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# Uncommonly Fun

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House of Cards  
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I have two basic goals here at "House of Cards." The first is to inspire you to make your own decks by reminding you of the fun of deckbuilding. I think there's far too much reliance on the Internet for off-the-shelf decklists, especially when a near-infinite number of decks are waiting to be discovered. I'd argue that sometimes it's much more satisfying to lose five games if a deck you created works *once* in the way you intended. The laughter and appreciative smiles a new deck generates are often worth the effort as well.

My second goal is to point you toward overlooked cards. Sometimes I go out of my way to focus on a "bad" rare. Most other times I simply discuss the cards in a set that are weird, funny, or generally considered too flashy and expensive to cast. As Aaron the editor has said before, I try to push you to use your entire collection, and, in turn, challenge you to reconsider cards you want to trade away. If winning with your own deck creation is fun, winning with a card everyone else thinks is junk is at least twice as fun.

Today I'm focusing on some *uncommon* cards in *Onslaught* that I think have deckbuilding potential. For the most part, these card choices are a little weird, which means that building a deck around them will automatically produce a deck that is both original and quirky.

The best part, though, is that these deck ideas won't cost you an arm and a leg to assemble. For the more tenured player, it should be easy to add your favorite rares to these deck ideas. But for the new or returning player who often finds price a barrier to deckbuilding, these rareless ideas should at least get you started toward creating something fun to play. In any "House of Cards" article, if you see a "lite" tag, it means the deck contains no rares.

I focus primarily on Standard because I think Standard is the most new-player-accessible format around. It also happens to be the most popular format, which means you have the greatest chance of trying your new deck at something like Friday Night **Magic**. Besides, as most of you know, I love Standard.

And now, on to the uncommons!

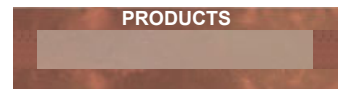
## THOUGHTBOUND PRIMOC

There are at least three different ways you can think of **Thoughtbound Primoc**. First, you can think of it as a complementary card to a "Wizard" deck. The deck is probably blue-red, and it probably uses **Embermage Goblin** and **Lavamancer's Skill** (I suppose there are red-white and red-green Wizard decks you can make, too, if you're really brave).

Unfortunately, Wizard decks usually rely on rares. **Voidmage Prodigy**, **Patron Wizard**, and **Arcanis the Omnipotent** are used to keep the Primoc on your side of the table but are also hard to find. Without rares, the deck doesn't look so hot unless you de-emphasize the Wizard theme. In a "lite" deck, I suggest using **Aven Fogbringer** and loads of land destruction like **Stone Rain** and **Lay Waste**.

The second way to think of the Primoc is as a Beast. Red has access to a lot of yummy nonrare red Beast cards like **Ember Beast**, **Longhorn Firebeast**, and **Chainflinger**. Combined with nonrare green beasts (such as **Krosan Tusker**, **Leery Fogbeast**, and **Snarling Undorak**) and **Wirewood Savage**, you have yourself a very respectable deck. You can probably even roll the dice and assume your opponent won't play any Wizards. Using a lot of red "burn" cards like **Shock** and **Volcanic Hammer** to take out those pesky Wizards helps, too.

The final way to think of **Thoughtbound Primoc** is as a Bird. In blue, this means emphasizing **Airborne Aid**. In white, this means emphasizing **Soulcatchers' Aerie**. Personally, I like the white road . . .



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## Standard Thoughtbound Primoc deck

### Main Deck 60 cards

9 Mountain  
15 Plains  
24 lands


2 Cloudchaser Eagle  
4 Gustcloak Harrier  
2 Phantom Flock  
4 Soulcatcher  
4 Suntail Hawk  
4 Thoughtbound Primoc

4 Battle Screech  
4 Reckless Charge  
4 Soulcatchers' Aerie  
4 Volcanic Hammer

16 other spells

20 creatures

## KAMAHL'S SUMMONS

*Kamahl's Summons* is one of those cards with which it's fun to gamble. If it's played at the correct time, it can be a better deal than *Grizzly Fate*, as you know how many creatures your opponent is likely to have in his or her hand while loading up your side of the board with as many as six Bears. The Summons is also easy to use in a two-color deck, as it has only a single  in its mana cost.

If there's a downside to a deck with *Kamahl's Summons*, it's that you need to use a lot of creature cards for it to be effective. Wait . . . What am I saying? I love decks with a lot of creatures!

A relatively obvious use is in a black-green deck that can strip an opponent of creature cards while refilling your own hand with creatures. Because I'm "forced" to use a lot of creature cards, I've packed the deck below with creatures that simulate noncreature effects like graveyard, enchantment, and creature elimination.



## The Summoner *Lite!*

Standard Kamahl's Summons deck

### Main Deck 60 cards

12 Forest  
12 Swamp  
24 lands

4 Crypt Creeper  
2 Druid Lyrist  
2 Elvish Lyrist  
4 Faceless Butcher  
4 Gravedigger  
4 Krosan Tusker  
4 Wall of Mulch  
4 Wall of Bone

4 Kamahl's Summons  
4 Morgue Theft

8 other spells

28 creatures

## RIPTIDE SHAPESHIFTER

I looked at the *Onslaught* set for almost two weeks before I realized that *Riptide Shapeshifter* isn't rare. It sure seems rare, but that's probably because every other Shapeshifter until now has been rare. It's nice to see that it's more common to find a Shapeshifter wandering into your local bar. Of course, I guess you wouldn't know he was there. Um, nevermind . . .

Some of the deck ideas that can be used with *Riptide Shapeshifter* have already been outlined in the results of [Deck Challenge 3](#) and the [add-on look](#) at [Artificial Evolution](#). I won't reiterate these excellent ideas from readers, but instead I will say that using *Riptide Shapeshifter* and *Astral Slide* -- another fun uncommon -- allows you to violate one of the previous rules of "lite" decks. Before *Onslaught*, you usually couldn't build a rareless deck with huge creatures. Thanks to morph, however, you can drop a bunch of Beasts onto the table, flip them over via cycling, and let your Shapeshifter transform into a 7/6 *Towering Baloth*. Wheeee!



## Rip-Beast *Lite!*

Standard Riptide Shapeshifter deck

### Main Deck 60 cards

60 cards

8 Forest	4 Barkhide Mauler	4 Astral Slide
8 Island	2 Krosan Groundshaker	4 Choking Tethers
4 Lonely Sandbar	4 Krosan Tusker	4 Complicate
1 Plains	4 Riptide Shapeshifter	
4 Tranquil Thicket	1 Snarling Undorak	12 other spells
25 lands	4 Towering Baloth	
	4 Venomspout Brackus	
	23 creatures	

## PROWLING PANGOLIN

Finally, I will mention that even existing archetypes that are made without rares can be interesting. To be honest, it's relatively easy to build a competitive monoblack control deck without dipping heavily into hard-to-find cards. The most pressing problem is finding a "finisher" card once you have control of the game. **Nantuko Shade** and **Riptide Replicator** are rare, and so is **Mirari**, which is used in tournament decks to "Fork" cards like **Corrupt** for the win. Luckily, **Prowling Pangolin** is a fine solution for the budget-conscious player.

The Pangolin is one of those cards that's best used when both options are to your opponent's disadvantage. Most people can use a big 6/5 monster to thwack an opponent upside the head. If you're equally happy for that opponent to lose two creatures, then you're really on to something. If your friend Amy keeps staring at the Pangolin you just played, stammering and changing her mind about what to do, you've just played it at the correct time.



Here's my try at a monoblack deck, sans rares . . .

**Black Prowler** *Lite!*

Standard Prowling Pangolin deck

<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		
3 Cabal Coffers	4 Prowling Pangolin	4 Chainer's Edict
23 Swamp	4 creatures	4 Corrupt
26 lands		2 Diabolic Tutor
		4 Duress
		1 Engineered Plague
		4 Infest
		3 Innocent Blood
		2 Mind Sludge
		4 Rancid Earth
		1 Skeletal Scrying
		1 Soul Feast
		30 other spells

Did you notice something about all of today's decks? They're all either monocolour or enemy-color decks. The reason for this is that in today's Standard, these color combinations rely mostly on basic lands while avoiding rare lands like **Karplusan Forest**, **Windswept Heath**, and **Skycloud Expanse**. You can certainly create a blue-black deck without **Polluted Delta** and **Underground River**, but the absence will be notable. In my opinion, the best "lite" decks are those that don't have to apologize for their card choices.

Other uncommons in *Onslaught* provide juicy deck possibilities. I've already mentioned **Astral Slide**, which makes up a cycle of interesting enchantments. The Chain and Avatar cycles also make for alluring "lite" decks. Heck, check out [Goblinablers](#) for another recent look at Standard decks on a budget.

Whatever cards you decide to build your deck around, I'm just happy you decided to build something original. And you used **Mistform Stalker**!?! Well that just makes me giggle.

Next week: Unleash the beast.

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Jay Moldenhauer-Salazar archive

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