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# The Mirror Gallery Challenge



Adrian Sullivan · *Single-Card Strategies*  
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Two weeks ago I asked everyone whether they would want a Reader Challenge on **Mirror Gallery**, and the results of that poll surprised me. No, it didn't surprise me that most people were in favor of the Challenge. It did surprise me how close the vote was.

There were a ton of completely different ideas that people went with for the Challenge. Wowsa. That was one of the things that I knew was going to happen. "Blue Enigma" Nate sent in a cool Captain Sisay/Counterspell deck, complete with **Umezawa's Jitte**, **Skyship Weatherlight**, Kaldra pieces, and even **Lu Xun**, **Scholar General**. Weedmonkey sent in a mono-Green Saproling deck with **Verdeloth the Ancient** and **Nemata**, **Grove Guardian**. "Afikguy" Charley sent in 5 decks, most of which ran **Volrath's Shapeshifter** – I liked his Karon/Akroma build best. Seth Gun sent a cool Mind's Desire/Rorix deck, and everybody sent in Honden decks (but I especially liked Diego Toba's Honden of Life's Web/Braids deck).

All-in-all, it was really refreshing to see so many different ideas swimming in that sea of Hondens. I'm glad that so many creative ideas came out of it, but it did make it hard to decide which decks to go with. Honden decks were, in fact, easily the most popular idea, weighing out all other decklists combined. Kaldra decks combining the many weapons of Kaldra weighed in as second most popular, and Krark's Thumb decks came in a close third. With so many decks built around these cards, it really did end up weighing against everyone that submitted them, but that didn't stop the flow of good ideas. So without further ado, let's hit the decklists.

## Honorable Mention: The Nuts



Liam Shiels writes, "What Legend relies on the Legend rule the most to stop it from being broken? **Mindslaver**? **Krark's Thumb**? Nope. **Frankie Peanuts**."

I have to say, I had to look up the card, I wasn't sure what he was talking about. I read the card, and went back to Liam's email to see what his plan was. "Ask 'Will you answer yes to my next question?'" and then with the second Frankie you ask whatever necessary to totally and utterly crush your opponent knowing full well what their answer will be."

Awesome. Funny. Shiels gets the honorable mention prize, though, because I don't know how much "crushing" he'll be doing in the follow up with this deck. In addition, running 4 **Mishra's Workshop** makes this deck pretty expensive and hard to find opponents up to playing against it (I don't know many casual players into playing against 4 Workshop).

**The Nuts Gallery – a fun deck**

60 cards

4 Mishra's Workshop	4 Solemn Simulacrum	4 Mirror Gallery
4 Forbidden Orchard	4 Frankie Peanuts	4 Defense of the Heart
4 City of Brass		4 Sylvan Scrying
6 Plains	8 creatures	4 Enlightened Tutor
4 Forest		4 March of Souls
2 Treetop Village		4 Orim's Chant
		4 Abeyance
24 land		28 other spells

I think the **Defense of the Heart** combination with the **Forbidden Orchard** is actually pretty brilliant, and I can appreciate using **March of Souls** to downgrade their dangerous creatures and keep your Defense useful. Obviously a deck running *Unhinged* cards doesn't have to conform to a constructed format, but there are a few tweaks I'd like to see to pump this puppy up. **Defense of the Heart** makes it very reasonable to put in only one or two copies of a scary creature and get it at will. Running some mana acceleration other than that **Mishra's Workshop** isn't a bad idea either. I like **Birds of Paradise** or **Sakura-Tribe Elder**.

This is a pretty cute deck, and I'm pleased to give Liam a nod with this Honorable Mention. Two other readers submitted fun Frankie Peanuts decks, so that "submit early" tiebreaker did end up actually mattering. One fun bonus: Liam's Frankie question "Will you answer yes to my next question" comes with a good follow up if they say no – "Will you cast spells or block this turn?" I'm sure you can come up with other good questions.

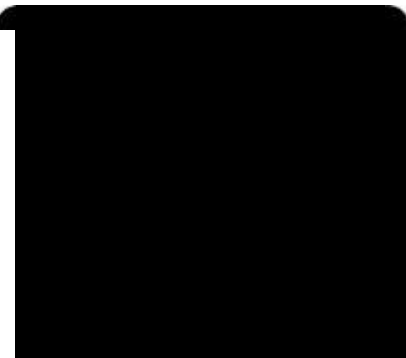
### Third Place: The Return of Kaldra

Noah Barron's submission isn't flashy, but it was the one Kaldra-tron decklist I could imagine winning a FNM. His deck takes a pretty standard Blue/White Control skeleton and adds onto it Kaldra's Legendary Weapons. He's only running one **Mirror Gallery**, but that seems fine here.

One Mirror, Many Kaldra – Standard		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 Steelshaper's Gift	4 Karma
4 Coastal Tower	4 Fabricate	1 Final Judgment
8 Island	4 Mana Leak	4 Echoing Truth
8 Plains	4 Condescend	3 Annul
24 land	4 Hinder	3 Circle of Protection: Red
	4 Wrath of God	15 sideboard cards
0 creatures	2 Final Judgment	
	2 Sword of Kaldra	
	2 Shield of Kaldra	
	2 Helm of Kaldra	
	1 Mirror Gallery	
	3 Talisman of Progress	
	36 other spells	

Noah said he envision the black outline of Ganon from Zelda when he thinks about Kaldra returning. His deck does what all of the Kaldra decks do, as he says here:

Theoretically, you should probably win with a hasty 9/9 indestructible, but in case that's not rowdy enough for you (it isn't for me)...  
**Fabricate** up the **Mirror Gallery**: voila! Every single mana you tap nets you an additional 4/4 Kaldra creature. The equipment keeps jumping to the newest Kaldra. **Final Judgment** does kill your Kaldra, but then the pieces just fall off and one mana makes a new one.



P.S. I'm probably going to enter this in next week's FNM out here in Scotts Valley, CA...I expect to be slaughtered by MBC.

P.P.S. This deck should probably have **Thirst for Knowledge**... meh.

Now, I haven't been paying a huge amount of attention to Standard (I'm looking more at Block right now), but I wasn't joking when I said this deck could win at an FNM. Don't give up on it already, Noah! As it stands, I really like the look of this deck. I could imagine a couple of other good tutorable Artifacts because of the **Fabricate**. One **Sculpting Steel** could be useful for copying anything really good that gets out there, one **Duplicant** could be a useful single answer to any creature, and one **Umezawa's Jitte** might be nice if only to destroy another Jitte. Perhaps the best one-of I like here, though, is **Sun Droplet**.



Good work, Noah!

## Finalist: Rat-tastic Redux

This is krizc's second appearance in a Reader Challenge, first appearing with *another* Rat deck for the [Psychic Vortex Challenge](#). His submission here is legal for Online Extended, but as he says, is more focused on fun than anything else.

Rat-tastic Gallery		
60 cards		
21 Swamp	4 Marrow-Gnawer	4 Mirror Gallery
3 Shizo, Death's Storehouse	4 Nezumi Cutthroat	3 Duress
	4 Ravenous Rats	3 Patriarch's Bidding
	4 Chittering Rats	
24 land	4 Okiba-Gang Shinobi	10 other spells
	4 Nezumi Shortfang	
	2 Ink-Eyes, Servant of Oni	
	26 creatures	



**Marrow-Gnawer** is a card that I've come to love in recent months, but imagining *two* of them out is a little bit sick. Two **Marrow-Gnawers** and a single friend quickly become six; six quickly become eighteen. Any Frankie Peanuts out there are going to be hopping around for cover really quickly. I like the way his deck attacks the hand too, but it looks like it might be too focused on that. Taking out a couple of the Gangs for a **Throat Slitter** would be nice, or some other elimination, say **Kiku** or **Grave Pact**?

There are only a few Legends here, but the Mirror is used as a good way to protect those Legends from death when a Bidding comes to bring all the dead Rats back. One of my favorite Legends in this deck is definitely the Shortfang. I've always been a fan of **The Rack** and so getting to have two in play again is a nice bonus.

I actually think that krizc is a secret pen name of Mark Rosewater, or if not that, maybe one of his bowling buddies. Rosewater may claim that he didn't design **Relentless Rats** or krizc may protest he doesn't have anything to do with Rosewater, but I'm not fooled. Thank you, krizc, for your rodent-inspired

submission.

## The Winner: Roar of Mirrors

This week's winner, Dom Camus, sent me a decklist that he uses in the real world and in MtGO (albeit in slightly different form). Designed for a relatively relaxed casual environment, his deck takes over the opponent's turn with **Mindslaver**, forces them to lose a bunch of their library to **Mesmeric Orb**, and uses **Roar of Reclamation** to do it again. And again. And again. Using the **Sculpting Steel** to copy **Mindslaver** wouldn't work without the Mirror, but with it, it probably isn't too unlikely to get at least four of your opponent's turns in a row! Here is his decklist:

My Turn Now – casual Standard decklist		
64 cards		
15 <b>Island</b>	4 <b>Jushi Apprentice</b>	3 <b>Conjurer's Bauble</b>
7 <b>Plains</b>	2 <b>Kira, Great Glass-Spinner</b>	1 <b>Sun Droplet</b>
4 <b>Mirrodin's Core</b>	1 <b>Silent Arbiter</b>	4 <b>Mesmeric Orb</b>
26 land	7 creatures	4 <b>Talisman of Progress</b>
		4 <b>Sculpting Steel</b>
		4 <b>Fabricate</b>
		3 <b>Thirst for Knowledge</b>
		1 <b>Krark-Clan Ironworks</b>
		2 <b>Mirror Gallery</b>
		2 <b>Mindslaver</b>
		3 <b>Roar of Reclamation</b>
		31 other spells

Dom says that the lone **Krark-Clan Ironworks** is very useful in the deck:

It gives you a sac outlet for your **Sculpting Steels** you may already have cast whilst at the same time helping to cast the Roar and then after Roar resolves, allowing you to activate a **Mindslaver**.

The deck is somewhat hurt by the lack in Standard of a Blue tutor which can fetch the Roar. Drawing multiple Roars is bad. The trick to playing the deck is in knowing what to **Fabricate** for. Depressingly often the correct answer is **Sun Droplet**! The version above assumes you're playing duels - it would need tweaking for multiplayer since it's not great at killing more than one opponent.

I think this deck is incredibly cool. Personally, I've always loved the **Sculpting Steel**, and seeing it used like this is nice. Not only can it help you in the early game to begin to "go off", but it can also copy that **Sun Droplet** to keep you alive, a **Talisman** for mana, or a **Mesmeric Orb** if you think you can win simply off of decking your opponent. One of the things I really love is being able to tutor for the **Silent Arbiter**. It really is surprising how much this card slows down an aggressive deck. I'm not sure about the **Conjurer's Bauble** in the deck. I understand that the idea is to put Roar (or other good cards) back into your deck that have been milled away by the **Mesmeric Orb**, but I think the deck might really want Silly Sully's Sylvan, the **Sensei's Divining Top**. The Top works *great* with the Orb if you want to find a card and even without it can really help smooth out a lot of those draws. Great work, Dom!



## Wrapping Up

I hope you enjoyed all of the decks this week as much as I do. Dom's deck in particular really struck me as not only creative from a purely imaginative point of view, but also a very well-crafted design. I'd like to thank everyone that sent in a deck for the challenge and give a tiny

apology to Charley; I liked every one of his five decks he sent in, but he was narrowly beat out by his many competitors. Overall, I think this Challenge really showed how versatile the card **Mirror Gallery** could be.

Before I sign off, I want to remind everyone how they can help the column. I'd love to hear your ideas on cards that I should cover in the future. Send in a column idea about, say, **Grizzly Bears**, and I'll be happy to drop your name here as a small thank you when I cover your take on that card. People look forward to new sets a lot, I know, but they are a big deal for my column especially. I know I'm really looking forward to some fresh cards to tear my teeth into.

Hope you enjoyed this week's column. Have a great rest of your week!



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