

New combos to try from *Betrayers* Magicthegathering. combos - *Betrayers of Kamigawa* Edition

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Welcome to the next installment of [magicthegathering.combos](#)! This time I'll be focusing on *Betrayers of Kamigawa*, which continues the combolicious flavor of *Champions* quite nicely but with its own style (hi-YA!) and finesse (WAA!). These are ideas that tickle my fancy, and will come from things I've seen, read or cooked up on my own. Hopefully you'll find them fun too and maybe they will inspire some cool deck ideas for you. Let's get right down to it!



Genju of the Spires + Crucible of Worlds

What a great twist on a player favorite! Everybody loves the manlands, from [Mishra's Factories](#) and Urza lands to the more recent [Blinkmoth Nexus](#). Kamigawa gets into the act with its own twist, the Genju land enchantments. Land enchantments have historically been on the sad end of the skill-testing equation, so our good buddies in R&D went the extra mile to make sure that these weren't your ordinary enchantments. These spirited cards keep coming back when something bad happens to your land. So why not keep those lands coming back too? [Crucible of Worlds](#) makes sure that even the most removal-heavy opponent has a tough time keeping a good manland down. And while any of the Genju go great with Crucible, if you're going to go to the trouble you might as well go with the hardest hitting one of the bunch. Genju of the Spires can pretty much take down whatever creature he tangles with, and with Crucible out his low toughness is pretty well negated. *I get knocked down, but I get up again...*

Genju of the Fields + Wrath of God

[Forbidding Watchtower](#) was decent enough as a good blocker that would force your opponent to commit another attacker to the fray in order to get damage through, and play the part of a land and dodge your [Wrath of God](#) that would net 2-for-1 card advantage. [Genju of the Fields](#) does one better

though, by gaining life from blocking you can often force your opponent to commit even more creatures to the board. The more creatures your opponent plays, the more devastating your [Wrath of God](#) becomes. Yes, I do love the smell of card advantage in the morning!! You can really frustrate your aggressive buddy across the table if you supplement this all with a [Maze of Ith](#) or [Kor Haven](#). C'mon, who wants to win during an attack phase, anyway? That's so base-set, guys!

[Genju of the Fens](#) + [Blanket of Night](#)

The black Genju is very elitist, wanting only the blackest lands surrounding it, feeding it life and sucking up turns. *No, don't cast any spells... feed me... feed me...* If one of your lands isn't a swamp well then it better be a [Cabal Coffers](#) or the Fenster is gonna get steamed. But what if you're dying to splash blue for some countermagic, or green for a big honking [Spiritmonger](#)? Give your Genju the security he needs with a nice evil blankey—[Blanket of Night](#), that is. Go ahead and nestle your black-hearted manland enchantment in the bosom of [Llanowar Wastes](#) or a [Lake of the Dead](#), he won't mind since they're alright by him!

[Heart of Light](#) + [Pariah](#)

[Heart of Light](#) is an interesting enchantment, serving as creature "removal" in a pinch but making a helluva blocker in the process. Sometimes you might need to transform one of your own creatures into a perma-blocker yourself. Well, if you're going to go all in and play with creature enchantments, then you might as well toss a [Pariah](#) on that bad boy too, and make sure you don't take any other extraneous damage that might get through. And yes, if you look closely beneath all those creature enchantments you may very well see a [Nomad Mythmaker](#)!



[Tallowisp](#) + [Rancor](#)

Speaking of creature enchantments, the new spirit [Tallowisp](#) offers up an interesting dilemma.

First, in order to fuel [Tallowisp](#)'s special ability, you have to play a good number of spirits and/or arcane spells. But if you have too many spirits or arcane spells, then you won't have room for enough creature enchantments to make this worthwhile. There's a balance to be struck there. My recommendation is not to necessarily focus on making a [Tallowisp](#) deck, but rather add [Tallowisp](#) to your spiritcraft deck and add four [Rancors](#) to the deck to fetch out with [Tallowisp](#). I mean, if you're going to go to the trouble of adding a creature that fetches creature enchantments, you may as well go get the most ridiculously overpowered creature enchantment ever made. I mean, outside of [Mythic Proportions](#), of course.

[Horoki, Dust Drinker](#) + [Nature's Will](#)

Fans of white weenie have long been bemoaning the loss of mana disruption, from [Winter Orb](#) rotating out long ago to the more recent loss of [Armageddon](#), [Savannah Lions](#) and [Lantern Kamis](#) just don't feel very impressive when your opponent is powering out [Darksteel Colossi](#) or casting [Rude Awakening](#) with entwine. So now we get [Winter Orb](#) back... *but tied to a fragile 2/2 creature*. Don't be so pessimistic my pasty white friend! Think of it as a [Winter Orb](#) that can actually swing! Okay, so maybe that's not going to happen very often, but it *is* nice to have that option.

The problem with symmetrical effects like old man [Winter Orb](#) and the young Mr. Dust Buster is that sometimes you can find yourself slowed down and troubled by them yourself. That's why all the cool kids try and *break* the symmetry somehow, so why not pair [Horoki](#) with [Nature's Will](#)? Not only will it lock down your opponent to having no more than two land untapped – ever – it will untap all of your own lands and give you free reign to... well, do whatever a white weenie deck might want to do with

all that mana. Work with me people, I'm painting in broad strokes here and I'll leave the details to you.

Kami of False Hope + Soul Foundry

Do you find yourself sad that the uncommon [Isochron Scepter](#) is going for good rare prices? Do you gag on your Yoo-hoo when you see what they're asking for [Orim's Chants](#)? Does it make you downright morose to see the uptight tournament kids ruining your plans to build a casual Scepter-Chant deck? Never fear, the albino [Spore Frog](#) is here! Yep, just when you thought all hope was lost, you can make a close approximation of Scepter-Chant with your "Hopeful Soul" deck, using four of those six or seven Soul Foundries that are riding your trade binder to churn out a constant supply of Kamis of False Hope to fog your opponent into desperate concession. Just make sure that you've got some [Leonin Abunas](#) out there to protect your combo, and don't forget to toss in a few [Spore Frogs](#) for style points. Your opponent will kiss you for it.

Kentaro, the Smiling Cat + Helm of Awakening

If you're like me, you saw Kentaro's disturbingly realistic mug and read his card text and wondered, "Are there actually any non-white samurai worth playing?" While I'll leave that metaphysical question for wiser men than me to ponder, I think what Kentaro the Hep Cat really wants is to free you from the chains of mana, to lift you beyond the limits of one or two creatures cast per turn. Yes, young grasshopper, he wants to awaken you to the higher path of cheap and plentiful samurai warriors. Put out a [Helm of Awakening](#) or two for Kentaro to meditate on and toss out your Bushidotastic banzais for nothing! No payments, no interest until 2006!

Shining Shoal + Eternal Dragon

It's hard to argue that [Shining Shoal](#) isn't going to be one of the top cards in *Betrayers*. It saves your creatures, kills creatures of your opponent's, keeps you from dying and can go to your opponent's dome for the kill. It works well in white-based control decks or white creature decks... and lets you tap out and still have some game. Serious, serious good stuff here, but there are limits. What if your opponent is getting froggy and really putting the pressure on, attacking you with an [Arcbound Ravager](#) sporting 12 +1/+1 counters while you're tapped out. Pitching a [Silver Knight](#) to your Shoal isn't likely to help things much, but at the same time you don't want to clog your deck with un-castable high-cost spells just to feed your Shoal.



That's where the otherwise awesome [Eternal Dragon](#) really puts on the superman outfit. As if you really needed a reason to squeeze a fourth Dragon into your deck, now your extra dragons can be burned for a whopping seven points of redirected damage as well as cycling for plains before eventually being an un-killable win condition.

Patron of the Nezumi + Tombstone Stairwell

At least once every other set or so there's at least one card that combos with [Tombstone Stairwell](#). The cool enchant world does something no other card does as well: it gives your opponents potentially tons of creatures every turn and then destroys them at the end of the turn. When *Scourge* came out and I saw [Vengeful Dead](#), one of my first thoughts was *Mmmm, Tombstone Stairwell... lots of zombies created, lots of zombies dying...* Especially in group games, that combination gets downright degenerate.

[Patron of the Nezumi](#) is one of the most interesting of the new Patrons because there are playable rats that can get into play at a discounted mana cost. I'm talking about the rat Ninjas, of which 3 are

imminently playable ([Ink-Eyes](#), [Okiba-Gang Shinobi](#), [Throat Slitter](#)). Throat Slitter in particular works well as Patron food, coming into play at two mana less than its mana cost: Ninjutsu [Throat Slitter](#) out for 2, and for just 1 more you can sacrifice him and play the Patron at instant speed. It also helps that there are at least two rats that work well with their ninja brethren: [Ravenous Rats](#) and [Chittering Rats](#). You even have a rat lord in [Marrow-Gnawer](#) to give your rats evasion, making the rat ninjas more effective. Hopefully between creature combat, hand destruction, and Throat Slitting, your opponent's graveyard will be well stocked with creatures so that when [Tombstone Stairwell](#) hits, the Patron's special ability will be able to quickly finish him off.

Fumiko the Lowblood + Fling

While white's Samurai hog the limelight, red's bushido warriors wait patiently in the wings for players to come around to figuring out how to tap into their power. One of the most potent of them is from *Betrayers*, [Fumiko the Lowblood](#). While being a 3/2 for four mana isn't terrible, it's nothing to write home about, and no matter how many creatures she has attacking with her, your opponent can simply take 3 points of damage or chump block her. No big deal, right? But Fumiko's true power lies in her ability to take choice away from your opponent when it comes to attacking. In the past, red's "everybody attacks" flavor has normally been symmetrical, but this time is different. Fumiko incites only your opponent's bloodlust while allowing you to keep your cool, set up ambushes, and plan your own attacks rationally. So think of it this way: unless your opponent just has one large hulking monster on his side of the board, Fumiko will likely be taking down your opponent's largest creature with her pumped-up Bushido and at the same time leaving your opponent pretty wide open for your counterattack. She's like a [Falter](#) with an attitude -- and a samurai sword.

Bushido is all nice and fine when it comes to creature combat, but how can you translate Fumiko's super Bushido into pain for your opponent? This question becomes highly relevant if Fumiko happens to taunt a lethally large swarm of angry creatures on your opponent's side of the board. That's where you get tricky with a nice little instant from *Stronghold*: [Fling](#)! Once your opponent declares his 10 Elves attacking you, declare Fumiko as blocking one, giving her Bushido 10 and boosting her to 13/12 in size. Sacrifice Fumiko with Fling, and top things off with an [Incinerate](#) and maybe a [Fireblast](#) or two before those silly elves even get to put damage on the stack. [Bloodshot Cyclops](#) can do the same thing but isn't nearly as surprising!

Kira, Great Glass-Spinner + Rayne, Academy Chancellor

Who remembers the days when [Frenetic Efreet](#) ruled the skies? Aye, I do too, and if you weren't the mage summoning him, you knew frustration watching your [Swords to Plowshares](#) and [Lightning Bolts](#) fizzled to the graveyard as you lost coin-flip after coin-flip. And even though the pesky efreet seemed to always dodge more times than he statistically should, eventually you'd call heads right and he'd self-destruct. So trying to take down [Frenetic Efreet](#) was always a calculated risk of giving card-advantage to your opponent.

Imagine your frustration if you knew that the first time you tried to kill that guy was always going to fail. *Always*. Yep, that's what [Kira, Great Glass-Spinner](#) brings to the table. With her on the board targeted removal is an immediate losing proposition. So if you're going to go down that path (and seriously, if you are a fan of funky blue creatures, you probably have a slight bit of sadist in your personality makeup anyway), go ahead and rub salt in the wounds; back her up with [Rayne, Academy Chancellor](#). Yep, now your creatures garner four-for-one card advantage from removal. And don't forget to toss around a few [Chains of Vapor](#) or [Plasma](#) just to tease.

Sway of Stars + Krark-Clan Ironworks

Alright, let me see a show of hands: who completely missed how broken [Upheaval](#) was until the State Champs hit right after *Odyssey* was released? Yep, me too. I was stuck in the frame of mind that a sorcery costing that much needs to win the game, not just reset the board. I didn't even see the whole "reset the game while I float mana" option.

So I'm a few years older and supposedly wiser now. [Sway of Stars](#) has just been released and it offers an incredibly powerful game reset with the twist of setting each player's life into the single digits. But it costs *friggin' ten mana*, and if something is going to cost ten mana well then it better win the game, not just reset the board, right? See what I mean—it's like déjà vu all over again. Are there any decks that can float mana after casting something that costs ten? Why yes there are... those wacky [Krark-Clan Ironworks](#) decks. I've seen them with the ability to sac a bunch of artifacts and generate a ton of mana... but sometimes that mana isn't quite enough to do the job. Sway of the Stars to the rescue! Not only giving you a fresh grip of artifacts that you can hopefully play out with some of the mana you've floated, not only resetting your opponent's life to a manageable seven points, but it's hopefully given you the kill card you've been searching for.

[Tomorrow, Azami's Familiar](#) + [Sylvan Library](#)

Our own [Adrian Sullivan](#) has likely already jumped all over this combo, at least in his 5-Color decks. As great as [Sylvan Library](#) is, with a Tomorrow on the board it just goes nuts. Instead of drawing your card for the turn, take the best of the top three, put the other two on the bottom of your deck. Activate the Library to draw two more, but for each draw instead take the best of the top three cards and putting the other two on the bottom of your library. But that's not all! Since you didn't technically actually draw any cards, you don't have to put any back to satisfy Sylvan's ability requirement. That's some seriously crazy – and quality! – card drawing right there! And yes, you can do the same kind of thing with [Brainstorm](#) but it doesn't make Adrian smile quite so much.

[Goryo's Vengeance](#) + [Iname, Death Aspect](#)

Reanimation strategies are the perfect balance between Timmy and Spike: you get to smash with humongous beasts and actually be competitive about it. Since *Odyssey* and *Onslaught* rotated out of Standard reanimation strategies have largely been the exclusive province of other formats, but Goryo changes things... *with a vengeance!* Okay, sorry, I couldn't help myself. [Goryo's Vengeance](#) has a lot going for it: it's cheap at just two mana, it's Arcane with a reasonably costed Splice ability, it's an instant and it brings back one of your creatures and gives it haste. The drawbacks aren't insignificant: the creature is removed from the game at the end of the turn, and the target has to be legendary.



[Iname, Death Aspect](#) answers these drawbacks pretty well, by letting you fill your graveyard with any number of legendary spirits, all ready to punish in the name of Goryo. Beatsticks like [Kuro, Pitlord](#)...[Kodama of the North Tree](#)... [Horobi, Death's Wail](#)...

You can even make it tricky with [Hikari, Twilight Guardian](#) and play an Arcane spell to phase him out so that when he comes back it's to stay. [The Unspeakable](#) will get back your Vengeance when he tramples over. [He Who Hungers](#) sacrifices spirits for re-reanimation while peeling away your opponent's hand.

In Closing

Alright, hopefully I've left you with plenty of cool nuggets of deck ideas so until next... what's that? What about the Ninja? Haha, you only *thought* I was leaving without mentioning the Ninja—I'm actually attacking with them right now, *hiii-YA!!*

Oppo-Ninja



Main Deck

60 cards

9 Island	4 Opposition
4 Polluted Delta	4 Seal of Removal
6 Swamp	4 Standstill
4 Underground River	_____

12 other spells

23 lands

4 Cloud of Faeries
1 Ink-Eyes, Servant of Oni
4 Mistblade Shinobi
4 Ninja of the Deep Hours
4 Ravenous Rats
4 Spiketail Hatchling
4 Throat Slitter

25 creatures



Several people mentioned during the Prerelease that playing a Ninja with its ninjutsu ability doesn't trigger [Standstill](#). That's amazing! To quote the mighty J.B., *I may not know karate but I do know ka-ra-zy!!* Swapping an unblocked creature for a [Mistblade Shinobi](#) and bouncing one of your opponent's creatures under a [Standstill](#) is good beats, folks. Now, everybody knows that a Ninja is going to get at least one good smack in all stealthy-like. But what happens when he's played his trick and is lying out there in plain sight for your opponent to block? That's where [Opposition](#) comes in, tapping down your opponent's creatures so you can make sure the right Ninja for the job comes through, whether it's Mistblade for the bounce, Deep Hours for the draw, [Throat Slitter](#) for the creature-kill or Ink-Eyes for the help. Standstill breaks the game open; [Opposition](#) takes it to the net.

Okay, now I'm really done

I hope I provided some food for thought, and if I inspired you to build a deck or two based on what you read, then I did my job. Let me know what you thought in the forums, and I'll see you next time for the *Saviors of Kamigawa* edition of magicthegathering.combos!