

Red Rains

This collection focuses on the PvE version of Ashes.

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Beginners Guide to Red Rains Campaign

[Abominable Adventure: The Red Rains Campaign Guide for Ashes: Reborn](#)

Guide for The Bloodwoods Queen against The Corpse of Viros

By Archivist

While all 6 of the Phoenixborn in the Master Set are interesting, [Jessa Na Ni](#) catches a lot of players' attention. And for good reason; you don't often see her theme in fantasy games, and very rarely do you get to play the blood-wielding villain.

But if you've tried playing her deck, either in PvP or against the Corpse of Viros (or any other Chimera), you're probably wondering how it is she's supposed to win.

Well, while I can't give you a lot of guidance for playing her deck in PvP, this guide should give you some help in fighting the Corpse of Viros. I'm going to go through this under the assumption you have the bare minimum to play: the Master Set and the Corpse of Viros PvE expansion, and have at least read the rules, even if you don't understand the finer details. This guide is going to focus on her Master Set deck ([The Bloodwoods Queen](#)), not the one in the Corpse of Viros expansion. Lastly, since the rules in the Red Rains campaign expect you to modify your deck for any game other than Standard level 1, I will mostly address navigating Standard Level 1.

Jessa Corpse of Viros
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Staring contest in 3...2...1...

Starting off

All the official Chimeras place a heavy emphasis on the battlefield, since none of them have any action or reaction spells at this time. The Corpse of Viros, being our first Chimera, also doesn't have alterations or conjured aspects, making its gameplay somewhat straightforward. This means that the main part of our strategy needs to be maintaining a solid position on the battlefield. Unfortunately, the Bloodwoods Queen deck is weak at this.

Jessa herself is strong in PvP because her ability skips over the field and hits the opposing Phoenixborn (if you're new to card games, that type of effect is often called "burn"). That's extremely valuable when the opposing Phoenixborn has 15-20 life, but much less valuable against a 30 or higher life Chimera. Additionally, her 4 battlefield is the smallest battlefield any Phoenixborn can have, and her spellboard, also at 4, doesn't even get filled by her deck. In her

favor is her high life, at 19 - just shy of the Phoenixborn maximum by 1.

Blood Archer or type unknown
The backbone of your fight

Her deck has four units: [Blood Archer](#), [Blood Shaman](#), [Living Doll](#), and the summonable [Blood Puppet](#). Taking a quick look, you'll see that the only one with any attack value is the Archer; he forms the core of Jessa's strategy, both with his ability and combat values. Blood Shaman is usually going to be a target of one of your own sacrificial spells (like Fear), but he's also useful as a one time blocker. Living Doll is one of the ways Jessa can throw damage straight to the Chimera, but the Doll's ability will be lower priority in most cases. The Blood Puppets are where things get strange. The summon book says you can place it on "target player's battlefield," and in PvP, you will often place them on your opponent's field. Here, though, you're more likely to place it on yours, to eat an attack from the Chimera. Once you get the timing right, the Puppets will always be destroyed before their ability damages Jessa.

Next are the spells. [Fear](#) is your secondary removal behind the Archers, mainly because you only get 3 of them, and the Archers can be brought back using the ceremonial dice power. Ideally, you will use Fear with the Shamans, to regain 2 life (1 from the Shaman's recover value, and 1 from his ability), but the Dolls and the Puppets can also be used in a pinch. Archers should only be used if there is nothing else and you absolutely need to use one.

[Final Cry](#) is just a burn spell. At 1 die, it's efficient, and they will help you win, but if you have to choose between it and playing a unit, go for the unit. [Redirect](#) is a way Jessa survives longer - but note that using Redirect does not change the source of the damage, so hitting a Shaman with the redirect does not count as using "a spell, ability, or dice power you control," and you don't get the benefits of Blood Ritual 1.

She comes with 1 alteration spell: [Undying Heart](#). This should be played on a Blood Archer, if able, to get them into hand faster after they are destroyed. Granting them 1 additional life also lets them use Blood Shot 1 more time before dying, which is a nice perk.

This leaves her spellboard, of which we've already gone over 1 card ([Summon Blood Puppet](#)). [Blood Transfer](#) is difficult to use in Red Rains due to being a side action, but if you can use it to preserve an Archer by sacrificing something less important, then you should.

Then there's [Cut the Strings](#). The rules say we can replace 3 cards with up to 3 copies of [Channel Magic](#). So replace all 3 Cut the Strings with Channel Magic. Cut the Strings is mostly for opposing alterations, and the Corpse has none, making it a card you'll never want to see. Channel Magic, even if you don't like it, will always do something, so is better.

The rules also say you can mix and match Phoenixborn unique spells, but I'm excluding Playtime because I regard it as part of the Corpse of Viros deck, not the Bloodwoods Queen deck. I also personally feel that Fear is the superior unique for fighting the Chimera, since it is not removed when the Ultimates trigger.

You are also allowed to change any of your 10 dice for any other dice, but I find that the mix of 5 ceremonial and 5 charm works well enough for Jessa's base deck. Maybe going to 6 ceremonial and 4 charm works fine, too, but anything beyond that and I think you'll struggle to pay costs.

The First Five

The first five cards recommended in the rulebook for the Master Set are Blood Shaman, Blood Transfer, Fear, Living Doll, and Summon Blood Puppet. I feel this is about as bad a set up as you can get against the Chimera, because it only removes 1 aspect, and ensures an Ultimate at the end of round 1. You also only use 7 dice in that hand, leaving the remaining 3 for either Screams or dice powers.

As such, my recommendation for the first five is Summon Blood Puppet, Blood Shaman, Fear, Blood Archer, and Undying Heart. While this also uses only 7 dice, the intent is to get the Blood Archer killed and returned to your hand via Heart, then replay him. Ideally, this will result in all 4 aspects being cleared in round 1. More likely, you'll get 3, with a Blood Archer in play for the start of next round. To play this opener, you need 2 ceremonial power sides (don't forget that Blood Shaman can raise a die 1 level if you kill him with Fear), 2 ceremonial class sides, and 3 charm class sides. This leaves your last 3 dice as 1 ceremonial and 2 charm to pay for basic costs.

Summon Blood Puppet	Blood Shaman	Fear	Blood Archer	Undying Heart
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My recommended first five				

The Corpse of Viros

If you're playing by pre-constructed aspects, the Corpse of Viros has 2: Fury and Shadow. Each one has certain aspects that are trouble, and I tend to break them down into the following categories.

Grunts: these aspects are ones that you can hit last. None of the aspects will make you happy to see them, but these are the least troublesome if left alone for a while. For Fury, this is Rampage and Whiplash. I'd put Constrict and Regenerate in here for Shadow. Whiplash falls into here due to its ability only triggering once; while that once can be devastating, it doesn't quite push it into the other categories for me.

High priority: these aspects are ones you should focus resources into removing, or they will quickly kill whichever Phoenixborn you're using, and Jessa is no exception. In my opinion, the high priority targets for Fury are Frozen Fear, Hunting Instincts, and Firebelly. For Shadow, it's Dark Descent and Stormcall.

Annoying: this is kinda where everything else goes. They're more obnoxious than the grunts, but not demanding of attention like the high priority aspects. Fury has only one here, Iron Scales, while Shadow has two: Lurk and Glare.

If you're wondering why Lurk is in the "annoying" group, it's because I view it primarily as a rules check: do you understand the interaction between exhaustion and abilities? If you do, then Lurk's threat diminishes the more used to losing units you get. If you don't, then here's the

Lurk
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"Just" annoying

interaction: exhausted units' abilities are treated as having no effect, unless they're in a yellow or green box (ie, Iron Scales and Stormcall). This means that after Lurk is exhausted, it can be targeted by abilities like Blood Shot, Throw, or the natural dice power. Or, attacked, like any other aspect. Even before Lurk is exhausted, it can be hit by cards that affect units without specifically targeting them (Mist Typhoon and One Hundred Blades do this - this kind of card is often called an "area of effect," or "aoe" spell). So while a Root Armored Hammer Knight or Blood Archer will still survive a Lurk attack and be able to counter, it isn't the only way to kill the aspect. Sequencing your turns in preparation for a Lurk is also generally a good strategy; you usually want to see as many of the Chimera's cards as you can before you run out of your damage sources, so holding onto a single damage effect until late in the round becomes pretty natural.

Moving on to apply Jessa's strategies to handling the Corpse's aspects, we see that the high priority aspects are comprised of 3 aspects with 3 life, and 2 with 2. Of them, I'd say that Frozen Fear and Dark Descent are the highest priority, with Firebelly and Stormcall being next, then lastly Hunting Instincts. The reason for this ordering is that both Frozen Fear and Dark Descent will take massive chunks out of Jessa, and both can be difficult to block and kill effectively - Blood Archer is it for Frozen Fear, and you need at least 2 units to block the Descent. Firebelly will simply eat your units, and also cut down on the number of Blood Shots you get in a round. Since that's a large chunk of your damage to aspects, you want to avoid that as much as possible. Stormcall will eat through Jessa's life surprisingly quickly; one might not seem like a lot, but once there's two out, you start feeling the burn really quick. Hunting Instincts is a threat due to its 4 damage and Red Rain token generation - both of these can hurt Jessa's small board immensely if not handled promptly.

Ideally, you'll be attacking exhausted versions of the 2 bloods with your Archers. However, putting the Archers in front of them (when able) to counter is more reliable, even with losing your Archer as a result. You can often see when this is going to happen, so try to Blood Shot the Archer down to 1 life remaining to get the maximum benefit of the 3 dice you spent for him. Speaking of, those 1 bloods make great Blood Shot targets....

Blurriness in priority happens when you get to Lurk and Whiplash. Blood Shot can take them out with a mere 1 activation, and reduce the number of tokens the Chimera will get at the end of the round, so it might not be a bad idea to do that when you can't get a kill on a 2 life aspect, either due to a lack of main actions, or not having enough Blood Shots left in the round.

The grunts are somewhat of a "when you get to them" set. Your Archers will eventually get around to them, but it will take some time, or a bit of luck in revealing nothing else of higher priority.

When to scream and (Final) Cry

Before the round gets underway, count the dice you'll need to get a defense set up. If you have 1 or 2 dice left over, you have room to use Screams of the Departed or Final Cry. In my experience, you'll really only use Screams two or three times the entire game, and usually in the last round, when you're trying to push enough damage through to win. Final Cry is a little stronger, since it does 2 damage for 1 die, but you'll still probably find yourself holding onto it until near the end of a round, as that's when you'll have a better idea of how much defense you need.

Plan ahead

Due to Blood Shots, Pain Links, and meditations, The Bloodwoods Queen is very side action heavy. You need to try to predict what dice you'll need early so you can get your meditation out of the way early in the round, and not feel like you need to meditate mid-round instead of doing something that affects the field more directly, like using Pain Link so your Living Doll will survive the next attack.

Rules Clarifications

The Bloodwoods Queen has a few rules quirks that can be easily missed by newer players. There's the aforementioned Redirect interaction (or lack thereof) with Blood Shaman, which is even in the official FAQ.

Then there's Jessa's ability and Final Cry. Her ability is a "triggered" ability, not a "reaction ability," which, for Ashes, are two separate things. This does mean that you can use both Screams of the Departed and Final Cry (or Redirect) in the same turn. However, it must be in the Player Turns phase of the game - if the Chimera triggers the Ultimate during the Recovery Phase, you can neither activate Jessa's Screams nor play Final Cry, regardless of your dice, as the Recovery phase is not the Players Turns phase. Similarly, Redirect can't be used during the Recovery phase.

The Blood Puppets also provide some interesting interactions. Since you can play them to any battlefield, you can very easily end up with one on the Chimera's field. Fortunately, the rules for handling it are very simple: it's just a conjuration on the Chimera's field. Since it doesn't have defender, it doesn't block for the Chimera or guard for other aspects. If it is attacked, the player attacking it can determine whether or not it counters, as players make all decisions for the Chimera. A Puppet attacks the opposing Phoenixborn if it is the leftmost aspect and the Chimera takes an attack action (usually, this is Jessa, but if you're playing multiplayer, it could wind up on a field opposing a different Phoenixborn). As a conjuration, it is not an aspect, so does not count for adding Red Rains tokens during the Recovery phase, but that also means it doesn't count against the Chimera's Threat. It is theoretically possible to have the Chimera have all 5 Blood Puppets on its field, as well as the full threat of aspects. Lastly, the timing for the Blood Puppet's damage is after the Chimera has added Red Rains tokens - which means that the Ultimate would trigger before the Puppet would deal damage for a round.

Moving past Standard 1

Okay, that's a lot! But Jessa's deck is not a simple deck to pilot, so a lot needs to be said. Below here is a sample round 1 I've played using the base deck, with the changes I've listed above (Channel Magic and first five), but before that, what about games 2 and 3 of the campaign?

Corpse of Viros
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Fortunately, the base set gives a lot of good cards to pull from, and most of the cards in the Corpse of Viros player deck will also bolster Jessa's game. It really depends on which direction you want to take her in. For more allies, you'll want to look at Coal and the Corpse's deck. For better summons, Aradel has two that can be brought in, but Noah's False Demons are a good choice, too. Until you

get expansions, Aradel's deck is the only one with an importable "area of effect" card (Mist Typhoon) which Jessa can make use of. There's a surprising amount of usefulness in the cards, despite having so few by name.

Just as a note, Root Armor does not stop a Blood Archer from placing the wound on himself due to Blood Shot. This is due to what step the damage prevention of Armor 1 affects: deal damage (Root Armor triggers here) -> place wounds (Blood Shot starts here for the Archer). This can be found on page 16 of the Master Set's rulebook. Root Armor will, however, stop Firebelly from dealing any damage to him.

After that, it's entirely up to you what to do. Done with the game? Okay, hope you had fun! Want more? There's lots more, including more Chimeras (that also come with another player deck)! Either way, best wishes.

Example game (vs Fury)

First five: Blood Archer, Blood Shaman, Fear, Summon Blood Puppet, Undying Heart

Starting roll: 4 charm class, 1 charm basic, 1 ceremonial power, 3 ceremonial class, 1 ceremonial basic.

I opt to go first, but it doesn't much matter. Usually, I have the Chimera go first so I am more likely to have main actions near the end of the round. This matters more when the Chimera has more aspects.

With my roll, I don't need to meditate at all, so no side actions there. I lead with playing the Puppet book to my spellboard.

The Corpse rolls 11 (raise 1 die) and reveals a Whiplash. That's good for me.

I summon the Blood Puppet to my field; I want it to soak an attack, early if needed.

The Corpse rolls another 11 and reveals a Hunting Instincts. That's 2 power sides from his behavior alone, so I'm a little lucky none of the actual rage dice rolls have been power sides.

Back to me, I play the Blood Shaman. It's at risk from Whiplash, but Hunting Instincts and Iron Scales would hit the Puppet, and Frozen Fear would be unblockable. If I need to, I'll guard with Jessa to make sure I get the Fear to hit what I want.

Chimera rolls a 1, and reveals Frozen Fear.

So, I have 2 high priority targets. I think I'm going to Fear the Instincts, and use the Archer to block the Frozen Fear. This gives me the least number of red rains tokens, and since I'm not using

Screams this round, I don't mind Jessa getting exhausted.

On my turn, I play the Archer and put a Heart on him. Yes, he's going to die because he'll Blood Shot the Whiplash and block the Frozen Fear, but putting the Heart on him makes sure that a "reveal and attack" with a second Frozen Fear doesn't kill him. It also puts less strain on my main actions, because the Heart will send him directly to hand, whereas returning him with a ceremonial power will also require a meditation and another side action to actually use the dice power.

The Chimera rolls a 9, causing me to lower 2 dice. Since Blood Shaman is going to raise only 1 die up 1 level, I opt for the ceremonial class and a charm class. I need to meditate anyways thanks to this roll. It then reveals an Iron Scales.

This doesn't change what I'm doing much; I'll get to the Scales later, when it's exhausted. So, I Blood Shot the Whiplash, preventing it from attacking my Archer. Then, even though Jessa isn't wounded, I use Fear, sacrificing Shaman to hit the Instincts. That's 3 total damage to the Chimera so far. I raise a charm die to class to reduce the number of cards I need to meditate later.

The Corpse makes its first attack: Frozen Fear. I block with the Archer (remember, he's supposed to die in round 1 so I can replay him).

I could choose to not block, and just take the damage. But then I have to rely on the Archer not being guarded when he attacks the exhausted Fear. I also then need to make sure I have enough mains to hit the Iron Scales with Blood Shots. Both are valid routes, but that one will likely end with Jessa wounded and 1 aspect left untouched. This should end with, at worst, 1 aspect left with 1 wound. The best case scenario for both is a Blood Archer that recovers all wounds at the end of the round. In one case, he'll have an Undying Heart on him, and I'll have dice left for using Screams once or twice.

Resolving the battle puts the Archer back into hand. I need to meditate to get the power needed to replay him (and lose a Fear - that's unfortunate), so that's my side action for the turn. I replay him.

The Scales takes out the Puppet.

On my turn, I use Blood Shot on the Scales, then attack it. The Chimera rolls a 4 for the guard, so the Iron Scales is out.

And that ends the round - the Corpse of Viros has taken 7 damage and has no aspects left, Jessa has taken none, and has a Blood Archer who recovers the 1 wound and is fresh for the next round.

Hopefully, that sample gives you a good idea of what to expect from the first five and how to adjust. Thanks for reading!

Final Cry

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Guide for The Shadows of Viros against The Corpse of Viros

By Archivist

[Noah Redmoon](#) does a fantastic job of looking the part of the evil, sword swinging wizard. Which is good, because he very much is, if you look into his lore (which can be found elsewhere on this wiki). You also might have noticed that he's labeled as the "Phoenixborn of Viros" on his card, which means that he and the Corpse of Viros share a stomping ground. But, "there can be only one" and if you're struggling with Noah fighting the Chimera invader, hopefully, this article will help.

My assumption with this is that you only have access to the Master Set and the Corpse of Viros. This guide will only specifically cover the [Shadows of Viros deck](#).

Preface: rules interactions

The Shadows of Viros has a few rules interactions that you need to understand before proceeding. The first one is around Noah's ability, Shadow Target. The Corpse of Viros - and all other Chimera so far - has only 1 Ready Spell: the Ultimate. The rules for an exhausted Ultimate are in the Chimera rulebook on page 12, or the Red Rains rulebook on page 17. Of importance to note is that this happens before red rains tokens are placed during the Recover phase.

~~Lurk~~ not found or type unknown
Lurk isn't the only Concealed unit

Another interaction is that of Firebelly and [Summon Sleeping Widows](#). As per the rules on page 17 of the Master Set rulebook, playing Summon Sleeping Widows after the Red Wrath 1 ability has triggered means that the new Sleeping Widows are not affected by the ability, and will stay around.

Stormwind Sniper is the last card that has any sort of tricky rules interactions, and he has several. The easiest one is that the Chimera counts as a Phoenixborn for the purposes of Ambush 1. The remaining interactions regard Concealed. If the Sniper is exhausted, Concealed is no longer in effect, as per rules on page 15 of the Master Set rules (or page 19 of the Red Rains rules). While unexhausted, however, abilities like Dark Descent do not affect the Sniper, nor does Whiplash, and attackers will skip over him and go to the next unit, or the Phoenixborn (Noah) if there are no other units (Red Rains, page 16). In contrast, Stormwind Sniper will be affected by the Firebelly ability

regardless of exhaustion, as it does not target the Sniper.

Starting Off

The Corpse of Viros plays everything to the battlefield, boasting a solitary ready spell, and no conjurations or alterations. His base form is just aspect units from either of its two Aspect decks. This means it puts a heavy emphasis on the battlefield, but the Corpse does have a fair number of abilities that target the opposing Phoenixborn's life total directly (often called "burn" if you're new to card games).

The Shadows of Viros is in a somewhat unique position compared to the other Master Set decks, as all of its units have a 2 attack value. However, most of the units in it are fragile, like with The Mist Guardian (Aradel), and it shares many of the same vulnerabilities.

One of those vulnerabilities is Noah's low life. At 16, he's just a mere 1 life point higher than the lowest allowed for a Phoenixborn, and he doesn't boast any healing in his original deck. This puts him in a position of needing to guard infrequently, which, fortunately, is just fine. His ability, Shadow Target, is situational in both PvP and PvE; more often than not, you'll find yourself not using it against a Chimera, but when you do, it can stave off an Ultimate for just long enough to prepare for what happens after that Ultimate resolves.

In a stark contrast to The Bloodwoods Queen, The Men of Iron, and The Corpse of Viros player deck, Noah's ceremonial package is rather light on allies, bringing just the [Stormwind Sniper](#). He is a decent ally for his cost, not outstanding, but thanks to his Concealed, can make for some interesting play lines, such as blocking a Dark Descent while he's the only unit on the field.

False Demon
no general form or type unknown
Better than he looks

His other units are conjurations, which fits more in line with illusion, even if the [Sleeping Widows](#) are a ceremonial reaction. And, while he has a whopping 13 conjurations - the second most of the Master Set decks, behind Aradel - only two of those are spellboard conjurations, which means he's only capable of reliably producing two units a round. This, combined with the fact that the [Wolves](#) and Widows have only 1 life, make Noah struggle in rounds 2 and later. Ironically, their fragility means that there's very little reason to guard them. Most of the time, you're better served letting them counter and die than you are trying to protect them.

[False Demon](#) bears special mention here. The Nightmare 1 ability has a lot of utility in picking off wounded or 1 life aspects. Using its ability is somewhat circular; if you're doing well, then you'll have no trouble finding a target for it, making it easier to keep doing well, but if you're struggling, then the ability will often do nothing, and you'll lose the False Demon before you get a chance to do anything else with it.

His remaining spellboard cards are utility cards. [Resummon](#) works well with False Demon to serve as a heal, an exhaustion removal, and an additional trigger for Nightmare 1, but that's the peak Noah can do with it before he imports cards. Given how many of Noah's conjurations are 2/1/0s with no abilities, more often than not, you're simply removing the exhaustion for 2 class die - which is slightly more expensive than the "standard" 1 class, 1 basic costs to unexhaust.

[Small Sacrifice](#) works as a way to deal a single damage, which is very useful, but unless you hit a False Demon, you're trading your unit for that 1 damage, which is not ideal. If you must use it that way, try to plan so that the unit is exhausted first, maximizing the value of the dice spent to get that unit.

Beyond his spellboard, he brings two actions spells: [Bound Soul](#) and [Sleight of Hand](#). Bound Soul is very similar to the ceremonial dice power, but suffers from a lack of targets in the base deck. Due to this, it is possible that you'll draw a Bound Soul before you ever see a Stormwind Sniper. Sleight of Hand is often considered a bad card, but in Shadows of Viros, it helps Noah to get the cards he actually wants, since he will likely be looking for more units or more removal. Two dice for it is a hefty price, but for Standard 1, it will work.

Speaking of, his removal is actually pretty strong. [Shadow Strike](#) is a reaction that will take out most aspects for a single die, and [Fade Away](#) is similar, but slightly harder to use since it won't trigger until after the Chimera has placed red rains tokens for the round. Shadow Strike should absolutely be used to handle problem aspects when you draw it.

Channel Magic and Shadowblade

Let me be very clear: there is no easy choice on these.

You should absolutely run all 3 [Channel Magics](#), the question is what cards to pull from them. Jayson, in his article, calls out Resummon, Sleight of Hand, and Bound Soul, stating "None of those three cards are gonna win the game for you, and Noah is going to be best with all 3 copies of Channel." He's not wrong, and I'd personally like to add Fade Away to that list due to the Ultimates clearing them out before they trigger.

Here's where my preference comes in. I actually think Bound Soul and Sleight of Hand are fine in the deck, if you shift your first five away from what's listed in the core rulebook. I'll get to my preferred first five after talking about Shadowblade, but for now, it's sufficient to say I don't think either of these cards are the best choice to cut. No, for me, the best cards are Resummon #3, because you will never use it (and probably won't use Resummon #2 for anything other than playing it to your board as a main action stall turn), and 2 of the Fade Aways. Yes, Fade Away is amazing when it triggers. But it has to trigger, and the higher in difficulty you go, the harder it gets. Noah's Shadow Target isn't good enough to make Fade Away reliable.

Alright, so what about the [Shadowblade](#)/Masked Wolves mix? This is another tough one, and I think this one is more a matter of preference. Shadowblade is absolutely amazing removal, and it draws you cards as a perk. But in Shadows of Viros, it fights for your other reactions' opportunity windows, and also takes away from Noah's ability to produce units to the field. Both of these are detrimental in my eyes, but I also see the value in having it, as I'm less likely to pull it in the campaign than I am the Wolves. My recommendation is to have at least 1 Summon Masked Wolf, and then have it be your call how many more you include. I typically either run all 3, or run 2 and 1 Shadowblade. Since Noah can't control when he'll draw Summon Sleeping Widows or additional spellbook cards, having more books in the deck for the first go is of higher importance to me.

First Five

The Master Set rulebook suggests Small Sacrifice, Summon Masked Wolf, Summon False Demon, Sleight of Hand, and Resummon as the starting first five. This makes sense in terms of setting up the spellboard, but I find it to be a bit awkward against the Corpse, as you're relying on Sleight of Hand to draw into your other needed cards. This can lead to situations where you see Bound Soul before you draw any of the Stormwind Snipers, or draw multiple Resummons without enough units to Resummon. It also consumes 9 dice (10, counting Shadow Target) while only providing you with 2 units to block with - all the Chimera units deal at least 2 damage, so you won't even have a chance to Resummon. This would actually mean you're only using 8 dice (7 if you don't Shadow Target), but I don't trust the 3 new cards to give you the right outlets for those remaining dice.

All these issues lead me to adjust the first five by two cards: first, swap Small Sacrifice for Stormwind Sniper, and second, swap Sleight of Hand for Summon Sleeping Widows. This gives you 5 units in round 1, with 3 main actions (more if you attack) to stall out the Chimera so your False Demon can be your Resummon target. It also consumes all 10 dice without a single power side, and you don't really need Shadow Target round 1, barring unlucky rolls. It also provides you with a target for any Bound Souls you draw into; something I mentioned earlier as a potential issue with Noah's deck.

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Summon Masked Wolf	Summon False Demon	Summon Sleeping Widows
<small>Damage not known, type unknown</small>	<small>Damage not known, type unknown</small>	<small>Damage not known, type unknown</small>
Stormwind Sniper	Resummon	
My recommended first five		

The Corpse of Viros

The Corpse of Viros has 2 aspect groups meant for preconstructed play: Fury and Shadow. Each one has certain aspects that bring trouble, and I tend to break them down into the following categories. If you've read my other guides, note that Noah's breakdown is a little different than the other Phoenixborns'.

Grunts: these aspects are ones that you can hit last. None of the aspects will make you happy to see them, but these are the least troublesome if left alone for a while. For Fury, this is Rampage and Whiplash. I'd put Constrict and Regenerate in here for Shadow. Whiplash falls into here due to its ability only triggering once; it's basically a single unit removal that sticks around to remove another one.

High priority: these aspects are ones you should focus resources into removing, or they will quickly kill whichever Phoenixborn you're using, and Noah is more fragile than most. In my opinion, the high priority target for Fury is Firebelly. For Shadow, it's Dark Descent and Stormcall.

Annoying: this is kinda where everything else goes. They're more obnoxious than the grunts, but not demanding of attention like the high priority aspects. All of Fury's two bloods are here, while Shadow has two: Lurk and Glare.

I feel the need to call out that Lurk's placement is due to the rules interactions it has. Since you should be familiar with how Concealed and exhaustion work thanks to the rules section above,

you've probably realized that things like Small Sacrifice and Nightmare 1 can take out an exhausted Lurk with no issues. And, since your units are disposable, letting it hit an exhausted leftmost unit is no big loss. Now, you don't want to leave it unblocked very often, as it takes a mere 4 hits to down Noah, but it's still not a big threat.

What is a big threat is Firebelly. Only False Demons will survive the ability, and they'll die when they block (but it's worth the block, barring circumstances where you'll lose if you do). The only upside to Firebellies is that they are great for putting Widows into play, but really, all the Chimera's attacks are good at that, since Noah's units are so fragile. If you see a Firebelly late in the round, it can be worth using Shadow Strike on it to make sure you have units for the next round. That 1 "wasted" damage is a better loss than losing the game because you have no units available following the Firebelly's attack.

Firebelly
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The worst thing to happen

Next in line is probably Dark Descent, then Stormcall, then it's down to the annoying ones like Hunting Instincts, Glare, and Iron Scales, with Frozen Fear and Lurk taking up the rear before you get down to the grunts. The Descents will cause issues since Noah has very few units until you get his spellboard running, or luck into a lot of Widows, but you still don't really want to see them. Stormcall eats through Noah's sparse life total, and Channel Magic can only mitigate so much of that.

Hunting Instincts places fourth on the list due to adding red rains tokens that accelerate the Corpse into the 1 and 2 damage Ultimates. These tend to wipe Noah's board clean, and, unsurprisingly, you don't want that.

Everything else, you'll get to.

Handling these aspects is almost entirely a matter of blocking or attacking, then using the 1 damage effects from Nightmare and Small Sacrifice to clean up. You only have 3 Shadow Strikes, with no guarantees you'll draw any of them (but with Sleights and Channels, you have a good chance), so combat is your most reliable source. When able, use Small Sacrifice and Resummon on False Demons; this preserves your units as long as possible while still dealing that damage.

A key strategy in a lot of illusion decks is to go for your opponent's exhausted units. Shadows of Viros is no exception, but you want to be strategic about which units of yours you exhaust and when. I alluded to it before, but if you see a Lurk about to attack an unexhausted unit, there's no reason to not exhaust that unit before the Lurk attacks, even if you're just attacking the Corpse itself (while it has no Defenders). Get value where you can; my typical advice for campaigns is "try to spend 1 die per blood, or 1 die per 2 unit damage" so if you can make your units punch up, do so. And don't be afraid to lose any of them. Shadows of Viros is a lesson in disposable units.

Related to targeting your opponent's exhausted units is giving the opponent the opportunity to exhaust their units. I find that one way to do this is to have the Chimera go first in the game. While it isn't foolproof, it does give you a better chance of controlling the end of round 1 and setting up for a strong round 2.

Round 2 and beyond

As mentioned before, a lot of Noah's difficulty comes from surviving past round 1. Due to the high unit volume I've assembled in the first five for round 1, you should be able to make it into round 2 with 1 or 2 units left on Noah's board, and this is crucial, since, also as mentioned before, he only has 2 reliable units per round. You can ceremonial power a Sniper back into hand, and should if needed, but you also want to get his Summons onto his spellboard as fast as you can. You'll likely never use the Wolves' focus ability, but having another 2/1 for 1 class is still useful enough. The rest, then, becomes a matter of managing the damage output you have and bleeding the Chimera down.

Once you've beaten Standard 1, you have a lot of good options for imports. If you want allies, all 3 of the other ceremonial decks have good ones to pull, and the Corpse of Viros player deck also has a good spellboard card in Chant of Transfusion (most likely replacing Small Sacrifice, since you have to pay attention to spellboard size). Even Saria's deck has good allies, but they're more 1 life units, so you don't fix your Firebelly vulnerability there. For more conjurations, you can look to Aradel's deck, but they, too, are 1 life units. On the other hand, they make building your board back easier, and removing 1 wound here and there is also helpful. And Root Armor can help almost any unit it gets placed on; Firebelly won't damage a Sniper with an Armor, and he'll survive any of the 2 attack aspects. Massive Growth can also make one of your units much bulkier, letting it tank a Lurk and something else (but you'll probably want to kill the Lurk with a ping damage instead of the Massive unit, so don't counter). There's a surprising amount of options.

Below here, I've included a sample round 1 using the deck and first five modifications above (so, 3 Channel Magics in, with 2 Fade Away and 1 Resummon removed - not that you see it with only 1 round). Other than that, best wishes!

Example game (vs Shadow)

First five: Summon Masked Wolf, Summon False Demon, Resummon, Stormwind Sniper, Summon Sleeping Widows

Cost requirements: 4 illusion class sides, 4 ceremonial class sides, leaving 2 basics (1 illusion, 1 ceremonial)

Starting roll: 1 illusion power, 2 illusion class, 2 ceremonial class, 5 basics (3 ceremonial, 2 illusion)

Since I'm choosing to have the Chimera go first, it opens with a power side and an 8, forcing me to lower 2. I opt for the illusion power, since I only need class, and one of the ceremonial class. I need to meditate anyways, this is just one more card.

And I get a Stormcall right off the bat.

This shifts my plan; normally, I'd want to hold the Sniper for later, but I want something to ensure I kill the Stormcall if it happens to attack. This means I play him now, resulting in the first damage of the game. I also meditate 4 cards from my deck: Shadow Strike, Summon Masked Wolf, Sleight of

Hand, and Fade Away give me 3 ceremonial power and 1 illusion power. This should be enough to last me through any more spin downs and still get me the dice I need.

Noah takes 1 from the Stormcall, then has to lower 2 more dice due to a 9 roll. I opt for 2 ceremonial, before the Chimera reveals a Lurk.

Back to my turn, I use the illusion basic to play Summon Masked Wolf to my spellboard, and follow it with Summon False Demon.

Noah takes the second damage from Stormcall, and the Chimera gets a red rains token. It then rolls a power side and an 8, so there go my other two power sides, and it reveals a Dark Descent. This is looking to be a tough fight. I play the Resummon, and summon a Wolf. I do that here despite the Dark Descent because of probability; I'm guessing that the Stormcall will attack before the Dark Descent, which means the Wolf will counter the Stormcall and die before the Dark Descent can attempt to exhaust anything. The last aspect could be another Dark Descent, and the Corpse could roll a "reveal and attack," but I'm gambling on the probabilities of both of those happening being low.

The Chimera rolls a basic and a 10, so spins that basic into the 3rd power side, before revealing a second Dark Descent. Well, I was half right; it didn't attack yet.

Again, this is off to a very rough start; I think Noah's going to take a bit of damage. Looking at what I have available, it looks like I can deal 14 total damage, and need 9 to clear the board. Unfortunately, the pair of Dark Descents is going to remove 2 of that in the best of cases.

Scenario 1: The Wolf is attacked by the Stormcall, and both die. I could Widows there. Then, the Lurk would attack a Widow on the next turn, killing it and leaving me with the Sniper and a Widow on the field. I could then play the False Demon to kill the Lurk, and have 3 blockers for the Dark Descents - and the Widows would be exhausted by the first one, while I block with the Sniper. Next would be using Resummon on the False Demon to remove the exhausted Descent, and the second Descent would then attack into said False Demon, killing it and staying alive at 1. This would leave Noah with an empty board.

Scenario 2: I let the Stormcall take out the Wolves, and skip the Widows for now. This forces the Lurk to attack Noah (which is probably fine), and the Sniper can then block the first Dark Descent, at which point, I could Widows. That means the first Descent is at 1, the second Descent only exhausts the 1st Widows instead of discarding it, and I still have the False Demon and Resummon available - which would let me use the unexhausted Widows to block the second Descent. At this point, before using the Demon or Resummon, there's 3 aspects with 1 life left, and, after I play the False Demon, I would have 1 unexhausted unit capable of attacking twice, thanks to Resummon. This would give me a chance to clear out the Chimera's board - and Nightmare 1 on the Demon would trigger twice, too.

I'm opting for scenario 2, so my sequence is to pass my next turn, let the Stormcall and Wolf kill each other. The Chimera didn't spin up any dice on my pass because all aspects were revealed.

Lurk attacks, and Noah's taken 5 damage. I pass main again.

Dark Descent attacks, but since its ability has no valid target, I don't exhaust anything. The Sniper blocks, and the Descent is heavily wounded. I use Summon Sleeping Widows here, dropping myself down to 1 ceremonial class, 2 illusion class, and 1 ceremonial basic.

On my turn, I play the False Demon using an illusion class and the ceremonial basic and kill the exhausted Descent. It's higher priority than the Lurk. I have 1 ceremonial class and 1 illusion class dice left - enough for the Resummon. Even if they were both basics, I have the space to meditate again.

Now, the second Descent attacks, exhausting my leftmost Widow. The other Widow blocks, because I want the Demon for Resummon. I could use the Demon to block and then Resummon the Widow, but this way, I'll have both the Widow and the Demon going into next round, so it's the better choice. It also gives me that chance to use Nightmare 1 again.

After that attack, it doesn't matter which one the Demon goes for; I have two attacks to get around the Chimera's guard. And if it does guard, I destroy the higher priority aspect (the Descent) with the Resummon. Regardless, I go for the Descent with the attack, and - the Chimera guards. Well, now it's taken 6 damage, and on my next main, I Resummon the Demon to kill the Descent and deal 2 more damage, for a total of 8. The turn after, the Chimera fails to guard the Lurk.

At the end of the round, I have a Widows and a Demon, with Noah at 5 wounds and the Corpse at 10 wounds and a single red rains token. But that's also half of the Chimera's high priority aspects out of the way.

Thanks for reading, and may your games go well!

Shadow Strike

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