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January 31, 2003



Q: "I have noticed something that somewhat confuses me... I just bought some *Seventh Edition* product and noticed the card **Sage Owl** and I thought to myself... 'That looks like a **Spire Owl**,' so I went over my *Urza's* block collection and sure enough there was **Spire Owl**... the exact same card with a different name. What's the deal with that, and would a **Spire Owl** then count as a reprint for use in tournaments?"
 --Dustin Hertel, Alberta, Canada

A: From **Elaine Chase**, Research & Development:
 "We often print a card that is functionally identical to a previous card but with a different name. Sometimes we give a card a new name because the previous name makes no sense with the new storyline. Other times, we make different names because we want players to be able to use more than 4 copies of that card in their decks. And still other times, our creative team feels they just want to spice things up.

"As far as tournaments are concerned, a card needs to have the exact same name as a card printed in a legal set to be playable. So, if you were playing Standard, you could only play with **Sage Owl** (which is currently in *Seventh* but was originally printed in *Weatherlight*), and not **Spire Owl** (which was only printed in *Urza's Saga*)."

January 30, 2003



Q: "While the reprint policy clearly states no cards on the Reserved List will be reprinted, both **Feroz's Ban** and **Clone** were on that list as of January 2000. They were reprinted in *Seventh Edition* and *Onslaught*, respectively. Can you explain this?"
 --Alex Kyrios, Richmond, VA

A: From **Randy Buehler**, Director of **Magic** R&D:
 The [Reserved List](#) was changed before **Clone** was reprinted in *Onslaught*... in fact, one of our motivations for asking and then changing the list was that we suspected the public wanted us to reprint **Clone** and we didn't think there would be negative consequences. When revising the list, we noticed that **Feroz's Ban** has mistakenly been included on the List after it had already been reprinted so we fixed that error. We anticipate no further changes to the Reserved List in the future.

If you want more information, read my two articles on the subject: [here](#) and [here](#).

January 29, 2003



Q: "Does the art description of 'Creature - Angel' state 'female,' the same way the art description for 'Creature - Dragon' states 'quadrupedal, reptilian, bat winged?' What exactly are the Angels of **Magic: The Gathering**? Are they a separate race, or are they very pious human warriors that continue fighting after they pass on to the afterlife (some 'Creature - Spirit' related cards dissuade me from thinking the latter)? Are they

mortal (I would assume so, since they can be killed, at least, in the game they can)? And if so, and if they are (as far as I can tell) all female, how do they keep their population from dwindling?"

--AA3D

A: From **Brady Dommermuth, Magic** creative director:

"Thanks for your question, 'AA3D' (is that a new battery size or something?). It's not a hard-and-fast rule that Angels are female, but it may as well be. Back in the days of *Urza's Saga* world-building, I suggested a 'matriarchal' model for Serra's Realm in which minor Angels would be male and Archangels always female, but it didn't fly, so to speak. So for the time being, Angels are exclusively female.

"What are they? Angels are manifestations of pure white mana. They're magically made, not born, and they don't reproduce. They will only fight if they believe they're on the side of justice and righteousness. They're immortal in the sense that if they're destroyed, their 'energy' persists until another wizard summons them through the aether, after which they are whole again."

January 28, 2003

Q: "I can't understand why you don't design cards which affect cards with a certain rarity, like 'destroy all permanents which are uncommon.'"

--Markus Kolano, Ebertsheim, Germany

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

"Ah, but we do design cards that affect rarity. The real question is why don't we publish them. As a designer, I'm constantly trying to break rules and affect things that have never been affected before. The developers are there to keep me in check as I create cards that the game can't always handle. For the current time, we are not planning to print cards that care about rarity. The major reason is that there are a lot of cards in print that don't have their rarity listed on them. (The colored expansion symbols showing rarity didn't start until *Exodus*.) Someday perhaps we will. I know I have a bunch ready when we do."

January 27, 2003



Q: "In the *Mistform Ultimus* section of the FAQ it states that *Mistform Ultimus* is both a Brother and a Sister. Rule 214.7b from the [Comprehensive Rules](#), however, states that plurality and gender are ignored when determining a creature's type. Shouldn't the *Mistform Ultimus* be only a Brother or a Sister, or, better yet, a Sibling?"

--James Whyte, Toronto, ON, Canada

A: From **Paul Barclay**, TGC Rules Manager:

"*Brothers of Fire* (Creature -- Brother) and *Sisters of the Flame* (Creature -- Sister) do not share a creature type. The type 'Brother' is not the same as the type 'Sister.'

"In these cases, 'Brother' and 'Sister' are used in their religious meanings, so the term 'sibling' would be incorrect. The Sisters of the Flame are not related to each other, and neither are the Brothers of Fire. It is membership of their respective organizations that makes them 'Brothers' and 'Sisters.' There could, in theory, be a female admitted to the order of the Brothers of Fire (if that order admitted females), who would then be a female Brother.

"Rule 214.7b does cover Ogre and Ogress, and other similar gender terms, however."

January 24, 2003



Q: "Why do most of the white creatures from the *Onslaught* set wear armor that looks like it was made out of wicker baskets?"

--Matt Lotti, Winthrop, MA

A: From **Brady Dommermuth, Magic** creative director:

"Matt, long story. The idea behind the *Onslaught* set is that refugees from the rest of ruined Dominaria are arriving on the shores of Otaria, which isn't nearly as decimated as the rest of the planet. But these survivors are destitute - all they have is the rags they wear, some homemade tools and weapons, and maybe some relics salvaged from the embers of the Phyrexian Invasion.

"Because these new arrivals are so poor, I had this idea that the Clerics would fashion robes and 'armor' from the long grass of the Daru Plain (because that's pretty much all they have). It sounded like a cool idea in my head, and everyone went along with it. But when sketches of the grass garb came in from the concept artist who was in charge of developing the Clerics . . . well, you've seen the results. I wasn't happy with the sketches, but the art director at the time approved of them and thought they were good.

"To be fair, I think some of the Clerics turned out cool, such as **Battlefield Medic**, **Dawning Purist**, and **Ancestor's Prophet**. Others, um, could have been cooler. In short, a weak idea led to (what I think were) weak concept sketches, and the illustrators had some successes and some failures with the concept. Live and learn, right?"

January 23, 2003

Q: "I'm a Brazilian player and a friend of mine told me that *Tempest* and *Urza's Saga* will be out of Extended when *Eighth Edition* comes out, is this true, or is just a rumor?"
--Pedro Alvarenga

A: From **Jeff Donais**, DCI Manager:
"Extended will not change when *Eighth Edition* is released, with the obvious exception that *Eighth Edition* will be legal starting September 1st.

"The next Extended rotation will probably occur in 2005. The most probable rotation will be three blocks rotating out, which would be *Tempest* Block, *Urza's Saga* Block and *Mercadian Masques* Block. Plans could change before 2005, but that's the current working plan."

January 22, 2003



Q: "I was doing a trade recently and I saw a **Plateau** with a different picture. I was told these were made during Unlimited but were not continued into Revised. I was wondering why you changed the picture and how many of them were made (as I now have one and I'm wondering how rare they are).
--Tom Cadden, Glasgow, Scotland

A: From **Elaine Chase**, Research & Development:
"When we were getting Revised ready to print, the image file of the original **Plateau** was corrupted. We contacted the artist, Drew Tucker, to see if we could use the original painting to make another scan. Unfortunately, Drew couldn't locate the piece. By this time, art for the *Ice Age* lands had already been commissioned but wouldn't be needed for a while, so one of those was snagged to be the new **Plateau**. The artist for the replacement piece is actually Cornelius Brudi, although it is misattributed to Drew on the actual card. The original **Plateau** art is on Alpha, Beta, and Unlimited versions of the card. The second painting only appears in Revised."

January 21, 2003



Q: "What was the motivation for making **Whipcorder** a Rebel? Obviously you deliberately made it one (meaning it wasn't an R&D screw-up) but why? Are we going to see more rebels in *Legions*?"
--Jeff Hegedus, Wisconsin

A: From **Brian Schneider**, Research & Development:
"The motivation for making **Whipcorder** a Rebel... interesting question. Well, we wanted to have 'cameo appearances' from cool races of the past. If you look closely, there's an Orgg (maybe you don't have to look that closely), a Demon (ahem), a Rebel, and a host of others. Another reason we wanted **Whipcorder** to be a Rebel was for Extended concerns. He seemed a natural fit with **Ramosian Sergeant** and friends, and was a nice boost for white. As far as the 'more Rebels in Legions' bit... there are none I can remember...."

January 20, 2003

Q: "When Jon Finkel and Richard Garfield made their **Deckmaster** decks, what were the rules you gave them? Are they the same rules you use to make normal preconstructed decks?"
--John Majeski, Bridgeport, CT

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

"Yes, the rules for this were very similar to normal preconstructed decks. They had to choose cards only from *Ice Age* and *Alliances*. They could choose 2 rares, 13 uncommons, and the rest had to be commons and lands. They had the additional problem that they could not choose any of the rare cards on the [reserve list](#) (the reserve list is a list of cards that we have decided never to reprint).

"One additional requirement was that all cards' current Oracle wording had to fit in the text box. *Dance of the Dead*-the updated wording of which is currently very, very long-had to be 'banned' from consideration for that reason."

January 17, 2003

Q: "Aren't you guys worried that the name *Legions* may sound a little bit too much like the name *Legends*?"

--Spencer Voice, Spokane, WA

A: From **Brady Dommermuth**, **Magic** creative director:

"Thanks for your question, Spencer. Yes, a number of people brought up the similarity between *Legends* and *Legions*, and a few holdouts maintain that it was a bad idea to name the set "Legions." But here are a few reasons why I don't think it's a problem. (1) There are eight years between the two sets. Eight years. Most **Magic** players don't even own a single *Legends* card. (2) The two words aren't similar in meaning at all. (3) Most importantly, even if a player does manage to confuse the two words, the consequences for that confusion are aren't very significant. In other words, of course we try to avoid confusing people, but we also take into consideration the possible results of that confusion. In the case of the *Legions* set name, we decided the word was cool enough and right enough for the set that it outweighed potential mix-ups."

January 16, 2003




Q: "I'll probably get vegetables thrown at me for asking this, but I was a fan of **snow-covered lands** during the *Ice Age* block, and was kind of disappointed that it really never took off. I understand the concept doesn't seem appropriate in current blocks, but was there an intent to expand on the snow-covered idea and it proved to just be too much of a headache to deal with, or was there another reason we only saw about 30 cards dealing with snow-covered lands?"

--Tony Venezia, Champaign, Illinois

A: From **Robert Gutschera**, Research & Development: "Snow-covered lands didn't work out so well. There was some rules confusion as to whether they were basic lands or not. They didn't do all that much that really mattered for the game. They looked enough like basic lands that they slipped into people's tournament decks later on when they weren't legal and got people in trouble by accident.

"That said, the idea was cool. Having lands that are similar to basic lands (in that they tap for colored mana and don't have other special abilities) but are all labeled as being special in some way is a reasonable idea. It's not out of the question for us to do something like that sometime in the future."

January 15, 2003

Q: "The Alpha set had 295 cards. From Alpha to Beta, seven new cards were added to the set, bringing the total set size to 302 cards. These cards were **Circle of Protection: Black**, **Volcanic Island**, and one new piece of art for each of the five basic lands. My question is: Did you forget to print these cards in Alpha? It's strange for the R&D team to design ALL the color combinations for the duals, except the , and ALL the protections except pro black. What really happened then?"

--Dimitris Panourgias, Athens, Greece

A: From **Skaff Elias**, Senior VP of R&D:

"Well, two things happened. Both were mistakes. First of all, the two 'new' cards in question were just accidentally left off, so we had to put them into Beta. Then second thing is that we advertised that the set had 'over 300 cards.' Unfortunately, we miscounted, and had to extra pictures of land to meet that goal. The land pictures had already been commissioned, but just accidentally not included in Alpha."

January 14, 2002



Q: "Why does the art on **Unified Strike** show only one Soldier? That does not seem very unified."

--Ti Chase

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

"The art originally commissioned for **Unified Strike** showed a lone Soldier surrounded by a group of Clerics. Since this clearly wouldn't work for the card's functionality, we did an art swap. The piece that ended up on **Unified Strike** was originally commissioned for **Daru Cavalier**. The original **Unified Strike** art ended up not used at all."

January 13, 2003



Q: "What will **Nekrataal**'s creature type be in *Eighth Edition*? I wouldn't mind it still being a **Nekrataal**; after seeing **Clone**, I can see that keeping old creature types isn't always bad (except for **Silver Erne**, **Osai Vultures**, and those other non-Bird birds, but I digress), but many people, including myself, want to know about this one. What the heck is a **Nekrataal** anyway?"

--Manny Hidalgo, Corpus Christi, TX

A: From **Randy Buehler**, Director of **Magic** R&D:

"Except in special circumstances, I don't believe in changing creature types when cards are reprinted. It can be pretty annoying to discover that a card you're playing with doesn't function the way it should, given what's printed on the card. We don't want to burden you guys with having to remember that, for example, your *Visions* **Nekrataal** doesn't have the creature type that's printed on the card. There's no special reason to change **Nekrataal** -- in fact, none of the creature types in *Eighth Edition* are different from the most recent printings of those cards.

"As for your other question ('What's a **Nekrataal**?') ... It's basically just a made up word. 'Nekra-' means death and comes from the same root that gave us **Necropotence**. The suffix '-taal' was added just because it sounds cool; I think Pete Venters was the guy who thought it up."

January 10, 2003

Q: "Could you explain what the expansion symbol for *Onslaught* is? Is it a spider? If it is, why?"

--Nate Jungemann

A: From **Brady Dommermuth**, **Magic** creative director:

"Thanks for your question. The symbol represents a 2/2 colorless creature that could morph into a normal creature. In other words, it's what face-down cards look like while they're in play, before they become something else. We call them 'clay spiders' here at Wizards, although they don't really have an official name. For a better view of these creatures, take a look at **Disruptive Pitmage**, **Serpentine Basilisk**, and **Skittish Valesk**. All three are morph creatures that have just been summoned through the clay-like forms.

"On the R&D creative side, morph creatures were a challenge. They're 2/2 and they can attack, so clearly they're not just eggs or cocoons of some kind. And they don't have any color or abilities, so they're not just sneaky versions of the creatures they can become. They must be able to move around and attack.

"Enter **Ixidor**. The *Onslaught* story features a mad wizard named Ixidor who can bring things into being by simply imagining them. So we decided that Ixidor would be the master -- maybe even the discoverer -- of this new method of summoning. The 'clay spiders' represent Ixidor's magically sculpted creatures, and each one carries an 'aether signature' through which a creature can be summoned. (The creatures aren't actually stuffed inside the clay. It's like a walking gateway for summoning.)

"PS: The **Break Open** card doesn't exactly fit into my explanation above. Okay, okay, it contradicts it. We didn't expect the illustration to look like a Cephalid was literally stuffed inside the morph creature. So, um, just pretend it's a metaphor for the spell's effect. Yeah, that's it."

January 9, 2003



Q: "Some people say that **Morphling** is the most powerful creature ever. Some say that it is **Masticore**. I think **Morphling** is better than **Masticore**, but both have excellent

qualities. I was wondering what the opinion of someone at Wizards was."
--Tristan Hickey, Ontario, Canada

A: From **Aaron Forsythe**, Content Manager:

"The guys in R&D love to have this kind of discussion, especially because everyone has different opinions on what makes a creature 'good.' (No, R&D does not have some kind of pure mathematical scoring system that determines if one card is better than another... it's all handled via arguing.) Most of them agree that **Morphling** is a better overall creature than **Masticore**, although the group is split on what the single best creature actually is.

"**Morphling** gets a lot of votes, but **Hypnotic Specter** also has some support. Dark horses include **Jackal Pup** -- considered better than **Savannah Lions** because red is generally faster than white at dealing 20 damage -- and relative newcomer **Psychatog**. Others tossed around during the argument were **Masticore**, **Phyrexian Negator**, **Wild Mongrel**, and **Mogg Fanatic**. It's all opinion, and it depends on what kind of environment you place the creature into. There is no clear-cut answer. For example, one piece of our audience might rate **Gorilla Shaman** in the all-time top 5, but another segment might see the card as next to worthless. And the way they each play the game makes them both right."

January 8, 2003

Q: "Are you guys really making a **Magic** movie? I saw it on mtgnews and the IMDB movie database."

--Pete Fernandez, Oakland, CA

A: From **Scott Rouse**, **Magic** Product Marketing Manager:

"It's fake.

"IMDB posts a lot of user-submitted data and does not check its sources closely. The people that posted this hoax made it credible enough to fool the website by using existing, although obscure, people in the movie business. The movie was removed from the IMDB site when they were told it was a fake report."

January 7, 2003

Q: "Have you ever had to reject a card because it wasn't possible to include in **Magic Online** for some reason? What kinds of cards are difficult to include in the program? Have development guidelines changed as a result of **Magic Online**?"

--Tommy Pedersen, Denmark

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

"The short answer: 'No.' The long answer is a bit more complex. For 99% of **Magic** cards developed, there is no thought given to how difficult this card will be to implement online. We just assume it will be no problem. For the few cards that might have some impact, we ask our resident programmer, Alan Comer, if a given card will be possible to code. A good example of such cards would be the **Mistform** cards from **Onslaught**. For now, nothing that we have wanted to do has been nixed by online constraints.

"Generally, there are two types of cards that make life difficult for the programmers. #1) Cards with complex, unique effects, like **Psychic Battle**. And #2) Cards that can affect a basic part of the game in unusual ways, like **Artificial Evolution**. (Yes, most of the difficult cards are blue.)

"The only cards we have discussed that might not ever be able to be used online would be something like **Chaos Orb** or many of the **Unglued** cards that require some type of physical activity. So far we haven't wanted to include anything like this in a real **Magic** set, but who knows what the future may hold."

January 6, 2003

Q: "Why is Extended the format for the qualifiers to Pro Tour - Venice, when PT Venice's format is Block Constructed? I REALLY like the Block Constructed format, but have no desire to compete in Extended. It's like studying French for your Spanish final; they're both languages, but not the same one."

--Noel Johnson

A: From **Jeff Donais**, DCI Manager:

"For constructed-format Pro Tours, we always try and keep the format for the Qualifier season different from the Pro Tour it feeds. This allows the format for the Pro Tour to be reasonably fresh.

"For example, Pro Tour - Venice qualifiers are Extended and the actual Pro Tour is Block Constructed. This allows the Extended format to evolve during the 2-month Qualifier season and also allows innovative Block Constructed decks for the Pro Tour.

"If we kept the Pro Tour the same as the Qualifier season, most of the decks would have already been discovered and the Pro Tour would be slightly less interesting."



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