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**September 30, 2003**

**Q:** "I have always heard of the occasional 'misprint' that sometimes occurs during the production of **Magic** cards. This may be a discoloration, misalignment or something else. However, I recently purchased an *Invasion* Tournament Pack and discovered that two of the Forests were 'misglued'. That is, the backing to the card and the front of the card were not physically attached, leaving me with two forests without a card back, and two card backs without fronts. I was wondering just how common this was, and is it worth keeping?"  
--Ivan

**A:** From **Robert Gutschera**, Research & Development:  
"It's not that common, and I'd certainly keep it as a curiosity. Whether it's worth money on the secondary market is hard to say. Most oddities (unless they are especially famous, like the blue Hurricane) don't have commonly accepted 'fair' values the way a normal rare from the set would have. Instead, they are worth whatever a particular buyer is willing to pay. Most people won't be that interested, but if you run into someone who collects misprints and mistakes, you might be able to get something good for it. Personally, I think it sounds kind of cool so I'd be inclined to keep it."

**September 29, 2003**

**Q:** "Who's 'Puddnhead' (the artist who did the awesome looking new **Unholy Strength** art in *Eighth Edition*)?"  
--Joe Sedita from NYC

**A:** From **Jeremy Cranford**, **Magic** art director:  
"Puddnhead is a new artist we found working out of California. You can visit his website to learn more about Mr. Puddnhead: <http://www.puddnhead.com/>

**September 26, 2003**

**Q:** "I was just wondering, what are the main strengths of each color of card to you guys at Wizards...When I try to explain what each color represents (strengthwise) I tell everyone that it goes like this.. Blue=Control, White=Defense/Prevent or Strength in Numbers, Black=Indirect (Creature Removal, etc.), Green=Sheer Power, Red=Speed/Burn. I just want to see how the professionals look at it..."  
--Kasey Maceranka, St. Louis, MO

**A:** From **Tyler Bielman**, Research & Development:  
"Hi Kasey, thanks for your great question and the compliment. It's not very often we get called 'professional.'  
  
"Each color represents a lot of different things and each color has a lot of different strengths. Each color is so rich with stuff that I could go on for pages and pages (and

actually, there is a 200+ page document that goes into a lot of detail about the color wheel). I'll try to tailor my answers to the elements you describe and the way you describe them.

"Blue certainly wants to control things, but it wants to control things because it is smarter than everyone else. I can control someone by wrestling them to the ground and pinning their arms down (well, someone really small), but that's not really Blue control. Blue = Outsmart.

"White has a lot of defensive ability to be sure. White has the unofficial motto: 'Don't mess with me or my boys.' (Please forgive the gender inequity of that statement.) The sentiment is that White doesn't really want to fight, but if you pick a fight with White, White will probably bust you up with a big group of fighters. White = Defense.

"I wouldn't characterize Black as Indirect. Black is a straight-up power broker. Black will manipulate circumstances and sacrifice itself to get what it wants. No compromises and no apologies. Creature removal is the most efficient way of dealing with creatures and that is Black's expertise. Black = Power.

"Green has really 'good' creatures. They're bigger, and usually tougher, than creatures that cost the same in other colors. Green is an advocate of growth. The result of that motivation is big creatures. Green = Big Creatures.

"Red has no long-term view of the future. Give it to me now. Now now now. Red is fast and you have correctly identified direct damage (Burn) as a primary way Red gets threats out of the way while it swings for your head. Red = Speed / Burn."

**September 25, 2003**



**Q:** "All small expansions from *Stronghold* on (including *Scourge*) have been 143 cards: 55 Common, 44 Uncommon, 44 Rare. Why was *Legions* a 145 card set, adding an 'extra' uncommon and rare?"

--Greg Olson, Sacramento, CA

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

"One of the side effects of *Legions* being an all-creature set is that it has no artifacts or lands. Since there were also no multi-colored cards, we were left trying to figure out how to split 143 cards across 5 colors. We had two options left: either cut 3 cards from the set, or add two cards. We felt that it was better to go up than down, so we rounded off to the next highest multiple of five."

**September 24, 2003**



**Q:** "Will we be seeing fewer enchantments such as *Crackling Club*, *Flaming Sword*, and *Blanchwood Armor* (to name a few) due to the advent of the Equipment card type? The reason I ask is that I always personally viewed those types of cards as equipment that you were giving to the creature, which now is exactly what the Equipment card type is." --Kyle Beck, Austin, TX

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

"I think you'll still see some local enchantments with equipment-like flavor in the future. Not many, but a few. Our guideline is that enchantments are made of magic--they're 'intangible' to some degree. So a steel sword would be an Equipment card, and a sword made entirely of magical energy would be an Enchant Creature card."

**September 23, 2003**



**Q:** "It's my fear that by creating artifact equipment that gives creatures abilities like trample, the 'Tim' ability, 'Spirit Link' and other usually color-specific abilities, Wizards is reducing the need for mixing colors. In my mind it is the weaknesses of the colors that matter as much as the strengths. If blue can get life gain and trample from *Loxodon Warhammer*, why does it need white or green?"

--Orion Adrian, Raleigh, NC

**A:** From **Devin Low**, Research & Development:

"I'm a big fan of the color wheel myself, and I agree that the colors' weaknesses are as important as their strengths. It's also true that the ability to put artifacts into any color deck makes them extremely versatile. However, if you look closely, you'll find that when artifacts get these abilities, there is a twist. Artifacts usually perform these

effects less efficiently than the colored versions, or only under certain conditions, or in a different way. Red decks could counter spells with **Null Brooch**, but only non-creature spells, and at the cost of discarding your whole hand. Blue can get life gain and trample from **Loxodon Warhammer**, but it has to pay 6 mana before it gets them, while **Spirit Link** costs 1 and **Armadillo Cloak** costs 3."

"Of course **Loxodon Warhammer** has its own advantages: it doesn't leave play when its creature does. This is an example of how artifacts also have a unique space in the color wheel, and can do some things that no color can do. If you want the raw, efficient version of a colored ability, you have to go to the color. If you want the ability with a twist, you just might be able to get it from an artifact. And with *Mirrodin* bursting with artifacts, let's just say it's time for a lot of twists."

September 22, 2003



**Q:** "Since *Mirrodin* is the 'Artifact Block,' will the policy of all artifacts being uncommon or rare be dropped and a few common artifacts be introduced?"  
--Richard Terry

**A:** From **Randy Buehler**, Director of **Magic** R&D:  
"Yep. As you now know, artifacts are much more common on the plane of *Mirrodin* than they are anywhere else in the multiverse."

September 19, 2003



**Q:** "Will Wizards ever drastically alter the game? What I mean is, will it ever add a color? or maybe mix up the pie equations? Or change the way the backing is done on the cards?" --Joe Kelly, Surrey, B.C., Canada

**A:** From **Brian Tinsman**, R&D game designer:  
"It's interesting that this question was assigned to me because I have a reputation for wanting to break the rules of **Magic** more than other people in R&D. So keep in mind that everyone here has slightly different opinions about what should happen five or ten years into **Magic's** future. You're getting the opinion of one of the most liberal and progressive people in the department.

"One of the elements that makes **Magic** the best game in the world is that it's constantly changing to surprise players. As time goes on, the bar keeps getting raised for new and exciting things to do with **Magic** cards. When we first proposed **morph** and **split cards**, they were viewed as radically different mechanics. Today they seem pretty tame. I believe that as years pass we will start to break rules that have never been broken before, rules that few expect us to break today. So to answer your question, yes we will alter the game.

"With that said, there are some rules that if broken, might just make **Magic** a worse game. Does **Magic** become more fun if you add a sixth or seventh color? There's some evidence that says no. Eventually we will do drastic changes that make fun and interesting games, but there are lots of drastic changes that would be terrible for game play. Sit down and think about the implications of cards that have different backs, different shapes, weird new card types, or counterspelling in green. You can probably figure out on your own which ones would work well and which wouldn't."

September 18, 2003



**Q:** "A thought came to mind when I was thinking about the [new card](#) that's being designed in '[You Make The Card 2](#).' If you can play land card from the graveyard as though it work in my hand. Does that mean I can use a land's cycle ability like on **Barren Moor** again and again as long its in the graveyard?"  
--Brian Schief, Tampa, Florida

**A:** From **Devin Low**, Research & Development:  
"Hi Brian, I'm glad you are thinking about this interesting card. The key to understanding the ability of YMTC #2 is to take it extremely literally: 'You may play land cards from your graveyard as if they were in your hand.' So using your normal once-per-turn land play, you can play a land out of your graveyard instead of your hand. But the card doesn't say you can *discard* lands as though they were in your hand, and it never says you can play the *abilities* of lands as though they were in your hand. So there are two reasons why this artifact does not let you cycle lands that are already in the graveyard.

"However, your question shows you are going in a good direction. To be clear, you can cycle your **Barren Moor** to draw a card, then play that same **Barren Moor** out of your graveyard, as long as you haven't yet played a land that turn. Any way you can get a benefit out of putting lands in the graveyard could be a powerful combo with this *Fifth Dawn* artifact. A look through *Onslaught* block, *Eighth Edition*, and earlier cards should give you lots of ideas for combinations."

September 17, 2003



**Q:** "I have a question about the rarity of cards from old sets. I bought a few *Homelands* boosters and I have no idea which cards are rare. When I look at the [spoiler](#) for the set, all I find is stuff like 'uncommon 1' and 'common 2.' How are these terms relevant to the current rarity terms and how do I tell which cards are rare?" -- Alex Borger, from Winnipeg, Canada

**A:** From **Matt Place**, Research & Development:  
"The reason *Homelands*, and some of **Magic: The Gathering's** other early sets like *Arabian Nights*, denoted rarity differently than current expansion sets was due to the way the cards were printed. Today we use three separate print sheets for rares, uncommons, and commons. *Homelands* had just two print sheets, one sheet for the commons and the other for both uncommon 1 and uncommon 3 cards. Uncommon 1 cards appeared on the sheet once and the uncommon 3 cards appeared 3 times, making the uncommon 1 cards the 'rares' of the set and the uncommon 3 cards the 'uncommons.'"

September 16, 2003



**Q:** "I was just wondering if it would be possible to get a clear response on how the [recent Extended bannings](#) (specifically **Entomb**) will effect [Online Extended](#) play. There's a flurry of disinformation on the subject at the moment, as people are unsure how to value the card. If this is not the appropriate forum for such a question, could you please point me in the correct direction?" --Alan Whitman

**A:** From **Henry Stern**, Research & Development:  
"**Entomb** will be banned for **Magic Online** Extended play. Since the **Magic Online** Extended format does not include some of the older sets, we realize that the Online Extended format is different from the paper version. However, we felt that having the same bannings apply to both makes the most sense. We do not wish to have people keep track of two different banned and restricted lists. Eventually, the MTGO and paper Extended formats will sync up."

September 15, 2003



**Q:** "I really like Equipment (from what I've seen of it so far), and it has very strong flavor. That is, as long as you equip Knights and Soldiers and Goblins with it. How can you flavorfully explain **Bog Rats** carrying around a Worldslayer? Or **Birds of Paradise** with Loxodon Warhammer?" --Zaphod Zarniwoop, Netherlands

**A:** From **Brady Dommermuth**, **Magic** creative director:  
"Short answer: You can't flavorfully explain those situations. Here's an excerpt from a chat I did on wizards.com recently as part of '[UnCon](#),' the online 'convention' that took place on the various Wizards.Community websites. You can find the whole transcript here:

<http://boards1.wizards.com/showthread.php?threadid=94355>

"Equipment was really hard to envision for us. **Magic** has had such a wide variety of creatures that we couldn't really "equip" everything sensibly. So we had to accept the fact that you'd sometimes have a wombat wielding a sword or an ooze wearing armor. It doesn't make much sense from a roleplaying view of the card game, but we thought equipment was a cool enough idea to not worry about that too much."

"As others taking part in the chat pointed out, it's really not much different than enchanting your **Wall of Stone** with a **Crackling Club**, for example. In general, as **Magic's** flavor tightens up, the parts of the game that don't make sense flavor-wise stand out more, but we don't want to let that fact stop us from making flavorful cards."

September 12, 2003



**Q:** "With *Odyssey* seeing the end of its time in Standard, were there any cards from the block that surprised you in that format? Like were you surprised by how well *Psychatog* did? Were there cards you expected to do well and just kinda flopped?"  
--Don D., Rochester, NY

**A:** From **Brian Schneider**, Research & Development:  
"Well... I'd say there were some cards that surprised us in Type 2. Most of our misses were of the 'we think this card's Tier 2 or fringe, but really, it's Tier 1' variety. Or in other words, 'this card's got potential, but we don't exactly see how it'll fit in.' I wrote in one of my journals that in our testing, 'Both the *Atog* and the *Infiltrator* were excellent as win conditions.' We didn't build decks as focused on feeding the 'Tog as the ones that actually showed up, and though we saw that 'Tog had potential, he certainly ended up better than we thought he'd be.

"A few of us thought *Upheaval* had some merit but we didn't give it nearly the credit it deserved. I think that we would cost that at 5 (or more) if we put it out today. *Deep Analysis* (all the cards we missed on were blue, obviously, and, as I see it, thankfully) was also better than we thought it'd be.

"As for what we thought we be good that didn't show up... I would say that R&D had an inflated opinion of the *Odyssey* white weenies (*Suntail Hawk*, *Benevolent Bodyguard*, etc.), *Genesis*, and red cards (*Odyssey* block gives red next to nothing). They all showed up less than R&D thought they would."

September 10, 2003



**Q:** "Do you have any plans to release future box sets?"  
--Carol Ellzey, Bastrop TX

**A:** From **Mark Rosewater**, R&D senior designer:  
"I assume you're asking if we're going to create more holiday gift boxes such as *Deckmasters* and the *Beatdown Box Set*. There is no immediate plans for any new box sets."

September 9, 2003



**Q:** "Why didn't you give an optional mana cost to *Mirrodin's Artifact Lands*? If you play the cost, the card would act like an artifact and wouldn't prevent you from playing a land that turn. If you don't, you couldn't play lands any more that turn but it wouldn't cost anything. And if a land had an optional cost, couldn't it have then some additional abilities? Some enchant lands could be replaced by lands that have the ability already."  
--Ville Lovikka, Kaavi, Finland

**A:** From **Paul Barclay**, Magic Rules Manager:  
"We thought up a few different wacky things that would have been possible with the Artifact Lands. In the end, it all came down to confusion. The message 'they work just like lands' is a very strong message to send. If we were to add an optional way to play the lands, it dilutes that message. It would also mean we'd need a lot more reminder text-we'd have to explain that you could play them as a land (not using the stack), or play them as a spell (using the stack).

"On the subject of additional abilities, bear in mind that any optional cost would be an advantage for the card, so any additional abilities would have to be negatives, such as 'When CARDNAME comes into play, you lose the game.' Well, maybe not quite that drastic, but you get the idea."

September 8, 2003



**Q:** "I've got a whole pile of *Eighth Edition* foils (premium cards) and I've noticed that they don't have the 'shooting star' that they would normally have. Why?"  
--Alex Loft, Australia

**A:** From **Jeremy Cranford**, Magic art director:  
"This question is pretty easy. You see, it was kind of hard to tell with some of the colors on the old card faces if a card was foil at first glance (except for black). We decided to add the 'shooting star' to allow some more foil to shine through so at a

glance you could see that it was a foil card. We found with the new foils it wasn't necessary to add the 'shooting star'. There is already lots of shiny foil showing with the new 'redesign' and no reason to add the star."

September 5, 2003



**Q:** "Why does putting a land into play not use the stack? I believe it would simplify the rules a bit, and that can't be bad, can it? Yesterday my friend and I went over a few of the possibilities and changes this could bring, and we just couldn't come up with any ill effects of the change. Oh well, I guess that's why we're not in R&D..."

--Charles Björklund, Lund, Sweden

**A:** From **Paul Barclay**, **Magic** rules manager:

Historically, playing a land has never used the stack - lands have always just come into play as soon as they're played. When we made the *Sixth Edition* rules, we wanted to streamline everything and make everything use the stack. But we found that there were a couple of things that just didn't want to use the stack. One of those was playing lands. The reason is pretty simple: If playing a land used the stack, people might want to counter the land (one of the problems of a radical new rules system is people not knowing exactly what's changed). This wasn't acceptable, so we left playing a land alone.

"Today, people know that playing a land isn't the same as playing a spell, and you can't counter playing a land. So it's less important whether or not playing a land not uses the stack. I can't say that we'd never change that rule, but I can say that it's pretty unlikely. We'll certainly talk about the issues again when *Ninth Edition* comes along (so there won't be any changes happening in the next two years)."

September 4, 2003



**Q:** "How are the basic lands portrayed (flavor-wise) in a **Magic** duel? How do the wizards draw mana from a mountain range or a jungle when they are in the middle of a battle? Are the planeswalkers in the terrain that they play as land cards in a game? Why can they slowly build up different lands in one battle?"

--Kyle Rainsford, Auckland, New Zealand

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

"Many of the most mundane functions of the **Magic** card game just don't translate very well into the metaphor of a battle between two mages. For example, why can you play only four of a given spell? In some cases, Wizards has acknowledged that there's just no reasonable way to make every aspect of the card game make sense in a magical duel context. We have thought about what land plays represent, however, and we've come up with a few possible answers, none of which we've really settled on, to be frank.

"The basic idea is that a mage must first create a bond to the land through some kind of ritual. Whether the mage actually needs to visit the land is an open question. Maybe some lands are so mana-rich or renowned that mages can create a connection to them from across space, time, or even across planes. In any case, once a mage has established a bond to a given place, he or she can manifest that bond by concentrating on it, then channeling the mana from the land into him- or herself for spellcasting.

"Perhaps this bond is abstract and only in the mage's thoughts, but we've also thought about ways to represent the bond visually, such as with 'mana globes' that float around a mage. The mage would create a small mana globe - roughly baseball-sized - that is a magical manifestation of his/her connection to a given land. Then the mage could literally 'tap' the mana globe to draw its power into him- or herself. The mana globe would then slowly regenerate until it was ready to be siphoned again. The bond could also be represented at the site of the land, such as with a totem or magical sigil that 'marks' the mage's bond to it.

"One recent development in this area has to do with legendary lands. It used to be that any unique place would be considered legendary for card purposes, whether it was a single structure or an entire city. We decided recently that unique places should be able to accommodate more than one mage's bond. Theoretically that means you could start seeing more unique places on nonlegendary land cards. This doesn't mean we won't print legendary lands anymore; such lands will simply be conceptualized as places that can support a bond with only one mage."

September 3, 2002



**Q:** "Have you every thought about altering the four-card limit rule? What I mean is, decreasing it to, say, two cards. Seems to me that decks wouldn't be so predictable and boring with four of everything, and more cards would see play in all formats."  
--Thomas Gass, Atlanta, Goergia

**A:** From **Henry Stern**, Research & Development:  
"Well, this has been thought about, but as they say, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.' The four-card-per-deck rule has now become almost an industry standard, and we are pretty happy with the predictability that having four of a card gives to deck builders. That said, we realize that some people like to vary this number, the two natural options being no restrictions, and one-card limit. This one-card limit, now called 'Singleton' in *Magic Online*, has been a reasonably popular format over the years."

September 2, 2003



**Q:** "Since lands have a type and the mana producing ability is linked with a land type, not a name under new rules, is it possible to create basic lands with names different from Plains, Forest, etc.? For example, 'Wirewood, Basic Land - Forest' or 'Skirk Ridge, Basic Land - Mountain.'"  
--Denis Mikheev

**A:** From **Mark Rosewater**, R&D senior designer:  
"Is it possible? Absolutely. When we first created the new land sub-types, we realized that we could do just what you're suggesting. R&D has actually debated the topic quite heavily. In the end, we've decided (at least for now) that the confusion it would create outweighs the extra flavor new names would bring."

September 1, 2003



**Q:** "If you could go back in time, what **Magic** card or expansion would you want to re-design or alter?"  
--Matt

**A:** From **Brian Tinsman**, R&D game designer:  
"I would alter **Elder Spawn** by putting a message in very small letters hidden in the artwork, where only I would see it. The message would say 'Brian Tinsman Feb 6 '03 play Mega-Millions, 10-18-20-23-48-49.'"

"Also, I would have added a couple of mana to **Swords to Plowshares**, since that card went a long way towards making lots of cool creatures bad."

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