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March 29, 2002

**Q:** "When will we see some of the older abilities resurface? Take rampage and cycling as examples, in my opinion two of the greatest abilities ever, yet they were only included in a few sets."

-- Derek Martin, Kansas City, KS

**A:** From **Bill Rose**, head of Research & Development:

"First let me explain why we do what we do. We limit our special mechanics to a single block (a large set plus the following two small sets) so that our blocks are different from one another. Another reason we limit the use of some mechanics is that sets can't hold too many card mechanics, even our large sets. If we put kicker, cycling, flanking, and fading (to choose some of our many mechanics) into *Odyssey* and tried to fit in threshold and flashback, it wouldn't work. There's not enough room. Plus, even if we could squeeze everything into a set, all of our **Magic** sets would become too similar.

"To answer the other part of your question, you're right -- some of the older abilities should resurface. Cycling is a fine choice. I'll make sure that cycling is brought back in the not-too-distant future."

March 28, 2002

**Q:** "It seems that **Aura Graft** is functionally unique from older and similar cards such as **Enchantment Alteration** and **Crown of the Ages** in that **Aura Graft** allows movement from permanent to permanent, as opposed to just creatures or lands. Knowing that, I have envisioned two odd scenarios:

"(a) There is a **Power Leak** or a **Confiscate** (or another Enchant Enchantment or Enchant Permanent) in play. Is it then legal to use **Aura Graft** to move that enchantment such that it enchants itself? If so, what would happen?

"(b) What if there's a **Confiscate** in play enchanting a **Forest**, and a **Power Leak** enchanting that **Confiscate**. Is it possible to use **Aura Graft** to move the **Confiscate** onto the **Power Leak**?"

-- Abe Corson, Alexandria, VA

**A:** From **Paul Barclay**, TCG Rules Creation & Writing:

"Answer to (a): No, that's not legal. We have a rule in the Comprehensive Rulebook that states that an enchantment can't ever enchant itself (214.8f).

"Answer to (b): Yes, this is possible. Play **Aura Graft**, targeting **Confiscate**. When it resolves, move **Confiscate** onto **Power Leak**. You now control both **Confiscate** and **Power Leak**, and they enchant each other.

"And now for the fun part. Assume for a minute that you put a **Confiscate** (#1) on your opponent's **Forest**, then she puts another **Confiscate** (#2) on your **Confiscate**, and you put a final **Confiscate** (#3) on her **Confiscate**. So, **Confiscate** #3 enchants **Confiscate** #2, which enchants **Confiscate** #1, which enchants the **Forest**. And you control all those permanents. Now, your opponent plays **Aura Graft**, targeting **Confiscate** #1. She makes it enchant **Confiscate** #3.

"So **Confiscate #1** enchants **Confiscate #3**, which enchants **Confiscate #2**, which enchants **Confiscate #1**. Your opponent gets her **Forest** back. But we still have to work out who controls the three **Confiscates**. Since they're all enchanting each other, we can't tell which to apply first, so we have to use their timestamp order. This is first #2, then #3, then #1 (when we moved #1, it got a new timestamp).

"**Confiscate #2** was originally controlled by your opponent. It tells her that she now controls **Confiscate #1**.

**Confiscate #3** was originally controlled by you. It tells you that you now control **Confiscate #2**.

**Confiscate #1** is now controlled by your opponent. It tells her that she now controls **Confiscate #3**.

"So your opponent controls **Confiscate #1** and #3 (which you originally controlled), and you control **Confiscate #2** (which your opponent originally controlled), and they're floating in space, each enchanting one of the others."

*March 27, 2002*

**Q:** "Is there a reason why you've printed **Thought Devourer** and **Possessed Aven**, two rare 4/4 flyers that cost 2, in two subsequent expansions? Is this an example of you trying to push a heavy blue deck into Type 2? Or did it happen purely by chance?"

-- Sian Davies, Yorkshire, England

**A:** From **Mike Donais**, Research & Development:

"The thought behind these cards was that, although blue does not have good small creatures or good big creatures, blue needs to have a niche.

"We decided that blue was the color that got good big flying creatures. A deck called 'Big Blue' using those types of cards existed in the past and it seemed like a reasonable deck type to have around, and it seemed like something that was in flavor for blue. As for pushing these in Type 2, I don't think the big blue flying creature deck is going to see play unless alternate-cost counterspells are available to protect those guys. **Force of Will**, **Foil**, **Thwart**, **Daze**, and similar cards are the main reason blue creature decks have shown up in the past."

*March 26, 2002*

**Q:** "I have collected foil cards since the first set that introduced them, *Urza's Legacy*. Up until *Odyssey* the ratio was 1:100 with foil commons in about every 12th pack, uncommons in about every 20th pack, and rares in about every 40th pack. Now I've seen that the ratio has changed for *Torment* to 1:70. Why?"

-- Matthias Sylvester Nagy, Friedenau, Germany

**A:** From **Elaine Chase**, Research & Development:

"The short (and somewhat incomplete) answer is that, as the only person in R&D who actually collects foil sets, I was having some difficulty acquiring all of them. (The popular myth that everyone here at WotC is given full sets and foil sets of everything that comes out is, unfortunately, false.) I asked Mike Elliott, who is in charge of collation, to just give me the foil sets, and he said no. Then I asked him if he could at least up the frequency of foils in packs to make it easier for me, and being the good guy that he is, he said sure.

"The longer (and more accurate) answer is that since the release of *Urza's Legacy*, we've done lots of research into the overall perception of foils, their secondary market value, and how easy or difficult it was to complete sets. We discovered that many of our consumers felt the same way I did, that the foils were cool but it was just too difficult to complete a set. We wanted to make it within people's grasp to complete foil sets if they worked at it, while at the same time keeping them scarce enough that they remained special. The result is the new, higher frequency of foils you see today."

*March 25, 2002*

**Q:** "Do any artists use computer-drawn art for cards? One of my friends claims **Longhorn Firebeast** was done using a computer; is this true?"

-- Greg Kepka, Thunder Bay, ON

**A:** From **Jeremy Cranford**, **Magic** Artistic Director:

"**Magic** artists are very creative and talented group of individuals, and they enjoy exploring different mediums and techniques with their art depending upon the desired effect. Yes, Glen Angus felt that digital illustration would be the best medium for creating the **Longhorn Firebeast**. The thing to remember is that whether it's oil, acrylic, water color, sculpture, magic marker, or a digital illustration on a computer, they are all just tools to the artist. It's the talent and creativity of each illustrator that determines if that illustration ends up being a great piece or not."

*March 22, 2002*

**Q:** "Do you folks at WotC foresee the day when you will have completely exhausted all the permutations and combinations possible in this game? I thought you were scraping the bottom of the barrel when *Homelands* came out, but ever since *Alliances* I have been repeatedly surprised by your creativity. Do you think the game has five more years, ten more years, infinite?"  
-- Raymond Russell, Minneapolis, MN

**A:** From **Mark Rosewater**, R&D senior designer:  
"This isn't something we like to talk about in R&D but according to our calculations, the game only has 7.4 years left before we completely exhaust the potential card ideas. Kidding! I'm kidding! Just having a little fun with you. The actual answer is that you needn't worry. One of the great strengths of **Magic** is its flexibility. I've been designing **Magic** cards for six years and I have as many cool ideas today as the day I walked into Wizards of the Coast. In addition to new ideas, we also have the ability to revisit old cards (with repeats) and mechanics (as we did with 'pitch cards' in *Mercadian Masques*) to find new ways to use old ideas. While not infinite, there are enough areas to explore for several centuries of new **Magic** expansions. All in all, no need to panic."

March 21, 2002

**Q:** "Rumor has it that **Rancor** was really a card that was supposed to cost 2 and ended up as 1. Misprint or not? Or just a last-minute change?"  
-- Mark Anthony Cassar, Cospicua, Malta

**A:** From **Bill Rose**, head of Research & Development:  
"The short answer is: I don't know. No one will ever know."

"As I recall, **Rancor** originally was 2, and it didn't have the 'deathback' mechanic, meaning it wouldn't return to your hand. In an effort to make some tournament-quality creature enchantments, **Rancor**'s cost was lowered to 1. Then the deathback mechanic was added. After that, the **Magic** developers disagree on what happened. There was a debate about **Rancor**'s cost. The group who wanted **Rancor** costed at 1 argued at it would be good, but not broken. The '2' group believes they won and **Rancor** was published as the development team wanted. The '2' group believes they won, but that the lead developer forgot to change the file sent to typesetting."

"Given the choice between 1 and 2, I would cost **Rancor** at 1. But given a time machine, I would cost it at 1."

March 20, 2002

**Q:** "In today's environment with flashback, threshold, and madness, why didn't you design **Morningtide** as an instant instead of a sorcery? I am a devoted white mage and I think many of the good cards in white are too watered down when compared to blue and red only because many of their good cards are instants instead of sorceries. What is considered when deciding whether a seemingly good card like **Morningtide** is to be a sorcery when it could be a great card by making it an instant?"  
-- Jim Azzano, Madison, MS

**A:** From **Mike Elliott**, R&D senior designer:  
"Well, when I submitted the card it was an instant, but those developers wrecked the card yet again."


"But seriously, when we make a new mechanic or series of mechanics, we are very careful to avoid creating high-quality cards that would negatively impact the mechanic early on. Say we went back to *Urza's Saga* and made a 1-mana artifact cantrip that said echo cards could not be played. This would certainly have made people very hesitant to play a bunch of echo cards in their decks and would have increased the randomness of the games where the 'hoser' card was played. So in a set where we are featuring graveyard mechanics, doing a very efficient card that would let you remove cards in graveyards was not desirable. On the other hand, we want to have sufficient answers available so we will often put in a card like **Morningtide** in case the mechanics veer wildly out of control, in which case the sorcery would then be very playable as opposed to fringe where it is now."

March 19, 2002

**Q:** "The *Apocalypse* card **False Dawn** received errata prior to the release of the set for undesirable interactions with some other cards. Were there general issues with making everything white, or was there one particular combination that would have been broken?"  
-- Chris Stevenson, Batavia, OH

**A:** From **Paul Barclay**, TCG Rules Creation & Writing:  
"It wasn't that **False Dawn** was broken. Rather, it was that you needed a large amount of rules

knowledge to know exactly how it worked in every situation. The original wording had three effects, and it didn't do any of them in a sensible way.


"1. It changed mana symbols in mana costs to , which turned everything white. Well, almost everything. It didn't change artifacts (because they had no colored mana symbols in their mana costs), and it didn't change anything which had already had its color changed by some outside effect.

"2. It 'fixed' mana production to make everything produce white mana. Well, everything that used a mana symbol, at least. The *Urza's* and *Masques* block non-basic lands used color words, rather than mana symbols. Color words weren't changed, so these lands would still produce their normal color of mana. Of course, since all your spells now require white mana to play, this isn't particularly useful.

"3. It allowed you to spend white mana on any cost. Actually, it didn't affect every single cost, because cards such as *Soul Burn* use color words to limit the colors of mana you can spend on a generic mana cost.

"The current Oracle wording removes the first part (because it was an unclear side-effect of the printed wording), and made the second and third parts work correctly across the board. *False Dawn* currently affects all colored mana production, and all cost payments, but doesn't change the color of any spells, cards or permanents.

"*False Dawn* (as printed)

Colored mana symbols on all permanents you control and on all cards you own that aren't in play become  until end of turn.  
Draw a card.

"*False Dawn* (current Oracle wording)

Until end of turn, spells and abilities you control that would add colored mana to your mana pool add that much white mana instead. Until end of turn, you may spend white mana as though it were mana of any color.  
Draw a card."

*March 18, 2002*

**Q:** "Why did you remove *Enlightened Tutor*, *Worldly Tutor*, and *Mystical Tutor* from the base set when moving from *6th* to *7th Edition*? It seems like Wizards isn't against the idea of tutoring in principle, with cards being printed like *Diabolic Tutor* or *Eladamri's Call*. Why make the nice, cheap, efficient ones so much harder to obtain by removing them from the base set?"  
-- Alex Churchill, Cambridge, England, UK

**A:** From **Robert Gutschera**, Research & Development:

"At the time we were moving from *6th* to *7th*, there were a lot of combo decks running around. Most of those decks were pretty annoying, and we thought that overall there was too much fast combo running around. Very cheap tutors make those kinds of combo decks much easier, so we decided to remove them. More expensive tutors like *Diabolic Tutor* fit into slower combo decks, which aren't so annoying.

"Remember that cards in the base set stay around for a long time, so if we ever did want to print a cheap special-purpose tutor it would be better to have it in an expansion rather than in the base set. We like to have the **Magic** environment constantly changing. Maybe at some point we'll decide it would be nice to have a few more combo decks in the **Magic** environment, and adding some tutors would be one way to encourage that. But we wouldn't want the environment to be combo-heavy all the time, so we probably wouldn't put cheap tutors in the base set again."

*March 15, 2002*

**Q:** "Ok, since *Torment* is now out and it has happened again, I wanted to ask why red has been getting cards that are out of its flavor: cards like the red *Hymn to Tourach* (*Skullscorch*), the red *Ray of Command* (*Temporary Insanity*), the red *Time Walk* (*Final Fortune*) the red *Counterspell* (*Mage's Contest*) and other assorted cards that red mimics from the other colors."  
-- Duane Serge, Erie, PA

**A:** From **Mark Rosewater**, R&D senior designer:

"One of the challenges of design is finding new areas to explore without breaking the definitions created for each color. Red, by the way, is probably the most misunderstood color in terms of its flavor. In each of your examples above, we found a way to explore a facet of red that mimics other colors' abilities. *Skullscorch* is one of the 'punisher' cards found in the *Odyssey* block. Punisher cards allow red to intimidate others into voluntarily doing something normally out of flavor. Basically, *Skullscorch* says, 'Unless you discard two cards, I'm going to punch you in the

face.' What keeps these abilities red is that the red mage has no control over whether or not the new affect happens. This keeps within red's flavor of often being out of control.

"**Temporary Insanity** explores a facet from red's past. Red is the color of emotional outburst and spontaneity. Old cards like **Disharmony** played into red's ability to infuse creatures with a touch of abandon. Red can use its impulsive magic to sway others but only for a short duration (as opposed to blue which can steal things permanently). **Final Fortune** plays into red's recklessness. Red can get quick resources but at a great long term cost. Red thinks about the present never the future. **Mage's Contest** plays into red's gambling nature. Red has effects that involve bidding and randomness.

"In short, red as a color has the ability to dip into a lot of abilities. But in each case red does so recklessly with very little control."

*March 14, 2002*

**Q:** "Why not ban **Fact or Fiction** in Type 2? It seems to me that, while not in every deck in the current format, it is in most. The card is overly powerful in the environment, and is more often than not game-breaking when resolved. (side note: I also feel that **Urza's Rage** dominated *Invasion* Block Constructed and should have been banned at that time.)"

-- Dave Rodriguez, Bethlehem, PA

**A:** From **Brian Schneider**, Research & Development:

"**Fact or Fiction** is good. Scratch that, **Fact or Fiction** is really good. It's also the most played card from the *Invasion* expansion. And it's probably not powerful enough to warrant a ban.

"Well, maybe it's close. Truth is, I wouldn't really know. I don't think about why cards get banned or why they should be (and I assure you I'm not asked to). I'm more concerned with the placement of cards in card sets and play environments...

"So I'll try and address your question from another angle: if I had the chance to go back and change a card from *Invasion* Type 2, it would be... **Flametongue Kavu**. Not **Fact or Fiction**, not **Urza's Rage**, but **Flametongue Kavu**. **Flametongue Kavu** makes interesting and fun creatures (like **Serra Angel**, **Lightning Angel**, **Mindslicer**, etc.) unplayable. It's just too powerful... it's a card that you simply must build your deck around... and I think it has had the most negative impact on *Invasion* Type 2 to date.

"As I said above, **Fact or Fiction** is a really good card. In fact, some developers in the department have gone back-and-forth on whether or not **Fact or Fiction** was too good to print... and the consensus seems to be that it's about as good as a card should get. But they, the men who actually ban cards, haven't been convinced that it's better than that.

"One last thing... while **Urza's Rage** was a very good card in IBC, I'm not convinced that it was dominant, or moreover, deserving of a ban. Having powerful cards at your disposal isn't necessarily a bad thing, as long as they don't break the game."

*March 13, 2002*

**Q:** "I've been wondering, why do some cards have flavor text while others don't?"

-- Jaryth Kushniruk, Portage la Prairie, Manitoba

**A:** From **Rei Nakazawa**, **Magic** creative text writer:

"There are a few reasons why a card might not get flavor text. The most obvious, and the one that comes up most often, is its interaction with rules text. Generally, **Magic** card text runs between 7.5 and 9 points in font size, and it's the editing department's job to make sure that the text is large enough to be readable, that there aren't unsightly blank spaces, and so on. There are also certain rules about separating abilities and flavor text with blank lines, which prevents awkward text layouts like on **Wall of Caltrops** back in *Legends*. So sometimes, these considerations mean that a card's text just looks better at a size that doesn't allow for any flavor text on it. This happens with more often with commons than rares, since a player's a lot more likely to read any one common over and over in Limited than most rares.

"Also, you might notice that basic lands and certain staple cards (such as **Wrath of God**) don't have flavor text. This is because such cards are played so often, and have such iconic, well-known abilities, that many people think that the card just looks cooler without any made-up flavor text to muddy the waters. Finally, of course, there's the fact that if we had to come up with flavor text for every single card, all our writers would get burned out pretty quickly!"

*March 12, 2002*

**Q:** "You banned **Dark Ritual**. You banned **Necropotence**. You banned **Lotus Petal**. You banned **Mana Vault**. You banned **Demonic Consultation**. You 'killed' several existing archetypes just to

keep Trix balanced in Extended. Why didn't you simply ban **Donate**? Was ONE deck really worth all you sacrificed?"

-- Duarte Fernandes, Lisbon, Portugal

**A:** From **Worth Wollpert**, Research & Development:

"When I took the job in R&D almost two years ago now, I set a few goals for myself as far as **Magic** development went. One of those goals was that we never would print an artifact that produced more mana than it cost to play the turn it came into play, like **Lotus Petal**. Really fast mana makes for a boring game a lot of the time.

"On that same note, one of the first decks I built after I arrived was a red/black deck that had no other purpose other than to demonstrate that **Dark Ritual** should never be reprinted ever again. I used to like to say that Dark Ritual had the 'restricted list' problem. If you played back in the day when **Magic** had a restricted list (or play Type 1 now, which has one), and you play enough games, you'll quickly realize how dumb things get when your opponent draws his **Ancestral Recall** in 7 of the 9 games and you only draw it once. I'm oversimplifying here, but I think you can get my point. Games that included an opening-hand Dark Ritual just weren't that fun, as they tended to usually be used in conjunction with some combo form, whether that is **Hatred** and a creature, **Necropotence**, 3rd-turn **Illusions/Donate** or whatever broken/abusive thing arises. Also, having just designed my first cardset, I realize that these cards are a design constraint to boot. We have to examine every card under a microscope when these engine type cards exist to make sure we don't do something even MORE broken.

"As far as tournament concerns go in R&D, we are MUCH more scared of 'engine cards' like some of the ones listed above than we are about random combo cards. For example, I had a nagging feeling all along about **New Frontiers** in *Odyssey*, something just didn't sit right with me, but as of yet you guys have proven me wrong, and the card seems fine. I hope it stays that way. **New Frontiers** is a good example in that it looks innocent enough alone, but when placed together with any number of other cards it gets a little scarier and keeps getting that way to the point where it may be busted right in half.

"Regarding **Demonic Consultation**, tutoring has always been watched very closely here in R&D (since I arrived, anyways) and we simply felt that Consult stepped over the line, power-level-wise.

"As to your main point: I wanted to use the examples listed above to say that, while the existence of the **Donate** deck helped us make those decisions, we decided on the bannings you listed only partly (minorly, even) because of the Trix deck itself. It just so happened that that particular deck abused many of those cards at once. We didn't really set out to 'get Trix,' it was a necessary casualty in a larger war. I for one thought that **Necropotence** stuck around a heck of a lot longer than it should have, and for that you guys have R&D Sr. VP Skaff Elias to thank, a Necro defender if there ever was one. Hope that helps..."

*March 11, 2002*

**Q:** "Looking at **Diligent Farmhand** and **Pardic Firecat**, I was curious if you intend to support 'counts as CARDNAME' for the other Burst cards in *Odyssey*? It is an interesting idea, so I was curious if the abilities associated with the other colors are too powerful, not interesting enough, or that those colors are simply not being supported at this time for the 'counts as CARDNAME' effect. It seems a little strange to make some of the cards and not the others as **Magic** does seem to be very well balanced in that respect thus far with card cycles."

-- Larry Chatfield, San Diego, CA

**A:** From **Randy Buehler**, Research & Development:

"When we were developing *Odyssey*, some of us thought it would be cool to have a card that 'counts as a **Flame Burst**.' There were others on the team, however, who thought **Diligent Farmhand** and **Pardic Firecat** were kind of 'wonky' -- our pet word for cards that don't feel right because they are junked up by random abilities that don't really belong or make sense. Usually the team will talk through an issue like this and eventually come to a consensus, but that just didn't happen this time. Some people remained adamant that this twist on the Bursts was cool while others thought it was just a bad idea. Essentially, we compromised -- we decided we would print the mechanic, but we would only have two of these fairly complicated commons running around."

*March 8, 2002*

**Q:** "I've been curious about this card ever since my brother stumbled across one in a *Chronicles* pack: Does the name **Palladia-Mors** derive from a phrase used by the Roman poet Horace (1st century BC) in his Odes I.4? He refers to *Pallida Mors*, or Pale Death in translation. If so, congrats to the R&D department on the reference."

-- J.P. Spear, New York, NY"

**A:** From **Steve Conard**, *Legends* designer:

"The Elder Dragon names are a close approximation in 'mortal speak' for their real names. Only dragons can understand their true names. (**Chromium** is a nickname and is not his actual dragon name.) Yes, we borrowed heavily from Latin sources but didn't pull directly from any specific location. It's not a surprise to find a near-match in some literary work. I once received a letter from a Latin expert who'd researched each name and was impressed with the scope of our knowledge. (Only one name befuddled him.) I didn't have the heart to write him back to tell him that all the names were just made up!"

March 7, 2002

**Q:** "Why was it decided to bring back the multi-colored cards in *Invasion*?"

-- John Symes, Orlando, FL

**A:** From **Bill Rose**, head of Research & Development:

"Plans for a multi-colored themed set date back to *Tempest* development (Winter 1996-'97). The **Magic** developers had to create a few multi-colored cards to balance *Tempest*. We struggled to create multi-colored cards that were both interesting and needed to be multi-colored. (Nowadays, Magic developers prefer not to put multiple colors in a card's cost if the card could be costed with only one color.) We decided to keep some multi-color in *Tempest* then stop making multi-colored cards for a while. (With an exception for *Stronghold's* multi-colored Slivers.) The *Urza's* block was multi-colored free. Around the time *Mercadian Masques* was being designed (Summer 1998), the **Magic** designers and developers decided that it was time for multi-color to return. We had stored many interesting multi-colored card ideas and the **Magic** community was asking for the return of multi-color.

"The *Invasion* block was designed for multi-color (Winter 1998-'99). The original *Invasion* design had both friendly-aligned multi-colored cards and enemy-aligned multi-colored cards. During *Invasion* development, Magic R&D decided that *Invasion* and *Planeshift* would have only friendly-aligned multi-colored cards and that only the third set -- *Apocalypse* -- would have enemy-aligned multi-colored cards.

"As you may have noticed from *Odyssey* and *Torment*, we've taken another break from designing multi-colored cards, though a few multi-colored cards may appear in the near future."

March 6, 2002

**Q:** "Will **Magic: The Gathering** ever see a return of the dual land? And what was the deciding factor in dropping them from the print run?"

-- Andy Traylor, Walker, LA

**A:** From **Mike Donais**, Research & Development:

"The dual lands are thought to be almost strictly better than basic land and therefore everyone wanted to play them in their decks. It was decided that it would be more interesting if people had to make decisions on what to put in their decks and not have any decisions made for them. Instead of reprinting dual lands we are making lots of strong multi colored lands to choose from."

March 5, 2002

**Q:** "Are some 'rare' cards rarer than others or are all rares printed with the same frequency? For example, is there a particular *Invasion* Dragon Legend that is more difficult to find than the others?"

-- Tom Weinmann, Downingtown, PA

**A:** From **Joe Hauck**, **Magic** Brand Manager:

"This is a very interesting question. The simple answer is we print the same number of rare cards for each set. The complex answer is: Although we print the same number of rare cards for each set, many things can happen that changes that equality.

"Once the cards are printed and slit, they get put into hoppers to be collated, and then put into booster wrap. It is certainly possible that some cards could get damaged in that process (dropped on the dusty floor, coffee spilled on them, mangled, crimped in booster wrap, etc.). This situation could create a scenario where it is possible that more of one rare card is damaged than another, but I highly doubt that the differential number of damaged cards is more than 10.

"In addition, not every box of **Magic** that we print gets sold right away, meaning some boxes are sitting in warehouses. Since we have no way of knowing which cards are in which boosters nor which boosters are in which display boxes, it is theoretically possible that more of one card is sitting in unopened display boxes either at the distributor, the store, or a player's house. My guess is that this would create a differential of less than 30 cards.

"Based on some very liberal and unscientific 'guesstimates' here, I would say that due to the above situations, rare cards are spread out in the public within a margin of +/- 20; not really a difference that would affect one's ability to obtain these cards. If you are experiencing difficulty in finding certain rares that you like, it's probably because everyone else is collecting multiples of them as well."

March 4, 2002

**Q:** "Why did you make cards for all the heroes from the books like **Captain Sisay** and **Karn, Silver Golem** but never an Urza card?"

-- Justin Sheppard, Pennsville, NJ

**A:** From **Rei Nakazawa**, **Magic** creative text writer:

"Well, we have, in a way. Vanguard cards were oversized cards which started in play and gave you additional abilities, as well as hand size and starting life adjustments. These cards were used as part of the Arena League a few years ago. They were represented by a wide variety of characters, including Urza and Mishra. But the main reason why there were no actual **Magic** cards depicting Urza is that Urza was a planeswalker. Since players themselves have historically represented planeswalkers in this game, any Urza card in **Magic** would be way too powerful; it would basically have to represent another player. Of course, there was **Blind Seer**, who was Urza in disguise, but he powered himself way down in this form so no one would recognize him.

March 1, 2002

**Q:** "Why doesn't the DCI consider un-banning **Zuran Orb** in Extended? It's been banned for the entirety of the format's 4 1/2 - year existence, and consequently it's been a long time since anyone has had a chance to put it in their decks and weigh its merits. Furthermore, is it really more 'broken' than, say, **Force of Will**, **Morphling**, **Duress**, **Fireblast**, **Swords to Plowshares**, or **Call of the Herd**?"

--Sol Malka, Atlanta, GA

**A:** From **Henry Stern**, Research & Development:

"A valid question. **Zuran Orb** was originally banned for several reasons. a) it could (and often did) go into any deck, b) it was severely undercosted for the effect, c) its interactions with other cards (primarily **Balance** and **Channel**) led to 'uninteresting' games, and most importantly d) it prolonged games.

"Clearly, reason c) does not apply to Extended as **Channel** and **Balance** are not in the format. However, reasons a), b), and especially d) still apply. Further, while we do not lightly ban a card, we also do not lightly un-ban a card."



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