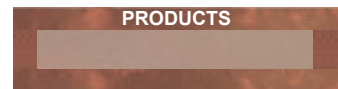


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Basic Training

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 House of Cards
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

Aaron the Editor has described my whole column as “helping people get the most out of their collections.” I rather like this description and have recently tattooed it across my chest. Okay, that was a lie. But I really like his description.

If I start to feel like a part of your collection is moving into your trade binder a little too easily, I’m going to stand up and flap my arms around. As my fellow [Johnnies](#) know, “unplayed” cards are nothing more than fun deckbuilding challenges.

Which is why today I’m talking about *7th Edition*.

When *Odyssey* and *Torment* hit the shelves, the mindset of **Magic** players shifted dramatically. Threshold, flashback, and madness made discard and the graveyard entirely new places to play with the rules. In addition, some cards --*cough* **Battle of Wits** *cough* -- spawned entirely new deck concepts. Understandably, everyone has been rushing to understand the weird and wonderful world left in *Odyssey*'s wake.

Yet in everyone's passion for the new cards, a lot of folks have forgotten to re-examine the base set that has been around since last April and understand how it fits into an *Odyssey*-focused environment. *7th Edition* has, in many ways, become lost in the shuffle.

Ouch, that is one bad **Magic** pun.

Anyway, I'm here to rattle your thinking a little. I say, be gone fancy-shmancy “expert-level” cards! Be gone alternate win conditions! Be gone complicated rules text! On Donner! On Blitzen!

Let's re-examine *7th Edition*! Yeehaw!

Below are ten forgotten cards from the current base set. These cards don't even need decks built specifically to support them... They're just generally solid. And fun. And worth considering. And they feel left out of everyone's parties, so give them a little love, okay?



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Ancestral Memories

Many things are true about **Ancestral Memories**. It's expensive, it's a sorcery and it has **UUU** in its casting cost. For these reasons, it compares poorly to the one-mana-cheaper-instant-splashable **Fact or Fiction**. At the same time, **Ancestral Memories** digs *seven* cards deep into your library, depositing *five* of those cards into your graveyard. Play one Memories, and you are one card away from threshold. Deposit flashback cards into your graveyard and you have a veritable armada of spells to play at your disposal.

Use any of the *Odyssey* lhurgoyfs, and you have a starting point for a deck...

The Sorcerer

Ancestral Memories deck

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| 4 Shivan Reef | 4 Magnivore | 4 Firebolt |
| 3 Barbarian Ring | | 4 Overmaster |
| 9 Mountain | | 4 Sleight of Hand |
| 7 Island | | 4 Recoup |
| | | 4 Volcanic Hammer |
| | | 4 Concentrate |
| | | 3 Devastating Dreams |

3 Price of Glory
3 Ancestral Memories

Remember, too, that Randy has hinted at a "Fact or Fiction hoser" coming in *Judgment*. Here's another hint: It doesn't hose **Ancestral Memories**.

Breath of Life

If you've read previous House of Cards articles, you know that I am, shall we say, fond of **Breath of Life**. I just can't get over the idea that white has a solid reanimation spell. The fact that it is an uncommon is gravy.

Most of the time, I use **Breath of Life** in black-white decks with **Zombify** to give myself eight 4-mana spells that pop creatures back into play. What is great about **Breath of Life**, however, is that it isn't reliant on black at all. Neat.

Pinky *Lite!*

Breath of Life deck

11 Mountain	4 Dega Disciple	4 Reckless Charge
11 Plains	4 Bloodfire Dwarf	4 Squee's Embrace
	4 Beloved Chaplain	4 Breath of Life
	4 Goblin Legionnaire	
	4 Flametongue Kavu	
	3 Longhorn Firebeast	
	3 Voice of All	

Crypt Rats

Until recently, **Crypt Rats** were relegated to weird "protection from black" decks. But the Rats have always been most useful in a deck heavily weighted towards black, where their tiny 1/1 frame can explode in an **Earthquake**-like effect.

Mono-black decks are powerful again thanks to *Torment*. Thus **Crypt Rats** have ceased twiddling their greasy paws, waiting for black to make its comeback. Consider trying the Rats in creature-light black decks or black decks using primarily fatties.

Jalum Tome

It all seems pretty unfair that one color -- blue -- gets the lion's share of fun madness tricks with cards like **Compulsion**, **Merfolk Looter**, and **Careful Study**. Thankfully, **Jalum Tome** gives *any* color the opportunity to sift through a library and discard cards. The Tome can't be used multiple times a turn like **Compulsion** nor can it attack/block like a **Looter**. But it is an artifact, and these days many more people are concerned about killing off enchantments and creatures than artifacts. If your deck is control-oriented and can take advantage of the mechanics in *Odyssey* and *Torment*, the Tome might just be for you.



Maro

I'm not trying to suck up to **Mark Rosewater** here, although that's never a bad idea. For a fattie costing four mana, **Maro** is arguably the best deal running (**Jade Leech** is pretty good too). The question is, how many decks want a four-cost fattie? A reasonably-costed fattie? Sign me up!

Odds are that somewhere around your local game shop or among your friends, a blue-green deck is flexing its muscles. In the first House of Cards [Deck Challenge](#), U/G was surprisingly the second most popular color combination. Could **Maro** fit into a deck like this? I think so.

rk sewer ("irk-seawater")

Maro deck

4 Yavimaya Coast	4 Birds of Paradise	4 Peek
12 Island	4 Gaea's Skyfolk	4 Standstill
8 Forest	4 Maro	4 Counterspell
		4 Call of the Herd
		4 Repulse
		4 Fact or Fiction

In fact, I can think of plenty of decks in which **Maro** could be the perfect finisher. Try a green-red deck with **Epicenter** or a green-black deck with **Skeletal Scrying** and **Phyrexian Arena**. The possibilities abound.

Megrim

Megrim might be the one spell on this list that people are starting to rediscover. Several people have e-mailed me wondering if **Megrim** is now good given all of the discard from cards opposing cards like **Wild Mongrel**. Michael Shmitz reports that inserting **Megrim** into my "**Looter**" deck has won him several games at his local shop and a "unique deck" award. So I guess the answer is "Yes indeedy!" At the very least, **Megrim** seems like an interesting sideboard card if you are sideboard-inclined.



Might of Oaks

Might of Oaks is an affordable, splashable instant that can quickly end the game. What is particularly amusing about it, I've found, is that if my opponent sees me play it ONCE, she will play differently for the rest of the day. **Might of Oaks** is like **Counterspell** -- just keep mana open and beads of sweat will begin to trickle down your opponent's face. For this reason -- and I'm not kidding here -- I will often play with one copy of **Might of Oaks** in my green decks.

Shivan Dragon

Does anyone really need reminding that **Shivan Dragon** is a house of a creature? The thing can single-handedly swing a game from a loss to a win with a beat of its mighty red wings. With **Chainer's Edict** running rampant today, it's dangerous to run the Dragon as your only creature. But consider this: **Shivan Dragon** survives **Flametongue Kavu**. In fact, a five toughness today can go a very, very long way.

A deck like the one below wins no points for subtlety. Then again, sometimes subtlety sucks.

Big Stick

Shivan Dragon deck

4 Sulfurous Springs	4 Nightscape Familiar	4 Duress
4 Tainted Peak	4 Flametongue Kavu	4 Firebolt
7 Mountain	4 Shivan Dragon	4 Chainer's Edict
11 Swamp		4 Urza's Rage
		4 Void
		2 Addle

Uktabi Wildcats

Control Green has always been one of my favorite decks to both build and play. Today, Control Green is missing most of the tools it would need to dominate games -- no **Smokestack**, no **Plow Under**, no **Eladamri's Vineyard**, no **Desert Twister**. But green does have one very solid creature for a deck with lots of **Forests** in **Uktabi Wildcats**. The Wildcats is a classic case of a good creature just waiting for a good deck. It may not fit perfectly anywhere now (although of course I'll give it a shot below), but always keep it as a possibility in the back of your mind...

Green Machine

Uktabi Wildcats deck

3 Deserted Temple
20 Forest

4 Diligent Farmhand
4 Llanowar Elves
3 Uktabi Wildcats

4 Call of the Herd
4 Squirrel Nest
4 Creeping Mold
4 Beast Attack
3 Overrun
2 Harrow
2 Bearscape
1 Might of Oaks
1 Parallel Evolution
1 Aladdin's Ring

Wall of Air

If your friends like to win via combat damage, walls are a good way to thwart their plans. That's an obvious point, I know, but walls have been strangely silent of late (forget for a moment that walls should never, ever, talk). **Wall of Air** not only provides a place to hide while you amass **Counterspells**, it is Edict fodder once your **Thought Devourer**, **Possessed Aven**, or **Mahamoti Djinn** hits the table. Oh, and remember that it also has a five toughness, shrugging its airy shoulders at **Flametongue Kavu**. Because of its cost, **Wall of Air** is probably the best wall in *7th Edition*, although **Wall of Swords** and **Wall of Wonder** are worth a look as well.

Those are just a few forgotten gems of 7th Edition. I haven't even mentioned some of the cards that deserve entire decks built around them such as **Equilibrium**, **Grafted Skullcap**, **Infernal Contract**, **Seismic Assault**, and **Verduran Enchantress/Yavimaya Enchantress**. To continue the *7th Edition* love, next week I'll take one of these added gems and throw even more deck ideas at you.

Until then, buy low and sell high,

-j

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