

How they fit into Magic's storyline

A Sliver Story

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"I love it when a plan comes together." – John "Hannibal" Smith

"I love it when Slivers come together." – [Volrath](#) (and many **Magic** players)

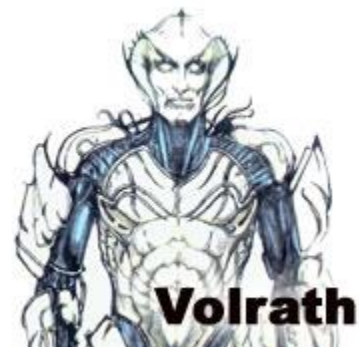
More varied than the Borg, more powerful than the living dead, and better shots than Imperial Stormtroopers, Slivers have always been one of **Magic's** favorite mindless hordes. Whether they're [resucking an opponent's brains out](#) or just sitting around being [untouchable](#), they have been the staple of tribal decks both in and out of tournaments for years. I was excited to help bring back Slivers during the days of *Legions*, especially since they've been a big part of the **Magic** world whenever they've appeared. That's no surprise – with their tenacity, strength, and power-sharing, they've always fit very well into the **Magic** attitude of "the more, the merrier." So how do the Slivers fit into the storyline?

To answer that question, we first delve into their murky history. Like everything else that's native to the plane of Rath, the Slivers' origins have been lost to time, thanks to the meddling of Yawgmoth and his evincars. Like the Slivers themselves, Rath is a giant jigsaw puzzle, made up of pieces of other worlds thrown together like a patchwork quilt. Of course, this had some pretty serious consequences that the creators didn't care about, like breaking down the relations between previously friendly [merfolk](#) and [elves](#), and trapping the [Dauthi](#), [Soltari](#), and [Thalakos](#) halfway between worlds. The Slivers might very well have been one of these victimized races, torn from their native world and forced to survive on this new, strange plane.



The Influence of Volrath

However, we can't ignore one major figure who may have had a big role in the story of the Slivers: [Volrath](#). Volrath had a sadistic hobby: experimenting on live beings without the benefit of anesthesia. Like



another famous ethically-challenged doctor, Victor Frankenstein, he used some of these experiments to create new creatures of his own, usually enslaved to his twisted will. Could Volrath have resisted plying his trade on those interesting beings nesting under his very Stronghold? Probably not. We know of one confirmed Volrath intrusion into the Sliver colony: the [Metallic Slivers](#). But would he have stopped there, with mere artifact creatures, without even trying to further bend the colony's will? Again, probably not.

We may never know just how many Slivers, and which ones, were brought over when Rath was created, and which were "designed" by Volrath. Perhaps the mono-colored Slivers from *Tempest* are original, while the multi-colored Slivers from *Stronghold* (except the [Queen](#)) were creations of the evincar? It's a nice theory, but nevertheless just a theory. Still, considering what we know about the Sliver lifestyle, the [Sliver Queen](#) herself is probably a natural creature; what we know of Slivers from the *Tempest* block storyline seems to bear this out.

Here's what we know: after [Selenia](#) and the *Predator* brought the pieces of the [Legacy](#) pirated from the *Weatherlight* back to the [Stronghold](#), they were placed in the care of the [Sliver Queen](#). Obviously, Rath's evincars have some hold over the Sliver colony, but this isn't surprising, considering that they're nested underneath the Stronghold, with nothing but more hostile terrain with no escape outside. In this light, it's even less surprising that they attack the *Weatherlight* when it enters the [Furnace](#). Not only is the Furnace Volrath's turf, it's also part of the Sliver colony's home. They fight for both the evincar and to protect the rest of the colony.

When [Karn](#) finally meets up with the [Sliver Queen](#), he's able to reason with her, and appeal to the similarities between them. She is swayed, and gives up the Legacy she's guarding to its rightful owner. This tells us that the Queen has her own will, something Volrath would have done his best not to allow if he'd created her. So at least some Slivers have not been touched by Phyrexian evil.

The First Wipeout

Speaking of the *Weatherlight* encounter, the crew makes a key discovery during this attack: they must divide and conquer if they want to have any chance of defeating the Slivers. Slivers have always been very big on unity. There is an early concept sketch that shows a huge group of them clinging to a stalactite, huddled together like a swarm of bats (see *right*). They were concepted as *asmesomorphs*, or shapeshifters. This is how they are able to, say, suddenly grow wings when a [Winged Sliver](#) is around. They also share a hive mind, as if all Slivers were using a communal brain. While they are not telepathic, they can "read" other Slivers with complete accuracy. Each individual is born with certain qualities or powers, and when another Sliver "reads" this Sliver, it can share those powers. Proximity, though, is very important. Slivers can't "read" each other over great distances, which was key to the *Weatherlight's* survival in the Furnace.

Then came the planar overlay during the events of *Planeshift*. The Stronghold was transported to Urborg, where it came to rest atop a [volcano](#). Unfortunately, and appropriately, this placed the Furnace directly into the heart of the volcano. Of course, this killed Slivers.

We don't know how many, though we do know that the Queen most likely died, considering the events of *Legions*. While some few "ordinary" Slivers may have survived, could they have lived long without a



leader to guide them? Either way, so many perished that they were not a factor in the final battles between Phyrexia and Dominaria.



You Can't Keep a Good Species Down

And so the once-mighty Slivers were laid to waste. But you can't keep a good species down. The founding of the Riptide Project by cephalid [Empress Llawan](#) was the first step in bringing the Slivers back to life. Created as a cooperative between humans and cephalids to advance the magical arts, Riptide Project wizards were probably the most well traveled beings on post-Apocalypse Dominia. So maybe it's inevitable that Project explorers went to Urborg, and came across the ruins of the Stronghold. There they found enough Sliver remains to experiment with back home in Otaria. Unfortunately for them, they were not nearly as foresighted as Volrath. They failed to consider just how fast Slivers could multiply, or how difficult it would be to control them. Maybe this was an easy mistake to make, since they wouldn't know about the importance of the [Sliver Queen](#).

So the Slivers went on a rampage, quickly overrunning the Riptide Project. Thanks to their instincts, power-sharing abilities, and the multiplication abilities of the [Brood Sliver](#), any wizards who weren't driven out were reduced to desperate survivalist tactics. And in the middle of all this, as with any other event on Otaria, was the [Mirari](#). Its magical waves not only helped along the growth of the Slivers, it also called out to them. Lost and confused, they mistook the Mirari's pulse for their deceased Queen's call, so they were as much attracted to the mystic orb as anyone else on Otaria. Thus the majority of this new breed was in the center of the magical "explosion" that created the so-called goddess [Karona](#). The burst of power was too much for the Slivers that had gathered there. So, for the second time, a magical cataclysm wiped out a huge number of Slivers. But just as the Mirari event fused two beings into Karona, it also mutated a small group of Slivers, fusing them into the ultimate manifestation of the hive mind, the [Sliver Overlord](#).

The Future of Slivers

But, like the Slivers' first eradication, this does not mean the end of the species – neither R&D nor the public would like it if they were destroyed forever. The Slivers still at the Riptide Project, and the Overlord itself, yet remain. Will their numbers return? Will they follow the Overlord as loyally as they do their Queen?

Good questions, but they will have to wait for the right time. For now, enjoy your [flying,regenerating, Spirit Linked](#) monstrosities that [draw you cards](#) and [gain you additional Slivers](#) when they damage opponents. You can't keep a good idea down, and the Slivers are a good idea whose time may yet come again.