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The Five Lost Tribes of Morningtide

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Building on a Budget
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hello everyone, and welcome back to Building on a Budget! Right now, we're smack dab in the middle of the time between the physical and online release of the *Morningtide* set. Since this column is exclusively focused on online play, this leaves me (and you) in a precarious position where we *really, really* want to play with the new cards, but can't just yet. It also gives me the great opportunity to use reader feedback to focus the deckbuilding for future columns!

Last set release, I [did a review](#) of the good budget cards in *Lorwyn*. I'm going to change tack a little bit for *Morningtide* and present the basic builds for some *Morningtide* decks. And by some *Morningtide* decks, I don't mean the five professions highlighted in *Morningtide* (Soldier, Wizard, Warrior, Rogue, and Shaman). I don't mean the tribes from *Lorwyn* (Elemental, Elf, Faerie, Giant, Goblin, Kithkin, Merfolk, Treefolk). I mean that I'm going to build decks for the five non-central tribes of *Morningtide*—specifically, Archer, Assassin, Cleric, Druid and Knight. At the end of each column, I'll have a poll, and the deck that polls the highest and get the biggest response in the forums will be one of the decks I focus on evolving once *Morningtide* goes online!

All decks will be built using the Standard format (*Tenth Edition*, *Coldsnap*, *Time Spiral*, *Planar Chaos*, *Future Sight*, *Lorwyn*, and *Morningtide*), and all decks will cost an (estimated) 30 tickets or less. Although it isn't possible to know exactly the prices of all of the *Morningtide* cards in the decks that follow, most of them should be firmly in the budget range!

A special note about changelings: Some tribes have a lot more native creatures of their type than others. We're going to see a lot of changelings come up during these deck lists. Keep in mind that changelings are every tribe, so each changeling is a possible fit for any deck running the appropriate color.

Archers

Greatbow Doyen is the card that we want to build around for an Archer tribe. He not only boosts the power and toughness of every Archer you control, but he also lets all of your archers get double damage in against both creatures and players. There aren't a lot of non-changeling Archers in Standard—and you also generally have Archers that can only really do damage against flying creatures.



How do we ensure our opponent has flying creatures? I came up with a list of blue and green cards that can grant an opposing creature flying. They include **Arcanum Wings**, **Evolution Charm**, **Shimmering Wings**, **Sky Weaver**, **Wings of Velis Vel**, and **Zephyr Net**. Some of these cards, like **Shimmering Wings**, are problematic—if the opposing creature doesn't have flying when a damage-dealing ability from a flyer-killing archer resolves (such as from **Jagged-Scar Archers** or **Lys Alana Bowmaster**), the ability will be countered. This means that you can't both shoot a creature with flying and return **Shimmering Wings** to your hand.

This leaves **Evolution Charm**, **Sky Weaver**, **Wings of Velis Vel** and **Zephyr Net** as the best choices to grant opposing creatures flying. Three of the four of these are blue, so it looks like the Archer deck would best be served as a green-blue deck, using the aforementioned **Jagged-Scar Archers**, **Lys Alana Bowmaster**, and **Greatbow Doyen**, with some combination of flying-granting effects.

Jagged-Scar Archers also need Elves to grow large. Having Elf-Growing effects seems like a great idea for this deck, and it also provides fodder for **Chameleon Colossus**, which is a humungous Archer for this deck's purposes. **Gilt-Leaf Ambush** and **Hunting Triad** can fill this purpose nicely. **Hunting Triad** seems especially good, since it can pump the heck out of any given Archer in a pinch, on both offense and defense through reinforce.

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What Goes Up...

Standard-Legal Archer Deck

Main Deck 60 cards

11 Forest	3 Changeling Titan	3 Evolution Charm
8 Island	3 Elvish Harbinger	3 Gilt-Leaf Ambush
4 Vivid Grove	4 Greatbow Doyen	3 Hunting Triad
23 lands	4 Jagged-Scar Archers	3 Wings of Velis Vel
	4 Lys Alana Bowmaster	3 Zephyr Net
	4 Thornweald Archer	15 other spells
	22 creatures	

Assassin

Most of the current Standard Assassins are black cards. This seems perfect for building a primarily black deck, but which Assassins to use? Some that leap out as particularly good are **Scarblade Elite** (the chief Assassin of *Morningtide*), **Garza's Assassin**, and **Nekrataal**.

Scarblade Elite is a particularly great Assassin, since it can kill black and artifact creatures, which are types of creatures that other black Assassins have problems with. One thing to note about **Scarblade Elite**—it can remove any Assassin card (not just creature card) from your graveyard, making it especially potent for combination with **Nameless Inversion**.

The base build of an Assassin deck would be particularly good for killing opposing creatures, but what about for killing an opponent? That's where we want to throw in some changelings—particularly **Cairn Wanderer** (which can assume most of the abilities from slain victims), **Moonglove Changeling** (which can kill anything it damages), and **Ghostly Changeling** (a potential win condition through late-game pump).



Since this deck will be mono-black, effects that count **Swamps** (such as **Tendrils of Corruption**) are especially potent. This deck is already top-heavy on rares compared to some other tribes, so I don't want to run **Korlash** (which would be pushing the budget a little), but I'd be happy to run a copy or two of **Nightmare** as a finisher!

There is one classic Assassin combo that's been around since the days of Alpha—**Icy Manipulator** and **Royal Assassin**. Is this a combination that we want to fit into this deck? **Icy Manipulator** is particularly good because you want to force your opponent to overcommit to the board, but **Royal Assassin** on its own is not particularly great—it's a 1/1 that requires your opponent to attack to have any real effect, and I've faced down enough **Royal Assassins** in the casual room to know that once he dies (and he will, being that he's a 1/1), you're going to get run over by a horde of creatures. For now, let's leave those two out of the deck, and see if the already-potent suite of creature kill will be enough!

The last addition is a way to sacrifice your own creatures to good effect (if you need to get them in the graveyard for **Scarblade Elite**), and that is **Phyrexian Vault**. The Vault allows you to draw cards during combat exchanges, to combat opposing creature removal, or to just plain dig deeper into your deck when you need another card.

Silent Killers

Standard-Legal Assassin Deck

Main Deck 60 cards

24 Swamp	2 Big Game Hunter	4 Nameless Inversion
24 lands	3 Cairn Wanderer	3 Phyrexian Vault
	4 Garza's Assassin	4 Tendrils of Corruption
	3 Ghostly Changeling	11 other spells
	3 Moonglove Changeling	
	4 Nekrataal	
	2 Nightmare	
	4 Scarblade Elite	
	25 creatures	

Cleric

Battletide Alchemist is the Cleric that leads up the tribe in *Morningtide*, but unlike **Scarblade Elite** and **Greatbow Doyen**, it is not a route to victory. Instead, it is a route to not losing—and the object of **Magic** isn't to not-lose, it's

to win! What, then, is the use for **Battletide Alchemist**?

It strikes me as the perfect fit in a deck that has spells to damage itself. **Battletide Alchemist** can prevent damage from multiple sources each turn, but only up to X (the number of Clerics you control) damage from each source. A variant on the classic **Orcish Artillery** / **Circle of Protection: Red** deck seemed to be in order for a Cleric deck, making it likely to be a red-white deck!

Orcish Artillery, **Manabarbs**, **Molten Disaster**, and **Pyrohemia** were the main cards that stuck out in my mind as good fits for this sort of deck. **Manabarbs** seems especially powerful, since each individual trigger of **Manabarbs** counts as a separate source for **Battletide Alchemist**, meaning you will take no damage while your opponent takes one for every land they control.

We don't want this deck to be a one-trick pony, so let's build it to be ultra-defensive. **True Believer** is a great Cleric on the budget, one which replicates **Ivory Mask** but attaches it to a 2/2 creature. **Story Circle** is another card which can prevent damage from self-damaging sources. **Pyrohemia** requires that someone keeps a creature in play, so adding in **Soltari Priest** (a Cleric!) also adds some oomph to this deck. **Burrenton Forge-Tender**, while not a Cleric, gives you another protection from Red creature to add to the deck. **Purity** also lets you convert mass damage to life, so it would be a great addition to **Pyrohemia** and **Orcish Artillery** for this deck.



Prevent This!		
Standard-Legal Cleric Deck		
Main Deck 60 cards		
11 Mountain	4 Battletide Alchemist	4 Heart of Light
11 Plains	3 Burrenton Forge-Tender	4 Manabarbs
4 Terramorphic Expanse	4 Orcish Artillery	4 Pyrohemia
26 lands	3 Purity	12 other spells
	4 Soltari Priest	
	4 True Believer	
	22 creatures	

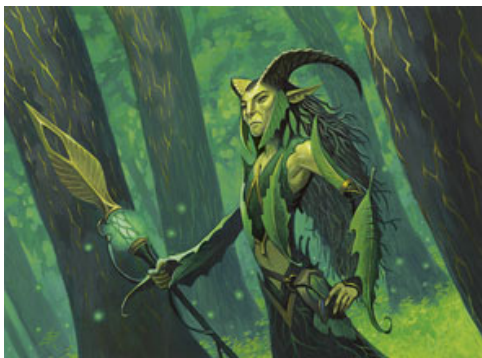
Druid

The Druid tribe in *Morningtide* is based around **Gilt-Leaf Archdruid** and his ability to take all of an opponent's lands. It's a very mighty task to be able to get seven creatures into play at once (and have them live, natch!), but luckily there are a lot of mana-producing Druids that will allow you to accelerate quite quickly into what you need.

Most of the key cards in this deck are Elves, so this allows us to play **Elvish Harbinger** (a Druid), which can go fetch **Gilt-leaf Archdruid** (an Elf!). **Llanowar Elves** and **Boreal Druid** are also Druids, as are **Civic Wayfinder**, **Heritage Druid**, **Leaf Glider**, and **Citanul Woodreaders**. **Llanowar Mentor**, while not a Druid himself, produces Elf Druid tokens.

Let's say that we have a lot of Druids, but there are problems keeping them all in play at once. Is there a way to put seven Druids into play at one time? **Living End** seems to be a perfect card to end the game with—bring back all of your (dead) guys late in the game, and then immediately grab all of your opponent's lands.

What other cards would work well with a large number of mana-producing men, or the ability to grab a bunch of lands? **Molimo, Maro Sorcerer** seems like the perfect finisher for this deck. I wanted to add in a touch of creature removal to round out the deck, since I will be splashing black for **Living End**, and voila: a Druid deck that can take everything that matters to your opponent, and use it to kill in a single **Molimo**-filled swing! The last piece is a couple of **Primal Command**, to both shuffle away any creatures my opponent might have in their graveyard, and to grab **Gilt-Leaf Archdruid** when the time is right!



Land Grab	
Standard-Legal Druid Deck	
Main Deck 60 cards	

12 Forest	4 Boreal Druid	2 Eyeblight's Ending
6 Swamp	4 Citanul Woodreaders	3 Harmonize
4 Vivid Grove	1 Civic Wayfinder	3 Living End
22 lands	4 Elvish Harbinger	3 Nameless Inversion
	4 Gilt-Leaf Archdruid	1 Primal Command
	1 Imperious Perfect	12 other spells
	4 Llanowar Elves	
	3 Llanowar Mentor	
	1 Molimo, Maro-Sorcerer	
	26 creatures	

Knight

Kinsbaile Cavalier grants double-strike to all of your Knights. This is an extremely powerful ability, especially when tied to a four-mana creature, because it does two things—it immediately doubles all damage you have on the board, and it gives all of your creatures first strike (half of double-strike), meaning they will win combat. The Knight deck is the most straightforward of the five decks to build, since you want to have Knights, get them bigger, and then have them smash face!

Let's assume that we want the deck to be mono-white, since most of the other Knights of note (black and red) are double-colored mana, and we have a curve to keep to. This leaves the following Knights worth playing:



One-Drop: **Knight of Sursi**

Two-Drop: **Benalish Cavalry**, **Knight of Meadowgrain**, **Knight of the Holy Nimbus**, **Order of the Golden Cricket**, **White Shield Crusader**

Three-Drop: **Avian Changeling**, **Mirror Entity**, **Outrider en-Kor**, **Riftmarked Knight**

Four-Drop: **Kinsbaile Cavalier**

Five-Drop: **Pentarch Paladin**

In order to maximize taking advantage of double strike, we want our guys to be as large as we can make them. **Mirror Entity** helps in that regard (plus it lets you turn anything into a Soldier, in case we decide to run non-soldier creatures in the future), but what else can pump creatures in white? Well some cards aren't budget-conscious (**Ajani Goldmane**), but others are (**Celestial Crusader**). Here's a list of the temporary and permanent creature boosters in white in Standard that cost four or less.

Temporary: **Fortify**, **Ghost Warden**, **Kjeldoran War Cry**, **Marshaling Cry**, **Surge of Thoughtweft**, **Warrior's Honor**

Permanent: **Celestial Crusader**, **Daily Regimen**, **Daybreak Coronet**, **Field Marshal**, **Glacial Plating**, **Glorious Anthem**, **Griffin Guide**, **Holy Strength**, **Icatian Priest**, **Meadowboon**, **Mosquito Guard**, **Serra's Boon**, **Serra's Embrace**, **Sinew Sliver**, **Triclopean Sight**, **Wizened Cenn**, **Zhalfirin Commander**

Of these, some have way too restrictive conditions to grow creatures (**Daybreak Coronet**, **Glacial Plating**—we'd need a lot of tickets in snow lands just for this one card), some are off-tribe (**Field Marshal**, **Wizened Cenn**), some have too little an effect (**Holy Strength**), and a few require too high of an investment (**Icatian Priest**). The ones that stick out as possibilities are **Fortify**, **Surge of Thoughtweft**, **Celestial Crusader**, **Glorious Anthem**, and **Griffin Guide**.

There's also the matter of equipment—while many of the tribal-specific equipments are a bit cost prohibitive for the effects (without the ability to take advantage of a free equip), good ol' standby **Loxodon Warhammer** seems a perfect fit for when you want to make a 2/2 guy into a 5/2 double-striking monstrosity! **Door of Destinies** also seems like a great way to stay in the game, later on—if you play guys on turns two and three and follow them with **Door of Destinies**, you're either setting up to make your guys bigger on subsequent turns, or you're going to be able to drop one huge guy after another once your opponent sweeps all of your creatures off of the board (with, say, **Wrath of God** or **Damnation**). It also works well with **Riftmarked Knight**, which drops two Knights into play for the cost of one.

Here's a preliminary build of a Knight deck, designed to smash face on a curve. Because there isn't a great three-drop slot for this deck, we can easily fit in four copies of **Llanowar Reborn** as a way to make our third-turn 2-drop into a 3/3 guy instead of a 2/2 guy.

Good Knight to You		
Standard-Legal Knight Deck		
Main Deck		
60 cards		
4 Llanowar Reborn	4 Kinsbaile Cavalier	3 Door of Destinies
15 Plains	4 Knight of Meadowgrain	3 Loxodon Warhammer
4 Windbrisk Heights	4 Knight of Sursi	4 Oblivion Ring

23 lands	4 Knight of the Holy Nimbus	10 other spells
	3 Pentarch Paladin	
	4 Riftmarked Knight	
	4 White Shield Crusader	
27 creatures		

So there you have it—five preliminary builds for the five mini-tribes of *Morningtide*! Don't worry - we'll be paying full dues to Soldiers, Wizards, Warriors, Shaman and Rogues in due time, but those five are the main focus of the set. It's time to give Archers, Druids, Knights, Clerics and Assassins their due in the meanwhile!

Which deck would you most like to see me evolve in a future column?

- Archers (What Goes Up...)
- Assassins (The Silent Killers)
- Clerics (Prevent This!)
- Druids (Land Grab)
- Knights (Good Knight to You)

See you all in seven days!

Ben

*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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