

Aaron Forsythe
Friday, May 21, 2004

The Two Themes

When you play in the *Fifth Dawn* prerelease this weekend, there are a couple themes you should be looking for in your card pool that will help give your deck some coherency—the "many-color" theme and the "cog" theme.

The many-color theme manifests itself in cards with the Sunburst ability (like the Infused Arrows that Mark previewed last week) and in several other cards, such as the cycle of rare Bringers (as previewed by BDM two weeks ago). In order to make this theme work for you, you'll want have ways to produce more than the usual different kinds of mana in your deck, as these cards get better and better the more different kinds of mana you put into them.

The many-color theme is quite obvious and easy to pick up on. But what is the cog theme? Or better yet, what is a cog?

"Cog" is not a new type of card. In fact, cogs have existed since the beginning of **Magic**. What *is* new is the nickname, and cards that make specific use of them.

Mark Rosewater coined the term "cog" during *Fifth Dawn* design to refer to artifacts that cost one mana or less, especially ones that are sacrificed for an effect. As I said before, cards like that have existed since **Magic's** day one—a prime example is Black Lotus.

The purpose of giving an old idea a new name was to allow the creation of a subset of cards that refer to them. Auriok Salvagers, an amazing card previewed by Scott Wills earlier this month, is a prime example of a cog-card—it allows you to repeatedly reuse cogs that you've sacrificed earlier in the game. Additionally, there are several other cog-cards at all rarities that let you tutor for and recover various cogs, generating subtle but powerful card advantage.

Of course, the word "cog" never appears on a card (we always refer to them as "an artifact card with converted mana cost one or less"), and we expected it to disappear. But some of our marketing materials listed "cogs" as one of the themes of *Fifth Dawn*. To this day, I'm sure players have been scratching their heads waiting for us to preview a card called a "cog." Well now the wait is over! We never really wanted "cog" to be an official nickname for these types of cards, but it may catch on now.

Mirrodin's Spellbombs are the poster-children for actual cogs in this block, but *Fifth Dawn* adds several new ones to the fray. The card I'm previewing in one such new cog...



Where Worlds Collide

Wayfarer's Bauble exists at the intersection between the many-color theme and the cog theme—it is a cog that enables many-colored decks.

If you are playing a Sunburst deck, the card is invaluable, letting you find another color of mana even if you don't have access to green (the traditional mana-fixing color). If you are playing a deck loaded with cog-helpers, even one that is only two colors, the Bauble can be searched out at reused to thin your deck of land. And if you're playing both... in the words of developer Paul Sottosanti, "It's the best one-drop ever."

The Card's Origins

Once it was decided that there would be cog-helpers in *Fifth Dawn*, we had to come up with some cogs as well. Many of our first attempts were removed from the set by development, and new submissions were requested. I sent in the following card:

Harrowing Cog

1

Artifact

T, sacrifice CARDNAME and a land: Search your library for a basic land card and put it into play. Then shuffle your library.

That card was weird. It gave you a slight mana boost for one turn, and could fix your mana for later. Basically, it was a Lotus Petal that cost 1.

The development team like the idea of a cog that could fix your mana, but wasn't sure if a Lotus Petal variant was the way to go. One developer suggested making it an artifact version of Rampant Growth, and the card flip-flopped between the two options, finally landing on the latter, which is how it ended up printed.

Whether or not the development team noticed that the card was strictly better than *Urza's Destiny's* Braidwood Sextant (a fact I realized only last week) is a moot point now, and the five-color mages around the world can rejoice.

Using the Bauble

If you get one in limited, play it. If you get two, play them both. If you get three, you have a decision to make. The card clearly shines in that format. You can treat it like you would a mana Myr—treat them as land one-for-one, but make sure your deck is capable of playing two land on the first two turns.

In constructed, the card should tempt non-green control players. Monowhite control, especially the variations running Temple of the False God, should jump at the chance to ramp up their mana using methods that aren't affected by Akroma's Vengeance. Black, blue, and red decks with expensive spells should also give the Bauble a long, hard look.

And of course, there's always the chance of a Sunburst or cog deck making a splash on the tournament scene, and we all know the Bauble is perfectly at home in either.

I hope you enjoyed this look at the "little Bauble that could." It isn't a fancy rare or a showcase for a new keyword, but it does good work, and it fits into the set perfectly.

Have fun at the prerelease! I hope to be at the Seattle one, if I can get out of the house after my week-long jaunt to E3 and the Pro Tour. I'll start pleading with my wife right away. See you there... hopefully!

Last Week's Poll

Of what you've seen of <i>Fifth Dawn</i> so far, what is your favorite component?		
Wacky rule-breaking cards	8443	45.5%
Five-color theme	4178	22.5%
Combo "machine" parts	2990	16.1%
Nothing... I'm not a fan (yet)	2092	11.3%
Other	855	4.6%
Total	18558	100.0%

We certainly turned up the volume on the rule-breaking cards! Glad you like them!

This Week's Poll

Are you going/did you go to the *Fifth Dawn* Prerelease?

Yes

No

Aaron may be reached at latestdevelopments@wizards.com.

