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Burning with Suspense (Reality Fracture, Part 3 of 3)

Ben Bleiweiss
Building on a Budget
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Welcome back to Building on a Budget! This year is drawing to a close, and so is my first *Time Spiral* theme deck evolution. Two weeks ago, we left off with this deck:

- Building on a Budget is dedicated to making decks that cost 30 tickets or less on *Magic Online*. Weekly deck testing is done using *Magic Online*.
- This week's deck concludes the evolution of the Reality Fracture theme deck from *Time Spiral*.
- Theme deck evolutions will always focus on Standard. The legal sets right now are *Ninth Edition*, *Ravnica*, *Guildpact*, *Dissension*, *Coldsnap*, and *Time Spiral*.
- Polls are your friends.



Reality Fracture 3

Main Deck
60 cards

10 Island 4 Izzet Boilerworks 10 Mountain <hr/> 24 lands	2 Coal Stoker 1 Deep-Sea Kraken 4 Errant Ephemeron 3 Jhoira's Timebug 2 Keldon Halberdier 1 Pardic Dragon 3 Riftwing Cloudskate 1 Sage of Epityr <hr/> 17 creatures	2 Serrated Arrows 1 Whispers of the Muse 1 Careful Consideration 2 Clockspinning 3 Empty the Warrens 4 Grapeshot 2 Ignite Memories 4 Rift Bolt <hr/> 19 other spells
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

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You voted, and you wanted a deck that combined the suspend and storm mechanics. Suspend allows you to engineer your turns so that multiple spells resolve at the same time, and storm takes advantage of an artificially increased spell count to pack one doozy of a spell.

I left off with a 5-5 record with the deck, which was in need of some changes. The deck wasn't consistent enough – I would have turns where my storm count was very low, or I couldn't generate enough mana. On top of that, many of my games were being won by *Ignite Memories*, and yet there were only two in the deck. If I'm going to use storm as my kill condition, I want to have the most storm cards possible.

The goal of a deck that revolves around storm and suspend, I've found, is to have "One Big Turn" – a turn in which all the spells you have suspended resolve and you throw as many of your eggs into one basket as possible in order to get a huge storm count for the win. Other strategies that combine these two mechanics are not taking full advantage of their synergy and are less likely to do as well because of that.

In order to fix both of these problems, I added *Seething Song* to the deck. Many decks don't want to play *Seething Song*, because the one-shot additional generation of two red mana isn't always worth the price of a card. In this deck, I'm aiming for one big turn – a turn in which I cast as many spells as possible, and have as much mana available as I can with which to cast them. Because of this, *Seething Song* acts both as a storm enabler and a storm count upper.

To make room for two more Ignites and a playset of *Seething Songs*, I cut all three *Jhoira's Timebugs*. I wasn't particularly impressed with their ability – they'd allow me to play suspend spells slightly earlier than I otherwise would, but they themselves wouldn't up a storm count on my critical storm turn in the same way that *Clockspinning* could.

In addition, *Pardic Dragon* seems like a lame duck – I only got him into play once, and other times he sat in my hand while I waited to get up to six mana to hard-cast him. It's too easy for an opponent to keep him out of play nearly indefinitely, and that is not the hallmark of a good card.

As the last two cuts, I took out the random *Sage of Epityr* that came with the theme deck – while he could set up a big turn in theory, casting him the turn before a storm turn means that I have one less spell to cast on my storm turn. Lastly, I took out an *Izzet Boilerworks*, as the deck is already a little land-heavy and I just added four cards that generate mana.



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Out: 1 Pardic Dragon, 3 Jhoira's Timebug, 1 Sage of Epityr, 1 Izzet Boilerworks
In: 2 Ignite Memories, 4 Seething Song

Reality Fracture 4		
Main Deck 60 cards		
10 Island	2 Coal Stoker	4 Seething Song
3 Izzet Boilerworks	1 Deep-Sea Kraken	2 Serrated Arrows
10 Mountain	4 Errant Ephemeron	1 Whispers of the Muse
23 lands	2 Keldon Halberdier	1 Careful Consideration
	3 Riftwing Cloudskate	2 Clockspinning
	12 creatures	3 Empty the Warrens
		4 Grapeshot
		4 Ignite Memories
		4 Rift Bolt
		25 other spells

Game 1: NAME WITHHELD (White Weenie)

I suspend turn 1 Keldon Halberdier, then use Grapeshot on turn 2 to kill his Savannah Lions. He concedes.

Record: Does not Count!

I guess that he's had bad experiences with storm decks already – oh well!

Alternate Game 1: Powerslouch (B/U/G Control)

I get Errant Ephemeron and Riftwing Cloudskate, but he uses Clutch of the Undercity on my Errant one, and then casts Ribbons of the Nights my Riftwing. I get Keldon Halberdier and a second Errant Ephemeron into play shortly thereafter. He uses Twisted Justice to kill my Halberdier and draw four cards and then kills my other Ephemeron (not the Exodus one, bad autocard!) with a second Ribbons of Night.

Well, I've had enough of that. On my next turn, I play Seething Song (1), Seething Song (2), Coal Stoker (3), Empty the Warrens (4), Empty the Warrens (5) and Grapeshot (6). Powerslouch doesn't have an answer to 18 Goblin tokens, and concedes.

Record: 1-0

Game 2: J_Sub (Mono-Blue Suspend)

He gets turn-two Errant Ephemeron, turn-three Errant Ephemeron plus Viscerid Deepwalker, and turn-four Deep-Sea Kraken. I Seething Song out a hardcast Errant Ephemeron on turn four, only to have it get hit by Snapback. J_Sub drops Paradox Haze and very, very quickly runs me over with his unsuspected creatures.

Record: 1-1

Game 3: Catacombs6961 (Fun with Fungus)

He gets Elves of Deep Shadow, Thallid Shell-Dweller, and Grave Pact. I drop Serrated Arrows to kill his Elf, and he responds with a Llanowar Elves (which I also Arrow). I suspend Deep-Sea Kraken, and he casts Doubling Season.

Well, his Thallid starts getting double counters, and spitting out double Saprolings. They are followed by Thallid Germinator, and suddenly the world looks awfully green. I suspend Rift Bolt, and he attacks me down to eight, and drops Phyrexian Arena. I send Rift Bolt at his head (1), play Whispers of the Muse (2), and play Ignite Memories for three. His only card in hand is a second Grave Pact, so he takes 12 damage from the Ignite and 3 from my Rift Bolt. Catacombs6961 has also taken 4 damage from his Elves of Deep Shadow and pain lands, and ends my turn at one life. His Phyrexian Arena finishes him off during his upkeep.

Record: 2-1

Well, I'm convinced – the slower suspend cards are not working very well with the storm cards. I borrow a page from other storm decks that have been floating around (Dragonstorm and Ignite Memories variants) and add in four Rite of Flame from Coldsnap. I take out the two Halberdiers, the Deep-Sea Kraken, and the Careful Consideration (which is another random one-of from the original deck).

Out: 2 Keldon Halberdier, 1 Deep-Sea Kraken, 1 Careful Consideration
In: 4 Rite of Flame



Reality Fracture 5		

Main Deck		
60 cards		
10 Island	2 Coal Stoker	4 Seething Song
3 Izzet Boilerworks	4 Errant Epheron	2 Serrated Arrows
10 Mountain	3 Riftwing Cloudskate	1 Whispers of the Muse
23 lands	9 creatures	2 Clockspinning
		3 Empty the Warrens
		4 Grapeshot
		4 Ignite Memories
		4 Rift Bolt
		4 Rite of Flame
		28 other spells

Memo to pauper players – at this point, the deck is down to zero rares, three timeshifted cards, seven uncommons, and fifty commons. Enjoy!

Game 4: Battlestar_Cerebus (Orzhov Control)

Neither of us do much until I get a turn of **Seething Song**, **Coal Stoker**, **Errant Epheron**, **Grapeshot**, and **Ignite Memories**. His hand is three lands and a **Pillory of the Sleepless**. He then suspends **Curse of the Cabal** on his turn, frown! I battle back with **Grapeshot** and **Empty the Warrens** and chip away at his life total with Goblins. He uses **Orzhova, the Church of Deals** to keep afloat, along with a **Guardian of the Guildpact**. I drop the Guardian to a 0/1 with **Serrated Arrows** before he destroys the artifact with **Seed Spark**. He drops **Venser's Sliver** and **Kjeldoran Gargoyle**. I suspend **Rift Bolt**, then next turn Bolt the Gargoyle, swing in with my guys, and **Grapeshot** him for exactly his life total.

Record: 3-1

Game 5: SevenRX (Mono-Green Elephants)

I get run over. There isn't much to say here, except that SevenRX smashes me with **Assault // Battery**, **Call of the Herd**, a **Moldervine Cloak**. I put out a bunch of Goblins via **Empty the Warrens**, but they only serve to keep me alive a turn or so.

Record: 3-2

Again, I'm not happy with the mix between suspend and storm in this deck. My storm cards are winning all my games, and my suspend cards (**Errant Epheron**, **Riftwing Cloudskate**, **Keldon Halberdier**, **Deep-Sea Kraken**) keep dying to creature kill spells. I decide to try an alternate route: **Greater Gargadon**.

The Gargadon can, in theory, come into play on a giant storm turn and deal a gigantic 9 damage. Let's say I have five lands in play, and it's my Storm turn. I can tap all five lands to put mana into my pool, then sacrifice them to get a five-counter-or-less Gargadon into play. This ups my storm count by one for zero mana plus puts a 9/7 haste creature on the board.

To make room for the Gargadon, I yank out the **Errant Epherons** from the deck. I also want more cards that up my storm count/mana considerations, so I add in the last couple of **Coal Stokers** to finish out a set of four and take out the **Serrated Arrows**. On turn four/five, I want to be setting up for a big storm turn, not killing **Llanowar Elves**.

In: 4 **Greater Gargadon**, 2 **Coal Stoker**

Out: 4 **Errant Epheron**, 2 **Serrated Arrows**

Main Deck		
60 cards		
10 Island	4 Coal Stoker	4 Seething Song
3 Izzet Boilerworks	4 Greater Gargadon	1 Whispers of the Muse
10 Mountain	3 Riftwing Cloudskate	2 Clockspinning
23 lands	11 creatures	3 Empty the Warrens
		4 Grapeshot
		4 Ignite Memories
		4 Rift Bolt
		4 Rite of Flame
		26 other spells

Game 6: Zenon6 (U/W/G Blink/Hierarch/Glare)

I suspend turn-one and turn-two **Greater Gargadon**. He gets turn-one **Llanowar Elves**, turn-two **Selesnya Guildmage**, and turn-three **Glare of Subdual**. I play **Rite of Flame** (1), **Seething Song** (2), **Grapeshot** (3) his two guys dead, and then **Empty the Warrens** (4) for eight Goblin tokens. He drops **Loxodon Hierarch**, blocks a Goblin, and takes 7. On his turn, he attacks for four. I attack, and he casts **Momentary Blink** to untap/retrigger his Hierarch, gaining four life and killing a Goblin in the process. He attacks again and drops **Selesnya Guildmage**. I play **Clockspinning**, **Grapeshot** his **Selesnya Guildmage** (to keep it from tapping any of my creatures via Glare)

and sacrifice all of my Goblins to bring both of my **Greater Gargadons** into play at once (So I used **Grapeshot** on a Guildmage so he couldn't Glare a Gargadon. Say that three times fast!)

A **Momentary Blink** on the Hierarchy is able to stop 9 damage, but Zenon6 doesn't draw another creature after a chump block and dies to my 18 power worth of creatures.

Record: 4-2

Game 7: Sam De Cat (**Cloudstone Curio**)

He gets a bunch of mana and a bunch of guys with comes-into-play abilities, and then drops **Cloudstone Curio**. I set up an **Ignite Memories** for 6, but his hand is all two-drops (**Plaxmanta**, **Selesnya Guildmage**, and the such), which only takes him down to 8. He begins recurring **Azorius Herald**, and I concede – with no cards in hand and his ability to save any of his guys with **Plaxmanta**, I really have no way to pull this out before I die.

Record: 4-3

One card I've been very unhappy with so far is **Izzet Boilerworks**. It stinks being stuck with a bounce land in hand when you're trying to build around one big turn, because it throws off the timing of playing suspend cards early (turns two and three), and it doesn't give you a land drop when you need that extra mana on the turn you go off. I take out the remaining three Boilerworks and add in a couple of Mountains and an Island. I also yank the sole **Whispers of the Muse** in favor of a fourth **Empty the Warrens**.

Reality Fracture 7			Main Deck 60 cards	
11 Island	4 Coal Stoker	4 Seething Song		
12 Mountain	4 Greater Gargadon	2 Clockspinning		
23 lands	3 Riftwing Cloudskate	4 Empty the Warrens		
	11 creatures	4 Grapeshot		
		4 Ignite Memories		
		4 Rift Bolt		
		4 Rite of Flame		
		26 other spells		

Out: 3 **Izzet Boilerworks**, 1 **Whispers of the Muse**

In: 2 Mountain, 1 Island, 1 Empty The Warrens

Game 8: Lobbut (U/G/B)

I get stuck with three Islands and a **Riftwing Cloudskate** as my only playable card, and I lose.

Record: 4-4

It's about this time that I take a look at my deck and realize that the deck clocks in at around eight tickets worth of cards, and six of those are the playset of **Greater Gargadons**. **Lotus Bloom** would probably be a big help to the deck, but would it run the deck over budget? I set out to the Buyer/Seller message boards on **Magic Online** to find out the current going rates on **Lotus Bloom**.

Three tickets.

Wow.

All right, I was expecting **Lotus Bloom** to be selling for six to eight tickets each, but they were under half of that cost! For a measly twelve tickets, a playset of **Lotus Bloom** could be mine. Since this deck was at eight tickets worth of cards, adding in twelve tickets was a no-brainer.

Since **Lotus Bloom** was only three tickets each, I decided to check out the price of **Ancestral Vision**.

Three tickets.

Double Wow.

You know, the prices on those two cards was much, much higher when **Time Spiral** first came out and I began writing this series. This is part of why I like to wait a couple of weeks before using the newest set for this column – prices are inflated on singles the first two weeks of release, as demand far, far outweighs supply. As people draft and cards enter circulation rapidly, prices fall.

Or, in other words, twenty-four tickets for four **Ancestral Vision** and four **Lotus Bloom**.

Seriously. No-Brainer here.

In: 4 **Ancestral Vision**, 4 **Lotus Bloom**

To make room for the eight new suspend cards, I take out seven of the older ones (4 **Greater Gargadon**, to keep the deck on budget and 3 **Riftwing Cloudskate**), plus an **Ignite Memories**.

Out: 3 Riftwing Cloudskate, 1 Ignite Memories, 4 Greater Gargadon



Reality Freacture 8		Main Deck 60 cards	
11 Island	4 Coal Stoker	4 Seething Song	
12 Mountain	4 creatures	4 Ancestral Vision	
23 lands		2 Clockspinning	
		4 Empty the Warrens	
		4 Grapeshot	
		3 Ignite Memories	
		4 Lotus Bloom	
		4 Rift Bolt	
		4 Rite of Flame	
		33 other spells	

The new version of this deck comes in at around 28 tickets, and that's generously putting the 52 commons and uncommons in this deck at four tickets (if you shop frugally, and have patience, and post that you are buying Lotus Blooms and Ancestral Visions in the Buying room instead of searching them out in the selling room, you can easily pick them up within a day or two at two tickets each, knocking the cost of this deck down to an anemic 20 tickets).

Game 9: Slaver001 (W/R Stuffy Doll)

He drops **Stuffy Doll** on turn five, and enchants it with **Spirit Loop** on turn six. I hit him with **Rift Bolt**, **Grapeshot** with five copies, and **Ignite Memories** with 6. He has 3 cards in hand – a **Serra Avenger**, a **Browbeat**, and **Mountain**. He reveals the **Mountain** four times, the **Browbeat** twice and the **Serra Avenger** once, and ends up at 3 life. I run out of gas, and he drops **Serra Avenger** and **Basalt Gargoyle** the following turn. I don't draw another burn spell before he kills me with his **Doll** (gaining 2 life a turn) and his flyers.

Record: 4-5

Game 10: Malaki_Rith (W/U/R Weenie)

He gets his weenies in play, and puts **Undying Rage** on one of them. I get **Coal Stoker** plus four Goblins. He **Pyroclasm**s, and I trade the **Stoker** for his 4/3 attacker. He drops **Drifter il-Dal** and puts the **Undying Rage** on it, and I kill his 4/3 with a **Rift Bolt**. I cast a pair of **Rite of Flame**, and **Ignite Memories** for four, hitting him all four times with **Undying Rage**. This brings him to 1, and I kill him the following turn with a third **Rift Bolt**.

Record: 5-5

Game 11: _Clarity_ (U/G Creatures)

Clarity gets **Plaxcaster Frogling**, puts a counter on **Plaxmanta** and **Trygon Predator** with it, and starts attacking. I kill the **Frogling** with **Clockspinning**, cast several **Rite of Flames** and **Seething Songs**, drop **Coal Stoker**, and **Ignite** for six, doing 12 damage (off of two-drops in _Clarity_'s hand). When _Clarity_ blocks with **Trygon Predator**, I use **Clockspinning** to remove the +1/+1 counter it has, making it a 2/3 and allowing my **Coal Stoker** to kill it.

Clarity **Remands** **Ancestral Vision**, allowing me to **Grapeshot** **Plaxmanta** for three. **Coal Stoker** brings the game to a 5-point margin, forcing **Clarity** to tap two painlands to drop blockers. This allows me to get through **Rift Bolt** for the win.

Record: 6-5

Game 12: Swampthing (B/G Control)

I suspend Lotus Bloom on turn one, and he drops Hissing Miasma on turn three. I suspend Rift Bolt on turn three. On my turn four, I unsuspend Lotus Bloom (1), Rift Bolt (2), play Rite of Flame (3), Rite of Flame (4), Coal Stoker (5), Grapeshot (6) and Ignite Memories (7). He concedes in response to the Ignite.

Record: 7-5

Game 13: Blazing_Archon (B/G Dredge)

I get turn-one Lotus Bloom, turn-four Seething Song (2), Seething Song (3), Coal Stoker (4), Grapeshot (5), Grapeshot (6), and Empty the Warrens for fourteen Goblins. With Blazing_Archon out, at 9 life...he casts Crime // Punishment for zero, taking out my entire board aside from Coal Stoker. He then drops Shambling Shell, kills my Coal Stoker, and bashes my face in with Golgari creatures.

My Crime? Going nuts with storm. My punishment? A game loss.

Record: 7-6

Game 14: jypsum1 (B/G Golgari Germination/Husk)

He gets turn-two Rakdos Guildmage, turn-three Golgari Germination, and turn-four Nantuko Husk. I suspend Ancestral Vision on turn-four, then Ancestral Vision and Lotus Bloom turn two and Rift Bolt turn four. My fifth turn consists of Ancestral Vision (1), Lotus Bloom (2), Rift Bolt (3), Rift Bolt (hardcast; 4), and Ignite Memories (5). He's at 14 before the Ignite resolves, and it hits a bunch of four-drop cards, including Hellhole Rats and Dread Return.

Record: 8-6

See the above game? If I had Clockspinning instead of Coal Stoker, I would have been able to resolve another Ancestral Vision, allowing me to add one more spell to the storm count (Clockspinning plus Vision, versus Coal Stoker), plus I would have drawn three more cards. I add in two Clockspinning and take out two Coal Stoker.



Reality Fracture 9			Main Deck 60 cards	
11 Island	2 Coal Stoker	4 Seething Song		
12 Mountain	2 creatures	4 Ancestral Vision		
23 lands		4 Clockspinning		
		4 Empty the Warrens		
		4 Grapeshot		
		3 Ignite Memories		
		4 Lotus Bloom		
		4 Rift Bolt		
		4 Rite of Flame		
			35 other spells	

Out: 2 Coal Stoker

In: 2 Clockspinning

Game 15: OrdoDredd (R/G Pandemonium)

He gets turn-one Lotus Bloom/Wild Cantor, turn-two Mogg War Marshal, turn-four Mogg War Marshal, turn-five Mogg War Marshal. I suspend Ancestral Vision turn one, Ancestral Vision turn two, and three Rift Bolts on turn four. On turn five, I Bolt him for 9, Grapeshot 5 of his guys away, and then drop twelve Goblins. He drops Pandemonium and Norin the Wary, and kills one of my guys. I attack him down to 3 and then drop Coal Stoker on his Pandemonium for the win.

Record: 9-7

Game 16: Ariel_ (W/U Control)

I get turn-one Ancestral Vision, turn-two Lotus Bloom, turn-four Rift Bolt. I have only Empty the Warrens in hand, and I'm afraid of Wrath, so I opt to hold out for Ignite Memories. He Reveals the Bloom, and I replay it, draw Clockspinning and Ignite Memories, and then have a turn of:

Clockspinning (1)
Lotus Bloom (2)
Rite of Flame (3)
Rite of Flame (4)
Seething Song (5)
Coal Stoker (6)
Empty the Warrens (7)

Grapeshot for (8)
Ignite Memories for (9)

He has two **Faith's Fetters**, one **Repeal**, **Draining Whelk**, **Cancel**, and **Sacred Mesa** in hand. He's at 12 life after the **Grapeshot**, and so the Ignite finishes him off easily.

Record: 10-7

My record post—**Lotus Bloom** and **Ancestral Vision**? 6-2. This deck is an absolute blast to play, and it can have the most explosive fourth or fifth turn you've ever seen. Have fun storming and suspending – next week, I return with a one-shot article I like to call "What Do You Do with Sixty-Four Mana?"

Will Building on a Budget ever have another Poll?		
Yes, now that you mention it.	3738	79.3%
No. Any polls I see here must be the work of BoaB, the evil non-Budgetary Robot!	976	20.7%
Total	4714	100.0%

How does Ben feel about people playing highly-tuned, several-State-Championship-winning decks in the casual room?		
Ben is going a little balder right about now due to pain and anguish.	2666	64.5%
What? A poll! You said you were never doing those again, you big fat liar!	1237	29.9%
I never read Building on a Budget, so I think Ben is fine with this.	230	5.6%
Total	4133	100.0%

*Ben Bleiweiss has written about his obsession with **Magic: The Gathering** for over a decade. He's travelled the world because of **Magic**, both as a player and a writer. When not spending time playing **Magic**, writing about **Magic**, or thinking about **Magic**, Ben is employed by [StarCityGames.com](#), where he works with **Magic** cards all day long. He lives with his wife in Virginia, and they sleep comfortably at night under their Orgg down comforter.*



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