



[Products](#)  
[Gameplay](#)  
[Rules](#)  
[Help](#)  
[Learn to Play](#)  
[Fun Stuff](#)

# Sketches: Banshee's Blade

This week's "Sketches" looks at the art on *Mirrodin's* growing sword, **Banshee's Blade**. Bradley Williams was given the task of illustrating the card.

## 1. Art Description

Here were the instructions given to Bradley Williams for the project:

- "Color: Artifact (neutral to colors)
- Location: generic metal world
- Action: Show a magical blade with a gaping, screaming mouth on its hilt. When this sword deals damage, it magically hurts everyone nearby, perhaps with sound.
- Focus: The magical blade artifact."

So the concept of the card is that the sword's wielder would become more powerful by the weapon's sonic attack. But the interesting part of the art piece's evolution has to do with the shift in focus from wielder to weapon.

## 2. Sketches

Here is Bradley's initial sketch:



As you can see, the art team decided they wanted to de-emphasize the blade's wielder and focus the piece entirely on the blade itself. But note how the wielder in this original sketch has the



Wed, Dec 10

[A Wandering Eye](#)  
Think before you commit  
by Brian David-Marshall

Tue, Dec 9

[The MVP Award](#)  
Shining in a team format  
by Anthony Alongi

Mon, Dec 8

[Red Letter Day](#)  
It's time for another mailbag column  
by Mark Rosewater

Sat, Dec 6

[Saturday School #55](#)  
Broodstar on a Soul Foundry  
by Rune Horvik

Fri, Dec 5

[Banned-ing Week](#)  
Randy explains this week's bannings  
by Randy Buehler

Thu, Dec 4

[Beat the Band](#)  
An irrelevant column for an obsolete topic  
by Mark Gottlieb

Search

*Mirrodin* look, with metal embedded in his skin and loose pieces of metal armor and gauntlets. Also note how the sword might appear to be harming him as well, which runs counter to the card's eventual ability.

Next Bradley submitted a second sketch.



In this sketch the wielder is all but gone, and the blade has taken the front and center position, as the art team desired. The look of the blade has changed as well -- the humanoid face of the first sketch has transformed into a snarling muzzle.

### 3. Final Art

But there is even more transformation to go.



Many elements change in the final piece. Here the blade has even more of the center stage, with just one of gripping arms of the wielder (who now appears to be green-skinned, perhaps a goblin) remaining. Also, the blade itself has grown in size considerably; compare it with the scale in the second sketch. The mouth has changed again to a flatter, sharper-toothed maw, and the environment has changed slightly. Lastly, there is a dimly-seen figure in the background, perhaps a foe affected by the sonic damage streaming out of the sword's grimace.

In sum, these changes serve to focus on the artifact equipment, and illustrate its powerful, sinister wail effect. Think of that the next time you arm your creature with the **Banshee's Blade**.

## 4. Card

Here is the card as you can see it in booster packs.



## Magic Arcana Archive

[Email to the editor](#)[Message Boards](#)[Full Archive](#)[Site Credits](#)[WHAT'S NEW](#)[CORPORATE INFO](#)[WHERE TO BUY](#)[INTERNATIONAL](#)[SUPPORT](#)[SITEMAP](#)[PRODUCTS](#)

© 1995-2003 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved.  
Wizards is headquartered in Renton, Washington, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057.  
[PRIVACY STATEMENT](#)