

Special: The Magic Storyline Team Discusses *Nemesis*

Featuring Danneen McDermott, Jess Lebow, and Scott McGough

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WizO_Arkana: Welcome to Wizards Presents! As the crew of the Weatherlight makes their way through Mercadia, back on Rath, Volrath's disappearance means a new evincar must be chosen. Chat with the team that makes the Magic storyline happen!

Glacian: Hi. I'm Jess Lebow, the **Magic** novel editor and local freak-out.

WotC-Daneen: I'm Daneen McDermott, Continuity Manager (I coordinate flavor text among other things).

WotC_McG: I'm Scott McGough. We're here to discuss the world and the story that went into **Nemesis**. Are there any burning questions, or should we start things off?

xsymbiot: Is the new **Nemesis** story all ready out?

Glacian: Yes. The novel, **NEMESIS** by Paul Thompson is in stores now. It's great. Go get it.

jowang: Ok if Volrath turned out to be female, why did al during the story line even the prelude to **Nemesis**?

WotC_McG: Volrath is not female; he was in his Takara disguise for Mercadian Masques.

Morinfen88: My friends told me that in the story, Volrath dies. Is this correct?

Glacian: I don't know. You'll have to read the book to find out :)

Flowbot159: Does it bother you that so little of the story made it into the flavor texts? The book is wonderful, but hardly represented by the cards.

Glacian: Thanks for the kind words about the novel, but really you should look at the novel and the card sets as different views of the same story. Neither can tell the whole story, and both together work to fill in all the visual an interesting details. I think the card set does a good job of illuminating the story in the novel and vice versa.

WotC_McG: We had 140-odd cards and 311 pages of novel. A lot is bound to get lost in the translation.

JoMaC2k: Who is the girl on the back cover? Who is Belbe?

WotC_McG: The girl is Belbe. She's the Phyrexian Ambassador to Rath (read the book for more). AS much as we could squeeze in.

Pikablu819: How did you go about creating the story line?

Glacian: Well, the story is a very complicated process. We start with what we call an "Author Summit." We sit around a large table, eating pizza, and we discuss possible ways the story can go. Then, we take the information we got from the author summit, and we send it out to different authors. Usually people who were in the summit. Then the stork comes and delivers a book, and we have a story. No, really, it's a collective effort on the parts of Daneen, Scott, myself, and many, many authors.

aerairelemental: Aren't you the storyline guy who helps with phyrexia.com?

WotC_McG: That's me. My participation on Phyrexia.com is largely unofficial (i.e., we don't have a formal arrangement), but I find the discussions there . . . to be remarkably intelligent. And I'm not just buttering you guys up, either.

jowang: In the new *Nemesis* all the people and creatures seem to be either evil or on the side of crazy against the crew except for the crew of the weather light why? And also goblin nabob what's up with that he's like freaky in the suit.

WotC_McG: Jowang, this is the bad-guy novel. There aren't heroes as such, just less heinous villains. It was kind of the point of setting the novel in Rath after the crew had left. Eladamri and Co. are good and honest and true . . . but they're the only ones. So who are you going to root for? Or, to be less rhetorical (everyone), who did you find yourself rooting for?

WotC-Daneen: Rath is a dark and scary place!

aerairelemental: Ertai said it himself, there is no such thing as bad magic or good magic. Thus, if people have mana auras, then there are no good or bad people.

WotC_McG: Area, consider the source of that quotation.

Morinfen88: What is the topple card? You mentioned it earlier to me.

WotC-Daneen: Topple is a white card in *Nemesis*.

Flowbot159: Explain the Fading cards in relation to the story?

WotC_McG: Fading is represented by the Parallax effect, an energy phenomenon that dissolves physical things and breaks them up.... Sometimes they come back, sometimes not. It's a bit like a mystical radiation poisoning.

Flowbot159: Does it have to do with the overlapping planes?

WotC_McG: It does. Phyrexia has been manipulating planes for millenia, and Rath is the jewel in Yawgoth's Invasion strategy. The overlapping of planes is essential to the ultimate purpose of the experiment that is Rath.

Nethya: How does the *Nemesis* storyline as it is compare with what was originally mapped out for it in the over-all plan?

Glacian: Well, the *Nemesis* storyline is exactly the way we planned it. We're very organized and we work years ahead of ourselves. We are professionals you know :)

Guest357: How many Envincars were there so far from Davvol on? Can you list them?

Glacian: Guest-I don't know, and no! We've only been privy to the goings on of Rath for the past 500 years or so. There is a lot of history that we've missed. We always try to give each set a distinct visual look. In this case, the fact that the Invasion is so close, the machinery inside the stronghold is running overtime, and the planar alignment of the Multiverse allowed us to show a slightly brighter, more harshly lit Rath. So there are both practical and Story/World reasons for the different side of Rath we see.

Flowbot159: How much control do you have over the art and stuff. I know we've seen Rath before but this set looks very different.

aerairelemental: Why did Belbe have to die?

Glacian: Aera, Belbe was Eladamri's child - before she became Phyrexian, so when he killed her it was to save his daughter from being a slave to Yawgmoth. It was a mercy killing.

WotC_McG: Can I repeat my question? For those who read the book, who did you find yourself rooting for? Personally, I was rooting for Greven, and I was kind of happy where he ended up. He was the only one smart enough not to play the Phyrexian's sham-coronation game.

Walt: Rooted for Ertai! All the way!

Flowbot159: I rooted for Grevin, actually.

Walt: Okay, how old was Ertai? Way back in *Tempest*, it was said he was 16, then I read in *Topdeck* he was 18, then in *Nemesis*, it said he was 19! And, how long was the book supposed to span? It said five weeks, but didn't *Masques* (which was supposed to happen at the same time) take a few months??

Glacian: Ertai is 19 in Earth years. Ages are difficult on Dominaria because there are so many different ways of keeping track of time.

WotC-Daneen: Notes that age is a pretty relative term for anyone who has spent any time on Tolaria.

aerairelemental: Referring to the statement about Yawgmoth, Eladmiri, and Belbe, Avila was dead and Eladmiri didn't know about Yagmoth and such.

Glacian: Aera- Who's to say that Eladamri didn't know about Yawgmoth?

guest357: Just to let Scott know, I'm still rooting for the sliver queen. She's my favorite character in this arc so far. Does she have any future in the storyline?

WotC_McG: Sliver Queen? Well, only time will tell what makes it to Dominaria from Rath.

Nethya: What good did it do the Phyrexians to pick Avila as the basis for Belbe? It didn't give them any advantages that I could think of.

WotC_McG: Two words cruelty and convenience. It's second nature for Phyrexians to really twist the knife, and they needed a humanoid (preferably a local) to test their larger hypothesis (it is clear that the contest for the throne had several different layers)?

WotC-Daneen: But what a psychological weapon of using the rebellion leader's daughter.

Glacian: Afterall - we know where the story goes next, right?

aerair elemental: Can you tell me what happens to Ertai in the invasion cycle?

Glacian: Aera - Well, I could tell you what happens to Ertai in the Invasion cycle, but then I'd have to silence you, so I won't. Besides, we're talking about *Nemesis* here.

Walt: I reiterate, how long was this supposed to have taken? Like, the time span of the story?

Glacian: *Nemesis* takes place at roughly the same time as Mercadian Masques. But, in firm times, the story spans roughly 4 weeks.

Walt: But . . . Masques took much longer, in the book, that is.

WotC-Daneen: Hmm, two time frames, two different planes... hmmm.

Glacian: Walt - no it didn't.

WizO_Paradox: What are your favorite cards in the *Nemesis* set?

Glacian: My favorite card is Liin Sivi.

WotC-Daneen: My favorite card in *Nemesis* is also my favorite character: Liin Sivi.

WotC_McG: I'm very fond of Massacre. It's a great shot of Crovax, a powerful card, and it shows a really nasty story scene.

Flowbot159: Is the next set also going to be happening simultaneously with Mercadian and *Nemesis*? If so, who is it going to be about? (I fear you may say Urza . . .)

WotC_McG: It does take place during roughly the same time period (roughly!). It takes place on Dominaria, though. Won't go into detail on Prophecy during a *Nemesis* chat (sorry). Especially when the sets three months away from being released.

aerairelemental: Here, Ertai got corrupted with black mana usage, whose idea was that?

WotC_McG: That sort of came out during the story development. He was being tortured and beaten in the Stronghold, and the only healing apparatus nearby was Volrath's. It was a situational, circumstantial thing, and it backfired on him. Question is: better corrupt, or dead (he was in danger of dying). Only time and the Invasion story will tell...

magicpaladin: What kind of new cards are in *Nemesis*? Creatures?

WotC_McG: Well, we've got Laccoliths, Mossdogs, Parallax creatures, more Dal, more Kor. Is this what you were looking for?

WotC-Daneen: LACCOLITHS! Think "walking volcanoes!"

magicpaladin: What are the laccoliths?

WotC_McG: Are you in the right room? This is the *Nemesis* chat. No, seriously, we've built up the laccoliths quite a bit; there's a cool story... On our web site that illustrates (in a very short period of time) the laccoliths and the parallax effect.

guest357: What's with the oracle en-vec? She was nothing like she was in *Tempest* as she was in *Nemesis*, with the whole defying the laws of physics in her tent thing. In *Tempest* she was pretty human-esque.

WotC_McG: What, you mean we're seeing more of Oracle's abilities than we did previously? She's old enough to be (and in fact, always has been very powerful). We just gave her more ways to show off what she can do. Yep. In *Tempest*, she was.

aerairelemental: What's behind the laccoliths? And I told glacial that lin-sivvi is a 1/3.

WotC_McG: The laccoliths are largely a naturally (or unnaturally, given the situation on Rath) evolution. They were burrowing lizard-type guys who were changed by all the environmental and mystical vectors on Rath. They were not a genetic experiment.

WotC-Daneen: But that doesn't stop the stronghold troops from using them as best they can...

Flowbot159: How come the Stronghold only has one ship, the Predator, and it's the forefront of the invasion? Mercadia had hundreds of ships...

WotC_McG: Because the Stronghold never needed more than 1 ship to pacify Rath. I've said this elsewhere, but it's not a good idea to go to your Phyrexian masters and tell them that you can't handle the job with the resources they've already given you. Just look at Davvol.

WizO_Arkana: Any last remarks from our hosts tonight? Any comments from anybody?

WotC_McG: Just that *Prophecy* has lots of Keldons, and I love that. As the Invasion gets closer, things get hotter. It should be fun. Hope to see you all there.

Glacian: Enjoy the novel, and look for *Prophecy* in June. Thanks for coming.