

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns



# Making History with Living Wish

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This week, I have the distinct pleasure of discussing a card that will influence every constructed format in **Magic** for the years to come. I'm not engaging in false modesty at all with this column, because **Living Wish** will change the way you play **Magic**. The Wishes in general take a normally non-interactive piece of the game (the sidebar), and make it into a fifteen-card toolbox at your disposal during the regular portion of the match. Of all the Wishes, I'm firmly convinced that this one, the green wish, is easily the most powerful. Let's take a look at what makes up this fine spell, and why I'm heaping praise upon it.

## THE ROOTS



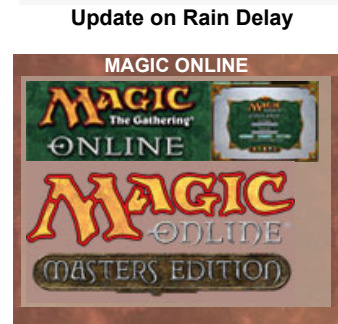
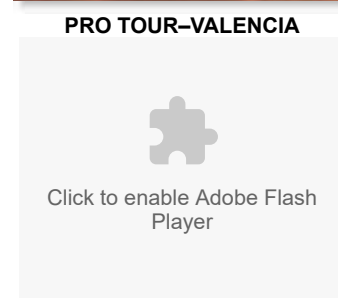
Living Wish is an amalgam of three earlier cards. They are **Ring of Ma'ruf**, **Crop Rotation**, and **Eladamri's Call**. It shares the Ring's ability to bring a card from outside the game into your hand. Under the DCI tournament rules, this includes cards that have been removed from the game (such as a creature that has been removed via **Swords to Plowshares**) and cards in your sidebar. **Crop Rotation** gives green the ability to tutor out any land from the deck, including non-basics. Because **Living Wish** won't put the land straight into play like **Crop Rotation**, it operates in a fashion more similar to **Lay of the Land**, but with a range of potential targets several orders of magnitude larger. Finally, it grafts the creature-tutoring effect of **Eladamri's Call** onto these other two already impressive effects. The Call had been the best attempt at finding a suitable power level for green creature tutoring, somewhere between the slightly underpowered **Worldly Tutor**, and the game-alteringly-good, banned-in-Extended **Survival of the Fittest**.

## THE RULE OF TUTORING

There's an unwritten rule of strategy in **Magic** regarding tutoring effects. Let's say you're playing blue and you have counterspells in hand. Your opponent casts **Diabolic Tutor** on his fourth turn. The rule goes as follows: *Never counter the tutor, always counter the card he tutors for.* That tactic follows the idea that it's better for your opponent to search for a threat from his deck which you can then counter and not worry about the rest of the match, than for you to counter the tutor and then have one less counterspell in hand should he draw the intended threat later in the game. The ability to tutor for lands breaks this rule in the favor of **Living Wish**, since lands cannot be counterspelled. As such, part of the beauty of **Living Wish** comes from being able to tutor for a land. Your blue opponent knows that should the tutor resolve, he might not be able to stop the card you go for. And some lands, like **Treetop Village**, **Kjeldoran Outpost**, and **Thawing Glaciers** are just nasty against blue.

## THE TOOLBOX

Utility versus consistency. Players argue all the time whether it's better for your deck to have an answer to every problem, or for your deck to be focused on one specific goal. Fast red Sligh decks would be considered "consistency" decks, as they try to overrun the opponent with damage as quickly as possible. The quest for consistency leads to in-deck redundancy -- all the spells do about the same thing. On the opposite end of the spectrum are toolbox decks, those which try to have at least one card handy for every possible situation that



might arise. The Wishes stimulate the deckbuilding minds of any player drawn to toolbox style decks. Suddenly you have access to cards not even in your main deck, to be retrievable at a moment's whim!

The two deck lists I've included this week, old-school Extended Survival and "Napster," illustrate the idea of a utility deck to a "T." Both rely on being able to run one of a particular card, with the option to grab it as the need arises via *Survival of the Fittest* or *Vampiric Tutor*. With *Living Wish*, you circumvent one of the drawbacks inherent to both decks: you *can't* draw a card you don't need at the wrong time. There's no chance of drawing that potentially useless *Stromgald Cabal* or *Uktabi Orangutan*, since they will both be safely nestled in your sideboard.



### Survival (old Extended)

Nate Heiss - 13th place - Pro Tour - Rome 1998

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
5 Forest	4 Survival of the Fittest	3 Red Elemental Blast
4 Taiga	4 Recurring Nightmare	2 Ashen Ghoul
4 Bayou	2 Buried Alive	2 Brass Man
4 Wasteland	2 Mirri's Guile	1 Monk Realist
2 Gaea's Cradle	1 Vampiric Tutor	1 Krovikan Horror
1 Savannah		1 Night Soil
1 Swamp	13 other spells	1 Vampiric Tutor
		1 Titania's Song
21 lands		1 Wall of Blossoms
		1 Sand Golem
		1 Granger Guildmage
4 Birds of Paradise		15 sideboard cards
3 Elves of Deep Shadow		
2 Ashen Ghoul		
2 Wood Elves		
2 Llanowar Elves		
1 Fyndhorn Elves		
1 Wall of Roots		
1 Gorilla Shaman		
1 Uktabi Orangutan		
1 Krovikan Horror		
1 Great Whale		
1 Ravenous Baboons		
1 Triskelion		
1 Thrull Surgeon		
1 Lhurgoyf		
1 Spike Feeder		
1 Quirion Ranger		
1 Cartographer		
26 creatures		

### Napster (or Flores Black) (old Standard)

Jon Finkel - Champion - US Nationals 2000

Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
15 Swamp	4 Vampiric Tutor	2 Rapid Decay
4 Rishadan Port	4 Dark Ritual	2 Engineered Plague
2 Dust Bowl	4 Duress	2 Phyrexian Negator
2 Spawning Pool	4 Yawgmoth's Will	1 Eradicate
23 lands	4 Vicious Hunger	1 Massacre
	2 Unmask	1 Perish
	1 Engineered Plague	1 Phyrexian Processor
	1 Perish	1 Power Keg
3 Skittering Skirge	1 Eradicate	1 Stromgald Cabal
2 Phyrexian Negator	1 Massacre	1 Stupor
2 Skittering Horror	1 Persecute	1 Thran Lens
1 Thrashing Wumpus	1 Stupor	1 Unmask
1 Stromgald Cabal		

## CHANGING THE WAY YOU PLAY THE GAME

This column might be short on **Magic** history compared to most of my work, but I'll be straight up serious when I say that the Wishes change the way the entire game of **Magic** will be played over the next two years. This cycle of cards is "history in the making," and I'm going to run through format by format to show just how much Living Wish shakes things up.

### Type I: Playing from the Sideboard

The following lands are restricted in Type I: **Library of Alexandria**, **Tolarian Academy**, and **Strip Mine**. Additionally, you may only play one **Crop Rotation** per deck. Commonly, people will run 4 **Wastelands** in their decks to battle the vast number of powerful non-basic lands available in this huge card pool. I'll do some simple math: there are three restricted non-basic lands, but four copies of a card you could use to tutor for them *at the appropriate time*. While you encounter the minor drawback of having your Wish countered (since it costs mana), you add major versatility in being able to run the Library, or Academy (or possibly even Strip Mine) in your sideboard, with the ability to tutor for them upon need.

### Extended: Total Domination

I can't say that **Living Wish** shines more or less in Extended than in other formats, since it performs amazing yet different functions from Type I to Block Constructed. I can say that it offers the most versatility in Extended of any of the constructed formats. Need to gain life? Grab a **Spike Feeder** from the sideboard. Summon forth **Uktabi Orangutan** from the 'board to smash **Tinker**. Grab **Quirion Ranger** to defeat a **Stasis** deck. Put a single **Gaea's Cradle** in the 'board and use **Living Wish** to accelerate your mana when needed. How many other cards in this format can reliably tutor for a **Thawing Glaciers** or a **Masticore** with no loss of card economy, and no major or minor drawback? Playing an **Oath of Druids** deck? Get a **Wasteland** to kill that **Treetop Village** that's been harassing you all game, or bring a **Crater Hellion** into your deck during game one. That way you can **Brainstorm** it straight to the top of your library as a nasty weapon against a creature horde -- before you've even sideboarded! The possibilities seem endless.

### Standard: Continuing the Beats

**Thornscape** and **Thunderscape Battlemages** have seen a lot of play over the past year in Type 2. How great is it that you can play a base green deck with both of those creatures, and be able to tutor out the land you need to play the appropriate kickers? Or, if you've already got the land, just get the Battlemage itself.

Plus, **Haunting Echoes** has been seeing more and more play after Pro Tour - Osaka. Why leave your deck vulnerable to losing its most valuable creature? After your opponent manages to kill that **Mystic Enforcer** and remove all the copies of it from your deck with a **Haunting Echoes**, simply smile and make a **Living Wish** to summon one back.

### Block Constructed: Did Blue/Green Need This Help?

The deck that won Pro Tour - Osaka received a major boon with this card. Got a **Squirrel Nest** going? Why not play a **Deserted Temple** straight from the 'board to keep things moving along at a brisk pace? Relegate a **Centaur Chieftain** as one of your fifteen extra slots, and bring it into your hand after you've safely achieved threshold. Heck, play a couple fewer lands in your deck, and use **Living Wish** to grab that formerly mentioned **Deserted Temple** on turn two and never miss a land drop! Better yet, forget about **Tarnished Citadel** -- simply add a single **Forest** and a single **Island** to your sideboard, and use **Living Wish** to smooth out your mana needs. Suddenly the greatest weakness of blue/green in *Odyssey* block vanishes out the window like so much smoke.

### RESTRICTED OR BANNED SO SOON?

I can't speak for the DCI, but I can make some guesses about the fate of **Living Wish**. It's perfect for Type 2, Extended and Block Constructed. Creatures are vulnerable, and are the second easiest type of permanent to deal with in **Magic** (aside from Enchant Creatures, which we covered [two weeks ago](#)). There aren't completely abusive lands available in any of these three formats that are still tournament legal (**Tolarian Academy** is banned in Extended). This leaves Type I. Will **Living Wish** eventually be restricted or banned? It's hard to say, but given that almost every vaguely playable tutoring effect (including **Crop Rotation**) has been restricted in this format, I'd get my time in now to enjoy tutoring out my **Library of Alexandria** from my sideboard.

And in the non-sanctioned format of [5-Color](#), I'd expect all five of the Wishes to make a hasty and permanent visit to the banned list.

Next Week: The Punisher Mechanic makes good.

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Will the Academy and the Library become sideboard cards? For how long?

Ben Bleiweiss has written about his obsession with **Magic: The Gathering** for over a decade. He's travelled the world because of **Magic**, both as a player and a writer. When not spending time playing **Magic**, writing about **Magic**, or thinking about **Magic**, Ben is employed by [StarCityGames.com](#), where he works with **Magic** cards all day long. He lives with his wife in Virginia, and they sleep comfortably at night under their Orgg down comforter.



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