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Wizards of the Moon

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Building on a Budget
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

As many of you know, many of the magicthegathering.com writers do not work at Wizards of the Coast. This has been the case for me as well, until now. That's right...Building on a Budget is now coming to you live from Wizards of the Coast in Washington. I recently accepted the general gaming R&D internship position, which means I get to run around testing all sorts of games, helping to improve on them before release. What does this mean for you? Why, better Building on a Budget, of course! Now, while Mark Rosewater is off fighting Ninjas and Aaron is fighting the good fight, I can bring you a little more of the flavor of what actually goes on here from time to time (like that time when Turian fought Place in the dojo for a cookie).

At any rate, to stay on theme with my arrival at Wizards, I decided to make a Wizard-based budget deck for today. Now, in the past this deck would have been composed of slim pickings...but luckily, since the printing of **Patron Wizard**, the tribe has been steadily getting better bit by bit. The latest incarnation of this tribe is the Soratami Moonfolk.

There is one Wizard in particular that I have been very impressed with: **Azami, Lady of Scrolls**. This wizard can allow you to draw a lot of cards and get ahead in the game from the very first turn it comes into play. The reason for this is the way the ability is worded: summoning sickness won't stop you from using it right away, meaning that you will at least get X cards for your troubles, where X is the number of untapped Wizards you have at the time.

Other great Wizards are **Puppeteer**, **Trinket Mage**, **Daring Apprentice**, and the all-powerful **Meloku the Clouded Mirror**. That, combined with the small amount of reasonable countermagic that has crept back into Standard in the form of **Mana Leak** and **Hinder**, makes for a pretty spicy looking Wizard deck. Let's take a look at it close up:



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Building on a Budget: Wizards of the Moon (about 30 tickets)

Main Deck
60 cards

23 Island 23 lands	4 Puppeteer 4 Thought Courier 4 Trinket Mage 2 Soratami Savant 1 Steel Wall 2 Meloku the Clouded Mirror 3 Soratami Rainshaper 3 Azami, Lady of Scrolls 23 creatures	1 Viridian Longbow 1 Leonin Bola 4 AEther Spellbomb 4 Mana Leak 4 Hinder 14 other spells
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This deck plays out by controlling threatening attackers with **Puppeteer** and various artifacts fetched by **Trinket Mage** (**Steel Wall**, **Viridian Longbow**, **Leonin Bola**, **Aether Spellbomb**). It compliments these with countermagic so things don't get out of hand. Then it starts to move to the endgame plan. This could be one of the following:

1. Draw lots of cards via **Azami** and overwhelm your opponent.
2. Fly overhead with **Soratami Savant** and **Soratami Rainshaper**
3. Play **Meloku**. Win the game.

Out of those options, #1 and #3 are the strongest, but with lots of control elements in the deck #2 can work from time to time as well. Note that the Savant and the Rainshaper have built-in protection abilities, so it really helps them go the distance. Depending on your situation, sometimes **Leonin Bola** can help you force some extra damage through on the ground, but don't expect it to be easy.

Tips on Playing the Deck

- Having trouble with a creature? **Aether Spellbomb** it back to your opponents' hand and counter it on the way back down for some tried and true Blue methodology!



- Be careful about returning too many lands to your hand via the Soratami...you really want to build up a strong mana base for when you play Meloku.
- Don't play Meloku out early, as you need to be able to protect her, or at least make a bunch of guys if she's going to die right away.
- Passing the **Viridian Longbow** around is your only way to actually kill creatures. If you don't know how to do this, see below.

Passing the Longbow: First, start with an equipped creature. Tap that creature to shoot something. Then, equip the longbow to a different untapped creature that doesn't have summoning sickness. Now that creature can also shoot something. This translates into 3 mana = +1 damage for pinging. This will allow you to take down 2/2 creatures (or sometimes bigger) very easily.

Adding Money to the Deck

Vedalken Shackles is likely the best thing to add to the deck. Be warned; they are getting pricy now that everyone is recognizing their power level. **Blinkmoth Nexus** will help add more kill cards to the deck. Also, more Melokus would really help the cause. If you want to take a slightly different route, you could add green for **Azusa, Lost but Seeking** with Birds and other mana-goodies in order to make the Moonfolk better. Once **Betrayers** is legal online, however, I would just go with the Patron of the Soratami, since the ability is rather similar and it is an awesome finisher that can be cast instantaneously. I would also consider adding **Ninja of the Deep Hours** from **Betrayers**, just because I have found it to be the best Blue creature since **Thieving Magpie**, and with the fliers it isn't too hard to Ninjustu out there.

Overall, this deck is decent and has a lot of room for personal preference changes, since the Wizard fodder could easily be replaced with other equally cool and useful Wizards, as long as they can deal with a weenie strategy. It is great for a player who wants to explore blue a little more as a color option, or even to just understand strategies that can beat it.

Until next time, **use your imagination**.

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



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