

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Magic Arcana



# Alpha Top-Down cards

Magic Arcana  
Friday, June 13, 2003



Most enfranchised long-time **Magic** players know the story of how **Birds of Paradise** was created as an afterthought by Richard Garfield. The card was designed at the last minute, and was done so just to use an extra piece of art he had lying around (the art used on the original **Birds of Paradise** was originally commissioned for **Tropical Island**, but the prominence of the bird made them scrap it).

But very few people know that **Birds** is really part of a cycle or rares designed from the top-down at the last minute before Alpha was released. All five of the cards—one rare in each color—were designed to match art that was not used in the set's first pass. Here are the other four cards:



**PRODUCTS**

**Dissension**    **Guildpact**  
All Magic products

**RULES**

Core Game  
Basic Rulebook  
Comprehensive Rules  
All Magic Rules

**MESSAGE BOARDS**

**MAGIC** All Magic message boards  
COMMUNITY magicthegathering.com forum  
Rules Q&A forum  
**Magic Online** announcements

**MAGIC ONLINE**

**MAGIC** ONLINE

Download Now!    Check server status

Magic Online Academy    Magic Online FAQ

**NOVELS**

**Dissension**  
Ravnica Cycle, Book III  
by Cory Herndon  
More fiction at *Inside Wizards*

None of these cards were playtested before the game was released, and some of them worked out better than others (*Word of Command* is still known for being one of the biggest rules headaches in the history of the game.)

It is interesting to note that *Sedge Troll*'s cross-colored activation and *Stasis*'s "cumulative upkeep" effect were stolen from the team that was working on the outline for *Ice Age* at the time.



[Magic Arcana](#) archive

---

[About Us](#) | [Jobs](#) | [New to the Game?](#) | [Inside Wizards](#) | [Find a Store](#) | [Press](#) | [Help](#) | [Sitemap](#)

---

© 1995-2006 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved.  
[Terms of Use](#) - [Privacy Statement](#)

