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November 28, 2003



Q: "I've heard that **Blood Moon** makes artifact lands into Mountains that are still artifacts. But basic lands are not artifacts. Can you explain the rules change that makes it work this way, and point me to a specific spot in the Comprehensive Rules that covers this?"
 --Richard Rodriguez, Corpus Christi, TX

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

"Note that **Blood Moon** doesn't make anything into basic lands. Its wording is simply 'nonbasic lands are Mountains.' This changes the land's land type to 'Mountain,' and makes it tap for red mana. It doesn't change whether the land is basic, or whether the land is legendary. It will remove any other land types the nonbasic land might have had (a **Lair** will no longer be a Lair, and a **Tundra** will be just a Mountain, and not an Island or Plains).

"Here's the rule from the [Comprehensive Rulebook](#):

"212.6e If an effect changes a land's type to one of the basic land types, the land no longer has its old land type. It loses any rules text it had in its text box, other than the rules text for the snow-covered ability, and it gains the rules text for the appropriate mana ability for that basic land type. Note that this doesn't remove any abilities that were granted to the land by other effects. Changing a land's type doesn't add or remove any types (such as creature) or supertypes (such as basic and legendary) the land may have. If a land gains one or more land types in addition to its own, it keeps its land types and rules text, and it gains the new land types and mana abilities."

November 27, 2003



Q: "Why is **Mox Diamond** considered powerful enough to be banned in the extremely high-powered Type 1.5 environment and restricted in the even more powerful Type 1 environment but is not banned in Extended?"
 --Andrew Earl Pate, Vanderbilt University

A: From **Paul Sottosanti**, Research & Development:

"**Mox Diamond** provides mana acceleration at the cost of a card from your hand. The decks in Type 1 are so incredibly fast that historically, cards that provide this effect have quickly been restricted. The spells in Type 1 are powerful enough that the loss of a card doesn't really slow a deck down at all, especially when the games are often over in the first few turns. In the combo decks that might be happiest to run four **Mox Diamonds**, like **Burning Desire**, the card disadvantage can easily be recouped through cards like **Timetwister**, **Ancestral Recall**, and **Wheel of Fortune**. Additionally, the existence of a simple card called **Tolarian Academy** makes any artifact that produces mana into even more of a problem.

"**Mox Diamond** is banned in Type 1.5 by virtue of it being restricted in Type 1, but similar reasons apply.

"In Extended, the options for recovering card disadvantage aren't nearly as appealing, and the games aren't always over nearly as fast. There's been quite a high percentage of turn two and

three kills in the current format, but it's safe to say that things might change soon. In any case, only 40 out of 318 competitors at [Pro Tour - New Orleans](#) used **Mox Diamond** in their deck, which seems to indicate that the card is strong but fair."

November 26, 2003



Q: "I have this card **Mirri, Cat Warrior**. But mine is white bordered and is marked as a common. I looked in *Scrye* and it said it is a rare. And *Exodus* is black bordered. I was wondering if this is a misprinted card and how much it is worth."
--Liz Cooke

A: From **Mons Johnson**, Research & Development:

"The white-bordered **Mirri, Cat Warrior** was reprinted in the *Anthologies* box set in 1998. The *Anthologies* box set consisted of a pair of decks, 'Dark Alliance' a red/black deck (a Goblin deck, huzzah!) and 'Defenders of the Cause' a white/green deck both built of a variety of cards printed in first 5 years of **Magic**. The **Mirri** you have has a white border because it was a reprinted card.

"The rarities were not marked on the cards for the *Anthologies* set because a portion of the cards (such as **Serra Angel**) were from the older base sets and would not have an expansion symbol. It was decided that rarities displayed on some cards, but not others wouldn't look appropriate. There was a misprint on the **Mirri**, however. **Mirri, Cat Warrior** is supposed to have a 3 toughness, the white-bordered one was misprinted with a 2 toughness. Since all cards are played using the Oracle text, **Mirri**, white bordered or not, has a 3 toughness.

"Because all the **Mirris** in the set were printed with this mistake, the card probably isn't worth more to a collector than a regular **Mirri**."

November 25, 2003



Q: "How do you tell the difference between Unlimited cards and Revised cards?"
--Jim Coffey

A: From **Aaron Forsythe**, Research & Development:

"The *Unlimited* set, released in 1993, was the first run of white-bordered cards that we ever released. The set's contents were the same as the Beta set's, including **Black Lotus**, **Time Walk**, and other power cards.

"The *Revised* set was the first time a Core Set '[rotation](#)' was implemented, meaning certain cards were taken out of print and replaced with cards from expansions. For example, **Black Lotus** and **Time Walk** were taken out and replaced with **Aladdin's Lamp** and **Island Fish Jasconius**. *Revised* was released in 1994 and was also white bordered.

"Once you know what to look for, the two sets are really easy to differentiate. *Unlimited* cards have a beveled edge around the card frame, and a thick black line around that. Revised cards do not have the bevel, and the *Revised* printing process made the cards look 'washed out' compared to other white-bordered cards.

"This image shows the differences really clearly."



November 24, 2003



Q: "With the advent of *Mirrodin* - where cats seem to be a greater presence, and warriors have come into being - and of multiple creature types in general, are older cards like *Mirri*, *Cat Warrior*, *Panther Warriors* and even *Cat Warriors* now considered Cats and Warriors, or is there a special creature type for them, the Cat Warrior?"

--Brian Weibel

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

"Every separate word in a card's creature type is a distinct type. That means if we wanted a special type just for cat humanoid, we'd have to call them 'Cat-Warriors' with a hyphen, for example. And that would be bad, because then they wouldn't count as Cats. Without the hyphen, a creature whose type line reads, 'Creature - Cat Warrior' has two creature types: (1) Cat, and (2) Warrior. As for older cards, check out the Oracle card reference. *Cat Warriors*, *Panther Warriors*, and *Mirri* all have the types Cat and Warrior (and *Mirri* also has the type Legend). The *Mirrodin* set introduces the Leonin, who all have the type Cat, as well as having the type Soldier, Knight, or Cleric. In general, white creatures aren't Warriors but Soldiers."

November 21, 2003



Q: "What was the reasoning behind making *Platinum Angel*?"

--Peter Gannon, Washington DC

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

"Early in *Mirrodin* design, **Magic's** creative director and art director (Brady Dommermuth and Jeremy Cranford) did a ton of work to flesh out this new world and the creatures that live there. What would an angel even be like on *Mirrodin*? They wrote up a concept for a female winged guardian made entirely of white-aligned noble metals (silver, gold and platinum) to evoke the imagery of **Magic's** angels, but with a *Mirrodin* twist. The mood for the art concept was 'Noble, but cold. Awe-inspiring.' Brom agreed to do the art for this metal angel, so we knew it would look good, and it was chosen for the *Mirrodin* booster boxes.

"Design has a lot of stages, but as *Mirrodin* went to development, the set still didn't have a card that seemed cool enough to fit this concept and art. As often happens, the development team reviewed this 'hole' in the file and created a card to fill it. The team (Randy Buehler, Brandon Bozzi, Elaine Chase, Brian Schneider, Henry Stern, and Brian Tinsman) wanted an ability that felt white, but with an artifact twist. They decided to create the ultimate defense: "You can't lose." and attach it to a powerful flying body. The artifact twist is that unlike *Worship*, you are also immune to *Battle of Wits*, decking, and as [Pro Tour – New Orleans showed us](#), *Final Fortune*.

"Now I can't tell from your question whether you're also asking, 'My opponent can never lose and I can never win?!? What were you thinking!!' Part of the goal in producing exciting **Magic** sets is making people's eyes bug out in exactly that way, and provoking the exclamation, 'They printed that?' If your friend has been pushing you around with **Platinum Angel**, remember that being an Artifact Creature means that every color can remove it from the board. **Altar's Light** in white, **Aether Spellbomb** in Blue, **Betrayal of Flesh** in black, **Shatter** in red, and **Deconstruct** in green are just a few of the many ways *Mirrodin* offers to take out this intimidating flier. And unlike the enchantment **Worship**, you can send your Platinum-protected opponent to 0 life or even negative, and he or she will lose as soon as the Angel leaves play."

November 20, 2003



Q: "On the *Seventh Edition* version of **Yawgmoth's Edict** there was a black book full of words in Phyrexian. I was wondering, have you developed a system of writing and lettering in Phyrexian or have you just made up random ones? If you have developed a system of writing and lettering in Phyrexia could you please show me?"

--Brian Johnson

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

"There is a big ol' Phyrexia style guide here at the Wizards office with tons of stuff in it that players have never seen. And yes, it even includes samples of Phyrexian script. Maybe you'll see it someday, but we're not ready to share it just yet. It's not a fully fleshed out alphabet or anything, so we won't be printing special cards in Phyrexian anytime soon. What you see on the *Seventh Edition* **Yawgmoth's Edict** isn't Phyrexian script, however, but simply the writing of a devotee. I want to take this opportunity to thank artists Dave Allsop and Chippy for their truly amazing Phyrexia concept illustrations."

November 19, 2003



Q: "While designing creature cards, what usually decides the creature's type in accordance to the card's abilities? For example, why was **Butcher Orgg** printed as an Orgg and not just a Beast like **Orggs** have been before? Or why isn't **Wellwisher** a Wizard?"

--Ophir Nemtsov, Mercaz Shapira, Israel

A: From **Brandon Bozzi**, **Magic** creative coordinator:

"Thanks for the question, Ophir. A creature's type is generally based on that creature's concept. There are several factors that go into determining a creature's concept: its color, its power and toughness, its abilities, the overall mechanical needs of the set, and the cosmology of the world we're on at the moment.

"This is how the process generally works. The creative team gets a card with color, power, toughness, casting cost, and abilities. Then we give that card a concept based on the information provided. For example, small, green mana producers are often Elves, whereas large red flyers are usually Dragons. These types will vary from block to block however depending on which races are present, and are usually more detailed than just 'elf' or 'dragon'. Then, based on that concept, the creature is assigned a type. Nowadays, for sentient creatures, that type consists of a 'race' and a 'class' (i.e. Elf Druid or Goblin Wizard). In the past however, some cards only got a race like **Wellwisher**, or a class like **Voidmage Prodigy**.

"As far as **Butcher Orgg** goes, we decided that Orggs were an important enough creature to **Magic** to get their own type, even though we didn't believe that to be so in the past."

November 18, 2003



Q: "I was wondering why you decided not to reprint **Shatterstorm** in *Mirrodin* as a rare. It seems to me that **Shatterstorm** really fits red's M.O., very destructive and very chaotic. I understand it would be a bomb in limited, but as a rare it wouldn't be as dominant in limited and my perception is that it wouldn't be overpowered in constructed."

--Santosh Narayan, Nashville, Tennessee

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

"**Shatterstorm** is very deliberately not in *Mirrodin*. R&D felt that the *Mirrodin* block should encourage artifact decks. As such, we made a conscious decision to keep all of our artifact hate to pinpoint cards and not mass removal. That way there were answers for individual artifacts but not single cards that just wrecked the artifact decks we were encouraging. Part of creating a fun environment is not only giving players the proper tools but also keeping away the key cards that would ruin all their fun. We'll leave that to **Akroma's Vengeance**."

November 17, 2003



Q: "I really like the card **Molder Slug**. Why isn't his creature type Slug? He seems like **Spitting Slug**'s older brother and **Spitting Slug** is a Slug. Does this mean that Slugs are extinct? Slug slug."

--Mike Turian, Pittsburgh, PA

A: From **Brandon Bozzi**, **Magic** creative coordinator:

"Thanks for the question Mike, and a 'slug slug' to you as well.

"Yes, slugs are extinct. In order to keep the number of individual creature types from spiraling out of control we have to, from time to time, reevaluate which creature types we support. In this case, we decided not to keep creature type slug around due in part to how infrequently we concept cards as slugs, and to the relative level of coolness of the creature type."

November 14, 2003



Q: "When will *Mirrodon* be released on *Magic Online*?"

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

"Monday, November 24th, at 9am. Click [here](#) for more details."

November 13, 2003



Q: "Where does color change (i.e. **Wild Mongrel** and **Spiritmonger**) fit in the color wheel?"

--Robert C. Lopez, Las Cruces, NM

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

"Have you ever noticed how some abilities get share between one color and its enemy? Green, for example, gets life-gaining. Black gets life-stealing. Dichotomies like this are our way of communicating to you that enemy colors can be like two sides of the same coin. Color-changing is shared by blue and green. In blue's case, color-changing is just an illusion, and is one of many tricks blue mages can pull on their opponents. For green, color-changing is a chameleonic ability, and represents green creatures' ability to adapt more quickly than other creatures to survive. You'll also notice that in general, green's color-changing is tied to particular creatures that can change only their own color, whereas blue can change the color of other cards in play."

November 12, 2003



Q: "Do the guys at the designing team keep a list of cards which have been specially made by certain people? By reading this website, I learned that **Maro** was a creation of Mark Rosewater, which was an interesting story in itself. Ultimately, it would be great to know who came up with the ideas for some of the best cards in the **Magic** world, like one of my favorite cards of all time, **Dream Halls**."

--Timothy Jonathan

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

"The short answer is no, there's no such list. That said, individual designers tend to have some idea which cards they did and did not create. But with so many cards, significant interaction throughout the creative process, and the fading of memory over time, the designers of certain cards remain unknown (or are claimed by multiple designers). I do happen to know though the designer of **Dream Halls**. That would be me. I was a huge fan of the 'pitch' cards from *Alliances* and I thought it would be fun to make an enchantment that turned all cards into 'pitch' cards. In fact, the design name for the card was 'Pitch World'."

November 11, 2003



Q: "While reading various **Magic** sites and articles I've come across a lot of references to deck archetypes using people's names... like, say, 'Spike', 'Timmy', etc. What, or who, are these names referring to, and where did they come from?"

--Dan Barrett, Glastonbury, CT

A: From **Aaron Forsythe**, Research & Development:

"Mark Rosewater went over what the labels 'Timmy, Johnny, and Spike' mean to R&D in an article here on the site last year. [That article](#) (and its introductory quiz) is basically required reading for anyone that wants to know how R&D views the different segments of the **Magic**-playing population.

"In a nutshell:

"Timmy' refers to the type of player that values size and splashiness over subtlety. Timmy likes to play with cards like **Luminous Angel**, **Thorn Elemental**, and **Plague Wind**, and would consider a card that deals damage to be greatly superior to a card that allows him to draw more cards. 'Timmy' enjoys **Magic** for the cool-looking monsters and spells therein.

"Johnny' is the clever player - the guy that wants to impress people with his nifty combos even if he doesn't win. 'Johnny' loves to build new decks, and tries to use cards that others shun in new and interesting ways.

"Spike' is the guy that wants to win, plain and simple. The joy he gets from **Magic** is the joy of beating his opponents. 'Spike' will use whatever cards happen to be good - big creatures, deadly combos, counterspells, direct damage, whatever it takes to win.

"Most players are some combination of those three oversimplifications, but it is interesting talk about motivations and perceptions in those terms."

November 10, 2003



Q: "How many different counters have been used in **Magic** so far and which is the most common (I'd assume +1/+1)?"

--Anonymous

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

"As you have guessed, +1/+1 counters are by far the most common. In recent years, we've followed an unwritten rule that the only size-changing counters are +1/+1 counters, so you won't see any more wacky -2/-1 or +0/+X counters. This centralization is useful so that these days, when you see a 0/0 with 3 counters on it, you can be pretty sure it's a 3/3. I can remember casting **Frankenstein's Monster** with a couple of +2/+0 counters, a couple of +1/+1 counters, and one +0/+2 counter, and I think you can see why the new system is much better. **Withering Hex** was a big temptation to use -1/-1 counters, but the editors stayed the course and worked around it with named Plague counters.

"We also use specially named counters, but these have been centralized too. In all of **Onslaught** block, **Gold**, **Plague**, **Trap** and **Charge** may be the only ones. **Mirrodin's** named counters are intentionally unified as **Charge** counters, with the necessary exceptions of **Fate** and **Flood**. Unifying the charge counters opens the door to cool cards like **Power Conduit** that manipulate all the counters at once, and turn one card's counters into another's.

"In **Magic's** earlier days, these unwritten guidelines about counters didn't exist. Designers and players alike could have a field day with different named counters, and the only real rule was: The weirder the name, the better. Some counters that went nameless on the original cards have even been given special names in their official Oracle text. How many different named counters have there been? Are you sure you want to know this? Really?? Well alright, I'll name as many as I can remember, but I can't help it if the answer makes you pull out some old card boxes. I mean who could forget classics like **Velocity**, **Carrion**, or **Wage** counters? **Spore**, **Tide**, and **Poison** counters were crucial to their races' very existence. **Magnet**, **Pain**, **Arrow**, and **Paralyzation** counters created a lot of 'Magic: The Puzzling' scenarios in actual games. **Page**, **Pin**, **Infection**, and **Hunger** counters built up on the same card over time, but you usually only put one **Bounty**, **Javelin**, or **Hourglass** counter on a single card.

"Like many of you, I can remember winning and losing games with each of **Soot**, **Verse**, and **Fuse** counters. **Fading**, **Delay**, and **Arrowhead** counters smashed a warpath across limited, casual, and constructed tables alike. **Age**, **Elixir**, **Credit**, **Pupa**, **Currency**, and **Doom** counters build up power over time. **Omen** and **Sleep** counters wind down. And **Dream**, **Polyp**, and **Energy** counters yoyo up and down in all sorts of crazy ways. I give the award for most varied use of a single named counter to **Growth** counters: on **Momentum**, they're basically glorified +1/+1 counters, while other **Growth** counters do something very non-basic.

"Counters help a lot to stagger the mana production of non-basic lands, whether releasing it in bursts with **Depletion** counters, building it up over time with **Storage** counters, or just balancing a benefit like the beloved **Mining** counters. **Time** counters were the first counters not printed on the card, but named in Oracle. The card received errata early on to fix a broken loophole: the unbeatable **Elder Druid/Time Vault** deck! (Well . . . it sure seemed unbeatable back then.) I just spent 4 seconds trying to think of a combo between **Sleight** and **Petal** counters, but it's just not there. My **Merfolk Assassin / War Barge** deck used to keep guys tapped with **Net** counters, and I've regenerated a handful of times with **Corpse** counters. I've never added an **Incubation** counter, but I've gotten smashed multiple times by the **Palladia-Mors** that hatched out of them. And if I had to choose between 40 **Echo** counters and 40 **Winch** counters.... I know which one I'd pick.

"Well that wraps up the counters, though I'm sure there are several I missed. May you never face an **Ebon Praetor** with 3 counters on it and have no idea what size it is!"

November 7, 2003



Q: "What ever happened to Gleemax? Does he still control R&D from a jar on Mark Rosewater's desk? Is Mark still made out of old pizza crusts or did Gleemax finally award him with a real body? Would Gleemax ever greenlight *Unglued 2* after Mark obviously deceived him with the first *Unglued*? Will the truth ever be known about R&D?"
--Anonymous

A: From Mark Rosewater, R&D senior designer:
"A brain in a jar that secretly controls R&D? Preposterous. I mean, if such a thing were true, such a being would greatly punish any R&D member that dared to publicly mention his existence. Such a being would also have greatly tortured any designer who dared to put out a set as irrational as *Unglued*. What does a brain in a jar know about chickens or the Hokey Pokey? But such a brain would eventually have to sleep, right? And if a crafty designer used that time to answer an 'Ask Wizards' question, then perhaps such a being would be none the wiser. It's safe to say... AAAHHH!!!! ARGGGG! THE PAIN! THE PAIN!"

"R&D has no knowledge of any such being. Any talk of a so-called 'Gleemax' is purely the product of an over-imaginative, under-disciplined **Magic** designer. R&D as a policy does not comment on the existence of any *Unglued* product. In the future, it would be more productive to ask questions of a less frivolous nature."

November 6, 2003



Q: "Why the big delay releasing new sets after the prerelease tournament? It seems to me that us casual players have to wait longer and longer to get our hands on the new cards. There was almost a two week gap between the *Mirrodin* prerelease and the street release of the cards September 20 vs. October 3. I seem to remember years ago (*Ice Age*, *Mirage*) that the street release of a new set was the Monday right after the prerelease."
--Josh Freedman, Boston, MA

A: From Randy Buehler, Director of **Magic** R&D:
"Our goal is to have one weekend in between the prerelease and the street release of a set. The reason you noticed a change with *Mirrodin* is that we changed our street release dates so that they happen on Fridays now, whereas they used to happen on Mondays. (We had too many issues with stores being tempted to start selling early so they could have tournaments on the weekend days right before the street release date, so we moved the release date to right before a weekend.) The *Mirrodin* prerelease actually happened a full week earlier than it was originally scheduled because of this change - the old plan would have had the prerelease on Saturday the 27th and street release on Monday October 6th. So actually, we got you guys the product 3 days earlier, and not 4 days later."

November 5, 2003



Q: "Yesterday, when reading through an old The Duelist, I noticed a Type 2 restricted list. When and why did you remove the restricted list, and go for banned only? And how about Extended?"
--Henrik Holt Nielsen, Denmark

A: From Henry Stern, Research & Development:
"The restricted list was removed from Standard and Extended to lower the 'luck factor.' When cards are powerful enough to be restricted (or banned) matches often boiled down to who drew his restricted card first.

"Another reason is that when a card is strong enough to be banned, every deck that plays that color will always run that card. This lowers the normal diversity of deckbuilding, which is a Bad Thing™."

November 4, 2003



Q: "What defines how or what will become a new set's symbol? *Mirrodin* has a scimitar, much like *Arabian Nights*. Since its the beginning to a new artifact block, why doesn't it have something similar the gears or anvil of previous artifact sets?"
--Josh Rudis, Renton, WA

A: From **Brady Dommermuth**, **Magic** creative director:
"Josh, you'll have to wait and see why the **Sword of Kaldra** is worthy of being an expansion symbol. As for the gears and stuff, in general we tried very hard to make **Mirrodon** a world of "organic" metal-a world in which a natural metal ecology evolved. We tried to stay away from industrial or steam-powered stuff. (Yes, a little crept in here and there despite our efforts.)"

November 3, 2003



Q: What was up with **Magic Online** and Chuck's Virtual Party last weekend?

A: From Randy Buehler, Director of **Magic** R&D:
For lots of information about what has happened and is going to happen with **Magic Online**, check out the [State of the Game](#) Address that I wrote. It's over on the [Magic Online website](#) (which we are still updating occassionally until we unveil the new fully merged version of MagicTheGathering.com).

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