

AEON'S END

A Beginner's Guide



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FOREWORD

I'm very much a beginner at *Aeon's End* but when I break into a new game that challenges me I like to 'solve' it by compiling a strategy guide like this to share with my fellow players. It's only a superficial examination of the characters and how their powers interact. Experienced players will correct me and point out more sophisticated interactions that I've missed – or I hope they will; I'll edit this document in the light of criticisms.

Throughout the document, mages and cards from the expansions are indicated by superscript: ^D for *The Depths* and ^N for *The Nameless*.

MAGE INTRODUCTION

Kevin Riley's flavour text helps characterise each mage, but since it's on the back of each player mat you don't get to read it during the game. I've reproduced it here, followed by a brief overview of this mage's main strengths and limitations.

Breaches: I list the breaches I-IV in order as open (✓), closed (but orientated right →, down ↓, left ← or upwards ↑) and non-existent (*).

Hand (Deck): The mage's cards, starting with the hand and the rest of the starter deck in parenthesis; "signature" is the mage's unique character card.

Signature Card [0]: The mage's signature card is briefly explained; all cards have their aether cost in parenthesis [].

Signature Power [4-6]: The mage's personal power is explained; the cost to use in charges is in parenthesis [].

I'll offer some thoughts on the starting two turns, priorities for spending aether and how to use the signature card and power to the best effects. Aether costs are indicated by @.

Key Allies: I'll offer some thoughts on the allies that function best with each mage: what they offer you and what you offer them.

Dream Team: This is (what seems to me) an optimal group of mages based around each character: the main mage comes first followed by a useful ally for a 2-player game, then another ally for a 3-player game and a final ally for a 4-player game. I've not included mages from the expansions in dream teams for the mages, but it should be obvious how they can be substituted.

KEY ASSUMPTION: THE PROBLEM WITH SPARKS

Most of the discussion which follows is based on a key assumption, that Spark cards are best 'benched' by prepping them in breaches and leaving them there, freeing up decks to maximise aether. The appearance of certain minions (like Haze Spewers) justifies everyone casting their Sparks to damage or destroy, but otherwise Sparks are more of an encumbrance than a benefit. Sparks are not worth firing at the nemesis; the damage they inflict is miniscule. When the endgame arrives, players will be dealing damage in double figures and, if they destroy the nemesis, they will over-kill it by a considerable margin, so the tiny damage at the start of the game will not be decisive.

The following advice assumes that the best strategy is to place Sparks into breaches and not cast them, using a trimmed-down deck of gems to buy charges, focus more breaches or buy better cards. Doubtless more experienced players will have more refined strategies to offer.



ADELHEIM

Breach Mage Weaponsmith

It is folly what I do, to make things in a place where everything is broken. But still, I bring my hammer down. We all have work to do and I'll not let pride keep me from it.

Ours is an army of fools, yes. We make weapons of the very breaches they wander through. No mystery we die so, when we try to play with the deadliest powers we know. But what of it truly? This is still the way of the things, in spite of all that has passed: some people die while the rest must fight. So I bring my hammer down, again and again. Mending swords. Fashioning strangeness from breach-touched ore. They ask it of me and thus it is done, for folly or not.

Adelheim is a 'backroom' character and needs to be played as such. His Aethereal Ward is capable of incapacitating the nemesis (but not its minions) for a short time. Keeping the Ward in readiness means Adelheim spends most turns buying charges; if the Ward is already charged, he buys better gems. He can keep both his Spark spells breached but needs to think very carefully before directing valuable aether to opening more breaches and acquiring spells: in general, he leaves that to the other mages.

Breaches: ✓↔→↓

Hand (Deck): Signature Card, 2 Crystal, 2 Spark (5 Crystal)

Amethyst Shard [0]: Gain 1@; any ally may draw a card and then discard a card in hand.

Aethereal Ward [5]: Activate during the nemesis draw phase: when a nemesis attack or power card is drawn but before it is resolved, you may discard it.

On your first turn you can open your second breach and prep both Sparks. Adelheim is the only mage with just 2 Sparks in his deck and if he can keep them in breaches it will slim the deck down to Crystals and the Amethyst Shard.

You can fire the Sparks when a minion appears (you can't discard minions with your Aethereal Ward); it's not worth using Sparks on the nemesis at the start of the game and they clutter up your deck and lower your buying power.

On your second turn, you have 5@ to make a strong purchase. Your Aethereal Ward is such a vital power you should always prioritise buying charges for it. **Mage Talisman [5]**, **Vim Dynamo^D [4]** and **Molten Hammer^N [5]** are great early buys, as is the **Leeching Agate^N [3]**, so with 5@ you can buy this and a charge, giving you 2 charges in total]. Otherwise, buy a 2- or 3-cost gem and 1 charge; if you can't do that but the supply contains useful spells (see below) then focus your third breach and buy a charge; otherwise just buy 2 charges. Encourage other players to buy **Ignite [4]** or **Clouded Sapphire [6]** and to give you charges when they are used.

Get the Aethereal Ward fully charged as soon as possible and don't be shy about using it to cancel nemesis powers or attacks as they are drawn; then start charging it up again. This is Adelheim's single most important contribution to the game.

Adelheim works best focusing on gems so that he generates a huge amount of aether each turn; if you have all your charges, aether can be used to discard a lot of nemesis powers that slip through the net.

Buying other spells and relics is quite low down your priority list; the best spells for Adelheim are ones like **Oblivion Swell [5]**, **Lava Tendril [4]** and the amazing **Devouring Shadow^D [6]** that can remain prepped but carry on creating benefits while they are in his breach.



Key Allies

Since Adelheim is best employed generating aether and acquiring charges, he needs to be allied with a mage who can take the fight to the enemy or help him round out his deck.

Jian: Jian has strong early damage output, making up for the fact that Adelheim will keep his Sparks prepped as long as possible.

Lash: Lash makes a good complement to Xaxos, giving Adelheim an extra turn to buy charges before the nemesis acts

Malastar^N: Gift of Aether^N [6] can give Adelheim spells for free, leaving you to concentrate on getting your charges.

Mist: Mist is a substitute for Xaxos, offering you extra cards which (since they should be gems if you prepped your Sparks) can be used to buy charges

Nym^D: Nym makes an interesting ally for Adelheim, introducing a strategy of burning through the nemesis deck to win by default. You will need Adelheim's Ward when the higher-tier nemesis cards come out.

Phaedraxa: Her **Auspex Rune [5]** can stand in while your Aethereal Ward is being charged, canceling all damage that the nemesis deals.

Reeve^D: Another strong warrior who can take the battle to the enemy—in particular she can deal with the minions that Adelheim's Ward does not discard.

Xaxos: Metaphysical Link [4] can charge Adelheim back up again after using his Aethereal Ward; his **Flare [0]** makes up for Adelheim's lack of damage output.

Dream Team: Adelheim, Xaxos, Lash, Phaedraxa



BRAMA

Breach Mage Elder

My conclave of sisters is long ago gone, all of them ash in the world above. I do not remember their names, only their faces and the brightness in their eyes. Their songs fade in the grey shadows of my many years, and I alone can still hear them. Only Gravehold is more ancient than I, and yet somehow I endure.

The city looks to me for guidance, for I have walked a long, wearisome path to stand before them. This is my duty, my burden, my privilege. It was I who counselled them to collapse the mouth of the cave, to entomb us here. It was I who taught the mages to wield the sister-words. Where so many have slipped beneath the shadow, I have remained in light.

Many say we are lost, that Gravehold is just that: our grave. They say, like my sisters, we will be erased, our bones left to moulder in the silence of this cave. But glory will be ours again and I will live to feel the sun and wind on my face once more. Faith, younglings. It is our best weapon.

Brama is first and foremost a medic and needs to keep her Brink Siphon ability in readiness, so her first priority is to acquire better gems and buy charges. With her team-mates on full (or near-to-full) health, she can invest in opening breaches and buying better spells. However, she must avoid cluttering her deck, so that she can keep buying charges to bring the Siphon back to readiness again.

Breaches: ✓↓→↔

Hand (Deck): Signature Card, 4 Crystal (3 Crystal, 2 Spark)

Buried Light [0]: When cast: deal 1 damage, gain 1@

Brink Siphon [5]: During your main phase, any player gains 4 life

You will have 3@ in turn 1 and can prep your Buried Light, which means in turn 2 you'll have 4@. Since your breach IV is nearly open, you might be tempted to spend 4@ in turn 2 focusing it and prep the other Spark there.

What to do with turn 1's 3@? You could open breach II, since, with 2 breaches open, you can keep all your

Sparks prepped until they're needed on minions and concentrate on opening breach IV for more important spells.

You're not in the same hurry to get rid of Sparks as the other mages: you can keep them prepped and out of your way; if you prep Buried Light to breach IV it will deal 2 damage and generate 1@, which is pretty respectable for the start of the game.

Brama is unusual in that her signature card is a spell and not a gem (although **Xaxos**, **Malastar**^N and **Z'Hana**^D share this); **Buried Light [0]** deals minor damage (unless you prep it to breach IV) and offers 1@ as well. With the Sparks prepped, you can develop Brama towards healing (by buying charges) or war (by buying better spells).

Brink Siphon [5] is a very important power, providing one of the few ways of healing in the game (Kadir's **Emerald Shard [0]** offers tiny amounts of healing and **Vim Dynamo**^D [4] and **Essence Theft [5]** heal damage too). You should avail yourself of this as often as possible.

If Brama is fully charged early in the game, her healing powers can buy time for other mages to focus on setting up their decks. Prioritise buying charges or look for supplies like the **Leeching Agate**^N [3], **Vim Dynamo**^D [4], **Mage's Talisman [5]** and **Molten Hammer**^N [5].

While the Siphon is fully-charged but if no one needs healing (and remember, you can't split the 4 Life among different people so it's worth waiting for someone to get down to 6 Life so they enjoy the full benefit), Brama can diversify her deck. But be restrained. A deck cluttered up with spells and relics won't reliably generate the aether you need to re-charge the Siphon after use. A single strong spell would be useful if you've managed to open Brama's breach IV.

You might also be tempted by relics or spells that destroy cards so you can cull the starter cards from your deck. Don't be sentimental about the Buried Light spell; it's useful at the start of the game as a spell that generates aether, but it's still clutter once you've bought better gems and more deadly spells, so destroy it if you can.

Key Allies

As a healer, Brama allies best with mages who inflict damage with their cards or who need a long time to set up the decks.

Jian: Jian has a lot of Sparks to get rid of before his deck runs smoothly and your healing can buy him time to do this

Lash: Lash's **Quicken Thought [5]** power inflicts damage every time it is used to manipulate the turn order deck

Malastar^N: The **Immolate^N [0]** spell causes Malastar to gain a charge every time he takes damage; this is great but he will need someone to heal that damage.

Phaedraxa: The **Tourmaline Shard [0]** lets you destroy a card (like a Spark) in exchange for taking 1 damage (which you can heal).

Reeve^D: Her **Obsidian Shard^D [0]** can cause damage with each use, so she will definitely need healing (but what a warrior!)

Z'Hana^D: Her **Sanctum Glyph^D [5]** heals Gravehold itself, which can make a party invulnerable if Brama is healing life too; this combination (perhaps with **Nym^D**) could win by exhausting the nemesis deck.

Dream Team: Brama, Phaedraxa, Lash, Jian



JIAN

Breach Mage Orphan

Father died. The orb. I took it in my hands. And then quiet was upon me.

Orphan. Then the mages. I learned the sister-words. The spark. But never spoke them.

Like Phaedraxa, I see it. It changed me.

There are many worlds. The Nameless are a scourge to all. So, war.

Once, I was born. Soon, I will save them, then become nothing. Everything in between is just waiting.

A web. It's all a web.

Jian is a combat mage who will probably save the day with devastating castings, but he needs time to set up first. Although he starts with 2 opened breaches, Jian's deck is cluttered with Spark cards that need to be replaced with much better spells (a problem he shared with Reeve^D). He needs to destroy the Sparks or find a way to discard them and draw better cards instead. Several gems and relics and the help of certain other mages can let him do this.

Breaches: ✓✓→↓

Hand (Deck): Signature Card, 2 Crystal, 2 Spark (3 Crystal, 2 Spark)

Moonstone Shard [0]: Gain 1@; gain an additional 1@ that can only be used to gain a gem

Black Mirror [4]: During your main phase, cast any player's prepped spell without discarding it, then cast that prepped spell again and discard it.

You start with two open breaches so you can prep both Sparks in the first turn. This leaves you with 4@ to buy the best gem you can afford. If for some reason you can't do that, buy a charge instead. You might end up keeping a Crystal in hand but make sure you put the Moonstone Shard at the bottom of the cards you discard.

In turn 2, you will probably draw 2 more Sparks, so you might as well fire off the Sparks from turn 1. Your best buy is another gem, because you need to increase your buying power to get some powerful spells, but you might consider focusing your 3rd breach and prepping a

Spark in that, just to free up space in your hand to draw back the new gem and/or the Moonstone Shard in turn 3.

Those Sparks create a trickle of damage at the start of the game, but they clutter up your deck and you have 4 of them (more than any other mage). This means your priorities are to get better spells and open more breaches to prep them in. Unfortunately, the **Moonstone Shard [0]** helps you buy gems, not spells, so use it to get the best gems you can afford (ideally **Diamond Clusters [4]** or **Searing Rubies [4]** but **Sifter's Pearl [3]** is useful too) then use them to fund spells.

Your next project is getting rid of those Sparks. Hopefully there are cards in the supply that trim your deck: **Spectral Echo [3]**, **Transmogri^Difier [4]** and **Molten Hammer^N [5]** and (better) **Consuming Void [7]** or (best of all) **Devouring Shadow^D [6]** all do this as does **Bottled Vortex [3]**.

Failing that, cards which let you discard the Sparks will help you get better spells into your breaches: **Dark Fire [5]** and **Essence Theft [5]** do this, as do **Sifter's Pearl [3]** and **Burning Opal [5]**. The **Banishing Topaz^D [5]** offers a way of converting unwanted Sparks into aether.

If Jian can solve the problem of his Sparks, he should end up with a lean, combat-heavy deck and a lot of open breaches to prep spells into. That's when his signature power comes into play.



The **Black Mirror [4]** is a cheap power to use, but it only really comes into its own later in the game when more powerful spells are being prepped. Don't be shy about using it to cast **Spectral Echo [3]** or **Consuming Void [7]** from someone else's breach in order to get rid of your own Sparks. Later in the game, your power to "double fire" spells will be decisive, so you will shift from buying spells to buying charges.

Key Allies

Jian fires off a lot of Sparks in the first few turns but needs to focus on getting better spells into play and getting the Sparks out of the way.

Adelheim: Adelheim's **Amethyst Shard [0]** can help you draw a card and discard a Spark.

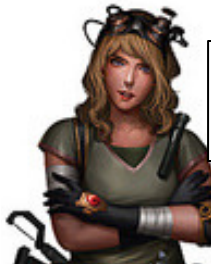
Malastar^N: The **Gift of Aether [6]** puts a spell straight into your breach – fantastic if **Consuming Void [7]** is available.

Mist: The **Divine Augury [5]** lets you draw 4 cards; since your hand tends to be cluttered with Sparks, you benefit from this more than most.

Phaedraxa: The **Tourmaline Shard [0]** lets you destroy a card (like a Spark) in exchange for taking 1 damage.

Xaxos: **Metaphysical Link [5]** can fully charge Jian back up again after using his Black Mirror; using Black Mirror twice in a turn can be devastating later in the game.

Dream Team: Jian, Phaedraxa, Xaxos, Adelheim



KADIR

Breach Mage Delver

I was alone in my hunger to explore the deeps. The elders say the ancient tribes once worshipped a sleeping god somewhere in the maze of tunnels and vaults below. I have journeyed farther than any other and seen many an oddity in the pure black silence, but none yet that resembles a god, asleep or otherwise.

There is no peace to be had elsewhere in Gravehold. Woe fills the air like dust, a patina of dread scattered upon everything. But in the deep, ah, in the deep there is peace. In the deep, there is wisdom that wells up from within as your self dissolves into the emptiness. This is why we take the youngling mages there, to clear their thoughts, even if only for that single pilgrimage. But I believe our true salvation lies beneath the city. Somewhere in the shadows is a place that even The Nameless cannot find. One day I will lead them to it, and they too will know peace.

Kadir is a good all-rounder. Her abilities benefit either herself or her allies, through minor healing or returning cast spells to breaches to prep devastating volleys. Since she can open her breaches relatively early, she can set herself up as a warrior quickly and take the battle to the nemesis.

Breaches: ✓↙↘↖

Hand (Deck): Signature Card, 3 Crystal, 1 Spark (3 Crystal, 2 Spark)

Emerald Shard [0]: Gain 1@ OR any player heals 1 damage

Otherworldly Gate [5]: During any player's main phase, a player may return up to 3 spells in their discard pile to their hand and prep up to 2 spells to any opened breaches during that turn.

You will have 4@ in turn 1 and can prep your Spark. Since your breach IV is nearly open, you might be tempted to spend 4@ focusing it and prep the Spark there.

Next turn, when you draw your remaining Sparks, you can open breach II and prep both of them and then work on opening breach IV the turn after that. Having breach IV open so early in the game makes even Sparks worth casting.

With 3 breaches open, you can keep your Sparks prepped until they're needed on minions and concentrate your gems-only deck on other things. Probably, the first thing you'll do is open your final breach: maybe **Jian** will get all his breaches open before you, but no one else should.

Sooner or later, you want to be rid of those Sparks. Hopefully there are cards in the supply that trim your deck: **Spectral Echo [3]**, **Molten Hammer^N [5]**, **Devouring Shadow^D [6]** and **Consuming Void [7]** do this as do **Transmogrifier^D [4]** and **Bottled Vortex [3]**. Cards which let you discard the Sparks will help you get better spells into your breaches: **Dark Fire [5]** and **Essence Theft [5]** do this.

Emerald Shard [0] is more useful as a constant trickle of healing than as a source of aether, so invest in better gems early. **Searing Ruby [4]** is best because it helps you buy potent spells for breach IV but **Sifter's Pearl [3]** and **Burning Opal [5]** help you discard unwanted Sparks while **Banishing Topaz^D [5]** turns starting cards into 2 aether. Always take the healing from Emerald Shard after the first turn: there's very little healing in the game and 'little and often' is better in many ways than **Brama's** big healing power.

The **Otherworldly Gate [5]** sets up powerful plays when big spells can be cast, reclaimed and re-prepped. This has a secondary benefit of bringing a spell someone has just bought into play rather than waiting for the discard pile to be flipped. It also lets a player re-order spell cards in the discard pile: once cast, spells are discarded together and get drawn together in future turns.



On top of this, the Otherworldly Gate allows the player benefitting from it to prep TWO spells to each open breach—ensuring that their next casting phase will be monstrous! If combined with a relic like **Temporal Helix [6]**, you could cast all your spells, retrieve and re-prepare them thanks to the Gate then cast them again without discarding them!

These are great benefits but they're only worth the investment later in the game: it's devastating when combined with **Jian's** power to cast a prepped spell (something **Mist** can also do with her **Garnet Shard [0]**).

Key Allies

Kadir's **Emerald Shard [0]** benefits allies with healing, but she can have powerful breaches open early in the game and needs help prepping powerful spells so that **Otherworldly Gate [5]** can deliver powerful cannon-ades.

Adelheim: Adelheim's **Amethyst Shard [0]** can help you draw a card and discard a Spark.

Jian: Jian's **Black Mirror [4]** can be devastating with Otherworldly Gate (cast spells twice then re-prepare them ready to cast again).

Lash: Lash can help set up the turn order so that a mage is ready to re-cast the spells they just prepped thanks to Otherworldly Gate

Malastar^N: The **Gift of Aether^N [6]** puts a spell straight into your breach – fantastic if you've opened breach IV already.

Phaedraxa: The **Tourmaline Shard [0]** lets you destroy a card (like a Spark) in exchange for taking 1 damage (which you can heal).

Reeve^D: Her **Obsidian Shard^D [0]** can deal her damage, so she benefits from your healing (and she's a great warrior ally).

Z'Hana^D: Her **Eternal Ember^D [0]** lets her cast one of her own prepped spells without discarding it, which is great if the Otherworldly Gate lets her prep a spell she's only just bought.

Dream Team: Kadir, Phaedraxa, Adelheim, Jian



LASH

Breach Mage Scout

Like the jagged rocks around us, these are hard times. You can see it reflected in the eyes of even the heartiest folk: the fog of constant dread looming large within them.

But me, I laugh, I smile. For any day is worth living well, no? What other use would it be? We are the lucky ones, though our journey may be paved with strife. I say laugh anyway. Smile anyway. Let my voice be heard ringing against the wall of the cave, echoing into nothing. If today be my last, then let it also be my best.

Often I stare down at the city from the balustrade, the dirt market being my favourite place to contemplate. The good people there, peddling their wares, the cacophony of their haggling, the scent of salted meat and brine. And I think to myself, "The world does go on." And so it does, in spite of our trials, our great adversity. The people in the market, they still find it within themselves to sit at their stall and hope for a good day's profit. To savour the banter of a spirited haggle. To cook a simple yet tasty meal to share with loved ones. And at night in their hovels, they dream against the dark. There is no beauty in this world or any other greater than that.

Lash is a tactician who can manipulate the odds in the players' favour. His Quartz Shard can generate extra aether and allows him some control over the turn order and, when his power is charged, he can grant a player an extra turn. In the meantime, his breaches are easy to open and he can start investing in more powerful attacks earlier than most of the other mages.

Breaches: ✓↔↔↔

Hand (Deck): Signature Card, 3 Crystal, 1 Spark (3 Crystal, 2 Spark)

Quartz Shard [0]: Gain 1@; reveal the top card of the turn order deck and place it either on the top or bottom; if you revealed a player turn order card gain 1@

Quicken Thought [5]: During any player's main phase, shuffle their turn order card back into the turn order deck; that player takes 1 damage

You will have either 4@ or 5@ in turn 1 and can prep your Spark. Since your breach IV is nearly open, you might be tempted to spend 4@ focusing it and prep the Spark there. Next turn, when you draw your remaining Sparks, you can open breach II and prep both of them and then work on opening breach IV the turn after that. Having breach IV open so early in the game makes even Sparks worth casting. With 3 breaches open, you can keep your Sparks prepped until they're needed on minions and concentrate your gems-only deck on other things.

Ultimately, you want to be rid of those Sparks. Hopefully there are cards in the supply that trim your deck: **Spectral Echo [3]**, **Molten Hammer^N [5]**, **Devouring Shadow^P [6]** and **Consuming Void [7]** do this as do **Bottled Vortex [3]** and **Transmogrifier^P [4]**. Cards which let you discard the Sparks will help you get better spells into your breaches: **Dark Fire [5]** and **Essence Theft [5]** do this, as do **Sifter's Pearl [3]** and **Burning Opal [5]**.

The **Quartz Shard [0]** is a valuable card. Not only is it often worth 2@, but it gives you some control over turn order. It's tempting to banish nemesis turns to the bottom of the deck, but think twice about doing this: when the nemesis activates last, there's a chance it will activate first (and perhaps second as well) once the deck is shuffled, leading to 2 or 3 consecutive nemesis turns, which is devastating. It's usually a good idea to put player turns on the bottom of the deck, especially if the player only plans to make purchases or focus breaches. Of course, some player turns are more important than that (like Adelheim or Phaedraxa charging their power before a nemesis turn) and need to happen straight away.

Quicken Thought [5] offers even more control over turn order, granting an extra turn to a player. This is best used once most (or all) of the other turn order cards have been drawn, to give a player 2 consecutive turns. Adelheim and Phaedraxa will use this to charge their powers in order to incapacitate the nemesis. Jian will use it to prep a powerful spell then cast that spell twice (or enable someone else to do this). This is very situational, however; someone must be able to accomplish something very meaningful to make this worthwhile, especially as they take damage from it.

In fact, the damage is the main reason you might not find yourself using this power. If Brama or Kadir are your allies, the damage can be healed back; otherwise, you need to have something awesome in mind for this extra turn to justify the cost of taking it.

Key Allies

Lash's Quartz Shard and Quicken Thoughts power both benefit his allies, but he can have powerful breaches open early in the game and needs help prepping powerful spells to them.

Adelheim: Adelheim's **Amethyst Shard [0]** can help you draw a card and discard a Spark.

Brama: Brama's **Brink Siphon** offers healing which is important since Quicken Thoughts damages its beneficiaries; this is even more important if Phaedraxa is in play as well

Kadir: Kadir's **Emerald Shard [0]** offers minor healing often which offsets the damage caused by Quicken Thought

Malastar^N: The **Gift of Aether^N [6]** puts a spell straight into your breach – fantastic if you've opened breach IV already.

Phaedraxa: The **Tourmaline Shard [0]** lets you destroy a card (like a Spark) in exchange for taking 1 damage. Combining another damaging power with Quicken Thought can only be justified if a healer is on hand.

Reeve^D: Reeve's immense damage output makes her a candidate for the extra turn you can offer with Quicken Thoughts.

Dream Team: Lash, Phaedraxa, Kadir, Adelheim



MALASTAR

Breach Mage Mentor

You can always tell which younglings will be mages. Mostly, they are girls, but sometimes a boy-child will carry the spark, though weaker than their sister-kind. Training each of them is my sad calling, for mages come and go like the black days in this place.

First, they learn the sister-words, the mage's tongue, the language of all things. Next we fashion them a gem, one that is theirs alone, a conduit for their nascent power. After this, Kadir takes them deep within the bowels of the cave, where they must find their way back with only their gem to protect them. Many find their way home, but we have lost many would-be mages in my years.

A student's last task is to slay a beast, armed again only with their gem and their wits. The child is dropped down a shaft outside Chasmwalk, left alone with whatever miscreation we have snared from the void. Sometimes the creature is wounded, weak, but always they are hungry. A student that navigates this ordeal is named apprentice. After that, one need only survive long enough to earn the rank of mage.

Malastar works best as a backroom strategist. He starts with just 3 breaches and none of them opened. Once he opens a breach (probably breach III), he will leave his Immolate spell prepped there. Since he has no other spells but lots of gems, Malastar is better employed collecting charges and using his power to gift the most powerful spells in the supply to other mages – although if he can squeeze out the aether to focus and open his other breaches, he can arm himself this way too.

Breaches: ✖→↑↓

Hand (Deck): Signature Card, 4 Crystal (5 Crystal)

Immolate [0]: When prepped, gain a 1 charge if you suffer damage; **cast:** deal 1 damage

Gift of Aether [6]: During your main phase, take a spell from any supply pile and prep it to any player's open breach

You will have 4@ in turn 1; you could open breach III or focus breach IV and prep your Immolate spell. You must keep Immolate prepped indefinitely, because it generates charges whenever you take damage.

After that, you have a gems-only deck which you can start upgrading. It might be tempting to use 5@ on turn 2 to open breach II, so that Immolate can be cast then re-prepped there later (breach III's damage bonus is wasted on a spell you keep prepped indefinitely).

Malastar is best played as a support character: buy better gems, using the aether to buy charges.

Immolate^N [0] is a fantastic spell if you keep it prepped. It interacts beautifully with Phaedraxa's **Tourmaline Shard [0]** which gives you a charge and deals you 1 damage; with Immolate prepped you turn that into 2 charges. It also interacts with **Vim Dynamo^D [4]**, which deals 1 damage and lets you draw 2 cards; since you can later destroy it to gain 2 life and a charge, it's a must-buy for Malastar. The only reason to cast a spell Immolate is to move it into a lower breach.

With only 3 breaches, Malastar is vulnerable. If he gets exhausted, there are only 2 breaches left to cast from and that will limit his usefulness at the end of the game (when everyone tends to switch to violent spell attacks). Playing Malastar, you should accompany healers like **Brama** and **Kadir** and petition for healing often and loudly.

Gift of Aether^N [6] is a power which (unusually but understandably) requires 6 charges to activate. The spell you acquire is best granted to a mage in support role; perhaps yourself or else someone like **Adelheim**, **Brama** or **Phaedraxa** who spends all their aether on charges. However, **Jian** could use the spell twice using his **Black Mirror [4]**, **Brama** could cast it immediately with her **Garnet Shard [0]** and **Kadir** could recall it after use with her **Otherworldly Gate [5]**.

Being the backroom quartermaster isn't the most exciting of roles (although **Adelheim** will sympathise), but if you're disciplined, Malastar can provide such powerful advantages that he can swing the game towards victory every time. Disciple is important: playing Malastar you must be cautious about cluttering your deck with impulsively acquired spells. If you want some of the new allies that act independently rather than buffing their friends from behind the scenes, look to **Nym^D** and **Reeve^D**.

Key Allies

Malastar is a great ally for mages who need to spend their aether on charges, gems or focusing breaches, because his Gift of Aether can grant them free spells.

Adelheim: Adelheim needs to build his deck around gems and buying charges so the Gift of Aether saves him from spending aether on spells.

Brama: Similarly, Brama is better off buying gems and charges for her healing power and the Gift of Aether grants her spells without her spending aether.

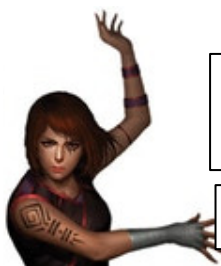
Jian: Black Mirror [4] casts spells twice ; since he struggles with too many Sparks in his deck, Jian benefits from a free spell directly into a breach.

Kadir: Kadir's **Emerald Shard [0]** offers minor healing often which offsets the damage Malastar takes to use Immolate.

Phaedraxa: The **Tourmaline Shard [0]** triggers a prepped Immolate spell for Malastar; she also prefers to spend her aether on charges and benefits from free spells.

Z'Hana^D: Her **Eternal Ember^D [0]** lets her cast one of her own prepped spells without discarding it, which is great if the Gift of Aether preps a powerful spell for her.

Dream Team: Malastar, Phaedraxa, Kadir, Adelheim



MIST

Dagger Captain

The mages, they all think me brave, their closest substitute to Thraxir. His death was like all the others: swift and cruel. It is true, I have waded in the fire of the breach three times. Each time I have left splinters of myself behind, little shreds ripped from my bleeding soul. Though many beasts have been quieted by my blade, I must confess each one of them has scared me more than the last.

I am not brave. Not like Thraxir, not like Brama. I simply do this because it was asked of me. I fight not truly for Gravehold alone, but selfishly – I would risk everything for the hope of leaving this place. I was made a dagger captain and taught the sister-words to wield the breach, but I am no different than any one here: scared, desperate and willing to die for an opportunity to once again be alive.

Mist is a good all-rounder with a useful gem and breaches that are quite easy to open. She can cast spells (her own or other people's) without waiting for them to be ready and her Divine Augury can trigger a big draw of cards, perhaps leading to a spell being prepped that her Garnet Shard then enables her to cast early. She's also useful as a support for other mages, enabling them to draw big hands to re-charge their powers or make expensive purchases.

Breaches: ✓↔↓↓

Hand (Deck): Signature Card, 3 Crystal, 1 Spark (3 Crystal, 2 Spark)

Garnet Shard [0]: Gain 1@ OR cast any player's prepped spell

Divine Augury [5]: During your main phase, any ally draws 4 cards

You will have either 3@ or 4@ in turn 1 and can prep your Spark then immediately cast it, if you like. You could then open breach II so that you can prep both Sparks next turn.

In turn 2, you should prep both Sparks and leave them there to keep your deck clear of clutter. Options include focusing breach III (possibly prepping a Spark there instead) or investing in your first gem, relic or spell.

Both of Mist's III and IV breaches are well advanced, so

gems (or the **Flexing Dagger [2]** or **Focusing Orb [4]**) make good purchases to get those breaches open.

The **Garnet Shard [0]** is a useful signature card; you want to move away from depending on it for aether and use it instead to fire prepped spells. These could be simple Sparks which go into discard piles, freeing breaches for better spells, or the better spells themselves, taking down minions before their persistent effects take place.

The ability to fire a prepped spell before its turn comes round is a key part of the game's synergy. There are a few other ways of doing it: **Void Bond^D [4]**, **Wildfire Whip [6]**, **Temporal Helix^N [7]** and the **Blasting Staff [4]** as well as **Jian's Black Mirror [4]** power—however **Z'Hanah^D's Eternal Ember^D [0]** only works on her own spells so it won't synergise well with this power.

This sort of synergy works very well with mages who can prep a spell on your behalf: **Kadir** using **Otherworldly Gate [5]** or **Malastar^N** using **Gift of Aether^N [6]**. They place the spell in the breach and you can cast it using the Garnet Shard. This is the sort of flexibility that helps players triumph over a nemesis that (on paper) looks unbeatable.

Divine Augury [5] has two main applications. There are some mages who try to keep their power fully charged at all times (**Adelheim**, **Brama**, **Phaedraxa**) and extra cards helps them buy back charges after use. Then there are mages who can make big plays with their powers (**Jian**, **Kadir**, **Lash**) and Mist can help them put out big spells faster.

However, this power is rather situational. You can only use it during Mist's turn (i.e. not when another player *actually needs it*) and sometimes drawing extra cards messes up the careful order of cards a player has set up in the deck—so ask whether someone really needs this help before you encourage them to take it.

Generally, Mist's power is more useful in games with 4 players, because it only works on *allies*. In a 2-3 player game, it may not be so useful.

Key Allies

Mist is an enabler for other mages with offensive or defensive specialisms. She can fire off their spells out of turn and stock up their hands for big purchases.

Adelheim: Adelheim's **Amethyst Shard [0]** can help you draw a card and discard a Spark while you can help him re-charge his **Aethereal Ward [5]**.


Jian: Jian needs help in the early game making purchases and managing his excess of Sparks; you can help him do both; later in the game his **Black Mirror [4]** complements Mists **Garnet Shard [0]** beautifully.

Malastar^N: The **Gift of Aether [6]** can put expensive spells straight into your breaches; Malastar needs help early in the game opening breaches and charging his Gift.

Phaedraxa: The **Tourmaline Shard [0]** lets you destroy a card (like a Spark) in exchange for taking 1 damage; you can help her re-charge her **Auspex Rune [5]**.

Reeve^D: Reeve is another combat mage who needs help in the early game managing a deck burdened with too many Sparks

Dream Team: Mist, Phaedraxa, Jian, Adelheim



NYM

Breach Mage Apprentice

The Nameless... what a stupid name for those things. It makes no sense. It's just frightened people trying to understand something they don't. Monsters. That's what those things are. Nothing more, nothing less.

Malastar says respecting one's foe is the straightest and clearest path to defeating them. But why would I respect monsters? Malastar is wrong. Respect is a useless concept in this fight—I have no respect for those freaks and have turned as many of them to cinder as anyone.

A lot of people are afraid of 'The Nameless' but not me. They think I am too young to know what fear is, but really fear is the only thing we younglings know. But I choose not to fear them any more. I won't give them anything other than my fire.

Nym is a rather 'niche' character. He functions well enough as a combat mage: his signature card is a spell that generates either damage or (more useful) lots of aether; his breach III and IV are both equally well positioned. But really, he is attuned to just one strategy: winning the game by exhausting the nemesis deck as soon as possible. This is his function and his allies need to get behind this or choose a different mage.

Breaches: ✓→↓↓↓

Hand (Deck): Signature Card, 4 Crystal (3 Crystal, 2 Spark)

Cinder [0]: Cast to deal 1 damage OR gain 2@

Terminus Barrier [5]: During your main phase, discard the top nemesis card; if it was an attack card, discard another nemesis card

You will have 4@ in turn 1—but it's worth holding on to Crystals because when your spell is cast on turn 2 it's worth 2@, giving you (with 5 Crystals in hand) up to 7@, the richest aether intake of any starting mage and sufficient to buy any card from the supply. This makes you a slow starter but, once your discard pile flips to become your deck, you'll have an amazing card in there.

A good choice is to spend 3@ on turn 1 which will open breach II; on turn 2 both Sparks can be prepped and removed from the deck. You should have 6@ that turn, which could buy a great spell or 3 charges.

Alternatively, if you hold more Crystals you'll generate 7@ on turn 2 which will either buy an amazing spell or open breach III, which would pave the way to keeping both Sparks prepped while still casting the Cinder spell as often as possible.

Cinder^D [0] is best cast for 2@, the damage dealt being trivial unless a minion (like the Haze Spewer) needs eliminating quickly. A spell that generates 2@ will remain useful into the mid-game, but by then you'll have more valuable gems and more deadly spells.

Terminus Barrier^D [5] dictates the shape of your strategy. If he doesn't use this power, Nym is just a combat orientated mage like **Jian** or **Kidar** without any particular flourish. If you use this power, you are advancing the nemesis quickly through its tier I, II and III powers. The only reason to do this (since it makes the nemesis more dangerous) is to win the game by exhausting the nemesis deck. This is the "Nym Strategy".

For the "Nym Strategy" to work, you will need allies with powers that incapacitate the nemesis rather than wound it or else powers that heal life or repair damage to Gravehold. You will need a lot of charges to fuel these powers: **Mage Talisman** [5], **Vim Dynamo**^D [4] and **Molten Hammer**^N [5] provide charges, as does the **Leeching Agate**^N [3]. **Ignite** [4] and **Clouded Sapphire** [6] both provide someone with charges when they are used.

However, the most important card for Nym's Strategy is the **Scrying Bolt**^N [6], which lets someone look at the top two cards in the nemesis deck and reorder them. (Ironically, the spell is found in a different expansion from the one Nym comes in!). This spell helps ensure that Nym reveals an attack card, thus removing two cards for one use of his power.



Key Allies

Nym needs allies who can hunker down and endure the nemesis' attacks until the nemesis deck is exhausted and all minions are destroyed, rather than mages who take the battle to the enemy.

Adelheim: Adelheim's **Aethereal Ward [5]** prevents the nemesis from using attacks or powers during its turn (minions are unaffected).

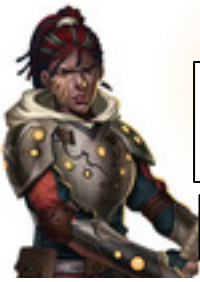
Brama: Brama's **Brink Siphon [5]** restores 4 life every time it is used, healing damage the nemesis has inflicted.

Malastar^N: The **Gift of Aether [6]** can put expensive spells straight into your breaches: useful when you are spending aether on charges rather than buying spells.

Phaedraxa: Her **Auspex Rune [5]** prevents the nemesis or its minions from dealing any damage during its turn.

Z'Hana^D: Her **Sanctum Glyph^D [5]** restores 7 life to Gravehold, healing damage the nemesis has inflicted.

Dream Team: Nym, Phaedraxa, Adelheim, Z'Hana,



PHAEDRAXA

Breach Mage Seer

This is a web, like the ones the howling spinners weave in the deeps. Each strand reaches backward and forward at once. What was, what is, what will be, there is no difference in the web. Silk is silk. Time is time.

I spoke the sister-words before they were taught to me, before I could walk, but after the world was gone. Brama says that is because the wraiths of the sisters encircle me beyond the veil, but she understands not. There is no host of sister-ghosts guiding my path. There is no chorus of voices within me, only my own. I merely see the web and all trapped in it.

I look at the survivors of this city, this beautiful and stark place hidden in the shadows. And in the web, I behold Gravehold, as it was and as it will be. I peel aside the door of a breach. And in the web, a breach widens, much like an eye struggling against the dark. I am born and I die. The Nameless are much the same.

Time is a web, no different, no more.

Phaedraxa has invaluable support powers: her Tourmaline Shard lets allies (not herself) destroy unwanted cards and her Auspex Rune makes the nemesis harmless for a turn. Phaedraxa needs to focus on buying charges and keeping her Rune charged. With only 3 breaches, she's a vulnerable combatant (once exhausted, she's down to 2, which is very limiting), so if someone provides healing, Phaedraxa is a priority.

Breaches: ✕✓↓←

Hand (Deck): Signature Card, 3 Crystal, 1 Spark (4 Crystal, 1 Spark)

Tourmaline Shard [0]: Gain 1@; any ally may destroy a card in hand if they take 1 damage

Auspex Rune [5]: Immediately after drawing a turn card, prevent any damage to players or Gravehold for this turn

You will have either 4@ in turn 1 and can prep your Spark immediately. You will have another 4@ in turn 2 and a second Spark.

Since Phaedraxa starts with no breach I, it's tempting to use her first 4@ to focus breach IV and use 4@ on her second turn to open it. Sooner or later, Phaedraxa needs to do this, but it depends on the supply: if **Leech-**

ing Agate^N [2], Vim Dynamo^D [4], Mage's Talisman [5] or Molten Hammer^N [5] are available, you're better buying them for the charges they offer. Do this by prepping the Spark and spending Crystals in turn 1 (ideally on the Agate) while holding onto the Tourmaline; in turn 2 you draw 4 Crystals and buy a 5-cost relic. If this isn't possible, open the breach instead.

Once these decisions are made, Phaedraxa needs to keep her Sparks prepped (not difficult: she only has two) and focus on acquiring charges. Great value gems like the **Diamond Cluster [5]** might be worth purchasing as might more of the relics and gems that create charges.

The **Tourmaline Shard [0]** is a fantastic gem that lets other players destroy unwanted cards. This is even more valuable if the supply doesn't contain cards that offer this power: **Bottled Vortex [3], Spectral Echo [3], Transmogrifier^D [4], Molten Hammer^N [5], Devouring Shadow^D [6] or Consuming Void [7]**. However, the damage cost from using the Shard mounts up, unless Kadir or Brama are allies with healing powers.

The **Vim Dynamo^D [4]** compliments Phaedraxa's Tourmaline: it lets you draw cards in exchange for 1 damage, but can be destroyed to gain 2 life and 1 charge.

Auspex Rune [5] needs to be kept fully charged all the time so it can be used at the start of a nemesis turn. You have to decide to use the Rune once the nemesis turn order card is revealed but before the nemesis begins its turn. It's particularly valuable if minions or powers that inflict damage are already in play. After use, recharging the Rune is a priority.



Key Allies

Since Phaedraxa is best employed generating aether and acquiring charges, she needs to be allied with a mage who can take the fight to the enemy or help her round out her deck.

Adelheim: The **Aethereal Ward [5]** can stand in while your **Auspex Rune** is being charged, cancelling any attack or power the nemesis draws. Moreover, Adelheim can declare the use of his **Ward** when the nemesis card is revealed, rather than having to do so at the start of the nemesis turn.

Brama: Since you are more vulnerable than most if you are exhausted, Brama's healing is important for you

Kadir: Kadir offers a trickle of healing using her **Emerald Shard [0]** and also functions as a combat mage so she could substitute for Brama.

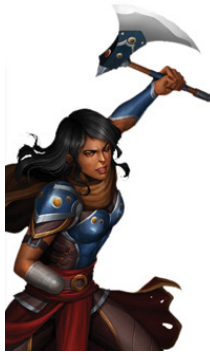
Lash: Lash makes a good substitute for Xaxos, giving Phaedraxa an extra turn to buy charges

Malastar^N: Malastar's **Gift of Aether** can give Phaedraxa spells for free, leaving you to concentrate on getting your charges; his **Immolate^N [0]** gains him an extra charge if he takes the damage from your **Tourmaline Shard**.

Mist: Mist is a substitute for Xaxos, offering you extra cards which can be used to buy charges

Xaxos: Metaphysical Link [5] can charge Phaedraxa back up again after using her **Auspex Rune**; his **Flare [0]** makes up for your lack of damage output.

Dream Team: Phaedraxa, Xaxos, Adelheim, Kadir



REEVE

Breach Mage Elite

I lost the arm to tainted jade. I felt it creeping through my arteries and I lopped it off without a thought. Best to lose the arm and keep the rest, no?

Kadir says I was born for this, meant to live here and now in this damnable hole in the ground to fight these things. And she has the right of it. This is who I am, what I am: a blunt instrument to be used against monsters. My life matters not for much more than that. And I am at peace with it.

Whenever those bells ring I feel my heart swell as I heave my chopper from its sheath. I smell the air burn as the breach opens and I cannot run there fast enough. We all have a purpose, a gift to give. This is mine..

Reeve calls herself “a blunt instrument” and she is indeed a fairly simple combat mage. Her starting breaches are in great positions to open early and (at some harm to herself) she can generate a lot of aether to spend on deadly spells. She suffers problems similar to **Jian**, having too many Spark spells in her deck.

Breaches: ✓↵↵↵

Hand (Deck): Signature Card, 2 Crystal, 2 Spark (3 Crystal, 2 Spark)

Obsidian Shard [0]: Gain 1@ but if you lose 1 life you can gain an extra 2@ (3@ total)

Quelling Blade [4]: During your main phase, you may deal 5 damage to a minion and then 3 damage to a different minion (if there is one).

You will have 3@ in turn 1 or 5@ if you sacrifice a life, which you should only do if there’s a great purchase in the supply. Otherwise, 3@ will open breach II and you can prep both Sparks.

In turn 2, you will have 3@ to spend again. If you didn’t open the breach, you should now; if you opened it, it’s tempting to use the aether to focus breach III and (temporarily) prep a Spark there too.

In the early game, you don’t want to cast your Sparks: you want them benched in your breaches so that your deck generates large amounts of aether for purchases.

Your next mission is getting rid of those Sparks. Hopefully there are cards in the supply that trim your deck: **Bottled Vortex [3]**, **Spectral Echo [3]**, **Transmogriker^D [4]**, **Molten Hammer^N [5]**, **Devouring Shadow^D [6]** and **Consuming Void [7]** all accomplish this. **Phaedraxa** can help you destroy those Sparks, but only at the cost of further damage, so beware.

Failing that, cards which let you discard the Sparks will help you get better spells into your breaches: **Dark Fire [5]** and **Essence Theft [5]** do this, as do **Sifter’s Pearl [3]** and **Burning Opal [5]**. The **Banishing Topaz^D [5]** offers a way of converting unwanted Sparks into more aether by returning them to your deck.

Be careful you don’t over-use the **Obsidian Shard^D [0]**. The damage it inflicts mounts up and healing is scarce in this game unless **Brama** or **Kadir** are allies or the **Vim Dynamo^D [4]** is available. Moreover, the nemesis tends to target the weakest mage, so this can turn into a downward spiral. The Shard should only be hiked up to 3@ when there’s a clear benefit or when healing is on the way.

The **Quelling Blade^D [4]** is a useful power because it’s cheap—just 4 charges—and it helps clear the table when minions are massing. This is particularly useful against minion-heavy nemeses like the Carapace Queen and the Horde-Crone.

Note that the Blade can still be used when there’s just one minion—it inflicts 5 damage and the other 3 points are wasted. Some players house-rule that the Blade’s second attack for 3 damage can be directed at the nemesis if there’s no second minion in play; this is a minor tweak that makes Reeve slightly more useful.

Key Allies

Reeve needs help managing her deck, which is full of Sparks that clutter up each hand she draws.

Adelheim: Adelheim's **Amethyst Shard [0]** can help you draw a card and discard a Spark.

Brama: If Reeve is going to make regular use of her Obsidian Shard she will need a lot of healing.

Jian: Jian suffers the same problem of deck-congestion as Reeve (if anything, it's worse for him), so these two do NOT complement each other well

Kadir: Kadir's **Emerald Shard [0]** provides minor healing that offsets using the Obsidian Shard.

Mist: The **Divine Augury [5]** lets you draw 4 cards; since your hand tends to be cluttered with Sparks, you benefit from this more than most.

Phaedraxa: The **Tourmaline Shard [0]** lets you destroy a card (like a Spark) in exchange for taking 1 damage.

Xaxos: **Metaphysical Link [5]** can fully charge Reeve back up again after using her Quelling Blade—perhaps enabling her to use it twice during her main phase.

Dream Team: Reeve, Kadir, Phaedraxa, Adelheim



XAXOS

Breach Mage Adept

The others, they do not understand. For them, struggle is a virtue acknowledged by less cruel gods than these. They ignore the dark around them and seek a world they cannot remember. But I have discerned our road to salvation, fractured and perilous, straight through the heart of the void.

We may learn much from these creatures, these divinities, though dark they may be. Theirs is a power to cull worlds, to tear wide the membrane of the universe, to traverse the very emptiness that lay between. Is it not within reason to presume they may also have some means to shape worlds as well as destroy them? Perhaps they can whisper into existence more than their fell armies and beasts. The tools they wield are just that – tool. Who is to say we cannot use a tool for a better end?

Yet these words alone are enough to brand a mage heretic. It is for this reason I stifle them, though these thoughts echo behind my silence in a way that seems wisdom. For now, I will study our foes closely, and in doing so I shall learn how to lift us from this torment... no matter what means I must use.

Xaxos is able to predict and manipulate the turn order deck which helps strategizing immensely. The ability to assign charges to other mages makes him fantastic for supporting allies who need to keep their powers ready at all times. What's more, with only a single Spark (which he can leave prepped), he's rich in aether at the start of the game. The downside is that his breaches are badly aligned and opening them will take time.

Breaches: ✓→→↓

Hand (Deck): Signature Card, 4 Crystal (4 Crystal, 1 Spark)

Flare [0]: When cast, reveal the top card of the turn order deck: deal 3 damage if it's a player turn, 1 damage if it's a nemesis turn

Metaphysical Link [5]: During any player's main phase, allies gain 4 charges split between them; reveal the turn order deck and return the cards in any order

You will have 4@ in turn 1 and can prep your Flare immediately. You only have one Spark card, so it's wise to

keep it prepped once it appears and work on your breaches to hold your Flare. Unfortunately, your breaches are very difficult to open. Nonetheless, you could focus breach II for 2@ (and perhaps buy a charge) or use all 4@ to focus breach IV. Once the Spark comes out, you can prep it to the open breach I and leave it there indefinitely.

Xaxos is a powerful mage who deals out respectable damage early on. His drawback is his breaches, which are expensive to open, but if he can get breach IV open then the Flare, launched from there, does up to 4 damage. The **Flexing Dagger [2]** and **Focusing Orb [4]** are useful relics for opening awkward breaches.

Flare [0] is a great signature card because it can deal 3 damage (significant in the early game) and reveals the next turn card.

Metaphysical Link [5] is an interesting power that brings huge flexibility to the group. Extra charges are vital for mages like **Adelheim** and **Phaedraxa** who need to stay fully-charged the whole time. The control over the turn order deck complements **Lash's** abilities to re-order the deck in minor ways and give players an extra turn.

Obviously, you use the Metaphysical Link on the very first player turn, in order to arrange all the subsequent turns. It's tempting to banish nemesis turns to the bottom of the deck, but think twice about doing this: when the nemesis activates last, there's a chance it will activate first (and perhaps second as well) once the deck is shuffled, leading to 2 or 3 consecutive nemesis turns, which is devastating. It's usually a good idea to put a player turn on the bottom of the deck, especially if the player only plans to make purchases or focus breaches. Of course, some player turns are more important than that (like **Adelheim** or **Phaedraxa** charging their power before a nemesis turn).

It's worth noting that **Jian** and **Reeve** have powers that are fully-charged with 4 charges. They could use their powers twice in a row if the Metaphysical Link replenished them.

Key Allies

Xaxos is a good combat mage but has a slightly slow start due to his breaches. His ability to order the deck and assign charges is incredibly helpful for mages with powers that need to stay charged.

Adelheim: The **Aethereal Ward [5]** is worth assigning charges to and Adelheim should be ordered before the nemesis takes its turn.

Brama: Her **Brink Siphon [5]** is another power that needs to be kept charged by you.

Jian: Jian's **Black Mirror [4]** can fire a spell twice (great if Flare is on breach III or IV) and can be fully re-charged with 4 charges.

Lash: Lash can also re-order the turn order deck, setting up your Flare with his **Quartz Shard [0]**.

Phaedraxa: The **Auspex Rune [5]** is worth assigning charges to and Phaedraxa should be ordered before the nemesis takes its turn.

Reeve^D: Her **Quelling Blade^D [4]** can be used twice a turn with your help and is devastating for minions.

Z'Hana^D: The **Sanctum Glyph^D [5]** can save Gravehold and you are able to charge this power and ensure she acts before the nemesis.

Dream Team: Xaxos, Phaedraxa, Lash, Adelheim



Z'HANA

Breach Mage Renegade

Through the flames I could hear them calling for me. My mother, my father. Their voices drowned in fire and smoke... That was the day I lost my family. That was the day I discovered I was a mage.

My philosophies on The Nameless are even less popular than Xaxos'. Many times I have slept in the crypts for things I have said to others. But many more nights I have fought back the dark, side by side with those who have locked the crypt door behind me.

I have journeyed to the cave mouth many times, sitting in the weak light that somehow manages to penetrate the mountain of rubble that bars our way back to The World That Was. Each time I go, I remove a stone. If they catch me, the crypts await. But I always go back, removing another stone and yet another. One day I will seek whatever awaits me beyond this place. One day I will remove the last stone.

Z'Hana is a mage with a radical signature power: she can restore lost life to Gravehold itself, staving off defeat. Her Eternal Ember offsets her main disadvantage: she starts with only 3 breaches, none of them open. On a positive note, she has only a single Spark which, if she can leave it prepped, ensures her deck can generate aether for big purchases early in the game.

Z'Hana is a good all-rounder combining a defensive ability with the potential to mount consistent attacks once spells are prepped to her open breaches. Managing the timing of her Eternal Ember spell is the main difficulty.

Breaches: →↓↑

Hand (Deck): Signature Card, 4 Crystal (4 Crystal, 1 Spark)

Eternal Ember [0]: When **cast**, deal 1 damage OR cast another prepped spell without discarding it

Sanctum Glyph [5]: During your main phase, restore 7 life to Gravehold

You will have 4@ in turn 1 which can be used to open breach IV and prep your Ember spell. There would have to be something pretty compelling in the supply for you not to do this.

In turn 2 you will have another 4@. Now you have choices; 2@ will focus breach I or 3@ will focus breach

II; you could buy charges; you could buy from the supply.

Eternal Ember^D [0] will only be cast for its damaging effect at the very start of the game; it's usually better to use it to trigger the casting power of another prepped spell instead. Since the triggered spell is not discarded, it stays prepped and can be used again.

Z'Hana needs to get a good spell in a high breach (like breach IV) that her Ember can be used to trigger. If it's a spell that offers an ongoing benefit for remaining prepped, so much the better: **Lava Tendril [4]** deals damage every turn, **Oblivion Swell [5]** generates aether every turn, **Devouring Shadow^D [6]** lets you destroy cards in hand, **Wildfire Whip [6]** lets you cast an ally's prepped spell, **Arcane Nexus [7]** lets you recall a gem you just played. These cards can stay prepped indefinitely and you still get their casting power thanks to the Eternal Ember. The only catch is that Z'Hana will only have at most 3 open breaches and one of them must be left clear for the Eternal Ember to go to.

Sanctum Glyph [5] is an invaluable power. Without Z'Hana in play, the only way to heal Gravehold is by destroying a **Focusing Orb [4]**. Once mages become exhausted it gets very hard to prevent damage to Gravehold from building up; restore 7 life to Gravehold in one action is a significant boost.

Notice that Z'Hana can only use the Glyph during her own turn. This means that it's not essential to get her power re-charged as soon as she uses it (although using it twice in a turn, perhaps with the assistance of **Xaxos**, is incredibly beneficial); however it also means that if the nemesis attacks Gravehold after Z'Hana's turn has passed, there's nothing she can do about it until her turn comes round again. **Xaxos** and **Lash** are both useful here because they can manipulate the turn order sequence, letting Z'Hana use her Glyph before the nemesis gets another attack.

Key Allies

Z'Hana has an unusual deck engine that takes some time to set up. She needs at least two open breaches (she starts with none) and a good spell permanently prepped in one, to be triggered by the Eternal Ember in the other. Once this is set up she can focus on buying charges for her healing power.

Adelheim: The **Amethyst Shard [0]** lets you discard a card (like your Spark) and draw a replacement, hastening the return of the Ember to your hand.

Jian: His **Black Mirror [4]** can squeeze another two castings out of a spell you already cast once, thanks to the Eternal Ember.

Kadir: Her **Otherworldly Gate [5]** can return discarded spells (like your Ember) straight back to breaches, ready for next turn.

Lash: Lash can manipulate the turn order deck, which helps you know when you need to get your Glyph charged up

Malastar^N: Malastar can prep a powerful spell directly into one of your breaches—an invaluable piece of assistance.

Xaxos: Xaxos can hurry the charging of your Glyph and ensure you get to heal Gravehold before the nemesis attacks

Dream Team: Z'Hana, Jian, Xaxos, Adelheim