c]Pestermite[/c]

Pestermite isn't a commonly used faerie card, but he still offers some value. He's a solid tempo play, and can buy you an extra turn or two to answer a lethal threat such as [c]Tarmogoyf[/c] (when applicable). He's also great as an extra attacker or as a turn 4 play coupled with a 2 mana spell such as [c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c]. He's even better in lists with many 1 mana instants, such as [c]disfigure[/c] or [c]spell snare[/c]. This becomes more pronounced in the white and red splashes that have access to [c]Path of Exile[/c] and [c]Lightning Bolt[/c], respectively. He might not have a spot in your list, but he is worth some consideration.

Niche Faeries

These cards aren't common across the majority of decks. Some of them are more often used in variation decks such as Ninjas or Rogues, others are just niche in their application or aren't of much use in the current meta. These cards aren't necessarily bad, and they are worth giving a thought to when constructing your final 75.

[C]Faerie Miscreant[/c] and Co.

Faerie Miscreant is our single best one drop. Play him before you play others. He has both the Faerie and Rogue creature types making him relevant in rogue builds. He doesn't have the wizard type, which might be relevant if we ever get a [c]Riptide Laboratory[/c] reprinting. His ETB is actually relevant, and can get absurd if paired with [c]Faerie Impostor[/c], [c]Quickling[/c], or [c]Mistblade Shinobi[/c]. He's stronger in a faster, less interactive, deck.

[C]Faerie Impostor[/c] and [c]Quickling[/c]

Solid cards. Quickling is usually favored because he offers protection from kill spells. Not typically part of the faerie core, as they don't offer enough power and can cost significant tempo.

Both have seen use in NinjaFae where their interaction with [c]Ornithopter[/c] can be better exploited.

-Control Kit-

Your control kit is key for slowing down your opponent, and keeping you ahead in the game. Kill and counterspells are pretty straight forward. Hand disruption helps protect your next turn's play, slows down your opponent, and removes threats that can't be dealt with through kill spells or counterspells.

[c]Inquisition of Kozilek[/c], [c]Thoughtseize[/c], [c]Duress[/c]

Hand disruption is great at any point of the game when your opponent has cards in his hand. Besides ripping out a card, it offers valuable information to help you decide how to play your own hand—never underestimate the value of information. Later in the game, they protect your manlands against removal; but other than that, they don't do much. If you draw one later game, you can sometimes get value from it by turning it into a kill spell/hard counter using [c]Cryptic Command[/c] or [c]Remand[/c] respectively. Inquisition is better against more aggressive strategies that don't stray much past CMC 3. Thoughtseize will rip apart combo decks and late game decks, and it can also keep Tron in topdeck mode. Against burn/aggro however, it can kill you and should usually be side-boarded out.

[c]Duress[/c] has a slight advantage over Inquisition against certain Tron and combo decks, and it's worth considering if you expect to play against such decks.

[c]Mana Leak[/c]

A hard counter most of the time. This changes in the late game when opponents can play the 3 mana. It's good against decks that don't have a high mana count, or against decks that frequently lack excess mana; and, accordingly, it is less effective against decks that produce excess mana, such as elves and Ad Nauseam.

[c]Cryptic Command[/c]

Few decks abuse Cryptic Command as much as Faeries does. Tapping all creatures is a pseudo [c]Fog[/c] that can lead into a game winning alpha strike. [c]Boomerang[/c] can keep a problem card off the field for a turn, and can be paired with [c]Thoughtseize[/c] to keep a problem off the field more permanently. Bouncing your own fairies is also relevant if you need to have another 'Enter The Board' ready— and sometimes even bouncing a Bitterblossom is necessary to keep you from dying. Cantrips and counterspells are already spoken for, although recognize that they aren't always the correct choice. Even if this isn't in your hand, leaving the mana open to threaten this or Mistbind Clique can lead to misplays by your opponent.

[c]Ancestral Vision[/c]

Premium card advantage. Turn 1-3 is great. If you find yourself suspending it late game, know when to shift from an aggressive to a defensive playstyle. Adding the full playset drastically improves control and Midrange matchups, while weakening your aggro and fast-combo

matchups. Main- and sideboard accordingly. In matchups where it matters (esp. Jund), a turn 1 AV is not really necessary as games tend to go long.

[c]Snapcaster Mage[/c]

Snappy is always a solid card, he's significantly more control oriented than traditional faeries. It is however, a great inclusion to the final 60/75. Decide how aggressive/tempo oriented your list is, and go from there.

[c]Doom Blade[/c]

Solid removal. Black is a strong color, so it might be prominent. If you expect to play against it you should be prepared to side this out, or move it to the sideboard completely. Solid against Affinity, unlike [c]Go for the Throat[/c].

[c]Fatal Push[/c]

A great 1 mana black removal spell. Hits nearly every creature, esp in traditionally bad matchups such as burn

[c]Go for the Throat[/c]

Another solid option. Dead against Affinity; but even if you expect to face it, it doesn't hurt to keep a copy or two between the main and side. This can't target [c>Spellskite[/c], and it's not uncommon for opponents to board that in if they see a lot of removal. If you expect to play against many decks that run [c>Spellskite[/c], this is a solid inclusion to the final 75.

[c]Dismember[/c]

Great removal. Kills most things you see across the board. When doing the math, consider the amount of damage you expect your opponent's creature to do to you. By killing it, you're effectively preventing that damage. Let that help you decide when and how to pay life. As most monoblack removal goes; this also has its bad matchups, namely Tron.

[c]Slaughter Pact[/c]

Solid removal. What was said of [c>Doom Blade[/c] stands here as well. Being able to cast this for free is great, and makes tapping out somewhat safer. If this is countered, either by spell or upon resolution; the cost need not be paid. Furthermore if you can win the turn you cast these, you won't need to pay the cost either.

[c]Disfigure[/c]

Great against aggressive creature based strategies. Late game it can sometimes turn a chump block into a trade. Beware using this against cards with Prowess, it's very easy for your opponent to protect their [c>Monastery Swiftspear[/c].

[c]Smother[/c]

This will hit a lot of the strong aggressively costed creatures that see play. It does miss some important creatures such as [c]Kiki-Jiki, Mirror Breaker[/c], [c]Restoration Angel[/c], [c]Siege Rhino[/c], and all of Tron. As for the rest of the removal, this is a meta call.

[C]Collective Brutality[/c]

If ever black got a silver bullet to burn, this is it. None of the options are great on their own, but being able to choose all three is amazing. Tack on the ability to turn bad cards into better ones, and you've got a force to be reckoned with. This is great against burn and non affinity aggro, where all three options are useful. It's great against tempo where the first 2 options are often exactly what you need. Solid against many other strategies, and gets points for being a kill spell that hoses many current combo decks.

[c]Spell Snare[/c]

A versatile counterspell that ruins your opponent's turn 2 spell. Beyond turn 2 it is still effective to let you use your mana more efficiently in counter wars and is superb against opposing snapcaster mages. The card excels against Uxx Control, Jund, Affinity, Thopter decks and Burn.

Niche Control

Niche cards are solid cards in their own right. However they aren't core cards for lack of power, restrictive costs, or inflexibility. Definitely worth considering, but might be passed up because of better options. Most black removal ([c]Doom Blade[/c], [c]Go for the Throat[/c], etc.) has limited application, and is therefore niche, to prevent confusion though, it's been left in the core.

[c]Murderous Cut[/c]

Arguably the best catch all for removal. It's weaker in fast matchups, as most catch all removal is. However, if you're able to use fetches and other removal before hand, you should be able to hit this on curve if needed. Of relevance, this can delve away cards you don't want your opponent to take advantage of. Delving away a [c]Bitterblossom[/c] to weaken future [c]Tarmogoyf[/c]s for instance.

[card]Hero's Downfall[/card]

A flexible removal spell that does well in a planeswalker heavy meta. If you want to run a catch-all removal spell, this is one of the best.

[c]Vendetta[/c]

This walks a narrow line between good and bad. It's rarely truly good, but it's better than the alternatives. If you're having trouble running [c]Disfigure[/c] mainboard against Midrange decks, this might be an option. When you want this against aggro, you'd usually prefer a [c]Disfigure[/c], and against Midrange at least it's not a [c]Disfigure[/c]. Can't get blown out by [c]Monastery Swiftspear[/c] and the Prowess mechanic in general.

[c]Victim of the Night[/c]

This will hit a lot of things. Quite possibly the best catch all removal we have. It will miss a few relevant things depending on the meta, such as [c]Kalitas, Traitor of Ghet[/c] or [c]Viscera Seer[/c]. The BB can be someone tricky, but if your mana base is built well it shouldn't be a problem. Depending on your meta [c]Go for the Throat[/c] might be favored because it can't be redirected to [c]Spellskite[/c].

[c]Peppersmoke[/c]

Solid card. Having limited range hurts a lot, being able remove a threat and cantrip feels great.

-Big Beaters-

[c]Kalitas, Traitor of Ghet[/c]

Kalitas is a powerful, multifunctional mid- and lategame stabiliser. It excels against Aggro of any kind, Company decks, Midrange decks, non-White control decks and Burn. Mutavault being a zombie means you can catch opponents by surprise, since they often do not realise the interaction. Against CoCo decks, it stops annoying triggers from Voice and Kitchen Finks, which will render them unable to exploit their combo while at the same time massing up value due to the zombies. If you can untap with a Kalitas in play against burn, you usually win outright. Kalitas is weaker in or against decks playing a set of Path to Exile. The most flexible and modestly costing threat.

[c]Tasigur, the Golden Fang[/c]

Besides offering great late game advantage, Tasigur has a great body that should keep many potential attackers at bay. Having delve, means you can leave mana open to protect him. His delve ability is also useful to limit the effect of graveyard based cards, such as [c]Tarmogoyf[/c]. Compared to the other choices, it is faster, but the bonus isn't often as good.

[c]Batterskull[/c]

A solid creature/equipment that is hard to answer. Unless your opponent is running [c]Kologhan's Command[/c] or artifact hate, they may be forced to play around this for it's duration on the board. Lifelink/Vigilance is often times a game ender, especially against aggressive decks. The slowest, but most resilient and powerful option.

[card]Smuggler's Copter[/card]

Copter has a 3/3 body, and in a deck where most creatures swing for 1, that's not nothing. Copter powers out Bitterblossom tokens and our other faeries, and gives us a nifty loot effect to help filter out or dead cards. It also gives us a blocker that can threaten to eat our opponent's creatures.

[card]Pack Rat[/card]

Pack Rat can take over games on his own, forcing your opponent to make their way through an increasingly large army of beaters. Allowing you to turn dead cards into relevant bodies. However, it needs to be protected carefully, and without a hand it doesn't do much.

-Planeswalkers-

[c]Ashiok, Nightmare Weaver[/c]

Decent against creature based decks, particularly when you can use his minus early on. Its ultimate is devastating against decks that need a hand. Even against creature light builds, the plus is effective at crippling card quality. It eats scry, and grabs their answers and wincons before they can. Against Prison decks or decks that demand aggro, this might not do enough.

[C]Liliana, the Last Hope[/c]

Liliana's great against swarm decks, and snipes X/1s all day. She interacts amazingly with any graveyard based cards, and feels broken with [c]Snapcaster Mage[/c]. Noteworthy interactions include using Mutavaults to boost her Ultimate, and using your own kill spells or Lily's +1 to get relevant ETB effects into the graveyard. If people ask you about a sideboard that's strong against faeries, this is definitely on the list. Great for the mirror match.

[C]Liliana of the Veil[/c]

Liliana of the Veil is the pet card extensively played by Spanish Faerie players and Metillon. Like in Jund, it's a very powerful topdeck, a nightmare for control, midrange, burn, "that damn bogle deck" and combo decks. It is very versatile with it only being weak against swarm decks. In a deck playing both control and aggressive cards, one half often bad against some decks. Liliana can dispose yourself of worthless cards and trade them for their relevant cards (Like pitching a Bitterblossom for a Boros Charm against burn). In addition, the +1 effect is usually great immediately after you Mistbinded your opponent in the upkeep step. Pre-board, it can dispose Tronlands, artifacts, planeswalkers and anything if you use the Cryptic Command bounce option. It is also good to lure burn spells and combo cards into your counter spells, as some burn players tend to stock their hands full of burn cards before unleashing their volley and combo players usually require a critical mass of cards with defense.

To summarize, unlike other planeswalkers LotV is never dead, it is always live. Faeries is secretly a better deck of Liliana than Jund is (but not Junk) due to increased interactions and flexibility. The trick is usually to decide whether those Faerie cards sitting in your hand will actually accomplish something or if you need to go full attrition and dispose them.

-Tempo Kit-

[c]Remand[/c]

Great tempo card. Remand can buy you the time needed to finish the game with the added bonus of cantripping, which is useful at any point during the game. Sometimes, however, a hard counter is needed. If played right, this can derail decks that rely on casting spells at a precise time, e.g. Ad Nauseam and Storm. Against more control-oriented decks, Remand can be used to return your own spells if the opponent attempts to counter—thereby depriving the opponent of

a counterspell, saving your card, and earning you another one. It's ultimately a stall effect, so it can be insufficient against fast decks.

[c]Unsubstantiate[/c]

Very solid card. Counters uncounterable spells, and maintains relevance when your opponent is hellbent. A super star against [c]Liliana of the Veil[/c], where the bounce can be effective creature removal.

[c]Vapor Snag[/c]

A solid tempo card, slows your opponent down for cheap and deals some damage. Lacking replaceability hurts it, but value can still be squeezed out. Hyper tempo lists often use this card. Can be used on your own faeries to buyback useful ETB effects.

[c]Hurkyl's Recall[/c]

Our resident affinity hate. Solid against other artifact decks as well, of note; Lantern Control and Thopter Combo. Against Affinity, be careful about timing. It's almost always wrong to do this at any time other than their end of turn. If they have an opportunity to replay their hand, they will almost always take it.

Niche Tempo

Tempo focused cards are often niche, because Faeries often plays the long game and needs to deal with threats more permanently. Some tempo cards however, are especially niche.

[c]Mistblade Shinobi[/c], [c]Ninja of the Deep Hours[/c], and [c]Higure of the Still Wind[/c]

These make up the ninja half of the NinjaFae deck. All offer a solid tempo advantage, but few have much to offer to a traditional Faerie list. [c]Mistblade Shinobi[/c] however, does have a fair bit of potential, and shouldn't be completely ignored. He's great against mana dorks and devastates [c]Noble Hierarch[/c]s, which can't even trade with him.

[c]Echoing Truth[/c]

Probably one of the best permanent bounce, very solid against tokens. But bounce isn't particularly great, so it's rarely a mainboard card.

-Sideboard Tech-

[c]Damnation[/c]

Great for recovering against aggressive and Midrange decks. Can easily save you in an otherwise hopeless game.

[c]Languish[/c]

You usually want [c]Damnation[/c]. This will, however, get rid of indestructible creatures.

[c]Sower of Temptation[/c]

Good against Tron or decks that aim for large creatures and do not play bolt. In an aggressive build, this can remove a blocker from your opponent's field.

[c]Engineered Explosives[/c]

A sideboard superstar. Great against tokens, and decks that toss their hands onto the battlefield. And besides the obvious can also be used for niche uses. Sometimes you'd just rather have another kill spell, than you would a counter spell. Also can remove your Bitterblossom, if it's becoming a liability. If you fetched correctly, it is possible to hit a Blood Moon with this.

[c]Spellskite[/c]

Strong against Burn, Bogles, Ad Nauseam, and Infect; as well as any deck that likes to target things excessively. Can interfere with combos. Blocks well against mana threats.

[c]Surgical Extraction[/c]

Graveyard hate, blanks graveyard recursion and nukes combo pieces in one package. Best part? It's free to cast. One of the best current sideboard cards in the format and perfect for a disrupting deck filled with hand attack, counters, and removal like ours.

[c]Negate[/c]

A great situational 2 cmc counter that hits a wide array of cards in a wide array of matchups. Side it in versus control to win counter wars, versus tron to beat karn, and excellent to bring in against combo decks. An all around solid sideboard card.

Niche Sideboard

[c]Shadows of Doubt[/c]

Great against 2+ color decks, and particularly mean against Tron. Since most people save their Expedition Map activations for the end of your turn, you can hit a turn 1 Expedition Map on the play or the draw(with luck). At its worst it serves as a cantrip.

--The Mana Base--

Faeries is a fairly color intensive deck. You want to be able to cast cards like [c]Thoughtseize[/c], [c]Inquisition of Kozilek[/c], [c]Ancestral Vision[/c], [c]Disfigure[/c], and [c]Spell Snare[/c] on turn 1. On turn 3 you'd like to have a [c]Mutavault[/c] out to power up a [c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c], while still having enough blue sources to cast [c]Cryptic Command[/c] on turn 4. Cards like [c]Agony Warp[/c] and [c]Victim of the Night[/c] can further complicate things. This deck wants to be running 4 Mutavaults, so be careful how many other colorless sources you add. 20 Coloured sources is usually the minimum, which means that lands 25 and 26 are the flex slots. Some players play 19 coloured sources, but 20 is optimal.

-Core Lands-

[c]Creeping Tar Pit[/c]

Can win games. If you and your opponent are both in top deck mode, this is often what you need to close out the game. Not always a good play early game, when you'd like to be at least threatening on-curve spells.

[c]Polluted Delta[/c]

This fuels delve; thins your deck; and can offer resilience to [c]Blood Moon[/c], while increases vulnerability to [c]Choke[/c]. If you're playing a lot of color intensive cards such as [c]Victim of the Night[/c] and [c]Cryptic Command[/c] you may want to include this and [c]Watery Grave[/c]. A note on off-color fetches:

Typically, off color fetches aren't strictly necessary. In many cases they offer more life loss than they are worth. The heavier you rely on delve cards such as [c]Murderous Cut[/c], the more necessary they become. With [c]Bitterblossom[/c], [c]Thoughtseize[/c], shocks, and on-color fetches; the pain can be difficult to cope with. Balance is key!

[c]Watery Grave[/c]

Works well with other cards such as [c]Polluted Delta[/c] and [c>Drowned Catacombs[/c]. Enters untapped as needed. Running too many can eat at your life, which is especially relevant when playing against an aggressive deck.

[c]Secluded Glen[/c]

The more faeries you run, the better this is. With a high faerie count this will usually enter untapped. If you're playing aggressively, you might want to get this out before you cast your last faerie.

[c>Darkslick Shores[/c]

A great way to get untapped mana turn 1-3. Faeries has a lot of lower CMC spells that they want to be casting on curve. However it does have some important 4 CMC spells that shouldn't be forgotten and it is therefore not always recommended as a 4-off. Nonetheless, it is one of the most important lands in the deck.

-Flex Lands-

[c]Pendelhaven[/c]

Boosts tokens, [c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c], [c]Scion of Oona[/c], and a few other goodies. Occasionally fuels [c]Engineered Explosives[/c]. Great if you're splashing Green, otherwise it's usually colorless.

[c]Cavern of Souls[/c]

Setting [c]Cavern of Souls[/c] to “Wizards” makes sure that both your Faeries and [c]Snapcaster mage[/c]s are uncounterable. This gives a decisive advantage in the blue games, especially in the Faerie mirror and against UWx decks. If necessary, using it to resolve a Kalitas is never wrong.

[c]Ghost Quarter[/c], [c]Tectonic Edge[/c]

Land destruction utility lands of choice. Tect edge is usually better against control and Midrange decks and abzan company, while ghost quarter is clearly the favourite against Tron to disassemble the namesake engine as soon as possible and against Infect and Affinity. Use Ghost Quarter in the draw step to minimize the chance your opponent of finding a basic land. Doesn't work against decks that tend to play lots of basics, such as Blue Tron. Of note: Ghost Quarters can be used to target yourself in response to a [c]Blood Moon[/c] or to fetch that last colored source for [c]Cryptic Command[/c] or another critical spell.

[c]Faerie Conclave[/c]

Another Faerie. Doesn't finish the game quite like [c]Creeping Tar Pit[/c] does, but still has potential in the late game where it can power up [c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c] and [c]Mistbind Clique[/c]. In an aggressive build this can get damage in before [c]Creeping Tar Pit[/c] without taking up a turn 4 play such as [c]Mistbind Clique[/c]/[c]Cryptic Command[/c]. However, conclave is in general inferior to [c]Creeping Tar Pit[/c] and [c]Mutavault[/c]. Tar Pit colour fixes, hits harder, usually blocks better and has better evasion, while mutavault is sturdier and easier to activate

[c]Mutavault[/c]

He's a Faerie, he's a Ninja, he's a Frog, he's a.... Rigger? Great as a swinger, a chump blocker, or adding another Faerie to expand Spellstutter Sprite's counter ability. He boosts cards that are already good, but have otherwise unused creature type relevant abilities (Kalitas). Of note, he can also be pumped by your opponent's tribal spells and permanents. If you are eager to use a Mutavault to add to the Faerie count of a Spellstutter Sprite's ability, remember to activate Mutavault *before* sprite resolves.

--Sideboard Options and the Faeries Meta Kit--

The Faerie meta kit is very important. The Faerie deck is capable of winning any matchup, as long as it has the tools it needs available. Small mainboard and sideboard choices can make the world of difference. You have to all the tools your final 75 might need, all you need to do is choose the ones that will best prepare you for the opponents you expect to face. A good deal of thought should be given to Aggro decks when considering sideboard cards, as they are some of our worst matchups.

--Matchups & Siding--

Against many decks; it's quite clear what direction to follow, in others it's less certain. Keep experimenting, just because one method works for one deck doesn't mean that it'll work for another.

Skill Intensive!

For some matchups, I added the words "Skill Intensive". This means that a disproportional amount of the winrate comes in by having experience in the matchup, rather than anything else. Faeries is a true Aggro/Control deck and pivoting from the Control role to the Aggro role is critical in skill intensive matchups. RG Tron is normally relatively straightforward, stop the Tron and aggro them. In other matchups, like Burn, every single decision counts heavily to your win %. The Faerie deck presents its pilot with multiple, often complex, decisions each turn. If you pick the correct one every time, your win rate will improve drastically.

We have a base plan for each archetype that changes from matchup to matchup. They are as follows:

-Aggro-

Aggro decks focus on dealing as much damage as possible, as quickly as possible. They do this with either spell based or creature based damage, often both. Our typical game plan against these kinds of decks, is to slow them down as much as possible. Either countering or killing their cards. We want to get as many 2+ for 1s as possible, but we'll accept 1 for 1s if necessary. Eventually we should be able to run them out of gas. We continue to deal as much damage as we can afford throughout the game; and after we've exhausted them, we start the beatdown.

Dredge

20/80

Dredge is fast and blanks your removal. It is able to flood the board on a bad day and Prized Amalgam is hard to block profitably.

Pluscards: Kalitas, Batterskull, small-artifact grave hate, Extraction effects

Bad cards: Counterspells, removal spells, discard spells

Burn

55/45 without Nacatl, xx/xx with Nacatl. **Skill Intensive!**

Burn's plan is to deal as much damage as quickly as possible. They sacrifice card advantage for sheer force. Swarming in small value creatures such as [c]Goblin Guide[/c] and [c]Eidolon of the Great Revell[/c]. This matchup is far from easy, you need to consider your plan very carefully

before proceeding. If you can slow the flow of damage and stick your own value on the board, this match can be won. Focus on checking your opponent's damage sources, and force them to run out of gas. Burn is very consistent and predictable, so you stand to learn more from experience.

Strong Mainboard Cards:

Spell Snare, Liliana of the Veil, Spellstutter Sprite, Disfigure, Inquisition of Kozilek, Mana Leak.

Weak Mainboard Cards:

Bitterblossom (unless you play Scion of Oona), Remand, Thoughtseize, Ancestral Vision.

Strong Sideboard Cards:

Spellskite, Kalitas, Traitor of Ghet, Batterskull, Countersquall, Dispel, spot removal.

Note:

Some players choose to board out higher CMC spells such as [c]Cryptic Command[/c] and [c]Mistbind Clique[/c]. Though this isn't necessarily wrong, the strength of these cards shouldn't be underestimated. Both cards dodge Eidolon's damage, and can win the game if unanswered. Being able to finish off burn quickly is valuable. You can't stall the game forever. Burn will kill you, eventually.

Note 2:

Ancestral Visions isn't the strongest card in this matchup. However if you can get one to resolve, victory is all but assured. Whether you keep them in is up to you, and should be based on how you expect the next game to go.

RG Tron

40 / 60

RG Tron's plan is to assemble Urzatron([c]Urza's Tower[/c], [c]Urza's Mine[/c], and [c]Urza's Powerplant[/c]) and use it to win. Unlike U Tron (See below), RG Tron aims to assemble the lands as quickly as possible. Even without cards such as [c]Eye of Ugin[/c] RG Tron is very redundant. Because of its speed, it can be a difficult deck to beat. In this match up an aggressive approach is recommended. Set up a few early threats and rip as many bombs out of their hand as possible (or land fetches if you think you can stall the assembly long enough). Then out Tempo their other bombs with [c]Mistbind Clique[/c] and [c]Cryptic Command[/c] This is a tight match up, you're going to lose the long game. So focus less on control and more on killing them before they kill you.

Strong Mainboard Cards:

Mistbind Clique, Thoughtseize, Ghost Quarter, Cryptic Command

Weak Mainboard Cards:

Go for the Throat, Dismember, Disfigure, Smother.

Strong Sideboard Cards:

Remand, Thoughtseize, Countersquall, Ghost Quarter, Sower of Temptation. [c]Surgical Extraction[/c] and [c]Extirpate[/c] if supported by [c]Ghost Quarter[/c].

Small/8Whack Zoo

20/80

This pile of Goblins, Apes, Cats and Llurghoyfs is the bane of Faeries. By assembling a large army early on, they can overwhelm the battlefield. They often fill the board too fast for Faeries to keep up. Their threats rarely matchup favorably with the 1/1s of Faeries, and we can't cope with multiple threats a turn easily.

Strong Mainboard Cards:

Spellstutter Sprite, Inquisition of Kozilek, Disfigure, [c]Pendelhaven[/c].

Weak Mainboard Cards:

Mana Leak, Cryptic Command, Vendilion Clique, Thoughtseize.

Strong Sideboard Cards:

Damnation, Spellskite, Batterskull, Kalitas.

Big Zoo / Anti-Abzan

45-55/55-45

In contrast to Small Zoo, Naya Zoo often plays low impact mana acceleration cards at the cost of cheap threat density. Usually plays only 1 or 2 creatures a turn, unlike small zoo, where 2 to 3 creature are expected. Anti-Abzan plays out very similar but without [c]Wild Nacatl[/c]s (A big plus). This allows us more time to remove/counter the threats one by one. Big Zoo can still overwhelm you by playing multiple Wild Nacatls. Usually, their threats lack trample, allowing Bitterblossom to shine. They often board in [c>Thrun, the Last Troll[/c], but because the card is so slow it often affords us an advantage.

Strong Mainboard Cards:

Spot removal (Any kind), [c]Mana Leak[/c], [c]Mistbind Clique[/c].

Weak Mainboard Cards:

Unclear. Possibly [c]Thoughtseize[/c] and [c]Remand[/c]. Liliana of the Viel's edict effect is still relevant.

Strong Sideboard Cards:

All kinds of spot removal (Especially if you play Snapcaster Mage), Kalitas, Batterskull and Damnation.

Affinity

40/60

Affinity uses artifact synergy to overwhelm their opponents. It's not uncommon for them to play most of their hand turn 1 one thanks to cards like [c]Mox Opal[/c]. If this happens to you game 1, it can be very difficult to recover. If you're lucky you might be able to Tempo your removal and faeries long enough for you to catch up, but it's very unlikely. In games 2 and 3 we are much more favorable, assuming we have enough relevant sideboard cards. Thankfully our Faeries trade well with many of their threats, few of which have toughness greater than 1. Problem cards include [c]Steel Overseer[/c] and [c]Arcbound Ravager[/c], which should be removed quickly if possible. [c]Etched Champion[/c] can be problematic, but we can deal with it much better than other decks thanks to [c]Mutavault[/c]. re able to bring in. Strong Mainboard Cards: [c]Mutavault[/c], [c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c], [c]Spell Snare[/c], [c]Mistbind Clique[/c].

Weak Mainboard Cards:

Ancestral Vision, Thoughtseize(on the draw), Mana leak/Remand (on the draw).

Strong Sideboard Cards:

Hurkyll's Recall, Engineered Explosives, Pithing Needle, Disfigure, Spell Snare, Damnation.

Note: A well-timed Recall means victory. A poorly timed one spells your doom.

Infect

80/20

Very Favourable. It's nigh impossible for them to beat a resolved Bitterblossom outside of [c]Blighted Agent[/c]. Don't keep hands without removal unless you expect to be able to deal with their threats in other ways.

Good Maindeckable Cards: Bitterblossom, Thoughtseize, Spell Snare, Disfigure, Go for the Throat (against Spellskite), Dismember, Slaughter Pact.

Bad Maindeckable Cards: Cryptic Command, 1-2 Lands, Ancestral Vision.

Good sideboard cards: Dispel, all removal spells, Pithing Needle (against Inkmoth Nexus), Spellskite.

Note: Against Infect, we generally want to drop the curve of your deck. This suggests that we can successfully board out some lands to increase the number of answers we can deploy.

-Control-

Control decks aim to slow down their and counter their game plan. They then finish the game with their own threats, often times protected with counter magic. For us the plan is simple. Counter any threats they have, and play around their hand. With the help of hand disruption and instant speed creatures, it's very easy to play around their counter and kill spells. In general it's difficult for Control to play around our deck, and we are often favored in these matchups.

U Tron

55 / 45

In many ways similar to GR Tron. However, this deck often favors a more defensive/control oriented approach. Often too slow to put up much of a fight. If we can't assemble a board, the inevitability of Tron can be an issue. More susceptible to hand disruption than GR Tron, and has a worse top deck mode. Hand disruption is very good. It gives you information about you need to resolve spells or beat them to death by hand disruption. No need to hold your cryptic command with them having multiple counters. Rather attack with Mutavaults/Tar Pits/Faerie Tokens

Besides the cards mentioned in the GR Tron Matchup, Dispels are also strong.

UWx Control

80 / 20 **Skill intensive**

Well...what do we need to say more. UWR gets wrecked anyday. T2 Blossom or not. Batterskull is a beast. The fact that they run many low quality cards (Electrolyze, Bolt, Helix, Remand) without supporting pressure means that we constantly out value them. In addition, we play their game better. Still, I marked this match as skill intensive due to the density of decision making

that is involved every single turn. The correct lines are not always the most obvious. UW Control is usually even weaker against Faeries.

Good Maindeck Cards: 95% of your deck. Honorable mentions: Cavern of Souls, Mistbind Clique, Spellstutter Sprite.

Bad Maindeck Cards: [c]Disfigure[/c], [c]Smother[/c], [c]Scion of Oona[/c]

Good Sideboard Cards: Any Hand disruption, Negate, Countersquall, Dispel,, Batterskull, Relic of Progenitus, Pithing Needle (Naming Collonade/Nahiri).

Note: If they play Nahiri, Grafdigger's Cage, Surgical Extraction and Extirpate are also cards to consider.

Grixis

Jund

60/40 Skill intensive!

Favourable We can usually out-Tempo them and thereby neuter their card advantage, especially from [c]Dark Confidant[/c]. Ancestral Vision extremely impacted the game dynamics here.

Metaphorically, the game plays out like where the Jund player is coming in with a huge sledgehammer, while the Faerie player acts like a ninja dodging the beats and stabbing Jund to death. Ancestral Vision is a beast. Of note, [c]Bitterblossom[/c] greatly boosts their [c]Tarmagoyf[/c]s.

Strong Mainboard Cards: Liliana of the Veil, Creeping Tar Pit, Snapcaster Mage, Ancestral Vision.

Weak Mainboard Cards:

Inquisition of Kozilek, Thoughtseize, Disfigure, Spellstutter sprite (*You do not want the full four, especially on the draw*)

Strong Sideboard Cards:

Batterskull, Kalitatz, Damnation.

Note: Whether or not to cut discard spells might be something personal. On one hand, it is the only way to get rid of [c]Abrupt Decay[/c], but the cards are generally extremely weak topdecks.

-Tempo-

Tempo's plan is to slow down their opponent long enough to win. They usually protect an early threat and keep themselves alive until their threat has finished the job. In a vacuum, Faeries is a Tempo deck riding on [c]Bitterblossom[/c]. However, Faeries is much less bound to the mold as other Tempo decks, and (as stated before) often switches playstyles as needed. In this matchup, our plan is to use our own threats to both slow down and race our opponent. Our spells matchup very well against most Tempo decks, and we are often favored in these matchups.

Merfolk

50 / 50 Skill intensive!

Merfolk is an aggressive tempo deck that likes to flood the board with unblockable creatures. With Aether Vial, it can be very difficult to catch up. This matchup isn't skill intensive in the traditional sense, in fact it's pretty straightforward once you've familiarized yourself with it. For those unfamiliar with the deck though, the matchup can be quite daunting. Usually it's good to start out with a defensive strategy. If you can get value off of Spellstutter Sprite awesome, but don't be afraid to toss them out as blockers if they're needed. Make use of killing Lords in the attack step, then favourably trade with their no longer unblockable creatures. Merfolk can empty their hand of threats very quickly, and if you can force them into the long game, you're likely to win. Of note, V. Clique pulls his weight in this matchup. Not only does he almost always guarantee a trade, but casting him in response to an Aether Vial activation can help you clear their hand of threats and sometimes completely lock them out of targets. At worse you can usually prevent them from flashing in a lord.

Main-deckable: Spot Removal, Liliana of the Veil, Thoughtseize, Inquisition of Kozilek, Scion of Oona, non-island lands.

Cards to board in: More spot removal, Engineered Explosives, Pithing Needle, Damnation, Batterskull, Kalitas, V. Clique

Cards to board out: Mana Leak, Remand, Cryptic Command, Spellstutter sprite.

BW Tokens

40 / 60

They produce tokens faster and their tokens become better than ours with Anthems. However, token spells are often clunky three drops and counterspells are therefore great against Tokens. [c]Creeping Tar Pit[c/]s are great to pass by their defences.

Good Maindeck Cards: [c]Thoughtseize[c/], [c]Inquisition of Kozilek[c/], [c]Mana Leak[c/], [c]Scion of Oona[c/].

Bad Maindeck Cards: (Almost) all spot removal spells, [c]Liliana of the Veil[c/], [c]Spellstutter sprite[c/]s if on the draw are also not always impressive.

Good Sideboard Cards: [c]Batterskull[c/], [c]Damnation[c/], [c]Ratchet bombs[c/] and [c]engineered explosives[c/]

-Midrange-

Midrange decks are healthy mediums between Aggro and Control. They share this trait with Tempo decks. Unlike Tempo decks which follow early game advantage with late game control, Midrange favors early game control into late game advantage. In general Midrange has a slight edge against Tempo decks. In a perfect world, Midrange's early control counters Tempo's early advantage, and then Tempo's late control counters Midrange's late advantage. Then, after both player's hands have been exhausted, Midrange's bigger threats trump Tempo's smaller ones. In most cases, a Faerie player will want to shift to a more control based strategy. Using less versatile counter spells when able, such as [c]Spellstutter Sprite[c/], and protecting our early creatures if it's advantageous. Even if we're playing control, we want to keep as much ground as possible. Midranges creatures are almost always better than ours, and we still need to kill them before they get too far ahead. After we've assembled a board, we shift into aggro using [c]Scion

of Oona[/c], [c]Mistbind Clique[/c], and [c]Cryptic Command[/c] to minimize our damage intake and kill them as fast as possible.

Junk

35/65

Unfavourable. Doesn't play exactly like Jund. Junk goes both over the top (Rhino) and wide (Souls) and is more resilient to Ancestral Vision. I like to keep my Thoughtseizes in to destroy Rhinos.

Strong Mainboard Cards:: Go for the Throat, Mistbind Clique, Cryptic Command, Mana Leak.

Weak Mainboard Cards: Disfigure, Spell Snare (on the play), Spellstutter Sprite (*Not the full four*)

Cards to board in: Batterskull. Thoughtseize.

Abzan Company

50/50 **Skill intensive!**

You only plan is to out-value them and to out-Tempo them. Voice of Resurgence is annoying, but the tokens it produces are not always relevant. Blowouts that had them receive multiple Voice tokens aren't an exception.

-Combo-

Combo decks use a combination of cards to either win or make themselves virtually unbeatable. [c]Angel's Grace[/c]+[c]Ad Nauseam[/c]+[c]Lightning Storm[/c], [c]Scapeshift[/c]+[c]Valakut, the Molten Pinnacle[/c], and [c]Melira, Sylvok Outcast[/c]+[c]Kitchen Finks[/c]+[c]Viscera Seer[/c]; are all such combos. Dedicated combo decks game plan is to assemble their combo and win. In these matchups we should favor an aggro approach, with lots of hand disruption. If they look like their combo is going to go off soon, it is important to have counter magic or other disruption available. In general, Faeries disruptive spells give it an advantage in these matchups.

Of note, not every deck that has a combo relies heavily on it. The Melira combo, for example, already runs cards that are good in midrange decks; and is often an alternate win con for decks that are already powerful on their own.

Ad Nauseum

65 / 35

We are favourable. Their best hands are better than our best hands, but anything average we can easily overcome. Sideboard Leyline of Sanctity is expected. Main-deckable cards: Vendilion Clique, Spellstutter sprite, Inquisition of Kozilek, Mana Leak. Cards to board out: All spot removal. Cards to board in: Liliana of the Veil, Countersquall, Dispel. *Note:* I have seen alternate win-conditions like dragonlord dromoka. Beware! Liliana of the Veil is great, because constantly upping Liliana will let your opponent be hellbent without backup Pact of negations. Countering the topdecked Ad Nauseam should be easy. This works even with Leyline of Sanctity in play!

Living End

70/30

The combo is easy to prevent using cards with our hand disruption and counter magic suite. This combo doesn't have the advantage of a card like [c]Cavern of Souls[/c] or [c]Boseiju, who shelters all[/c]. Furthermore, Spellstutter Sprite hard counters [c]Living End[/c]. If played correctly, this is almost an auto win.

Main-deckable cards: Vendilion Clique, Thoughtseize, Inquisition of Kozilek, Spellstutter sprite. Cards to board in: Relic of Progenitus, Leyline of the Void, Damnation, Countersquall. Cards to board out: Spell snare, Disfigure, Smother

Note: Grafdigger's Cage is painfully ineffective, because it does not work against Living End's effects! Do not walk into this trap.

Scapeshift

65 / 35

Combo deck that we easily disrupt. Compared to UWR Control decks and Jund decks, we do not have to choose between applying pressure or disrupting their combo. We do both. Of note, some builds splash for [c]Bring to Light[/c]. Either way, they die. As far as the card goes itself, the colors they choose when casting it can give us a hint as to whether or not [c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c] is sufficient. Either way it's usually better to counter the fetched spell, better if they have a [c]Scapeshift[/c] in the graveyard than in their deck.

Good Main-deck Cards: Vendilion Clique, Mana Leak, Thoughtseize, Mistbind Clique, Liliana of the Veil, Tectonic Edge.

Weak Main-deck Cards: Any spot removal (But see *Note*)

Strong Sideboard Cards: Countersquall, Dispel Cards to board out: Most spot removal spells.

Note. Many Scapeshift lists run alternative win conditions now in the form of creatures like Wurmcoil Engine or one of the many Titans. It might be wise to keep 1-2 copies of Doomblade/Go for the Throat. This is also the reason why Liliana of the Veil is so great in this matchup, because this card addresses both the Creature and Land-based win conditions..

Thopter Foundry Combo

60-50 / 40-50

Once on the table, the Thopter combo will wreck you. Otherwise, we are very good at out-Tempoing and disrupting their combo. Versions including Tezzeret are usually very doable because they are easy to disrupt. More control-oriented builds are more difficult to beat because proper resource assignment is diffused.

Good Maindeck cards: Thoughtseize, Inquisition of Kozilek, Spell Snare, Spellstutter sprite.

Bad Maindeck cards: Most spot removal.

Good sideboard cards: Engineered Explosives, Pitihing Needle, Damping Matrix, Negate. Steel Sabotage and extirpate work well here, even once the combo is assembled. As does leyline of the void.

--Faerie Builds and Variations--

Control Build

Minimal Faerie synergy. More emphasis on Non-Faerie, high impact cards, plays many snapcasters

Many Faeries favor a controlling match up. [c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c] and [c]Vendilion Clique[/c] help you manage your opponent, [c]Mistbind Clique[/c] slows down your opponent, and gives you an aggressive body. In such decks, the best play is often to have no play at all, especially if you already have a body on the field. Faeries isn't a deck about using mana efficiently, it's about using cards efficiently.

Tempo Build

Scions, intensive Faerie synergy, No snapcasters, "Faeries of the good old days".

A Tempo Build usually tries to slow down your opponents as much as possible while still developing a field of your own. [c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c] shines in this build as a way to both counter a spell, and put a body on the field. [c]Bitterblossom[/c] allows you to chump block attackers while leaving mana open to disrupt future plays or further board development and if left unchecked, will overwhelm the field. [c]Scion of Oona[/c] can force even uncounterable removal, such as [c]Abrupt Decay[/c], to fizzle and is versatile as both a protector and an aggressive force. [c]Mistbind Clique[/c] will buy you another turn and can save your other Faeries from removal. [c]Cryptic Command[/c] can also let you punch through a wall of fliers.

Faerie/Rogue Build

[c]Oona's blackguard[/c], [c]Faerie Miscreant[/c], et al.

FaeRogue sacrifices some late game control for more aggressive option. A turn 1 [c]Faerie Miscreant[/c] curves beautifully into a turn 2 [c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c]. Turn 2 [c]Oona's Blackguard[/c] into a Turn 3 [c]Faerie Miscreant[/c]+([c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c]/[c]Oona's Prowler[/c]/[c]Bitterblossom[/c]/[c]Oona's Blackguard[/c]) is also powerful. This deck doesn't win on turn 4, so disruption is still very important.

Faerie/Ninja Build

NinjaFae uses cheap evasive creatures and the ninjutsu mechanic to exploit enter the battlefield and combat damage triggers. It is best known by it's legacy variant [FaeNinjaStill](#). If you're planning on building a full on ninja focused deck that splashes in Faeries, you might want to look at the [Modern Ninja](#) thread and post your questions and ideas there. However, if your playtesting Ninjas in your Faerie deck, we'd love to hear about it here.

For the deck itself, NinjaFae is often good with [c]Faerie Miscreant[/c] and [c]Spellstutter Sprite[/c]. Both have enter the battlefield triggers that can be quite good (Miscreant's trigger is somewhat more situational). As for all Faerie decks, Ninjas relies on disruption to keep it's opponent from getting ahead.

A huge thanks all those in the Faerie community who helped to contribute to the primer. We couldn't have done it without you!

If you'd like to contribute to this primer, visit the draft over [here](#). As Magic the Gathering continues to grow, so does our deck. We're always happy for help keeping this up to date!