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June 30, 2004



Q: "Being new to the game, but a fan of mythology, this Angel Week is very interesting! But I am curious, which cards are featured in the banner used for Angel Week? I only recognize **Reya**."

--Michael
Bakersfield, California, USA

A: From **Jen Page**, Senior New Media Designer:

"There were dozens of angelic cards to choose from, but four cards made up the [divine banner](#) for Angel Week. **Angelic Blessing** was featured from the *Exodus* set and **Silver Seraph** is a rare from *Judgment*. **Angel of Light** is a *Starter 1999* uncommon card, and you recognized the rare **Reya Dawnbringer** from the *Invasion* set."

June 29, 2004



Q: "I've noticed that there are cards in which the order of the color symbols on the mana costs are different. For example, **Altar of Bone** (*Ice Age*) costs while **Hunting Grounds** (*Judgment*) costs to play. At some point, did Wizards change the order of the color symbols?"

A: From **Del Laugel**, **Magic** technical editor:

"As you've noticed, three different systems have been used in the past to order mana symbols on cards. One system always put the colors in the order white-blue-black-red-green, and that ordering was used for *Ice Age*, *Tempest*, and *Chronicles*. Another goes clockwise around the 'pentagon of colors.' *Mirage* block used that ordering, and we've been following it consistently since *Stronghold*. And then there's the *Legends* system, which involved throwing mana symbols into a hat and then pulling them out at random.

"Our current (and final!) system for ordering mana symbols is pretty simple. If you look at the back of a **Magic** card, you'll see the pentagon of colors. Going clockwise, the colors are white, blue, black, red, green, white, blue, black To order a pair of mana symbols, find them in that list, and then put them in whichever order puts the fewest colors between them. For example, white/red has two colors in the middle (blue and black), but red/white has only one (green). That's why **Goblin Legionnaire**'s mana cost is .

"Then came the *Apocalypse* 'wedge' cards. Our system breaks down when you're trying to order two friendly colors and their common enemy, and *Apocalypse* has five rares with mana costs that fall into that category. For **Lightning Angel**'s mana cost, and are equally valid options. In the end, I decided to put the enemy color pair first.

"(Yes, I know that the *Apocalypse* split cards all violate the color order. It was decided that those five cards would be easier to name that way.)"

June 28, 2004



Q: "I saw on your website that you are [currently hiring](#) a **Magic** Rules Manager. What happened to Paul Barclay?"

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

"Paul hasn't gone anywhere, but he is interested in trying his hand at designing and developing new games. He is going to continue to serve as **Magic's** Rules Manager until we fill the position that you saw posted, then he'll help bring the new person up to speed, and then he'll move into the New Business section of R&D. He's been a real asset to the **Magic** R&D team for several years now and we'll miss him, but at the same time we're happy that he's going to help the company pursue some exciting new opportunities."

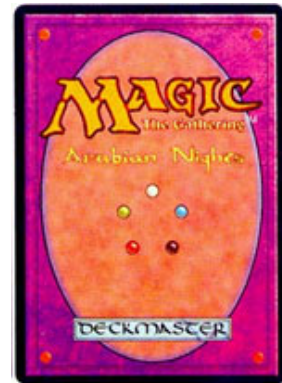
June 25, 2004



Q: "On May 22 while answering a question about **Magic** card backs Worth Wollpert hinted that the card backs were almost changed in *Arabian Nights*. Is that true, and are there any examples of what it would have looked like?"

A: From **Devin Low**, **Magic** R&D:

"I found the picture by typing 'back arabian' into the search box at the top of the www.magicthegathering.com [main page](#) (this is a really useful way to find anything you think might have gone up on the website in the past!). The #1 and #2 listings that come up feature the *Arabian Nights* cardback that you want, in a [Magic Arcana](#) from Christmas Day 2002."



June 24, 2004



Q: "Do you have any advice on how to explain (fast and simple) the game **Magic** to my friends and family who have never heard of anything like this?"

A: From **Elaine Chase**, **Magic** R&D:

"Here is a standard spiel I use:

"Unlike normal card games where players use a standard pre-built deck of cards, a trading card game allows each player to construct their own deck of cards to play with. There are thousands of **Magic** cards available to use, so there are a nearly endless number of different decks you can make.

"**Magic: the Gathering** was the first trading card game and is now over 10 years old. You use your deck of cards to cast spells and summon creatures which you use to defeat your opponent. Each player starts at 20 life, and you win by using your creatures and spells to reduce your opponent's life to zero."

June 23, 2004



Q: "I'm thrilled that this week's theme is angels...other than **Akroma** and **Serra**, so few of them get any real press. I was wondering if you could send me a list of all the angel cards in **Magic**?" -- Steven, Massachusetts

A: From **Scott Johns**, Content Editor, magicthegathering.com:

"Glad to hear you're enjoying Angel Week! Below is the complete list of cards we've printed with creature type 'Angel'. Note this leaves off creatures that have 'Angel' in their name but which aren't angels, such as **Angelic Page** (Spirit) as well as cards

which generate angels but aren't angels themselves (such as [Opal Archangel](#)). Finally, I should also give an honorable mention to [Gabriel Angelfire](#) from Legends. Back then legendary creatures didn't have creature types beyond 'Legend', but it seems likely this one would have been an angel if it had appeared in later sets instead (certainly the art would suggest as much)."

- [Akroma, Angel of Wrath](#)
- [Angel of Fury](#)
- [Angel of Light](#)
- [Angel of Mercy](#)
- [Angel of Retribution](#)
- [Angelic Protector](#)
- [Archangel](#)
- [Avenging Angel](#)
- [Blinding Angel](#)
- [Copper-Leaf Angel](#)
- [Crypt Angel](#)
- [Desolation Angel](#)
- [Exalted Angel](#)
- [Fallen Angel](#)
- [Glimmering Angel](#)
- [Guiding Spirit](#)
- [Haunted Angel](#)
- [Herald of Serra](#)
- [Iridescent Angel](#)
- [Lightning Angel](#)
- [Luminous Angel](#)
- [Melesse Spirit](#)
- [Mistform Ultimus](#)
- [Platinum Angel](#)
- [Pristine Angel](#)
- [Radiant, Archangel](#)
- [Reya Dawnbringer](#)
- [Selenia, Dark Angel](#)
- [Seraph](#)
- [Serra Advocate](#)
- [Serra Angel](#)
- [Silver Seraph](#)
- [Starlit Angel](#)
- [Sustainer of the Realm](#)
- [Tormented Angel](#)
- [Voice of All](#)
- [Voice of Duty](#)
- [Voice of Grace](#)
- [Voice of Law](#)
- [Voice of Reason](#)
- [Voice of Truth](#)
- [Warrior Angel](#)
- [Wayward Angel](#)

June 22, 2004



Q: "I noticed a very distinctive character portrayed on the cards [Justice](#) and [Surge of Strength](#). Not being too familiar with the *Ice Age* block storyline, I had no way of knowing who this guy was (or if he was just someone Ruth Thompson liked to draw). Is he part of the story and if so, who is he and what effect does he have on it?"
-- Nick Bottomeley, Davis, CA

A: From [Rei Nakazawa](#), [Magic](#) creative text writer:

"Notice he also appears on [Dystopia](#) as well! This particular elf wasn't meant to be anyone in particular; apparently, Ruth Thompson thought it would be interesting to show him in various stages of power, from strong ([Justice](#) and [Surge of Strength](#)) to weak ([Dystopia](#)). He doesn't correspond to any currently known major figure in the *Ice Age* block storyline, so ably written up by Jeff Grubb in a trilogy of novels. As far as we can tell, he just appealed to the artist as an interesting figure."

June 21, 2004



Q: "In [an article](#) about the Great Machine from *Fifth Dawn*, the writer told us how to use them all together, but there is no explanation on how this combo untaps [Salvaging Station](#). Please tell me how to use these stations." -- Blane Andysio

A: From [Monty Ashley](#), [magicthegathering.com](#) Editor-in-Chief:

"Step zero: Have all four stations out with a cheap artifact in play. The artifact has to cost 1 or less; it can even be an artifact land (which has a cost of 1 by definition). We'll start the cycle with [Grinding Station](#) as the only untapped Station.

"Step one: Tap [Grinding Station](#) to sacrifice your cheap artifact and mill your opponent for three cards. Because an artifact was put into a graveyard from play, untap [Summoning Station](#).

"Step two: Tap [Summoning Station](#) to put a 2/2 colorless Pincher token into play. Because a creature came into play, untap [Blasting Station](#).

"Step three: Tap [Blasting Station](#) to sacrifice the Pincher token and deal one damage to target creature or player. Because a creature went to the graveyard, untap [Salvaging Station](#).

"Step four: Tap **Salvaging Station** to return the cheap artifact or less from your graveyard to play. Because an artifact came into play, untap **Grinding Station**.

"And then go back to step one. As long as you continue to sacrifice your 2/2 tokens (which do go to the graveyard, although they immediately vanish once they get there) and use the same artifact (with mana cost 1 or less) with the **Salvaging** and **Grinding Stations**, the cycle can go as long as you like."

June 18, 2004



Q: "With Sunburst being prominent in *Fifth Dawn*, was **Crystal Quarry** ever considered for the set?"

A: From **Aaron Forsythe**, **Magic R&D**:

"Nope. In design, the focus was more on 'play many colors,' as opposed to specifically playing five colors. The only card in the design file with 'WUBRG' anywhere on the card was **Fist of Suns**. Development upped the number of five-color specific cards, adding the Bringers, **Channel the Suns**, **Door to Nothingness**, and others. **Crystal Quarry** was never really considered, as development thought the set had enough Sunburst 'helpers,' and the card holds very little nostalgic value as it is only a year removed from Standard play."

June 17, 2004



Q: "Why do some cards change rarity when they are printed in later sets?"

A: From **Matt Place**, **Magic R&D**:

"In general we prefer to keep cards at the rarity they first appeared, but there are a few reasons we might change the commonality of a card. For example, a card made six years ago may have made sense being common for the environment at the time, but to fit well in our current world it needs to be moved up to uncommon. Rather than never use a potentially fun card again we correct the rarity and use it again."

June 16, 2004



Q: "I would like to find out if the votes are being monitored or not, for duplicate votes or fake votes, or cheats? Are the members restricted to vote only once? I'm asking this because I have already voted once and just out of curiosity, I clicked the vote another time and it says, thanks for voting, etc. That shouldn't happen, right?"

A: From **Doug Beyer**, **magicthegathering.com** web developer:

"Thanks for your concern about [Selecting Ninth Edition](#), Dacre. Even if it says 'Thanks for voting' on your second vote, the database checks your voting history and doesn't record the second vote. The results are watched carefully to make sure there's no problems with people voting multiple times. We take the polls very seriously and do everything in our power to prevent unfair manipulation of the results, and to make sure you have real power to determine the contents of the next Core Set."

June 15, 2004



Q: "Why does **Door to Nothingness** come into play tapped? Was there a particular reason for it?"

--Kyle, Goodyear, Arizona, USA

A: From **Brian Schneider**, **Magic R&D**:

"Because the effect is so dramatic (despite the costs), we wanted there to be a period in which you could respond to the card's effect. By having it come into play tapped the other players have a chance to respond while the card is still in play."

June 14, 2004



Q: "Why is white receiving so many graveyard abilities? Doesn't this go against the flavor of white?"

-- D.W., Normal, IL

A: From **Mark Rosewater**, **Magic** Lead Designer:

"White has always had some graveyard abilities. The two biggest are reanimation (**Resurrection**, for example, appeared in *Alpha*) and returning artifacts and/or enchantments from the graveyard to hand (**Argivian Archaeologist** was in *Antiquities*). Both of the abilities still appear infrequently on cards. So no, it's not out of flavor, but note that these graveyard abilities are not core to the color so they appear with much less frequency."

June 11, 2004



Q: "I'm having difficulty figuring out how to write to the authors of weekly articles. I can't seem to find the appropriate email address for 'Swimming with Sharks,' or any other article for that matter. Am I missing something obvious?"

A: From **Scott Johns**, Content Editor, magicthegathering.com:

"Up until very recently this site always included email links to send feedback to the authors. The problem was that these links were visible and as a result all of those accounts are now so buried in spam as to be nearly unusable. To give you an example of just how bad it is, I just peeked into the old Ask Wizards email address and it's currently got *one hundred thirty-seven* new spam in its folder just today, and it's not even 2pm yet!

"The result was that it was just getting too difficult for the team here at **magicthegathering.com** to interact with the readers, something that we take very seriously here. The solution we've employed is to remove the old email links, cancel the ruined accounts, and implement a new web-form based system. At the bottom of every article there is now an option that says 'Respond to [author's name] via email'. If you click on that link it will open a form in your browser which you can complete and send off straight to the author in question (or me, at Ask Wizards). I apologize for any inconvenience while you get used to the new system, but I can definitely say that we're already seeing a dramatic improvement, which makes it that much easier for us to give the readers a voice in the site."

June 10, 2004



Q: "Does Wizards of the Coast accept card ideas from people who play **Magic**? I think I have some really good ideas, and I'd love to submit them."

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

"Unfortunately, no. While everyone usually thinks their ideas are great, and some probably are, it's simply too much work for us to go through all the suggestions. When we used to do this we found useful ideas so rarely that it wasn't worth it. This is especially true since our lawyers won't let us look at card ideas without getting the proper paperwork filled out ahead of time (where you promise not to sue us if we print anything resembling your card ideas)."

June 9, 2004



Q: "I noticed that **Anodet Lurker**, which triggers a life gain effect when sent to the graveyard, is an anagram of Darker Onulet. I saw this as both the Lurker and **Onulet** trigger life gain when they die. Was this link in the names intentional?"

A: From **Brandon Bozzi**, **Magic** Creative Coordinator:

"Yes, the link was intentional. This creature was so close in ability to **Onulet**, we thought we should tie it to its predecessor somehow. We chose to use an anagram to continue the **Onulet**-anagram tradition. You see, 'onulet' was created as an anagram of the '**Soul Net**', another card from the old-days of **Magic**. (The original card name was 'Onulets', but the 's' was dropped when the art came in showing only one creature.)"

"The process of coming up with a card name that we both liked and was an anagram, proved to be somewhat challenging. Here are some of the other names we considered before getting to 'Anodet Lurker'. First, we looked at anagrams of 'bigger onulet': Leering Gobtu, Leering Bogut, Leering Gutob, Leering Obgut, Glue-Rot Being, Bulging Reeto, Bungle Goiter. Then, we looked at anagrams of 'large onulet': Alert Lugeon, Lone Glutera, Neural Golta. We also looked at anagrams for 'big onulet': Beglution, for 'greater onulet': Oleate Grunter, and even for 'great big onulet': Tel Gate Ironbug. And,

somewhere in there we looked at names that would tie the Lurker to the Onulet without using an anagram: Onulyx, Noctulet, Grey Onulet, Repurposed Onulet, Twisted Onulet. In the end, we settled on 'Anodet Lurker', a name given to us by **Magic's** creative director, Dread Broth Mummy aka Marty Bummed Hord."

June 8, 2004



Q: "There are some rumors on the net (supposedly written by Mark Rosewater) that **Magic** is going to end after the Kamigawa block. This isn't true, right?"
-- David A.

A: From **Mark Rosewater, Magic R&D:**

"David,

"As the supposed author of this rumor, I would like to emphatically state that the rumor is false. We have no plans to stop producing **Magic** expansions. In fact, **Magic** is enjoying its best sales in its history. I am currently leading the design for the 2005 fall large expansion (codenamed Control, followed by Alt and Delete), with an amazing design team: Mike Elliott, Aaron Forsythe, Tyler Bielman and some guy named Richard Garfield. There is no end in sight, just many exciting new beginnings.

"Just so I don't start new rumors by ending on an expansion codenamed Delete, we are in the process of assembling the design team for the 2006 fall expansion codenamed Snap (followed by Crackle and Pop)."

June 7, 2004



Q: "Why have all of your Card of the Day been Yawgmoth cards this week, is it leading on to something like that the Kamigawa block will have him back or something?"

A: From **Scott Johns**, Content Editor, magicthegathering.com:

"Good question! When I choose which cards to use for Card of the Day, I often try to include themes across the entire week to unify them. Sometimes these are more obvious than others. Examples would be the week we launched the new site, which included **Launch**, **Reincarnation**, **Divine Transformation**, **Winds of Change**, and **Rebirth**. Another example would be Mulligan Week, which had **Contract from Below**, **Memory Jar**, **Wheel of Fortune**, **Timetwister**, **Maze of Ith**. The first four of those all draw you a new hand (similar to mulliganing, especially under the old mulligan rules) and the fifth card is related to mulligans because of the way it could screw you up under the old "no land in hand" mulligan. While I'm on the subject, I'll also point out that sometimes I'll choose a Card of the Day specifically for a special day, such as "**Leap**" for February 29th, or **Future Sight** (casting cost 5) for May 5 (Cinco de Mayo). As I said, sometimes the themes are more obvious than others, as you can certainly see with the 5 Yawgmoth cards this week.

June 4, 2004



Q: "I keep reading the term 'mirror match' in various articles. What exactly does this mean?"

A: From **Scott Johns**, Content Editor, magicthegathering.com:

"Mirror matches' refer to match-ups where you are playing against a deck that is very similar to your own. If your opponent is running the same **Tooth and Nail** deck that you are playing, that's a mirror match (since it's like looking in a mirror). The term is most commonly used when writing about tournament decks and strategy, where mirror matches are more likely to occur and it's potentially more important to have sideboard cards chosen with the mirror match in mind."

June 3, 2004



Q: "Why did you stop printing cards that wipe out an entire expansion, such as **Golgothian Sylex**, **Apocalypse Chime**, or **City in a Bottle**? I can see why from a tournament point of view, but they are still cards that seem very valuable to casual players that have very interesting interactions and can be very fun to play with."

A: From **Mark Rosewater, Magic Lead Designer:**

"There are a number of reasons we don't make them any more. Here are the top three:

"1) Because the rules allow players to play with any version of a card, we don't like cards with the same name being functionally different. Expansion hosers keep this from being true. For example, the *Eighth Edition Flying Carpet* is functionally different from the *Arabian Nights* version because the latter is destroyed by *City in a Bottle* while the former is not.

"2) An important part of the color wheel is that individual colors have trouble destroying certain types of cards. As such, we have greatly reduced our number of mass removal artifacts (although *Mirrodin*, as the artifact block, has more than average).

"3) We don't want to commit a spot in every set for an expansion hoser and it seems unfair/unbalanced to merely have them in some expansions."

June 2, 2004



Q: "It's great that you [banned Skullclamp](#), but I have a question: will [Skullclamp](#) be banned for US Nationals? If not, will people have to play a different Standard deck on Sunday, June 20th?"

-- Timmy

A: From **John Grant**, Organized Play Policy Manager:

"Thanks for your email, Timmy. The answer to both of your questions is 'No.' There is no 'emergency' or situational banning being considered for [Skullclamp](#) prior to June 20, 2004. All DCI-sanctioned Standard and *Mirrodin* Block tournaments that start before June 20 must allow the use of [Skullclamp](#) throughout the event.

"While not (currently) articulated in the DCI Universal Tournament Rules or the **Magic the Gathering** Floor Rules, once a tournament starts, the cards and sets that are legal the day the event starts are the cards and sets that are legal for the entire event. This is true for all multi-day, multi-format events. For example, U.S. Nationals start with Standard decks on Friday, June 18; the Junior Super Series (JSS) Championships, an all-Standard event, start play on Saturday, June 19. Players advancing to Sunday, June 20 from both events must use the same Standard deck they used on Thursday or Friday, even if it includes [Skullclamp](#).

"This also means that [Skullclamp](#) is legal for the U.S. Nationals Standard 'grinders' held on Thursday, June 17, and for the JSS Open held on Friday, June 18.

"Check [here](#) for all the information on the 2004 U.S. Nationals; go [here](#) for details on the 2004 JSS Championships.

"Kind regards,
John Grant
Organized Play Policy Manager
Wizards of the Coast"

June 1, 2004



Q: "With the new artifacts in *Mirrodin* and *Darksteel*, why didn't you guys put [Circle of Protection: Artifacts](#) back in?"

- Karl, Bamberg, Germany

A: From **Mark Rosewater**, **Magic** Lead Designer:

"Karl,
"The *Fifth Dawn* team and you were obviously thinking alike. That's why [Circle of Protection: Artifacts](#) is in *Fifth Dawn*."



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