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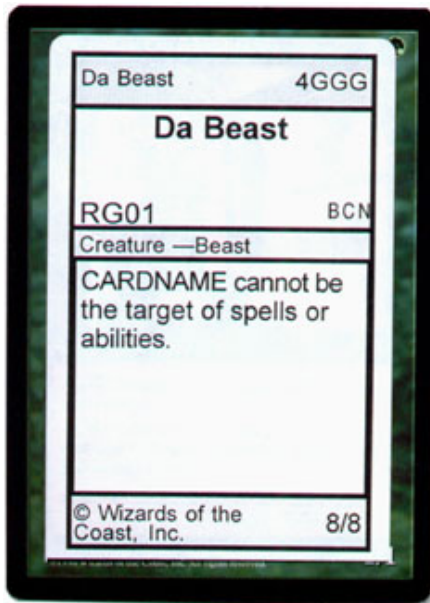
Mirrodin playtest cards III: Strictly better

Magic Arcana

Thursday, November 13, 2003

Generally speaking, having a more powerful card means paying a higher cost, but sometimes you get more than you would normally pay for. When two different cards -- or two versions of the same card -- have different abilities for the same cost, the more powerful of the two is said to be *strictly better* (for example, compare [Grizzly Bears](#) and the strictly better [Wild Mongrel](#)).

This comes up during the design and development of **Magic** sets, too. While R&D is developing a new card, that card's abilities and costs can change radically, often for the better. In today's Magic Arcana, we take a look at some playtest versions of *Mirrodin* cards that didn't change cost in their final forms, but that R&D made strictly better for that same cost. Thanks, R&D!



[Plated Slagwurm](#) survived playtesting as an 8/8 for $4GGG$, but in its final form is targetable by its controller -- a serious advantage. That means it can be [Predator's Strike](#)'d by you, but still not [Terror](#)'ed by your opponent.



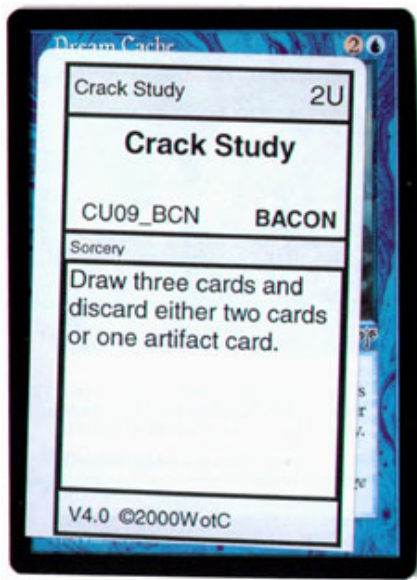


R&D toyed with the idea of printing an instant in *Mirrodin* that countered just artifact spells for $\{1\}$, but instead just reprinted *Urza's Saga's* strictly better *Annul*.



Electrostatic Bolt now packs quite a bit more punch for its $\{2\}$ mana cost -- a change that is often crucial in Limited play, where it can now kill creatures from *Yotian Soldier* to *Platinum Angel*.





Thirst for Knowledge, a staple of current Affinity decks, changed from Sorcery to Instant -- so now you can leave mana open and cast it during your opponent's end step, or whenever it suits you -- but it maintained its bargain price of 2.

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