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# Rats Without Honor

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Building on a Budget  
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

Happy new year!

Exciting, huh? 2005! What, you aren't impressed? Ok, so maybe it's very similar to, say...five years ago, but not every year can be the new millennium, you know! I decided to kick this year off with another tribal deck, newly inspired by *Champions of Kamigawa* – Rats. Now, it would be really cool if it were the Chinese year of the Rat, and I could say that was the excuse for talking about this Rat deck, but alas...we would have to wait until 2008, and the Chinese New Year isn't on January 1 anyhow.

Regardless, Rats are back in force, and I imagine that they will only get stronger with *Betrayers of Kamigawa*. But even with the Rats that are available right now, a good competitive deck can be made. We have come a long way since *Plague Rats*!

## The Oldies But Goodies:

### Ravenous Rats:

These guys have a special place in the hearts of many. They have been a great and interesting card for years. I believe the first time I played with *Ravenous Rats*, it was in one of the infamous Chapin drafts...years before it was actually released for the first time! I believe he called it "the cheap *Cackling Imp*." The Rats have gone in and out of favor over the years, but they have always been strong.

### Chittering Rats:

The *Ravenous Rats*' big brother...his 2/2 body makes up for the increase in cost. This is one of the few Rats available with more than 1 toughness, so he'll be one of your main attackers.

### Swarm of Rats:

These guys snuck in from one of the lesser-known sets – *Portal Second Age*. They somehow became the replacement for *Plague Rats* in the basic set, and that's fine with me, especially since they're cheaper to cast! The 1-toughness thing is just something that Rats have in their flavor...get used to it.

## The New Rats on the Block:

### Nezumi Shortfang:

This guy really shook up the power level of Rats. He is simply awesome! Shortfang gives you a recursive discard threat vs. slower decks, and then once his job is done, he switches to smackdown mode! You really can't ask for much more from a card.

### Nezumi Graverobber:

While his ability isn't that exciting on its own, the fact that he might into a 4/2 attacker on Turn 3 is rather appealing. Of course, your opponent needs to have exactly one card in the graveyard, but it could happen. In the late game you might even be able to dig up some goodies here or there.

### Nezumi Cutthroat:

Cutthroat indeed! *Grizzly Bears* would turn green with envy if it weren't already, well, green. A 2/1 Fear for 2 mana is nothing to scoff at. This guy is right up there with the likes of *Leonin Skyhunter*.

### Nezumi Ronin:

This guy isn't really as good as the other Rats, but looks cool and gets clean-up detail. The one thing the Ronin is good at is piling on the damage. Also, with Bushido it can attack past larger creatures and fear not the 1/1.

Wow, look at all those Rats! Many of them are good enough to play in non-Rat decks, meaning that when you make a Rat deck out of all of them you really have something special!

Let's take a look:

Final Wrap-up  
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### Building on a Budget: Rats Without Honor (about 30 tickets... okay, less.)

**Main Deck**  
60 cards

22 Swamp	4 <i>Ravenous Rats</i>	4 <i>AEther Vial</i>
22 lands	4 <i>Swarm of Rats</i>	4 <i>Devour in Shadow</i>

4 Chittering Rats	4 Night's Whisper
4 Nezumi Cutthroat	12 other spells
4 Nezumi Graverobber	
2 Nezumi Ronin	
4 Nezumi Shortfang	
26 creatures	

This deck is really straightforward. Play Rats. Use Rats. Win with Rats. It isn't even all that hard, usually. The power level of these guys really shows through – especially in the case of **Nezumi Shortfang** (the only Rare in the deck). **Aether Vial** helps this deck a lot with the crowded mana curve. With a Vial sitting on 2 or 3, you can effectively double you mana, allowing to use the abilities of Shortfang or the Graverobber, or leave mana open for a **Devour in Shadow**.

It is amazing how this deck doesn't run out of steam. It doesn't have a ton of land, which works well with the card drawing from **Night's Whisper**. This equals a steady stream of stuff to do. You won't always be activating your **Aether Vials** every turn, but when you do you will be glad to have them.

Tips on playing the deck:

- You can activate **Nezumi Shortfang** even if they have 0 cards in hand in order to flip it.
- I recommend keeping your **Aether Vial** on 2, unless I have a bunch of three-drops in your hand.
- You can sometimes trick people with **Aether Vial** and **Swarm of Rats**, growing the Rats in combat.
- You can also trick people with **Aether Vial** and **Nezumi Shortfang**. They might go down to 1 card, and you can put him into play on their end step and then activate the ability, hitting the last card on your turn.
- Spend the early game playing your beatdown guys. It is better to save your **Ravenous Rats** for when they only have a few cards in hand...you will hit better ones that way...but for **Chittering Rats** it doesn't matter – just get him out there.



## Adding Money to the Deck:

**Chrome Moxes!** This deck really wants **Chrome Moxes!** Luckily they aren't really that expensive on **Magic Online**. I could have even included a couple without going over-budget, but I thought it better to mention it here. Other discard spells like **Persecute** would make a fine compliment to the discard. **Shizo**, **Death's Storehouse** would be really nice to include for your flip creatures once they are legendary. One thing that I would really want to have access to is some ways to remove an enchantment like **Night of Souls' Betrayal**. **Oblivion Stone** is probably your best bet, but I would just keep it in the sideboard for when you need it.

Until next time, don't try using walls to rid yourself of Rats!

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BuildingOnABudget and NateHeiss on **Magic Online**



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