

My favorite card - Triskelion Day of the Robots

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Monday, December 02, 2002



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When *Fourth Edition* (and later, *Chronicles*) was released, I was one of the players that did a little dance. You see, I started playing right when *Fallen Empires* was released, which was about when the folks here at Wizards figured out how many cards they needed to print to satisfy the demand for expansion sets. Prior sets were all under-produced, meaning the value of good cards from those sets was quickly going through the roof.

At the local card shop, the veteran players would taunt me with pages and pages of [Carrion Ants](#) and [Mishra's Factories](#), asking for pints of blood and first-born children for the right to own them. I had to stick with my *Thallids* and *Thrulls*.

Then those two white-bordered sets came out and said dancing began. [City of Brass](#) and [Land Tax](#) for everyone! [Erhnam Djinn](#)s and [Strip Mines](#) raining down from heaven! [Nicol Bolas](#) and [Fallen Angel](#)! [Blood Moon](#)! [Sylvan Library](#)! Hooray!

Two of the cards I immediately fell in love with (and acquired four copies of) from *Fourth Edition* were a pair of six-mana 1/1 artifact creatures--[Tetravus](#) and [Triskelion](#). Granted, they weren't really 1/1's; each came into play with three +1/+1 counters, making them 4/4's for 6 mana, which wasn't a bad deal. The [Tetravus](#) flies and can split itself up into little fliers, and the [Triskelion](#) uses its counters to "shoot" things for one point of damage each.

Over time, [Tetravus](#) proved itself to be little more than a curiosity; it couldn't do cool instant-speed tricks and didn't compete well against [Serra Angel](#) and [Sengir Vampire](#), the rulers of the skies at that time. But [Triskelion](#)--or simply "Trike"--ended up being the bomb.

So much about the card is appealing. The name is archaic and very cool (and is, in fact a real word meaning "a figure composed of three usually curved or bent branches radiating from a center.") The picture looks like a cross between [Trapjaw](#) from *Masters of the Universe* and that [rabbit-hunting robot](#) Elmer Fudd built to go after Bugs Bunny on *Looney Tunes*. As for the flavor of the card, I suppose it shoots its arms at stuff, leaving a stumpy 1/1 body left on the battlefield.

Aaron's Favorite Card:



Triskelion
Antiquities rare;
Fourth Edition rare

Plus, when you play [Triskelion](#), you can say corny stuff like, "Rock'em Sock'em Robots!" (For you young'uns, that's a toy from the late '60's. And no, I'm not that old.)

THE 6-MANA BEATS

With the arrival of *Chronicles*, anyone that didn't have access to the three Urza lands ([Urza's Mine](#), [Urza's Power Plant](#), and [Urza's Tower](#)) suddenly had no trouble accumulating several of each, and I was no exception. The appeal of ridiculous amounts of mana was strong. The "Big Artifact" deck was a popular one to build at that time, and mine featured the "curve" of [Juggernaut](#), [Clockwork Avian](#), [Tetravus](#) and Trike. I threw in a [Sol Ring](#) and a (then restricted) [Mishra's Workshop](#) that I splurged on and the beats commenced.



My first version was blue-based, using cards like [Reconstruction](#) and [Copy Artifact](#) to keep the stream of creatures coming. But once I traded for four copies of the *Ice Age* rare [Ritual of Subdual](#), I switched my artifact deck to green.

With eight Elves ([Llanowar](#) and [Fyndhorn](#)), the Urza lands, and a few [Mana Vaults](#), I could get out [Triskelion](#) and his friends very quickly, and then lock the game up with [Ritual of Subdual](#). The deck played similarly to decks with weenies and [Winter Orb](#), except my creatures were cooler and all the cards in my deck cost six mana as opposed to two. My roommate eventually made me take the deck apart because he refused to play against it.

In Type 1 currently, there is an artifact beatdown deck called "TnT" (for "Tools n' Tubbies"; "Tools" for [Survival of the Fittest](#) and "Tubbies" for fat beaters like [Juggernaut](#) and [Su-Chi](#).) Most versions of this deck use one or more Trikes for additional fat, plus they combine quite well with [Goblin Welder](#). Here's one version:

Tools 'n Tubbies



Main Deck 60 cards

- 1 [Library of Alexandria](#)
- 1 [Ancestral Recall](#)

- | | | | |
|-------|-------------------------------------|-------|---|
| 4 | Mishra's Workshop | 1 | Black Lotus |
| 1 | Strip Mine | 1 | Grim Monolith |
| 4 | Taiga | 4 | Land Grant |
| 1 | Tolarian Academy | 1 | Memory Jar |
| 4 | Tropical Island | 1 | Mox Emerald |
| 3 | Wasteland | 1 | Mox Jet |
| <hr/> | | 1 | Mox Pearl |
| 18 | lands | 1 | Mox Ruby |
| | | 1 | Mox Sapphire |
| 1 | Anger | 1 | Sol Ring |
| 1 | Elvish Lyrst | 4 | Survival of the Fittest |
| 1 | Genesis | 1 | Time Walk |
| 4 | Goblin Welder | 1 | Tinker |
| 1 | Gorilla Shaman | <hr/> | |
| 4 | Juggernaut | 20 | other spells |
| 1 | Masticore | | |
| 1 | Squee, Goblin Nabob | | |
| 4 | Su-Chi | | |
| 2 | Triskelion | | |
| 1 | Uktabi Orangutan | | |
| 1 | Wonder | | |

22 creatures



Plus, when you play [Triskelion](#), you can say corny stuff like, "Chicken! Fight like a robot!" (For you young'uns, that's a line from the arcade game Berserk, released in 1980. And yes, I am that old.)

COMBO-RIFFIC

A long time ago, someone figured out that [Ashnod's Altar](#), [Ornithopter](#), and [Enduring Renewal](#) was an infinite-mana engine and posted the combo to a **Magic** newsgroup online. The idea was solid, but not great; without *Tempest's* [Goblin Bombardment](#) (which wasn't yet printed), the combo wasn't fatal on its own, and without *Mirage's* [Enlightened Tutor](#) (also not yet printed), it was too hard to assemble. Once *Mirage* was released, I had everything I needed to build a [Triskelion](#) combo deck. I made a mono-white deck that would Tutor up the necessary combo pieces to win--[Enduring Renewal](#), [Ashnod's Altar](#), [Ornithopter](#), and, yes, Trike. Once I had all four pieces in hand, I would play the Altar and the Renewal, then the [Ornithopter](#), which was sacrificed for two mana and returned to my hand. If I did that twice more, [Triskelion](#) could come out and shoot someone for three damage before being sacrificed for two mana itself. Repeat ad nauseum.

I fleshed the deck out with some [Swords to Plowshares](#), [Wrath of Gods](#), and a [Balance](#) and took it to the big multiplayer games at the local student union. No one saw it coming. One minute I had nothing in play, and the next everyone was dead. Of course, everyone else hated it, but I was so proud of myself!

[Triskelion](#) also had combo potential in competitive play. I posted this deck previously in my "[Decks with Horsepower](#)" article, but it fits the bill here as well. The deck would generate tons of mana using [Great Whale](#) and [Recurring Nightmare](#), then Recur the Trike into play enough times to kill the opponent.

The Tech



Main Deck 60 cards

4	Bayou	3	Animate Dead
1	Mishra's Factory	4	Duress
2	Rootwater Depths	4	Force of Will
4	Scrubland	4	Intuition
4	Tropical Island	4	Recurring Nightmare
3	Tundra		
4	Underground Sea		

22 lands

3	Great Whale
4	Merfolk Looter
4	Merfolk Traders
4	Triskelion
4	Wall of Blossoms

19 creatures



Plus, when you play [Triskelion](#), you can say corny stuff like, "Domo arigato, Mr. Roboto!" (For you young'uns, that's a line from a 1984 song by Styx. And yes, I am that old.)

CONTROL MODE

Years after my multiplayer Trike extravaganza, I started playing **Magic** with pro players, and one of them--Erik Lauer, the "Mad Genius of **Magic**"--showed me another use for [Triskelion](#). He was using two copies of it in his Extended [Oath of Druids](#) deck as the only creatures. Genius indeed!

The environment at the time was filled with Sligh and white weenie "Jank" decks, decks with creature bases that suffered at the hands of Trike. The Trike could kill itself with a single shot to avoid being removed from the game via [Swords to Plowshares](#). [Gaea's Blessings](#) allowed the deck to be reused over and over, meaning as long as the opponent had one creature, you could block with Trike, shoot the opponent, then Oath and do it all again next turn.

As opposed to today's more counter-heavy Oath decks, this one was packed full of discard, like [Hymn to Tourach](#) and [Duress](#).

These proactive cards allowed the deck to

play aggressively against the [High Tide](#) decks running around at the time. Of course, there were a few counters to make sure nothing went wrong, and eventually Trike would show up and attack until the opponent was dead.*



Oath of Druids and Gaea's Blessing combine with Triskelion to allow a recursive source of damage.

If I recall correctly, [Triskelion](#) was the weapon of choice for most Extended [Oath of Druids](#) decks until *Fourth Edition* rotated out of the format, paving the way for [Morphling](#). Another control deck that used [Triskelion](#) in that era was [Pox](#). [Pox](#) would wipe out most of the board and then bring back the Trike via [Animate Dead](#) effects or [Corpse Dance](#). Here's the deck Michael Debard took second place in 1998's Grand Prix - Madrid with:

Trike Pox



Main Deck

61 cards

1 Gemstone Mine	3 Animate Dead
1 Mishra's Factory	3 Charcoal Diamond
4 Scrubland	1 Corpse Dance
1 Sheltered Valley	4 Cursed Scroll
11 Swamp	2 Dance of the Dead
1 Undiscovered Paradise	2 Diabolic Edict
3 Wasteland	2 Disenchant
_____	1 Fellwar Stone
22 lands	4 Hymn to Tourach
4 Bottle Gnomes	2 Necromancy
3 Nekrataal	4 Pox
4 Triskelion	_____
_____	28 other spells
11 creatures	



Plus, when you play [Triskelion](#), you can say corny stuff like, "Let's go, Buzz!" (For you young'uns, that's a line from the 1966 Hanna-Barbera cartoon "Frankenstein Junior." And no, I'm not that old.)

THAT'S WHY...

And that's why I love the Trike. It's a cool-looking relic of a card that has applications in beatdown, combo, and control. What else could you ask for?

So what makes it a good card? It took me years to figure out exactly why [Triskelion](#) is good, but the answer is clearly its activation cost. Cards that can be activated without tapping and for zero mana always deserve a look, as mana and time are so valuable in **Magic**. [Triskelion](#), once it hits the table, requires neither mana nor time to do its thing; the counters come off, and things die. Quite amazing. [Mogg Fanatic](#), [Spike Feeder](#), and [Wild Mongrel](#) are other such cards that can be activated for no mana and without tapping them.

So if you haven't yet, get your hands on a few copies of [Triskelion](#) and toss them in a deck, then watch your opponents squirm as the big robot bashes away at them while simultaneously picking off all their small creatures.

Plus, when you play [Triskelion](#), you can say corny stuff like, "Danger, Will Robinson!" (Never mind...)

*: I played the Black Trike Oath in one PTQ, losing the last round to make Top 8 to a fellow named Theron Martin playing a Survival deck. Martin went on to lose in the Top 8 to Pat Chapin in a match that **Magic** internet historians know as "The Story of Low Tide," as immortalized by Eric Taylor.

Send questions and comments to editor@wizards.com.