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April 30, 2003



Q: "I was wondering why some artifact creatures have an additional type? **Patagia Golem** for example is 'Artifact Creature - Golem,' but other artifact creatures do not have any other type or subtype. The other artifact creatures could be classified by a type... **Phyrexian Hulk** could be a Hulk or a Giant."
--Wayne Bodnar, Toronto, Canada

A: From **Brady Dommermuth, Magic** creative director:
"Thanks for your question, Wayne. Way back in the day, no artifact creatures had creature types. But here and there Wizards would create an artifact creature that 'counts as a Wall,' for example. Then, when we were working on *Sixth Edition*, we started taking a closer look at creature types across the board, and we finally had enough artifact creatures that it was an issue. 'How come we have all these Golems, but you can't really build a Golem deck, because none of them has a creature type?' That line of thinking led us to where we are today: If an artifact creature lends itself to a type, it gets one (such as Golem or Dragon). This approach was reinforced by the *Onslaught* block's 'tribal' theme, which encouraged every creature to have a type if possible. I'll admit, though, that your question has gotten a few of us in R&D talking... Why don't we give every artifact creature a type? Only time will tell where this new discussion leads."

April 29, 2003



Q: "Does the new card face for *Eighth Edition* mean the price of packs is going up?"
--Carmichael Jacobson, Sacramento, CA

A: From **Wendy Wallace, Magic** product manager:
"I'm happy to tell you that no, the price for an *Eighth Edition* booster is not going up because of the card face, or for any other reason for that matter. Although it would be a bargain at twice the price!"

April 28, 2003



Q: "Why does **Wrath of God** have no flavor text? I mean, there are so many possibilities! How about, 'His arms rose above the clouds. And when they fell, there was nothing.'?"
--Jason Begun, Rockville, MD

A: From **Brandon Bozzi, Magic** creative coordinator:
"Thanks for your question Jason. You're right, there are many possibilities for flavor text on **Wrath of God**, some of which are even good enough to see print. So, why no flavor text? There are two main reasons that a card doesn't get flavor text. First, and

most commonly, there just isn't enough room for it. We like to have a card's rules text at an easily readable size, so sometimes the rules text is long enough to prohibit flavor text. Second, we believe that some iconic cards in core sets look better without flavor text. You may have also noticed that, on some of these cards (e.g. **Disenchant**, **Giant Growth**, **Stone Rain**...), we center the rules text. In the end, we think the combination of centered rules text, and no flavor text lends itself to a more powerful, clean, and easy to read visual that many players appreciate.

"PS: Hang on to that piece of flavor text you wrote. Who knows, you might be able to use it on the next 'You Make the Card.'"

April 25, 2003



Q: "Is it me, or is **Consecrate Land** really weirdly worded? I don't mean the actual card, but the Oracle text. Most of the Alpha cards seem to have undergone an effective rewording (Love **Rock Hydra**'s old wording, though!), but for some reason it implies lands take damage. Do I not understand the rules?"

--Simon Jackson

A: From **Paul Barclay**, TCG Rules Manager: "The Oracle wording is designed to do what the original wording did -- stop the land being destroyed in any way. The normal way to do this is regeneration, but that would tap the land (which **Consecrate Land** never did). The first thing we tried is, 'if enchanted land would be destroyed, instead it isn't.' If our enchanted land had been turned into a creature, and it was being destroyed by lethal damage, our wording would prevent it being destroyed. But it would still have lethal damage, so the game would try to destroy it again. And again... the game would never end. So that wording isn't good. The easiest way to fix that is the wording that's currently in Oracle. In addition to stopping the land being destroyed, it removes all damage from it, if there is any."

Consecrate Land



Enchant Land

Enchanted land can't be enchanted except by Consecrate Land.

If enchanted land would be destroyed, remove all damage from it instead.

April 24, 2003



Q: "I've always wondered... What are the tiers? (1,2,3) and can you give me a list?"

--Gene Tsair

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

"For those who don't know what tiers are, tiers are a 'measurement' (I use the term loosely) we use to classify a card's power level. In determining a card's power level, we'll often look at how often a card is played in the real world and how dramatic that card's effect is on Type 2 over the course of its two years in the cycle. In the end, if a card's played an awful lot, it'll probably be considered Tier 1. **Wild Mongrel**, **Psychatog**, **Goblin Piledriver**, **Upheaval**, **Circular Logic**, **Deep Analysis**, **Polluted Delta**, and **Wonder** are all examples of Tier 1 cards. They all get played a lot. If a card's played a reasonable amount but drifts in and out of the Type 2 environment, it's Tier 2. Here's some examples of Tier 2 cards: **Shadowmage Infiltrator**, **Elephant Guide**, **Mutilate**, **Wrath of God**, **Merfolk Looter**. Tier 3 is what we call "fringe." Cards in this tier get played every once in awhile or fill a niche for a short time. Examples: **Possessed Aven**, **Nimble Mongoose**, **Mystic Enforcer**, **Acorn Harvest**, and **Rorix Bladewing**.

"Players will often classify entire decks in the same manner, such as the Psychatog deck is Tier 1, Mono-black Control is Tier 2, and Tight Sight is Tier 3."

April 23, 2003



Q: "I was wondering how big a regular guy would be in power and toughness terms. Would a 5'8" 160-pound guy be a 1/1 like **Eager Cadet** or would he be bigger? Not all the human characters are the same size. Does this indicate a difference in skill, like **Gerrard Capashen** vs. **Eager Cadet**?"

--Anthony Sculimbrene

A: From **Brady Dommermuth, Magic** creative director:
"Thanks for your question, Anthony. Power and toughness sometimes correspond to plain ol' size, but lots of other factors can explain a creature's power and toughness as well: magical strength, destiny, fighting skill, ferociousness, and so on. I would say an average human would be 1/1, or maybe even 0/1. That's because **Magic's** creature cards all represent creatures that are way better than the average thing of that kind. After all, if you're a wizard fighting a magical duel, why would you summon a random farmer or merchant to do your bidding?"

April 22, 2003



Q: "Is it true that the entire *Unglued* set is banned? if so, why did you guys create a set that can't even be played?"

--Rich Monteleone, Aliquippa, PA

A: From **Mark Rosewater, R&D senior designer:**
"I think there's been a little confusion. Silver bordered sets (such as *Unglued*) are not legal for sanctioned play. This is a far cry from being banned from **Magic**. They are legal for use in some non-sanctioned tournaments and casual play. When *Unglued* was first released, for example, there was a series of non-sanctioned prerelease tournaments and an Arena season using the cards. I am often told of stories by players who play with *Unglued* cards in non-sanctioned tournaments in their local store. (About a quarter of which include the phrase "so he took off his pants.") The purpose behind *Unglued* was to create a series of cards for a casual audience that didn't have to follow the constraints of tournament play. If you're only interested in playing in sanctioned tournaments then *Unglued* was not designed for you."

April 21, 2003



Q: "Why do some lands, like **Sulfurous Springs**, add 'one colorless mana' to your mana pool, while other lands, like **Unholy Grotto**, add '1' to your mana pool? How does Wizards decide whether to use a symbol or to write it out fully?"

--Taylor Porter, St. Stephen, New Brunswick, Canada

A: From **Del Laugel, Magic** technical editor:
"That's a simple question to answer. If the card is from the *Onslaught* set or sets after it, it says 'add 1 to your mana pool.' If the card is from an earlier set, it says 'add one colorless mana to your mana pool.' Of course, I can tell long, boring stories about practically anything. . . .

"The *Odyssey* card **Nantuko Elder** started life as a reprint of **Fyndhorn Elder** (with a different name, of course). You see, R&D hadn't noticed that **Fyndhorn Elder** was in *Seventh Edition*. Sets without wacky playtest names just don't stick in their heads. When the development team realized that the old Elder was still with us, they mixed up the creature's stats to distance the two cards. In addition to a mana cost change, its ability changed from '1: Add 2 to your mana pool' to '1: Add 1 to your mana pool.' That wording was never questioned, and that's how the card went to press.

"Fast forward to July 2001. Collin Jackson, a well-respected judge and former R&D rules intern, was visiting Wizards during his summer break. He saw the **Nantuko Elder** rules text and immediately noticed that it was wrong: You can't add generic mana to your mana pool, and 1 represented one generic mana, not one colorless mana-at least that's the only meaning the symbol had at the time. ('Generic mana' is just the rules term for mana of any color or colorless mana. For example, **Nantuko Elder's** mana cost is 2, or two generic mana and one green mana.)

"Once this subtle rules issue was pointed out to us, the templating team recognized the error. But we also liked how it looked on the card. And R&D loved how it looked on the card. Anything that saves seventeen characters of rules text makes R&D very happy. So we added to the rules a definition of 'colorless mana' that covers this situation and vowed to introduce the new template in the next large expansion, the *Onslaught* set. And that's what we did."

April 18, 2003



Q: "What was the result of the data collected at Grand Prix - New Orleans about going first? Any statistical significance?"

--John B. Turpish

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

"R&D was interested in studying how important it is to go first, especially in the current Extended constructed format, so we collected data at both Grand Prix - New Orleans and Grand Prix - Hiroshima. We had players mark an asterisk on their scoresheets to indicate which player won the die roll and then we added up the winning percentages of those players. We know that almost everyone who wins the die roll chooses to go first, but we tracked winning the die roll (not going first) because winning the die roll is the thing we *actually* care about -- it would be bad if that random event was really important.

"The results were fascinating: in New Orleans 47% of players who won the die roll went on to win the match. 47%! That means winning the die roll was a *bad* thing. The only explanation that makes any sense is that going second was actually correct some of the time, but no one knew when to choose 'draw.' In Hiroshima the results were a little less crazy: 53% of players who won the die roll went on to win the match.

"R&D started out a bit nervous after the format rotated -- after watching Pro Tour - Houston it looked like the first few turns of the game were crucially important in Extended and that led us to fear that the die roll was too important and the format might require a massive round of bannings. However, this data completely allayed our concerns. Extended is faster than Standard, but it's not so fast that the die roll reigns supreme.

"In addition, this data further confirms our belief that the 'play/draw' rule does a good job in general of making the game fair no matter who goes first. The last time R&D collected a massive amount of data about the winning percentages of players who go first was back when going first was strictly better than going second (because you also got to draw a card). At that time the data showed that winning the opening die roll gave you a winning percentage well over 60%, which is why the play/draw rule was introduced in the first place."

April 17, 2003



Q: "I was wondering about the etymology (origin) of the card name for **Keeper of the Nine Gales**. I have a working theory that has to deal with the Beaufort scale (wind speeds), but you've said expansions shouldn't have references to the real world. Can you enlighten me?"

--Nick Allmaker, Bellevue, NE

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

"Thanks for your question, Nick. Lately I've been pushing the writers who work on **Magic** card names to come up with more evocative names--names that suggest a whole culture or cosmology behind them. **Keeper of the Nine Gales** is one of those. (**Vexing Beetle**, for example, is not.) We know that it's a bit more high-falutin' than our names normally are, but we liked it because it conveys a sense of majesty, and suggests some sort of hierarchy or mythology within the aven culture. As for exactly what those details are . . . that's up to you. Part of what makes an evocative name cool is that it leads you to 'complete the narrative,' to come up with your own story behind the card. (And sorry, but the name has nothing to do with a real-world wind-speed scale.)"

April 16, 2003



Q: "Are you going to release a list of what cards will be appearing in *Eighth Edition* on the website?"

--Scott Kelby, Long Beach, CA

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

"Hold your horses! We still have to get through *Scourge* previews! But yes, sometime during the end of June and/or the beginning of July, we will release the contents of the *Eighth Edition* Core Set. That way everyone can get a jump on trading for the cards that will be legal in Standard this fall. Stay tuned!"

April 15, 2003



Q: "Are you ever going to make 4-3-2-2 payout for all-*Seventh Edition* draft and *Odyssey* block draft on **Magic Online**? That way people like me (who rarely win more

than the first round) could try drafting formats other than *Onslaught* block."
--Steinar Nerhus, Norway

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

"When we introduce a new tournament queue on *Magic Online* we have to be careful that we don't split the audience too much. For example, if there are two queues with four players waiting in each where there used to be one queue that would have already launched an eight-person tournament, that's a bad thing -- waiting around isn't nearly as much fun as actually playing. That's why we only added one 4-3-2-2 queue - we were confident that the *Onslaught* block booster draft audience was big enough to support two different queues, but we weren't sure about any of the others. Our plan now is to study the popularity of the new prize schedule and once we feel confident that we understand what's going on, we can consider adding more queues for other formats, if we don't think that would divide the audience too much."

April 14, 2003



Q: "Are there any plans to change the DCI foils given away at Friday Night **Magic** to the new format of the cards after *Eighth Edition*? It would look quite good to have cards of that quality with the new border and layout."

--Jon Wilton, Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia

A: From **Thomas Pannell**, Editor, *Sideboard* and Sideboard Online:

"Starting sometime late this summer all Friday Night **Magic** prize cards will use the new card design. This opens up a village of possibilities for interesting cards, as any card that has not been printed in the new card face is fair game.

"A few weeks ago Jeff Donais, Randy Buehler and I sat down and used our accumulated knowledge to come up with ideas for new promos using the new card design.

"DCI Player Rewards tokens and promos as well as Volunteer Staff cards will use the card design in the future as well. So be assured that you will be smothered in new card design promos in the near future."

April 11, 2003



Q: "I found a card in an Asian *Visions* pack that had a regular back, but the face of the card was Asian text from top to bottom. Was there some sort of promotion going on at one point? If so, did I win? Or did it just say 'He who opens this pack shall be cursed with mana problems for the rest of his days?' I think I have that curse, by the way."

--Brennan Lile, Louisville, KY

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

"Nope, not a promotion, just boring rules.

"*Visions* was the first expert-level expansion printed in the Korean and Chinese languages, which meant there were no *Mirage* rulebooks around to explain what the keywords flanking and phasing meant in those languages. So the solution was to condense the rules onto a card that could be put into booster packs.

"These rules cards were inserted into every Korean and Chinese *Visions* pack, so they don't even make particularly good collectables. You can view the Korean version [here](#).

"As for the mana problem, I recommend drawing land. It always works for me."

April 10, 2003



Q: "Why is there no printed version of the rulebook included in some form of packaging now? It seems many people are asking the same kind of rules-based questions that a hardcopy rulebook would alleviate."

--Jensen Bohren

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

"There is a printed rulebook included with the Core Set and with *Magic Online*. While this simplified version does not include answers to every possible scenario, it does give more than enough information to learn how to play. You can find an online version of this rulebook here:

<http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=magic/rules/newplayer>

"If you think you completely understand these rules and are looking for an in-depth explanation of an unusual situation, you can find the comprehensive rules on our website here:

<http://www.wizards.com/magic/comprules>

"Be warned: the comprehensive rules are very exhaustive and read like legal text, which is why we don't include printed versions in any product. Most players won't ever need to know the rules at this level of depth, and a rulebook this intimidating would scare off lots of people.

"If you think you're up to it, give it a read, but don't blame me if your head explodes."

April 9, 2003



Q: "Where does the new *Legions* ability double strike fall on the color wheel? Is it a mostly red ability, like haste, or will it be shared with white, like first strike, or will there be some other colors it pops up in?"


--William Lund, Spring, TX

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

"Because double strike holds first strike within it, it has been relegated to the two colors that have first strike, red and white, leaning more towards the former than the latter. This isn't to say we're never going to bleed it to other colors, but from a color wheel perspective it's red and white."

April 8, 2003



Q: "Why is it that *Willbender*'s morph cost is only , which is 2 mana less than *Deflection*? All the other morph costs on other morph trigger creatures such as *Voidmage Apprentice* and *Echo Tracer* cost 2 more than the actual spell they are mimicking. Is there a reason for this?"

--Jacky Au, Sydney, Australia

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

"Well, a few things are going on here. First, we always have cards at a variety of power levels. Now on *Willbender* in particular the thought was that this can be a cool fun ability that causes some crazy things to happen so we wanted it to be one of the better cards. The other abilities you asked about (countering a spell and bounce) are things that we have had at a high level in recent sets so we decided to let them be the weaker ones. We also realize that *Deflection* is not as good of a card at its price as *Counterspell* is so we have more room to discount it. On top of that, *Willbender* doesn't affect a heavy-creature environment as much as the other two would. Since this block, and *Legions* in particular, has so many creatures *Willbender* isn't as good. So in general there are a lot of things going on when we decide on the cost of any one given card."

April 7, 2003



Q: "Why doesn't *Magic Online* have alternate art for the premium *Planeshift Legends*?"

--David Scotton

A: From **Alan Comer**, *Magic Online* programmer:

"Since this was programmed before I got here, I had to ask around the office to find out. After some investigation, I found out that the problem with implementing these alternate art promos stemmed from what to do about redemption. There seemed to be no good answers about how to handle it. Solutions to this needed to deal with the following problems: The promo cards are rarer than other rares, so they would increase the difficulty of collecting sets which included them. All the cards you buy on *Magic Online* can be redeemed, and it is a logistical nightmare to allow individual cards to be redeemed.

"So, it was decided that there were better places to spend development time, and this tiny little part of paper **Magic** did not transfer into the online product."

April 4, 2003



Q: "Why was *Berserk* unrestricted?!" --Anthony Leger, North Grosvenordale, CT

A: From Henry Stern, Research & Development:
"A few things to keep in mind:

- We do not like to ban cards. We want people to be able to play with their cards.
- We do not like to restrict cards. We want people to be able to play with their cards, and we like people to be able to build decks around cards.

"R&D is constantly monitoring the tournament environment. Of course, we pay a lot more attention to the more popular formats like Standard, Extended, and Block Constructed. However, we do monitor Type 1, and even 1.5 as well. Part of our monitoring includes [listening](#) to the players who actually play the formats. R&D meets to discuss each of these formats, and when we feel a change should be made, we pass these recommendations on to Organized Play. Once our recommendations are implemented, Organized Play [announces](#) these changes once per quarter. Included in that announcement are explanations as to why each card was banned or restricted."

April 3, 2003



Q: "When designing cards, why is the cost of abilities always bad and the effect good? I think it would be interesting if you made a card like that. **Lion's Eye Diamond** would be much more interesting if it was 'Add 3 mana of any color to your mana pool: sacrifice Lion's Eye Diamond.' Why isn't there a card like that?"
--Greg Bodwin

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

"The cost part of an activation is what happens when you activate the ability, and the effect part is what happens when it resolves. If the good part is the cost, you could just activate it many times to get the good part over and over again. If the bad part was the effect, if you could get around the drawback. For example, lets say there was an enchantment that had the text, 'Gain 3 life: sacrifice a creature.' We'll call it Crazy Life. You could:

"Activate Crazy Life and gain 3 life.

In response, activate Crazy Life and gain 3 life.

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over and over an over again.

"When it was time to resolve the stack, you look around and notice that you have no creatures to sacrifice, so nothing happens. You just gained a million life for nothing! Obviously, this method of costing is too good."

April 2, 2003



Q: "I wonder if Wizards will ever make the videos from the Worlds and Pro Tour available over the Internet. This is a very good chance not only for the old players to remember the old days, but also for the new players have a hint about the greatest moments of the **Magic** history. I've watched the Finkel vs. Garfield feature match and I had a great time doing so. It would be great if we all could be watching some historical matches as Finkel vs. Bob Maher in Worlds 2000, or Kai Budde topdecking his Morphling in the Finals of Pro Tour - New Orleans or even the unstoppable Tommi Hovi's Academy deck at Pro Tour - Rome."
--Marcelo Coutinho, Brazil

A: From **Renee Roub**, Senior OP Manager:

"Well, we have all the Pro Tours on some sort of tape. Some of them have been edited for the ESPN shows when we had that contract. None of the other shows have been edited. Each show has three cameras and a directors cut. At this point in time, we have chosen to not spend the time and energy editing these shows into some watchable length, as the demand for them isn't worth the trouble. We have the ESPN shows available, and since they have already been edited into a nice form, we have made copies available for sale. We sell them at the Pro Tour booth for domestic shows.

"Maybe one day the Pro Tour will have a massive public fan following, and then we'll go back and edit those old tapes."

April 1, 2003



Q: "Will Wizards ever consider a mono-color set?"
--Andrew Richenderfer

A: From **Mark Rosewater**, R&D senior designer:
"Will we ever consider it? Sure, we consider pretty odd ideas all the time. Will we ever do a mono-color set? Well, I'm famous for making a quote about how Wizards would never reprint **Mana Drain** until after all of R&D is hit by a bus. I think there's a more likely sense of us reprinting **Mana Drain** than printing a mono-color set. Let's leave it at that."

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