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Fates Entwined

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Building on a Budget
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

Shared Fate is definitely one of my favorite cards. It does something so insanely cool and powerful that people just aren't sure if they want to play with it. I love how people are very concerned about what happens when you get paired off against the mirror, when no one really plays the deck but a scant few. It is a deadly game of metagame chicken that the *Shared Fate* players run. Another element that appeals to the Johnny in me is that there is something very elegant about having no win conditions as your only win condition. I would play this deck (or a similar one) in a professional level tournament given the chance, just for the kicks. I recall playing Clerics at Nationals once on just such a dare, and it worked great!

This article originally appeared on August 27th, 2004.

This week's deck was inspired by a reader that only goes by the name 'Tophi'. The deck he sent me was a deck concept that popped up early in the particular card's release, but then quickly died off and was forgotten. This card is one of the most interesting and daring cards in **Magic**: *Shared Fate*.



Ever wonder what it is like to play your opponent's deck? Want to try out those expensive and powerful cards but just can't afford it? Well luckily, with *Shared Fate*, you can borrow your opponent's deck and take a test drive. It is fun, effective, and educational. I think that this week's budget deck is one of the more powerful ones that I have posted in a while, so take notes...

First, here is the email that reminded me of this awesome card:

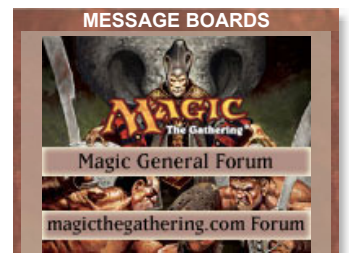
Dear Nate Heiss,

I have never played Magic Online, but I do read your articles and I have a deck that I bought online for \$15. I have never lost with it; I have even beaten a R/W Slide deck and an Affinity deck (before Ravagers). It is a swapping the fate deck, that relies on black for discard and creature destruction, it has 4 Rares, 4 Uncommons, and the rest are common. Here's the decklist:

- 10 Swamps
- 10 Islands
- 4 Wall of Air
- 4 Wall of Blood
- 4 Steel Wall
- 4 Coercion
- 4 Dark Banishing
- 4 Vicious Hunger
- 4 Mana Leak
- 4 Condescend
- 4 Terror
- 4 Shared Fate

I hope it performs well online too.

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--Tophi

Never lost a game with it? That got my attention. Of course, after looking over the decklist I knew he was probably telling the truth. The sheer simplicity of the deck and rogue factor is good for wins. In fact, Tophi had come up with the solution that the deck has been striving at for a long time. The card in question is **Coercion**. The problem that **Shared Fate** decks always had was the game state when **Shared Fate** hit play. If you couldn't handle the board situation, you were almost guaranteed to lose if you played the Fate. Sometimes, the board would look great, but a smart opponent would sandbag some threats in their hand, then the turn after you play the **Shared Fate** lay them all out and crush you. **Coercion** lets you take a sneak peek at what is up your opponent's sleeve. Take their best card out of the mix and evaluate if it is the right time to play out the **Shared Fate**. Brilliance!

Here is my list:

Fates Entwined			Main Deck 60 cards	
12 Island	3 Steel Wall	4 Coercion		
10 Swamp	3 creatures	4 Dark Banishing		
22 lands		4 Mana Leak		
		4 Terror		
		4 Blackmail		
		4 Shared Fate		
		3 Thirst for Knowledge		
		4 Condescend		
		4 Serum Visions		
			35 other spells	

This deck plays out like a dedicated control deck for the first few turns. Use your **Condescends** and **Mana Leaks** to good effect. **Terror** and **Dark Banishing** creatures as they come into play. Don't let anything of any consequence sit on the table. Counter everything possible while using **Thirst for Knowledge** and **Serum Visions** to look through your deck for the **Shared Fate**. Dig deep with **Scry** and find gold! Use **Coercion** and **Blackmail** to take a peek at their hand before you play the fate if possible, making sure the coast is clear.

After you drop the **Shared Fate**, everything changes. Now the goal is to use the resources in your opponent's deck to win. Don't worry about the answers that are in your deck, they are not enough to stop an entire deck of threats...the only time this might be a problem is when you are playing against a heavy control matchup with very few win conditions...then you will need to be careful. Keep in mind that you can't die to decking, so theoretically you could wait to draw all the cards (you also have no effective hand size maximum, since the cards are removed from the game), and then go to town with all the available options against a known quantity of answers that you can easily deduce by looking at your hand and graveyard.

There are almost no decks that can win if you can get **Shared Fate** out with control of the game. I am sure there are some decks out there...but they are a very small part of the giant metagame of what people typically play.

Tips on Playing the Deck

- Fetch lands won't work unless you are getting Islands or Swamps out of your deck – similar issues apply to any tutor effect.
- Be careful with **Thirst for Knowledge**, you can't discard cards out of your **Shared Fate** hand. Usually your opponent will cast **Thirst** unknowingly and have to discard cards from their real hand.
- When you **Scry** with **Shared Fate** out, you get to arrange what your opponent will draw...fun, fun!
- You might want to explain to your opponent that you have no win conditions in your deck and no one can die from decking (the draw is a replacement effect). This might get them to concede and save you guys a lot of time...that is of course unless you want to see what their deck is all about and take a test drive!
- Mulligan pretty aggressively; it's really good to have both colors of mana, some control elements and a **Shared Fate** in your opening hand.
- Be wary of cards that go to the graveyard when used, like **Eternal Dragon**. If you play one out to beat down and then they **Terror** it, it goes to their graveyard and then they can bring it back and play it against you! I would only try to win with a card like this as a last resort.



Be careful with fetch lands

Adding Money to the Deck

Polluted Deltas would be awesome, since your opponent can't really use them to full effect and they fix your mana! **City of Brass** can be really helpful since it will also provide mana to use cards from your opponent's deck right away. **Barter in Blood** might be a good card to add, since it helps sweep the board and gives some card advantage. Basically there is not a whole lot you can do to add money to this deck because you want it to be

really bad for your opponent to top-deck from! The cheaper the better!

Note that Wizards was kind enough to allow me to use a new special account to test these budget decks from. This will make them better in the future! Thanks Wizards!

Until next time, **your word is my command!**

Nate Heiss
BuildingOnABudget and NateHeiss on **Magic Online**



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