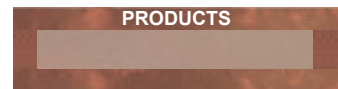


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Reflections

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Building on a Budget
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

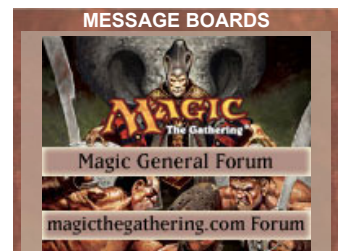
Everyone loves a good Panoptic Mirror deck. There have been a few articles about this card on this site already – but since it is so variable in its usage, I decided to take the Budget angle on the card. Of course, the first thing I did when setting out to abuse the Mirror was to find the best spells to put in the Mirror. I wanted to be sure that the deck ended up very different from the Scepter-cize deck a while back. While browsing through card lists I came across what could possibly be one of the best spells to put into the Mirror. It was a rare card, but worth the cost to see the expression on your opponent's face, or (their lack of response over the net, with implied jaw dropping). The card is **Plow Under**. Think about it – every turn you can put two of your opponent's land on top of their library, meaning they can either never draw a new card (or never have more than one land in play).



Panoptic Mirror is particularly nice because you can imprint more than one card on it and use the best card based on your situation. The early game will probably warrant you imprinting some creature removal, and the mid-game is when you can switch to **Plow Under** mode, all with the same **Panoptic Mirror**. By now, everyone should know this trick, but I will reiterate it for those who didn't read it in the other writer's articles; you can get a use out of the Mirror on you first upkeep having it in play when there is nothing on it. Simply let the Mirror go on the stack, then respond by imprinting the card that you want it to copy. This lets you cast and use the mirror without missing a beat.

This deck has a very simple strategy but can be complex to play. I would say it's a step up in complexity from last week's deck, and would be a good way for players with a little experience under their belt to move up to a harder-to-play deck. In general, the harder the deck is to play, the more it will teach you about **Magic**. This deck isn't extremely difficult, but you will have to make important decisions such as what creatures to remove and with what spells. I remember playing in a PTQ season once with a deck that could only win by attacking with **Ravenous Rats** or **Nightscape Familiar**. After that season was over, I felt like I was better at **Magic** than I was before just by playing with that deck, since I had to win on such limited resources. Similarly, this deck only has 12 actual creatures to win with (and a combo).

Final Wrap-up
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1 Building on a Budget: Reflections (less than 30 tickets) H.dec

Main Deck
60 cards

11 Forest 9 Swamp <hr/> 20 lands	4 Vine Trellis 4 Krosan Tusker 4 Twisted Abomination 4 Nekrataal <hr/> 16 creatures	4 Barter in Blood 4 Panoptic Mirror 4 Smother 4 Betrayal of Flesh 4 Plow Under 4 Star Compass <hr/> 24 other spells
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This deck plays out by controlling the game in aggro-control fashion, with beefy creatures clogging up the ground and spot removal to ensure that your opponent will not swarm you. There are a lot of land-cycling abilities in this deck because of cool tricks you can do with **Betrayal of Flesh**. If you put it on the **Panoptic Mirror** you can reanimate all of your **Twisted Abominations** and **Krosan Tuskers**, not to mention that you could switch to kill mode and just destroy one of your opponent's creatures every turn. You could do both by paying **Entwine**, but you should only do this in dire situations.

The basic game plan is to stabilize the board via creature removal and creatures with high toughness until you can get your soft lock of **Panoptic Mirror** and **Plow Under** up and running. There is **Vine Trellis** and **Star Compass** to help you accelerate to 4 mana, so you can cast **Nekrataal** or **Barter in Blood** if need be. Sacrificing **Nekrataals** to **Barter in Blood** is decent because you can get them back with a **Betrayal**, killing another creature.



Great for mana early and giant monsters

Tips on Playing the Deck

later.

- With this deck, sometimes it is right to hold the **Twisted Abomination** for hard casting. It is usually not right to hold the Tusker though.
- It can be a hard decision to cast **Barter in Blood**. Generally it is better on the Mirror, where it turns into a permanent **Wrath of God** until you deem otherwise. Generally your decision to cast **Barter in Blood** should not be based on what you will sacrifice, but rather how much damage you will be saving yourself.
- Be careful about putting too much stuff on one Mirror; if all of your eggs are in one basket, you will be sad if they break.

Adding Money to the Deck

Birds of Paradise would really help this deck out, and a few **Diabolic Tutors** could be nice. Besides that, better creatures might be in order, such as **Ravenous Baloth** or **Viridian Zealot** – guys that are good to bring back with **Betrayal** because they have alternative uses. While it really isn't more money, my initial build of this deck had **Titanic Bulvox**, since you can morph it for an early block and then **Betrayal** it into play as a humongous monster. Unmorphing a Bulvox was certainly my favorite part of that old draft format.

Until next time, may there be **two turns** for you on the other side of every mirror.

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NateHeiss on *Magic Online*



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