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Clone



Adrian Sullivan · *Single-Card Strategies*
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Ah, yes. Burning the midnight oil.

On the weekend of a Prerelease, sleep can be a rare commodity. I'm sure I'm not the only one out there who gave up a little of that precious sleep to do things like draft. *Champions of Kamigawa* is one of the most fun sets I've had the pleasure of playing with since *Invasion*, and I gave two whole days of my life to the new set just because I wanted to.

Of course, there are a [lot](#) of [new mechanics](#) to grapple with now. We have Bushido, Vigilance, Defender, Arcane, Splice, Soulshift, and the new Legends rule. I was talking to some deckbuilding collaborators (the inimitable Brian J. Kowal, and Ben S. Dempsey, searcher for truth and justice in deckbuilding), when I had a fun thought.

Champions is going to bring with it a lot more people playing legends. Back during *Onslaught* Block (especially [Pro Tour Venice](#)), several powerful legends saw play. The assault of Ravager Affinity on the tournament scene may have knocked them out of the running, but *Champions* brings so many more [neat legends](#) it is inevitable that the new legend rule is going to come into play some time or other.

And then I realized I could play a card that would make it happen any time my opponent played any legend.

The same matter can't occupy the same space...

If you look at a picture of **Clone**, you see the old classic image staring back at you. Two soldiers in yellow stare each other down. What's new is the legends rule...

It's pretty simple, really. A **Clone** comes into play as whatever you want to copy. Copying a legend triggers the legend rule and kills both legends. If there are as many legends going to be running around as I think there will be, this is a pretty fantastic little power. Just from *Champions* and *Mirrodin*-block, I predict we'll see a fair number of them. Here are just a few of the cards that I think *might* make constructed decks in the near future (check the [official spoiler](#) for some of the *Champions* cards if they are unfamiliar to you):

- [Glissa Sunseeker](#)
- [Bosh, Iron Golem](#)
- [Azami, Lady of Scrolls](#)
- [Azusa, Lost but Seeking](#)
- [Dosan the Falling Leaf](#)
- [Eight-and-a-Half Tails](#)
- [Hikari, Twilight Guardian](#)
- [Horobi, Death's Wail](#)
- [Isamaru, Hound of Konda](#)
- [Keiga, the Tide Star](#)
- [Kodama of the North Tree](#)
- [Kumano, Master Yamabushi](#)
- [Marrow-Gnawer](#)



- Yosei, the Morning Star
- Zo-Zu the Punisher

Of course, this is not a comprehensive list, particularly for casual players! Now, I can imagine some of you out there saying to yourself, “Hey, wait a gosh darned minute! Kodama isn't targetable! You can't copy him!”

Oh, but you can.

Breakin' the law, breakin' the law

One of the fun, fun things about **Clone** is that you can use it to copy anything that is in play when you are casting it. “Choosing” a card isn't the same thing as targeting it. Other than purely untargetable creatures like **Autumn Willow**, a lot of other cards can help make things untargetable. A **Tooth and Nail** can easily fetch a huge **Darksteel Colossus** (How are you going to be able to answer him?!) and then a **Leonin Abunas** (and now you can't even bounce him!!) With the power of **Clone**, your opponent can't hide behind untargetable to keep you from copying his guys. Besides being able to nab untargetable guys, there is other fun to be had as well.

Clone copies something “as it comes into play”. This means that once you've made your choice, they can't foil your attempt at copying it by sacrificing or killing their creature. They have to make up their mind whether or not they care about you copying before you go about choosing something.

As a copy, **Clone** follows all of the rules of copies. **Clone** becomes a copy “as” it comes into play. That means that it acquires all kinds of other fun tricks.



Untargetable? No problem!

Good on the trigger, good on the bounce

Comes into play triggers can be fantastic. **Flametongue Kavu's** trigger was so potent that for almost the entire time it could be played in Standard tournaments the entire format was defined by it. You simply could not play a creature card that was expensive unless it could survive the Flametongue.

The list of creatures that have good triggers like Flametongue can go on and on. When you're building a deck and you discover that you have a goodly number of these kinds of creatures, one of the things that you can do is ask yourself if you wouldn't mind having a few more of them in your deck. If the answer is yes, maybe now is the time to toss in the **Clone**.

One of my favorite decks from the most recent Block Constructed deck was largely built on the back of good creature triggers. Called “Crystal Witness” by some people, the Blue/Green deck ran **Viridian Shaman**, **Solemn Simulacrum**, and **Eternal Witness**.

It also ran another fantastically interesting card, **Crystal Shard**.

Now, you can substitute any bounce spell for **Crystal Shard** - permanent cards like **Temporal Adept** work just fine, and single effects like **Repulse** work as well. Access to these cards means that your **Clone** can be a lot like an improved **Vesuvan Doppelganger**: you can have a copy of the best creature in play whenever you want. Even better than the Vesuvan, each recast of the **Clone** continues to trigger comes into play effects and each new choice of the **Clone** is not targeted (whereas choosing a new creature with the Doppelganger does not trigger comes into play abilities and *is* a targeted ability).

A fresh new body

Another neat thing about **Clone** is that when it copies a creature, it doesn't care what is going to happen to the creature that it is copying. The new **Clone** doesn't care if that **Shivan Dragon** is going to perish at the end of turn from some other effect. Whether or not that creature is going to die, the **Clone** is its own person.

There are a lot of cards that you can use to take advantage of this. Many of them have some pretty strong problems tied into them, but with your newfound Cloning skills you can avoid them.

Sneak Attack

Sneaking a **Darksteel Colossus** into play is already a really potent play. In a Sneak Attack deck running the Colossus, it would probably be a great idea to run 4 Colossus, but why stop there? Run 4 **Clones** too, and you have a great beginning for a deck. Of course, since **Clone** is so cheap, you can just *cast* the **Clone** and keep your Colossus copy around until the opponent dies...

Creating Serpents

Many of the short term ways of raising the dead involve removing the creature from the game at the end of the turn. **Shallow Grave**, **Corpse Dance**, and **Dawn of the Dead** are just a few of the cards that this happens with. A **Clone** of the freshly raised corpse will stick around for good.

Sometimes one is not enough

Finally, one of the things that is true about cards is that we want more of the same. If this wasn't the case, every deck would always run one-of this and one-of that, and no one would run extra copies.

There are cards that just benefit from a few extra copies. Here are a few as food for thought:

Sunscape Familiar (or any Familiar)

Getting out a single Familiar can be a really nice thing. Once you get out multiple copies, however, it can be shocking what you can accomplish. Back in *Invasion* Block, "Sunny D" was a Domain deck for *Invasion* Block Constructed, one which Brian Davis took it to a [Top 8](#) off of the mana powering of multiple Sunscapes.

Graveborn Muse

Dangerous in multiples, but still very exciting, **Graveborn Muse** can generate a ridiculous amount of cards. When you go about cloning **Graveborn Muse**, make sure that you have some way to get rid of the Muses or to gain life, or you may find yourself dying to your own Muses.

Argothian Enchantress

While you can't actually target the Enchantress, that doesn't stop you from Cloning it. Your opponent, on the other hand, will find themselves with yet another Enchantress that they can't target. Each extra Enchantress draws you even more oodles of cards.

Brothers Yamazaki

Drawing a second **Brothers Yamazaki** gets you a big bonus for both of them, but since you can only play four, it can be a little hard at times. Cheat and run **Clone** and make it easy-peasy!



Bringing it all together

Here is a casual Extended deck that makes use of many of the ideas I've already mentioned.

Dead Clone		
60 cards		
4 Polluted Delta	1 Undead Gladiator	4 Dawn of the Dead
4 Underground River	1 Wonder	3 Corpse Dance
6 Island	4 Clone	4 Buried Alive
11 Swamp	1 Colossus of Sardia	

25 land	1 Thorn Elemental	4 Fact or Fiction
	1 Sundering Titan	4 Smother
	1 Avatar of Woe	
	3 Nekrataal	19 other spells
	3 Psychatog	
	16 creatures	

The deck is pretty simple. A **Buried Alive**, a **Fact or Fiction**, a **Psychatog**, or an **Undead Gladiator** can get a mean creature into the graveyard. **Dawn of the Dead** or **Corpse Dance** can get it out (if only for a turn). **Clone** can keep it out for good. **Clone** can be a way to reuse **Nekrataal** as well!

Even without **Clone**, it can be really fun to put three giant creatures in the graveyard and then lay a **Dawn of the Dead**! I hope you enjoy trying out this deck.

I leave you with a poll...

What set should the next card in Single-card Strategies be from?

A set not currently legal (yet)? (*Champions of Kamigawa*)

A Standard legal set? (*Mirrodin* and *Onslaught Block*)

An Extended legal set? (*Tempest* thru *Odyssey Block*)

A Classic legal set? (Everything older than *Tempest*)

Have a great week with the new cards. I know I plan on sneaking in a draft or two...

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