



Evolution Calling

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House of Cards
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

Some prerequisite reading is needed for today's article. First, check out Bennie Smith's [Onslaught preview](#) of [Artificial Evolution](#). Bennie's article is an excellent foundation for the fun tricks involved with [Artificial Evolution](#). When you're done there, read the results from [Deck Challenge 3](#). Then, you'll know why I'm discussing [Artificial Evolution](#) today, and why I'm featuring decks made by readers. It'll take some time to plow through both of those articles, but I'll be waiting here for you when you're finished.

[whistles a little tune]

Back already? Gee, that didn't take long after all.

Consider today an extension of Deck Challenge 3. The decks here are [Onslaught](#)-only and are submitted by readers (the Challenge is over by the way . . . please don't send me decks). They represent the single largest deck type submitted. As you will see, "deck type" is a bit misleading here. About the only thing this menagerie of decks has in common is the use of [Artificial Evolution](#).

If you are wondering how you might use those few [Artificial Evolutions](#) you picked up in a trade, I hope today will provide some ideas. All the wacky combinations below were submitted for the Challenge. I have a feeling -- in fact, I'm downright sure -- this list in no way exhausts the possibilities of [Artificial Evolution](#).

If today's article doesn't amaze you and put a smile on your face, then you and I play [Magic](#) for veeeery different reasons. Put simply, these decks serve as a banner for why I have so much fun with the [Onslaught](#) set.



ZOMBIE to CLERIC

While sifting through the pile of Deck Challenge submissions, it quickly became clear that [Rotlung Reanimator](#) is a favorite target for [Artificial Evolution](#). Why? If you change all instances of "Zombie" on the Reanimator to "Cleric," you suddenly have 2/2 Cleric tokens that always replace themselves. This is a good trick on its own, as we all love unkillable creatures (check out the most common deck submitted to [Deck Challenge 2](#)). But it gets even better when you combine it with other cards in [Onslaught](#). For example,



- With [Nantuko Husk](#), you can repeatedly sacrifice your undying Clerics for an arbitrarily large Husk. If unkillable creatures are cool, 104,000/104,000 creatures are even cooler. Put a [Goblin Sharpshooter](#) on the board, too, and the game is over as you happily ping your opponent to death in one turn. Or try [Death Match](#) to clear out all opposing creatures.
- With [Cabal Archon](#), your Cleric tokens effectively read: "☠: Target player loses 2 life and you gain 2 life."
- [Starlit Sanctum](#) then effectively reads: "☠, ☠: You gain 2 life" and "☠, ☠: Target player loses 2 life."
- [Doom Cannon](#) effectively reads: "3 ♣, ☠: Doom Cannon deals 3 damage to target creature or player."
- [Read the Runes](#) allows you to draw cards with no drawback as long as you draw cards equal to the number of Cleric tokens you control on the board. (You can't draw more cards than that "for free" because you won't get the replacement tokens until after [Read the Rules](#) has resolved.)
- [Doubtless One's](#) power and toughness are only going up -- way up, if you add [Riptide Replicator](#).
- With an army of undying Clerics, [Gangrenous Goliath](#) has a much better chance of being reanimated. [Ancestor's Prophet](#) might actually see four other Clerics, too, as they are now so resilient.

The list goes on and on. Undying Cleric tokens provide a scary array of potential. Below, are two good examples. One is a deck by Marco Mastropaolo, and the other is a deck by Shawn Main. Mastropaolo's deck uses most of the tricks described above. I like Main's, though, because he uses [Clone](#) as [Rotlung Reanimator](#) insurance.

Final Wrap-up
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Zombo Combo

Marco Mastropaolo

Main Deck
 60 cards

4 Bloodstained Mire 6 Island 1 Mountain 4 Polluted Delta 9 Swamp <hr style="width: 80%; margin: 5px 0;"/> 24 lands	4 Cabal Archon 2 Goblin Sharpshooter 2 Undead Gladiator 4 Mistform Wall 4 Rotlung Reanimator 4 Nantuko Husk <hr style="width: 80%; margin: 5px 0;"/> 20 creatures	4 Artificial Evolution 2 Death Match 2 Death Pulse 2 Endemic Plague 3 Read the Runes 3 Swat <hr style="width: 80%; margin: 5px 0;"/> 16 other spells
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Clerical Error

Shawn Main

Main Deck
 60 cards

8 Island 4 Polluted Delta 12 Swamp <hr style="width: 80%; margin: 5px 0;"/> 24 lands	4 Cabal Archon 4 Clone 4 Doomed Necromancer 4 Imagecrafter 4 Rotlung Reanimator <hr style="width: 80%; margin: 5px 0;"/> 20 creatures	4 Artificial Evolution 1 Cover of Darkness 4 Meddle 1 Patriarch's Bidding 4 Read the Runes 2 Slate of Ancestry <hr style="width: 80%; margin: 5px 0;"/> 16 other spells
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CLERIC to ZOMBIE

Of course, you can always point your Evolution at your Reanimator and change all instances of "Cleric" to "Zombie." The outcome is essentially the same -- this time, unkillable Zombie tokens, which just *feels* better thematically -- but the difference is subtle. Gone are the **Cabal Archon** and **Starlit Sanctum** tricks. It's now **Soulless One** that is the beast, not **Doubtless One**. **Shepherd of Rot**, **Wretched Anurid**, **Gravespawn Sovereign**, **Frightshroud Courier**, and **Festering Goblin** might make an appearance. All told, I think the Zombie-to-Cleric strategy has advantages over the Cleric-to-Zombie. Unless you start including other sets (remember, today's decks are *Onslaught*-only -- I'm just speculating here). Then the use of **Zombie Infestation**, **Deadapult**, **Pyre Zombie**, and **Lord of the Undead** become quite juicy indeed.

CLERIC to WIZARD, WIZARD to ZOMBIE

Chad Jewers used **Rotlung Reanimator** and **Artificial Evolution** with **Voidmage Prodigy**. The idea here is that your dying Wizards make Zombie tokens, allowing you to counter spells and maintain your offense. Mathew Dowd, meanwhile, preferred using the same combination to allow **Voidmage Prodigy** to sacrifice Zombie tokens. Definitely worth pursuing, especially if you can manage to cast Evolution twice so that when Wizards die they make 2/2 Wizard tokens.

BEAR to BEAST

Speaking of neat tricks, here's one for you. Play **Wirewood Savage** followed by **Words of Wilding**. Then use **Artificial Evolution** to change all instances of "Bear" on the Words to "Beast." Now, whenever you would draw a card, you get a card *and* a 2/2 Beast token. Cool. Hey, and isn't that a card you're drawing with **Wirewood Savage**? May as well activate the Words again! Not only that, but with **Ravenous Baloth** on the table you have access to a ton of life. Drop **AEther Charge** and you have X 2/2 creatures, a card, and 4X damage to an opponent, where X equals the mana you spend every single draw step! Hey, and because you're using red, you may as well include **Mana Echoes**, too, which puts you into a bit of loop, now, doesn't it? Lots of people sent decks like the one below, but here is the one I liked best:

Beastwords

Alex Churchill

Main Deck
 60 cards

8 Forest 8 Island 4 Lonely Sandbar 4 Tranquil Thicket <hr style="width: 80%; margin: 5px 0;"/> 24 lands	3 Krosan Tusker 4 Ravenous Baloth 2 Wall of Mulch 4 Wirewood Savage <hr style="width: 80%; margin: 5px 0;"/> 13 creatures	4 Artificial Evolution 4 Complicate 2 Discombobulate 4 Mage's Guile 2 Naturalize <hr style="width: 80%; margin: 5px 0;"/> 16 other spells
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<p>3 Read the Runes 4 Words of Wilding 23 other spells</p>
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BEAST to ELF

As **Wirewood Savage** is an Elf, it seems like an appropriate time to bring her back into the fold. Point an Evolution at her, and now you can draw a card whenever an Elf comes into play. Oh, and feel free to toss **Words of Wilding** into your deck too to make Elf tokens. Or **Riptide Replicator**. Green-blue Elf decks . . . who woulda thunk it (besides Jonathan Proulx, Luis Gustavo, and Jeremy Thompson, that is)?

BEAR to WIZARD

Words of Wilding just keeps getting better and better. What about if you used it in a Wizards deck with **Artificial Evolution** so that it produces 2/2 Wizard tokens in place of card drawing? Well, **Voidmage Prodigy** just got really scary, and **Arcanis the Omnipotent** can produce three Wizards a turn. Danny Nguyen made a cool deck along these lines.

SOLDIER to WIZARD

Speaking of **Voidmage Prodigy**, wouldn't it be interesting if you pointed Evolution at **Mobilization** to make 1/1 Wizard tokens? That means for every **2 * 2** you spend, you can counter any spell. Right, Nick?

<p>When a Soldier Is a Wizard Nick Gundam</p>		
<p>Main Deck 60 cards</p>		
<p>4 Flooded Strand 9 Plains 10 Island 23 lands</p>	<p>3 Arcanis the Omnipotent 3 Supreme Inquisitor 4 Voidmage Prodigy 2 Exalted Angel 2 Quicksilver Dragon 2 Weathered Wayfarer 16 creatures</p>	<p>4 Mobilization 4 Artificial Evolution 4 Shared Triumph 4 Righteous Cause 2 Doom Cannon 3 Words of Worship 21 other spells</p>

ANYTHING to ILLUSION

Here's a darned clever idea: Alex Landau reasoned that if you use a bunch of Mistform creatures, **Artificial Evolution**, and one copy of each Lord that some crazy things can happen. For example, you can change **Catapult Master** to read "Illusion." Note the use of **Tribal Golem** for fun tricks and also **Riptide Shapeshifter** so that you can call "Lord." This deck strikes me as too mana-intensive, and where's **Imagecrafter**? But still, mighty neat.

<p>The Mists Alex Landau</p>		
<p>Main Deck 60 cards</p>		
<p>4 Grand Coliseum 10 Island 5 Plains 5 Swamp 24 lands</p>	<p>1 Ancestor's Prophet 1 Catapult Master 1 Gravespawn Sovereign 4 Mistform Dreamer 2 Mistform Mutant 2 Mistform Shrieker 4 Mistform Stalker 4 Mistform Wall 4 Riptide Shapeshifter 1 Supreme Inquisitor 4 Tribal Golem 28 creatures</p>	<p>4 Artificial Evolution 4 Peer Pressure 8 other spells</p>

LEGEND to ANYTHING

On the other hand, Dan Hoffman and J. P. Barela reasoned that if you point **Artificial Evolution** at a Legend, you can make it . . . well, anything besides Legend. This allows you to have two copies of **Visara the Dreadful** on the table -- one for attacking and one for shooting down potential blockers.

Okay, each of the following applications of **Artificial Evolution** showed up about once each. I'll try to give credit where credit is due while speeding up the explanations.

ELF to INSECT

Voice of the Woods is now friends with **Broodhatch Nantuko** and the Symbiotes! (Marian Vencel)

WIZARD to INSECT

Hey! This trick works with **Supreme Inquisitor** too! (Dave Tumarkin)

SOLDIER to BIRD

Mobilization now works with **Airborne Aid!** (Jonathan Coutts)

CENTAUR to ELF

Centaur Glade, meet **Elvish Guidance!** (Oswaldo Rivera)

DRAGON to GOBLIN

Let **Dragon Roost** make Goblins with **Mana Echoes** on the table! (Christian Muller)

WALLS to ANYTHING

Imagecrafter can now stop any creature by turning it into a Wall! (Lactose Johnson)

INSECT to BEAST

Symbiotic Beast now triggers **AEther Charge** five times! (Jim Cawlo)

WIZARD to ELF

Let **Voidmage Prodigy** sacrifice those lowly Elves! (Ryan Barker)

WIZARD to GOBLIN

Let **Lavamancer's Skill** be fearsome on your Gobbos! (Dennis Formadero)

ANYTHING to ANYTHING

Cause chaos! Turn creatures into Fetal-Pigs and Level-3-Judges! (Well, no, you can't really do that -- the rules [don't allow it](#) anymore -- but there are still some fun options out there.) (Brian Mackey)

There were other suggestions, but they just got crazier. You people are so inspiring.

After so many great ideas, I thought I would toss out one of my own. Below is one of about a billion things you can do with **Artificial Evolution** in Standard. In this case, I like the idea of turning **Catapult Master** into a Lord of the Walls. It's not an easy trick, mind you... it involves casting one **Artificial Evolution** at the **Catapult Master**, then responding with a second Evolution targeting the first. When the second resolves, change "Wall" to "Hippo" (or whatever you choose), so that the first **Artificial Evolution** now reads "Change the text of target spell or permanent by replacing all instances of one creature type with another. The new creature type can't be Legend or *Hippo*." That way, when the first Evolution resolves, you can change Soldier into Wall on the **Catapult Master!** (Hey, I didn't say it was a *consistent* deck...)

Have fun, and . . . Evolve!

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00 cards

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 4 Adarkar Wastes | 3 Catapult Master | 4 Artificial Evolution |
| 10 Island | 4 Glacial Wall | 4 Compulsion |
| 2 Lonely Sandbar | 2 Glory | 2 Deep Analysis |
| 8 Plains | 4 Imagecrafter | 4 Shared Triumph |
| <hr/> | | |
| 24 lands | 1 Mirror Wall | 14 other spells |
| | 4 Wall of Air | |
| | 4 Wall of Swords | |
| <hr/> | | |
| | 22 creatures | |

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