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I've been enjoying some vacation time this week. My brother is in town, and we've been playing lots of games. No matter what else we try, the gaming invariably always returns to **Magic**, probably because it's just better than every other game we could be playing. My brother's favorite way to play **Magic** is "draft from a giant box of cards." (See this Ben Bleiweiss article for an explanation of this type of draft.) I'm still reeling from his Pain/Suffering followed by Plow Under; I died to Planeswalker's Fury holding the ultra-fat trio of Needleshot Gourna, Child of Gaea, and Two-Headed Dragon. Ouch.

Developing **Magic** cards is the farthest thing from my mind right now, so I'm going to let you guys think about it instead. In lieu of writing some long analysis of this card or that, I've turned to my favorite well of material, Multiverse. Below are comments snipped from ten *Darksteel* cards during different points of development; your job is to figure out which cards they are. A puzzle, if you will.

Just so you know where the various people's comments are coming from: Henry Stern told me before the development for *Betrayers of Kamigawa* (the next block's second set) began that it is the job of the development team to *defend* their own decisions (and to some extent the decisions of the designers), and it is the job of all the developers *not* on the team to *attack* those decisions. That's the way Multiverse works for the most part. Because the development set of any given team is constantly meeting and talking about the cards in the set, they tend to not put as much into Multiverse. The people asking the tough questions are those not on the team, as Multiverse gives them a way to officially voice concerns, and it's up to the team to digest those comments.

For *Darksteel*, the development team was led by Henry Stern (comments marked by "HS"), and also contained Tyler Bielman, Brandon Bozzi, Charlie Catino (CC), and Brian Schneider (bs). Bill Rose (Bill) led the design team. Non-involved developers include Randy Buehler (RB) and Worth Wollpert (WW). Others giving input include rules manager Paul Barclay (PB), editor Del Laugel (DL), and creative director Brady Dommermuth (BD).

Don't send your guesses to me (after all, I already know most of the answers). Instead, discuss them on the boards here, or just file away your thoughts until I reveal what's what. In two weeks, I'll do just that. Enjoy!

CARD #1

RB 2/6: Timmy's eyes just bugged

HS 2/7 moved to rare, slightly retemplated

DL 2/17: Couldn't resist templating this. Note that we've been making +1/+1 counters mandatory.

CARD #2

bs 3/12: would prefer to keep this one, kill the red card and the white card (instant enchantments) and save those for a later set -- I think that's a nice mini-theme/minor mechanic for another set.



CC 3/26: Agree. And if we could fill some of those holes with cards like this that give counters, that would be a bonus.

RB 4/1: this is such a swingy card in Limited that I think it might want to be uncommon

HS 4/2 Team disagrees, lets leave it a common for now (so it will come up more) and see how it feels.

CARD #3

RB 12/12: why is this black? It looks very red to me ... I know it's a stealing effect that's permanent but what it *really* is it a target changing effect -- this is a Deflection variant that seems perfect for red's new trickster image

WW 12/16: Agreed Randy.

Bill 1/10: I disagree. If this were until end of turn, it would be Red. Red should not permanently steal things.

WW 1/15: And black should? Bills argument means this should be blue, right? Not to mention, does this card prevent us from making some insanelly high equip cost artifacts? (I have no idea if that was something we were thinking about for Tomato)

Bill 1/16: Deleted "unattached." Could be Blue (everything tricky can be Blue). Team wants Black to steal artifact equipment.

HS 1/24: I don't understand black stealing equipment at all. a) black doesn't "steal" things, b) black should have trouble dealing with artifacts. Make blue or make it 'til end of turn and make it red.

WW 1/24: Amen brother Stern.

Bill 1/28: Team talked about this becoming a 1U instant.

CARD #4

PB 1/7: This is going to cause work in MTGO - it will require a new interface part for "mana that can only be spent on this thing"

HS 1/16: suck it up, cause this is a neat card.

CARD #5

bs 2/17: why does this hose pro-red?

HS 2/17 it hoses pro-red because it says "can't be prevented" :)

RB 2/18: I think a remove from game clause might fit better than this damage can't be prevented clause, either way I like the can't regen (a la Scorching Lava/Disintegrate)

bs 2/18: i like randy's suggestion. too many people will confuse the "can't be prevented/pro-color" issue... imo.

HS 2/24 Team agrees to take out the damage prevention clause, but we are not sure what the "remove from game" achieves over the current "cant regenerate"

CARD #6

Bill 2/14: Shouldn't Black get a common flier?

Bill 2/14: repeat Sewer Rats?

bs 2/17: not thrilled about this change... people did like sewer rats.

BD 2/20/03: Flying gone? Can I take Bird off?

HS 2/24 please do.

HS 2/14 to answer Bill's question, not if there are only 3 creatures, and 1 of them already has evasion.

bs 3/24: black is too weak in limited... particularly its creatures.. let's push a common or two.

HS 3/26 added flying to improve black in limited

CARD #7

WW 1/15: This fits better into white vs. black as opposed to green vs. black, but I still don't think it's healthy in a block where we're already crossing so many other traditional

lines, which is not to say I think we should never do this card, just maybe not here.

HS 1/16: Bothers me a lot less in white. Willing to playtest to see how it feels.

Bill 1/16: While I don't think this is crossing boundaries we shouldn't cross, if we are going to make flavorful cards that cross the line, we should make them in this block. The line is already crossed.. another card won't matter.

CARD #8

bs 1/14: let's make this matter.

WW 1/15: A fine idea Brian. The charge cards seem sucky to me right now. We need to find a way to make them decent on their own.

HS 2/1 Yep

HS 2/20 this guy should not be common, if he even is allowed to exist at all

HS 2/21 moved up to uncommon, added sac effect.



CARD #9

Bill: Do more coffee cards.

bs 1/14: I wish I liked this card.

HS 2/3 reduced activation to 1 land instead of 2, and added ol. Also, made charge activation poly. Card might actually be playable now.

HS 2/18 should the charge activation do something *different* than what the tap ability does?

HS 2/21 Team discussed issue, decided we like the "coffee card" aspect of getting more of what you want

CARD #10

WW 1/7: I think I just chucked Leveler and found a new guy to Stifle. :)

Last Week's Poll

What was your initial reaction to Blinkmoth Nexus?		
Decent but unspectacular.	4758	38.5%
Has real potential.	3768	30.5%
I need four right now!	2249	18.2%
What crap.	1599	12.9%
Total	12374	100.0%

This Week's Poll

Do you have a singular favorite Magic artist?

Yes—an artist you don't really use any more.

Yes—an artist you are currently using.

No—I like several artists equally.

No—I don't really care.

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